

NAVIGATING CULTURES: IMMIGRANT MOTHERS' PARENTING BELIEFS

A THESIS

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By

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“One looks back with appreciation to the brilliant teachers, but with gratitude to those who touched our human feelings. The curriculum is so much necessary raw material, but warmth is the vital element for the growing plant and for the soul of the student.” (Carl Jung)

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Abstract

Parenting beliefs of immigrant mothers typically emerge from their culture of origin; each woman negotiates the new challenges that are presented in parenting their “American” children through her own cultural lens (Bornstein & Cote, 2004). A mixed-methods study of nine immigrant women living in New York State was conducted. The present research examined the parenting beliefs of immigrant mothers who arrived in the United States after the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965. The “developmental niche” model (Super & Harkness, 1996) and Bronfenbrenner’s (1986) “ecological” model provided the theoretical basis for this study. Qualitative themes that emerged included the importance of social support, the formative experience of immigration, and hybridized discipline styles. Findings suggest that immigrant mothers do hold unique parenting beliefs as a marginalized group.

Navigating Cultures: Immigrant Mothers' Parenting Beliefs

“What you leave behind is not what is engraved in stone monuments, but what is woven into the lives of others.” (Pericles)

Since the formation of the Westernized “New World” (i.e., the colonial period and after) there have been people who traveled to the United States of America and raised their children in a land that was not their native country. In the last fifty years, contemporary American society has become increasingly diverse; the supposed “melting pot” is now boiling over with cultural differences. What are the cultural factors that influence how people think about themselves as parents? This study was a mixed-methods project that examined the parenting beliefs of immigrant mothers. The purpose of this study was to investigate how immigrant mothers think about their experience navigating both the novel challenges in mainstream American culture in general and the parenting process as their children grow.

Culture and Human Development

Rubin (2006) defines *culture* as, “A system of shared beliefs, values, customs, behaviors, and artifacts that the members of society use to cope with their world and with one another, and that are transmitted from generation to generation through learning” (p.91). It is impossible to examine an individual without thinking about her cultural background or worldview. People are not static; culture is a major factor in the analysis of human development. However, culture is commonly overlooked in psychological inquiry.

Human development takes place in the context of cultural values and norms. Rogoff (2003) posits that “...people develop as participants in cultural communities. Their development can only be understood in light of the cultural practices and

circumstances of their communities—which also change (p.1).” The communities individuals are nested within influence the ways people change and grow over time. However, there are times when people choose to leave their communities to live elsewhere. In this paper, *culture of origin* will refer to the cultural community within a nation that an individual chose to leave, and *culture of destination* refers to the community to which an individual decided to emigrate. The term *immigrant mother* is defined as a female individual with children (born in the United States) who emigrated from a culture of origin to a new culture of destination.

Parenting Beliefs and Parental Ethnotheories: The Developmental Niche Model

An important area of research involves understanding the ways in which culture informs both how and why parents choose to parent in a particular way. Super and Harkness (1996) examined this issue in their work on *parental ethnotheories*, defined as “cultural models that parents hold regarding children, families, and themselves as parents” (Harkness & Super, 2003, p.64). They assert that individuals exist within a “developmental niche” that consists of three components: the settings, the customs, and the psychology of caregivers; each of these components are bidirectional and influence the other. First, the physical and social settings in which children live are important in that they provide a structural framework for a child’s life as it unfolds. Home environments differ based on region, socioeconomic status and dictate the resources that are available to children while growing up. Second, the customs of childcare and childrearing are “culturally regulated” (Super & Harkness, 1996); both women and men learn from their parents or peers about what is the standard for raising a child, in turn implementing those practices in their own parenting. Third, caretaker psychologies

(*parenting beliefs*) affect children because they influence how parents think about their own parenting; these cognitions, in turn, influence parenting practices. At the heart of this model is the idea that children's development is inextricably linked to parents' ethnotheories or beliefs about childrearing. These beliefs are directly related to how parents raise their children and how children develop.

Parenting beliefs (also called *parenting cognitions* or *parenting attitudes*) are defined as the "thoughts of parents concerning how to care for children, how to rear them, and how to apprentice them into the culture" (Bornstein & Cheach, 2004, p.19). Such beliefs contribute to the "continuity of culture" by helping to shape and define culture to offspring and the transmission of cultural information across generations. These findings raise interesting questions about what happens when an individual (including her beliefs and parenting beliefs) is transplanted into a new culture. For an immigrant parent, their thoughts surrounding parenting are taken from their culture of origin and imported to the culture of destination.

What are developmental niches and parenting beliefs like in cultures around the world? Bornstein and Cheach (2003) express a rationale to study parenting beliefs in a cultural context by suggesting that "the majority of the literature in parenting science derives from studies conducted in Western industrialized nations, and where there are exceptions little methodological standardization has been brought to bear on comparisons of the most basic psychological constructs, structures, functions, or processes"(p.8). In support of this statement, a comparative study of parental beliefs in seven countries was conducted (Bornstein and Cheach, 2003). Mothers evaluated their own competence, satisfaction, investment, and role balance in parenting. They differentially attributed their

successes and failures to ability, effort, mood, task difficulty, or child behavior. Argentine mothers, for example, rated themselves relatively low in parental competence and satisfaction and blamed parenting failures on lack of ability as opposed to other factors. Belgian mothers, on the other hand, rated themselves as satisfied with their parenting. South American cultures emphasized modesty and humbleness while European Belgian mothers indicated that society promoted parenting by having a strong social welfare system with maternal care support. In sum, mothers from each culture focused on vastly different goals and thought about parenting in a variety of ways. This study was one of the first to examine the parenting beliefs of mothers from a variety of cultures, subsequently comparing and contrasting them.

Bornstein and Cheach (2003) illustrate the idea that in different cultures mothers have disparate beliefs about parenting that are linked to the wider ecological context. It is important to note, however, that the women in the sample were not immigrants. Therefore, this can only demonstrate differences among parenting beliefs between cultures; parenting beliefs have been studied in encapsulated cultures but not when immigration is a variable. Thinking about these issues within a cultural context, immigrant mothers have not been studied in a manner exemplified by Bornstein and Cheach (2003). The understudied population of immigrant mothers in the United States would benefit from research on the processes that influence families.

Gaps in the Literature: The “Developing Parent” in a Cultural Context

Although the importance of understanding parental cognitions has been widely established (e.g., Rubin, 2006), research on parenting beliefs has been limited in several ways. Most studies on the topic have focused on infants or young children (e.g., Grusec,

Hastings, & Mammone, 1994; Nucci, 1994; Okagaki & Bingham, 2005). Given that the parenting role does not end when children reach adolescence, the breadth of literature needs to be expanded to include offspring that are in all developmental stages of life, including adolescence and emerging adulthood and from a wider range of cultures (Rubin, 2006). In addition, studies done on attitudes and cognitions of parents have not focused on immigrant mothers as a group with unique needs that transcend cultural differences.

The lack of attention given to immigrant parents is surprising given that parenting beliefs have been established as a mechanism for cultural continuity (Bornstein & Cheah, 2004). In other words, the ways in which parents think about how they parent and the actions they take are one of the ways in which culture is transmitted to younger generations. This issue is complex for parents who immigrate to a new culture that endorses parenting goals and strategies different from their own. For example, in the fictional dramatic film *Amreeka* (2009), a Palestinian single mother (Muna) emigrates from the West Bank to the United States with her teenage son, Fadi. In her culture of origin she expects Fadi to be polite and respectful of her in every way; that is her belief on how children in her country should behave. Consequently, during the family's transition to a small Midwestern town Fadi acts out and is defiant towards Muna, cursing at her. Her shock at the situation in her culture of destination is paramount, but rationalized to her by her acculturated sister in that defiance is common among American adolescents. How would this situation affect the developing identity Muna forms in her new culture?

Supporting the above example, Farver, Xu, Bhadha, Narang, and Lieber (2007) compared Asian-Indian American and European-American families' ethnic identity, parenting beliefs, and acculturation levels. The Asian-Indian American adolescents were first generation immigrants (i.e., their parents immigrated to the United States); it was hypothesized that "family conflict and adolescent anxiety would be higher in Asian-Indian than in European-American families, particularly when Asian-Indian parents had a marginalized or separated acculturation style (i.e., more traditional)" (Farver et al., 2007, p.193). The hypotheses were confirmed, suggesting that when parents' beliefs differ from the mainstream culture, conflict increases. This study is one of the first research efforts to examine parenting beliefs in relation to acculturation level. The researchers concluded that Asian-Indian cultural values and expectations for behavior increased family discord when families were transplanted into American culture. This work suggests that there is a complex relationship between parenting beliefs, acculturation level, and family-level processes.

Acculturation: Trials and Tribulations

"You don't understand how it works in this country. If you want to get anywhere you have to be as mainstream as possible. If not, you will be left by the roadside. You have to use your English name here." (Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, *The Arrangers of Marriage*)

First- and second-generation immigrants constitute 23% of the population in the United States. In New York City alone, the 2000 Census showed that 40% of people living in the five boroughs of the city were born in other countries (Deaux, 2006). According to Corsini (1987), *acculturation* is defined as "a process whereby individuals learn about the rules for behavior characteristics about a certain group or people" (p.7). *Immigration* is defined as "to come into a country of which one is not a native for

permanent residence” (www.merriamwebster.com). A certain stigma accompanies immigrant status (i.e., differing from the in-group) and individuals make certain choices to assimilate or acculturate into U.S. mainstream culture or continue with traditional values from their culture of origin (Lalonde & Cameron, 1993). One important component of the immigrant experience is a change in setting, specifically when children are involved. Immigration and choosing to leave an individual’s culture of origin is a major catalyst for a change in thoughts about life and in turn, being a parent.

The acculturation process has been widely studied but not in conjunction with parenting which is one goal of the current study. Berry (1997) reviewed the immigrant experience of integrating into dominant United States culture. Research in this field has shown that there are four prototypical *acculturation strategies*, which include: a) *integration*, b) *assimilation*, c) *separation*, and d) *marginalization*. People can acculturate to certain extents, such that they may fully integrate into the dominant culture (integration), hold some beliefs from their culture of origin (assimilation), feel removed from the mainstream culture but ambivalent about it (separation), or remain unacculturated and feel negatively targeted by the dominant culture (marginalization) (Berry, 1997).

Berry (1997) calls for more applied research to be done in future studies, “...people without a sense of themselves (i.e., a cultural identity of their own rooted in some degree of cultural maintenance), and who feel rejected by others...are exposed to significant psychological costs in their own communities” (p.29). These costs are referred to as *acculturative stress* or *acculturative dissonance*. One question lacking in the field of

immigration psychology is how acculturation affects a person's beliefs about parenting (Bornstein & Cote, 2004).

A major concern for immigrant parents is the effect that immigration stigma has on their children. To investigate this issue, Buki, Tsung-Chieh, Strom and Strom (2003) interviewed Chinese immigrant mothers with adolescents. A total of 95 participants were asked to think about their acculturation process into American society. Results indicated that mothers saw their children as more acculturated than themselves, implying that they held onto their beliefs and ideals from their culture of origin (Bornstein & Cote, 1994). Mothers also reported that they needed to know more about how their children were growing up today. To illustrate, a mother raising her child in a rural Bolivian village would know within minutes through the town 'grape vine' that her child fell and hurt himself whereas it might take a few hours or a call from a hospital for a mother in contemporary New York City to find out. This lack of communication is difficult for all parents but exponentially increases when there is the added stress of an unfamiliar society. Research on acculturation has previously shown that individuals who are not fully acculturated into the dominant culture have a difficult time existing and navigating the daily tasks of life (Cooper & Denner, 1998).

What role does acculturation play within the dynamics of a family with at least one immigrant parent? Kim, Cain, and McCubbin (2006) were interested in understanding how the acculturation status and parenting practices of both Korean-American mothers and fathers influenced the psychological adjustment of their adolescent. Subjects included 106 Korean-American families in the Midwestern region of the United States; mothers, fathers, and adolescents filled out self-report measures.

Findings concluded that a mother's acculturation level was the only moderating factor on adolescent psychological adjustment. This work raises important questions about how mothers acculturate and how they make meaning of acculturation in terms of parenting beliefs and practices. Little research has been done on the meaning-making processes of immigrants in their new culture.

Ecological Models: The Individual in a Cultural Context

Bronfenbrenner (1986) theorized that all individuals can be contextualized within their own *ecological niche*. This framework is a way in which to describe the cultural systems in which a person exists and it provides a context in which to understand human development. These systems include the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, chronosystem, and macrosystem. Each of these systems influences the other and in turn change when even one changes.

Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Model (1986) places individuals within context of the world around them. The *microsystem* is characterized by the direct, face-to-face interactions that take between individuals and other people and objects in the immediate environment. Working outward, the *mesosystem* is defined as interactions between microsystems. For example, a parent's relationship with his or her child will be influenced by a mother's relationship with her own mother. The *exosystem* is defined as the those contexts that are external to the individual. In this way, the exosystem indirectly influences an individual's development. Examples include, , mass media, policies, organizations, and neighborhood settings. If a neighborhood is filled with poverty and violence, for example, an individual will grow up with a view of the world that is different than someone who grew up in an affluent and safe area. Finally, the

macrosystem encompasses the most outward and systemic network of an individual, primarily including the greater norms, values, and expectations that are prominent in society. In this way the macrosystem serves as “blueprint” for all other systems. Finally, the *chronosystem* is the level that represents historical and personal change over time. Each of these systems are separate but simultaneously influenced by the other.

Immigrant mothers are nested within the context of family, neighborhood settings, work, etc. Their ‘worlds’ are separated more than those who are not immigrants and do not always overlap due to potential language barriers, cultural discrimination, racism and stereotyping. The inability to navigate freely may be due to lack of acculturation into the dominant society. One question that has not previously been addressed is what happens to an individual’s ecological systems when they immigrate to a new culture; Is there a change in the system? A change in one’s ecological niche affects those around them as we are all connected in some fashion. For example, a choice to immigrate and raise a child in America not only affects the family system but the parents’ workplace, childrens’ school settings, etc.

Current Study

Research on parenting beliefs has been acknowledged as an important way to understand why parents parent in certain ways (e.g., Grusec, Hastings, & Mammone, 1994; Nucci, 1994; Okagaki & Bingham, 2005). However, previous research has focused on the parents of young children, thus creating a limited body of knowledge in the parenting literature. Immigrant groups have also largely been ignored in this field. Moreover, research in this area has been primarily comparative, making generalizations about the Western world and leaving unanswered questions about the processes and

systems of meaning-making that may explain cultural differences in parenting. One question that the current research hoped to address is whether parenting beliefs and ethnotheories change during the transition of immigration.

The main question that has yet to be addressed in the parenting beliefs literature is what happens when the developmental niche (Super & Harkness) is changed. The cultural context is influential in teaching an individual about parenting, but what happens when the setting changes? There are three possibilities that can occur: a) the ethnotheories remain static, b) the ethnotheories from the culture of origin are replaced by the ethnotheories of the dominant culture, or c) the ethnotheories become a type of ‘hybridized parenting ideology.’ The present study will address which approach is most typical among immigrant mothers.

Particular forms of research methodology are required in the tradition of cultural psychology (as opposed to cross-cultural psychology), where one culture is examined and not compared to another (Kitayama & Cohen, 2007). Another methodological technique that has been established to be successful with immigrant populations is called *mixed-methods* research (Bornstein & Cheach, 2003). This approach involves conducting qualitative, in-depth interviews in conjunction with a series of questionnaires. Mixed-methods research on one cultural group is a common technique utilized in this field; such an approach aims to understand, rather than simply compare cultural differences. This current research addresses gaps in the literature by examining the parenting beliefs of immigrant mothers as a group (who were not compared to a sample of American mothers), as they were described by women in open-ended interviews.

The research on parenting beliefs, parental ethnotheories, and the ecological model (Bronfenbrenner, 1986) all suggest that immigrant mothers will think about parenting in a similar manner, regardless of culture of origin. Home life, work, their children's schools, religious institutions, etc. all have separate values systems that may not align with an immigrant mother's culture of origin. Accordingly, it is important to understand how immigrant mothers think about socializing their children based on beliefs from their culture of origin in relation to how immigrant mothers think about American ideals and parenting. The current study will allow for a better understanding of how immigrant mothers navigate cultural differences in the United States.

Research Questions

The main purpose of this study was to describe and explain the experience of being a woman who immigrated to the United States to raise her children. This population has yet to be examined from a mixed-methods approach. Using open-ended interviews that were analyzed using inductive methods, this study examined if immigrant mothers align themselves with the dominant American culture and how they make sense of their parenting in a culture different from the one in which they were raised. The following questions were specifically examined:

1. How do immigrant mothers describe their experience of immigrating to the United States?

Berry (1997) posited that there were four main acculturation strategies that people choose to ease the process of adjusting to a new culture. The current research suggests that people do think about the transition process and the psychological stressors that may ensue.

2. How do immigrant mothers describe their parenting experiences in the United States in comparison to their native culture?

The parental ethnotheories model created by Super and Harkness (1996) claim that parenting beliefs are intertwined with cultural beliefs. The current study addresses this model in the context of immigration and moving from one developmental niche to another. Women were asked to think about their beliefs and attitudes regarding parenting after immigrating to the U.S. It was expected that immigrant mothers, as a group, would describe parenting in the United States as different than their own parenting style, regardless of culture of origin.

3. How do immigrant mothers describe their parenting in comparison to parenting in the United States?

The ecological model (Bronfenbrenner, 1986) states that individuals are nested within a number of cultural subsystems that influence one another. The current study focused on the macrosystem and microsystem levels in regard to broader thoughts on U.S. parenting in comparison with parenting in the immigrant mother's culture of origin. These levels are emphasized because they will give the reader insight into the individual lives of the participants and further add to the broader narrative of social dynamics for immigrants in the U.S. In the context of immigration, it was expected that the women in the sample would identify American culture and parenting as different from their own.

The second purpose of this study was to examine patterns of emergent themes, as they related to quantitative measures of acculturation, parenting stress, self-efficacy, and socialization goals. In order to obtain and assess the experience of being an immigrant

mother it was necessary to use typical questionnaires used to study parenting. It was expected that immigrant mothers would demonstrate a range of acculturation experiences as demonstrated by Berry (1997). Given the inductive nature of this portion of the study, specific hypotheses were not predicted, although differences were expected across acculturation groups as delineated by Berry (1997). The final purpose of this study involved examining the relationship between mothers' acculturation level and the psychological and social thought processes related to parenting, as ascertained by the quantitative measures.

Method

The women who participated in this mixed-methods study were interviewed based on qualitative research standards and Grounded Theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) and filled out a number of quantitative measures (see appendices B-F). Interviews were consensus-coded and themes were identified that addressed the structured research questions.

Recruitment

Immigrant mothers were recruited in the Mid-Hudson Valley region of New York State and New York City using convenience sampling and snow ball sampling. Campus recruitment occurred through all-campus emails, flyers, and various contacts with immigration resources. This sampling strategy resulted in a diverse sample of women who reflect a variety of socioeconomic and ethnic/racial characteristics, representative of the national population (see Table 1).

There are a number of inclusion criteria participants had to meet in order to participate in this study. Mothers had to be over the age of 18, must have immigrated to

the United States after 1965 (when the Immigration and Nationality Act was passed), and must have immigrated at age 18 or older (in order to have exposure to parenting beliefs in their culture of origin). For most of the participants we tried to recruit women who had at least one of their children needed to have been born in the United States and currently be of adolescent age (12 to 17 years old). Participants could have been of any ethnic background for the purposes of the research; diversity was important to the nature of this project in order to obtain the “immigrant mother experience” that was believed to be universal (i.e., research question two).

Adolescence has been shown to be a time for battles to increase between parent-adolescent dyads as a part of normative development (Arnett, 1999); conflict may also be heightened for certain cultural groups. Parental goals for their children may be unclear and incompatible with the dominant beliefs of “American” life. The themes of change and acculturative differences are more noticeable and frequent during this time directly due to the fact that children are becoming more autonomous. They literally may be “bringing home” American culture much more, causing a conflict of values. Phinney, Ong, and Madden (2000) mention the influence of an adolescent’s peer group on their behavior as a factor, “In comparison, adolescents born in the United States are likely to feel more American and may, in turn, develop attitudes and expectations closer to those of their non-immigrant peers” (p.530). Based on the above research, a qualifier of recruitment in the present study was that there must be at least one adolescent in the family between the ages of 12 to 17 to focus on during the interview.

Only women were interviewed for this study. This recruitment decision does not discount the fathers or other individuals who help raise a child. The researcher was

interested in the experience of being a woman who chose to leave her country of origin. It was important to give a voice to these women who previously have been overlooked as an important population. Previous research has also driven this decision, as it was shown in Kim et al. (2006) that the acculturation level of the mother was the only significant predictor of positive adolescent outcomes.

One exclusionary measure proposed in order to control for extraneous variables is for women to hold non-refugee status. The term *refugee status* refers to someone who has “sought out asylum in the United States due to religious/political persecution, threats to physical wellbeing, or any other threat to themselves or the lives of those in their family” (www.rapidimmigration.com). The refugee experience (i.e., being forced to leave your country) of an individual may differ vastly from someone who immigrates for employment or higher education (some of the main reasons most of the mothers in this study chose to immigrate). In addition, a number of psychological issues may be comorbid with refugee status (e.g., post-traumatic stress disorder, depression, etc.).

Participants

Subjects in this study included nine mothers, each of whom had an adolescent between the ages of 14 and 16 ($M=15.00$, $SD=2.00$). Subjects all resided in the Greater New York City area. The immigrant mothers in this study ranged in age from 39 to 59 with a mean age of 45.78 ($SD=6.57$). Mothers had been living in the United States for a number of years, ranging from five to fifty ($M=20.33$, $SD=12.76$). The number of children of each woman ranged from one to five ($M=3.33$, $SD=1.50$). Seven women in the sample were married (77%). All participants reported that they talk to family from their country of origin; however, only 55% spoke to family once a week or more. Level

of education ranged from high school (33%) to advanced graduate degrees (33%) and 55% of the women were employed (see Table 2). For additional qualitative descriptive information refer to Appendix G, which provides a summary of where each woman immigrated from, and a brief snapshot into each of their lives.

Measures & Materials

Immigrant mother interview. Each participant was asked questions from a semi-structured interview created by the researcher. These questions targeted three topics: the immigrant experience (e.g., “Tell me about your experience immigrating to the U.S.”), parenting beliefs (e.g., “What goals do you have for your children?”), and parent-adolescent conflict (e.g., “What are some values you teach to your children?” and “Tell me about a typical argument with your adolescent”). The interview was designed to be open-ended with probes and follow-ups that explored and invited respondents’ opinions and subjective experiences (See Appendix A). Each interview ranged in time from one to two hours.

Demographic questions. Questions included age, level of education, and type of employment (See Appendix B). These questions helped the researcher obtain basic information in order to describe the sample.

Acculturation measure (AMAS-ZABB; Zea, Asner-self, Birman & Buki, 2003). The Abbreviated Multidimensional Acculturation Scale (AMAS) is a thirty-item questionnaire (see Appendix C). There are three subscales within the measure including language, cultural identity, and American identity. Questions are on a four-item scale ranging from ‘strongly disagree’ to ‘strongly agree.’ Sample statements include ‘I feel good about being U.S. American’ and ‘I am proud of being _____ (culture of origin).’

High scores represent an individual who is acculturated into mainstream US culture (integrated) while low scores indicate that an individual holds strongly onto values from their culture of origin (marginalized). Cronbach's Alpha ranged from .90 to .97 for the sub scales, indicating a reliable measure.

Parenting self-efficacy scale (Freedman-Doan, Arbretton, Harold & Eccles, 1993). This measure contains seven-items that rate parenting statements on a one to seven scale (1= "very little" and 7= "a great deal." Statements include "How much do you think you can get your adolescent to stay out of trouble" and other parenting-related self report concepts (see Appendix D). High scores indicate high parenting self efficacy (i.e., women who are confident about themselves as parents). This scale has been shown to be highly reliable (Cronbach's $\alpha = .86$; Freedman-Doan et al., 1993).

Parenting stress scale (Berry & Jones, 1995). This measure determines subjects' vulnerability and levels of stress associated with parenting. This 18-item measure asks parents to rate parenting stress-related statements on a 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) scale. Sample statements include "I am happy with my role as a parent" and "I feel close to my children." This scale has high reliability, Cronbach's $\alpha = .83$ (see Appendix E). High scores indicate low parenting stress.

Autonomy-relatedness measure (Keller, 2007). An "autonomous-relational socialization goals" measure was used in order to determine if immigrant mothers have differing parenting beliefs based on their placement along the independence-interdependence continuum. Subjects rated statements on a 1 (Do not agree) to 5 (completely agree) scale. Statements ask parents to think about how they would like their adolescent to be raised, including "develop a sense of self" (an autonomous goal) and

“learn to obey elderly people” (a relational goal). There has been good reliability associated with this measure, Cronbach’s $\alpha = .93$ for the autonomous goals and Cronbach’s $\alpha = .89$ for the socialization component (see Appendix F). High scores indicate autonomy socialization goals.

Digital audio recorder. In order to allow for pure qualitative conversation and limited interruption of dialogue, interviews were digitally audio recorded and then transcribed by both a research assistant and the researcher. In this way, experimenter bias was controlled for and the methodology was strengthened due to standardization of technology use. An Olympus Digital DS-30 Audio Recorder was used to conduct all interviews.

Researcher journal. It is important during the qualitative research process to document the experience of being a researcher (Glesne, 1999). The situations, emotions elicited, and conclusions based on the process are equally important. The researcher for this project prepared pre, mid, and post documentation of the research process for readers (See Appendix H). The physical identity of the researcher has a profound effect on the eliciting of responses from the participants (i.e., that I am a Caucasian non-immigrant without children asking about immigration and parenting).

Procedure

The current study consisted of two components collected in one session from each subject. Mothers first completed a series of self-report measures and then took part in an in-depth qualitative interview. Given the nature of the questions driving this study, open-ended, qualitative interviews were necessary to explore mothers’ subjective experiences

and meaning-making of parenting beliefs and being an immigrant mother. Data was collected at a location convenient to participants, ranging from meetings in the participant's home or at a public place such as a church office. Once interviews were complete a research assistant transcribed them verbatim and all participants were assigned a pseudonym to ensure confidentiality.

The amount of time allotted to take part in this study was approximately two hours. Participants met with the researcher at a mutually agreed upon location and date, planned out through emails or phone calls. These locations included home visits, restaurants, church multi-purpose rooms, and cafes in the greater New York area. Preliminary demographic information was first collected and allowed the researcher to describe participant's backgrounds.

Subjects proceeded by filling out the quantitative measures (see appendices C through F). This portion of the study took approximately twenty minutes. Next, the researcher conducted the "Immigrant Mother Interview" (see Appendix A). This component took one to two hours, depending on the length of time taken by the participant. The interviews were later transcribed verbatim by a research assistant and uploaded into QSR NVivo (a qualitative software package for managing and coding data) for subsequent analyses. The author would like to note that the creation of all pseudonyms for the mothers was completed in a careful and intentional manner (see Appendix G); As this project focused on the culture that each woman came from and identified with, each assigned pseudonym reflects and honors the participant's culture of origin or spiritual beliefs. Most of the names were researched to be indigenous to the mother's culture of origin. Additionally, six women out of the nine (66%) were from the

same church in the New York City borough of the Bronx. Some of the pseudonyms given to those women are biblical in nature, such as “Eden,” “Grace,” and “Hope” due to their affiliation with the church. The researcher felt that it was important to respect each woman’s identity through the use of meaningful pseudonyms.

Results

Quantitative Results

In reference to the quantitative measures (parenting self-efficacy, parenting stress, acculturation, and autonomy-relatedness), the sample was too limited in size to calculate any parametric statistics such as correlations or ANOVAs. However, sum scores and descriptive statistics were calculated for each measure (see Table 1). The acculturation measure (AMAS-ZAB; Zea et al.) had three sub-scores: American identity ($M=23.78$, $SD=6.67$), language ($M=48.22$, $SD=5.36$), and cultural identity ($M=28.56$, $SD=7.81$). These descriptive statistics suggest that participants, as a group, did not identify strongly with values dominant in the United States, were somewhat ambivalent about language skills, and reported that their culture of origin identity was much stronger than any identification to mainstream U.S. culture.

The mean score for parenting self-efficacy was 44.44 ($SD=3.00$). Scores ranged from 38 to 48, suggesting that there were some mothers who did admit to lower parenting confidence levels when it came to their parenting skills. For autonomy-relatedness, there was a mean score of 29.33 ($SD=1.87$). Scores ranged from 27 to 33, showing that there was little variability in this sample concerning this construct. The raw scores for autonomy-relatedness socialization goals suggest that most mothers wanted their children to grow up in a more ‘related’ or ‘collectivistic’ manner. Parenting stress scores were

relatively high ($M=74.00$, $SD=9.81$). Sum parenting stress scores ranged from 68 to 86, indicating that there was a wide index of responses in terms of the stress related to parenting; some mothers reported higher stress than others.

During the interview portion of the study women responded to the question of how “American” they felt in order to place them into acculturation groups. Based on a median split on a 1-7 scale (4 being the median), five mothers (55%) reported that they felt relatively “Americanized” (Azalia, Chyrah, Durene, Faith, and Ishani) and four felt that they did not (Beatriz, Eden, Grace, and Hope). This was the measure that was used to place participants into groups based on acculturation.

Qualitative Results

Qualitative research focuses on weaving the stories of people together in order to answer guiding questions. There are a number of steps a qualitative researcher needs to take to properly be the storyteller for her participants. The following description provides insight into the process that helped set the stage as a raconteur for immigrant mothers in this study.

Trustworthiness.

A necessary aspect of qualitative research is the reporting of the process of inquiry and analysis so that others can use that information in their own interpretation of the results (Morrison & James, 2009). There were a number of ways in which the primary researcher created a ‘trustworthy’ rapport with the participants in this study. This is an important aspect in the qualitative research process; as previously mentioned the interviewer has a role that can dramatically change how interview data is collected. As the primary researcher and interviewer, I made sure that each woman directed me as to

where the meeting would take place in a location that she was most comfortable. Upon meeting, I made it very clear that I was interested in listening to her story by demonstrating empathy and undivided attention, while trying to be as non-intrusive as possible. I told the participant about my background, hopefully making her comfortable enough to create an environment to speak honestly.

Triangulation.

Additionally, triangulation was done in two ways in order to strengthen the study. *Triangulation* (the use of multiple data collection methods) is a strategy for increasing the validity and evaluation of qualitative research findings (Mathison, 1988). Both a qualitative interview and quantitative measures were collected from each woman participating in the present study. Triangulation occurred through: a) interviewing more than one participant; b) the codes, categories, and resultant model were examined by multiple reviewers; and c) theoretical validity or underlying assumptions were examined in light of existing literature to see if they were supported (Morrison & James, 2009). The quantitative data was used to strengthen and inform the qualitative responses the mothers provided. The interviewer also continuously ‘checked in’ and asked participants if they had anything to add or to clarify what they meant during the interview.

Qualitative Coding.

Data processing. Analysis of the Immigrant Mother Interview was based on an inductive approach, which is exploratory in nature. The current study utilized a specific type of inductive method, called *grounded theory* (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). This analytic tool is defined as “a systematic qualitative research methodology in the social

sciences emphasizing generation of theory from data in the process of conducting research” (p.34). In other words, the data and subsequent analyses dictate the directions in which conclusions are made. Typical to grounded theory, an *a priori* theoretical framework did not drive the qualitative data analysis; rather, analyses were based on patterns and themes that emerged from the interviews. All interviews were coded for common themes, including both within and cross-case comparisons. Once all coding was finished, data was triple consensus-coded and discrepancies were discussed. Emergent codes were then examined as a function of mothers’ immigration status and acculturation.

Inductive coding. Each interview was read multiple times by both the primary investigator (PI) and a research assistant who took note of any and all themes that emerged related to the questions posed (see Research Questions section). Initial coding schemes were created by both the PI and research assistant independent of each other. These “codes” are categories that summarize quotations from multiple transcribed interviews. The two researchers then came together to decide on codes that seemed to fit appropriately based on the research questions in the study.

Comparing and contrasting. In the nature of Grounded Theory, researchers discussed the emergent themes (codes) in terms of similarities and differences between them. This was done three times between the primary researcher and research assistant throughout the analysis process. The themes were then further discussed in terms of “codes.” A systematic reliability check occurred throughout the qualitative coding process, which involved a constant conversation about similarities and differences of emergent codes that the primary researcher and research assistant had created. Reliability analyses exceeded 75% agreement which means that the PI and research

assistant agreed on more than 75% on the coding scheme, a good level of reliability in qualitative research.

Grouping. After initial coding and comparisons were done in order to create consistency of emergent themes, the codes were then collapsed into larger meta-themes that contained only a few sub-themes. This allows for a streamlined discussion of results within the final written product so that there are overarching themes that clearly answer the research questions.

Summary of Emergent Themes

The major themes that emerged from consensus qualitative coding included: 1.) the experience of acculturation and 2.) parenting beliefs that accommodated diverse cultural ideals. These goals and emergent themes address the main theoretical issue of whether immigrant mothers' parenting beliefs change due to the immigration process. One notable finding during the qualitative analysis is the difficulty of parsing apart question three ("What are immigrant mother's thoughts on mainstream United States culture and parenting?") as separate from research question one (about acculturation) and two (about their own parenting beliefs). There was substantial overlap in parenting beliefs and cultural ideals (i.e., the emergent themes for question three were not distinct); therefore, the following thematic analysis will combine answers for question three into the discussion of acculturation and parenting beliefs. This finding provides evidence that these concepts are intertwined and justifies the needs to study all goals previously mentioned together (for a detailed list of themes, refer to Table 3).

Stories of acculturation and the formative experience of immigration

Research questions 1 & 3

*“Look at the people who shop here; they are the ones who immigrate and continue to act as if they are back in their countries.” He gestured, dismissively, toward a woman and her two children, who were speaking Spanish. “They will never move forward unless they adapt to America. They will always be doomed to supermarkets like this.” (Chimamanda Ngozi Adiche, *The Arrangers of Marriage*)*

The first question that this research addressed was how women think about the process of immigrating to the United States. One sub-theme that emerged centered on the time line of immigration, as it related to acculturation. In other words, during the interviews women spoke about immigration in a linear fashion (i.e., before, during, after) in order to set the stage for thoughts on parenting. Although the women in this study acknowledged the all-encompassing nature of immigration, none of them seemed particularly disturbed or upset by making the choice to leave their country of origin and start anew. An integral component to this study was the immigration story that each woman told. Each and every account was vastly different than the other, even if the women came from the same country. For example, 44% of participants were women who emigrated from Jamaica around the same age and time. However, each had a different experience in her transition to the United States due to the specific developmental niche in which she grew up.

Initial thoughts about America

Two themes of the acculturation process that arose were mothers’ motivation to leave and mothers’ difficulties adjusting to American culture. Within the sample, three out of the nine women (33%) did not intentionally leave their culture of origin. The parents of these women made the decision to immigrate. Beatriz (from Bolivia) was very

upset when her stepfather decided that her family would remain in the United States. She recalls, “When my father said we were passing through here (New York), I said, ‘No way! Leave me here (Bolivia), I don’t want to go to New York.’” Other reactions about America were qualitatively different. Faith (from Jamaica) remembers being excited when thinking about the United States:

...as a child, wanting to come here (America), watching the television gives you this grand picture of everything being nice. You know, I used to watch the ‘Brady Bunch’ and ‘The Partridge Family’ and everything looked so nice and beautiful. Of course you wanted to be here and live that dream. You know, you’re thinking everything is just beautiful. (Faith, Jamaica)

The media and images of America transmitted to other countries also made an impression on Azalia:

...America was Hollywood, to me, I rented movies in Israel...to me, America always seemed like this land of good and plenty and everyone was rich and everyone seemed like movie stars.

As these quotes illustrate, for several women there was a bit of enticement and excitement about the thought of starting over, having a new life in a new place that appeared to be a land of opportunity. Other women (44%) stated that their motivations to leave were more child or career driven, such as being able to provide a better education for their children in the United States.

Although the adjustment and acculturation process was different for each woman, they did have some common experiences as well. To go along with her dislike of being in the U.S., Beatriz did not have an easy time adjusting to “the American way:”

You know those ‘I Love NY’ pins? I scratched an ‘X’ on the heart and I used to walk around with that. My grandmother used to say, ‘You

ungrateful little girl, you're in the capitol of the world, you should be happy.' I was like, 'Blah, I hate New York.'" (Beatriz, Bolivia)

Beatriz did not feel that America was the right place for her then and currently identifies as low acculturation. Other women in the study had difficult experiences surrounding language barriers, being denied social services, and experiencing racism upon arrival in the United States. These experiences were especially difficult for the women, as they simply did not expect to be treated in this way; their positive perceptions of America (in particular, the ones who had idealized the U.S.) were incorrect.

The importance of social support.

Several mothers in this study (44%) emphasized that creating a strong social network in the United States helped greatly in the acculturation process. Upon arrival to America, Beatriz did not feel comfortable speaking English because her father had taught her proper English as opposed to slang. However, she was able to find a comfortable place in terms of acculturation for herself in the U.S.:

It's all ghetto or whatever, mixed with Spanish...I'll never forget, they were asking me if I wanted something and I didn't understand it because they asked me with slang. They asked, "What did you just get off the boat?" and I said, "As a matter of fact, yes, about two weeks ago I got off the boat"...I had to bring my passport to the classroom to show them. I had no idea what they were talking about and they had to teach me. I commissioned a Jamaican girl and a Puerto Rican guy, they became my friends and they taught me slang.

All it takes is a few friends to change a negative situation. This poignant example shows how immigrants try to prepare themselves for the transition but are unable to predict every situation. Hope also found that a community of other African and West Indian immigrants took her in and provided social support in order to help her adjust:

When we came here, we find the same church, like the church back home and the church members, especially the wife of the pastor; she was so interested to come close to me, to help the girls and myself. So I opened my door, to give myself to the church, to be active in all the activities of the church.

Based on the above quotes, social support was a factor that lead to an easier transition to America. In the sample, 55% of mothers reported seeking out some form of social support during their transition to America. Loneliness and feelings of isolation only added to acculturative stress (Berry, 1997).

Sibling Roles.

Typically, an individual does not immigrate completely alone. She might have family already living in the culture of destination, or travel with other family members. The women in the current study had a number of different situations that provided for interesting family dynamics, in particular between siblings. For example, Azalia's family was close while she and her sister were growing up. Upon immigration to America, Azalia adopted popular U.S. culture as her own while her sister clung to traditional Jewish values in order to cope with acculturative stress. Azalia reported a strong, positive relationship with each of her daughters and that her sister does not have a loving relationship with her own children who have rejected orthodox ways.

Azalia is Jewish; one aspect of her extended family life that affected her is her younger sister's choice to become orthodox Jewish and raise her children that way:

This splitting of siblings into extremes of acculturation, one integrated and the other marginalized, is common among immigrant families (Pyke, 2005). Beatriz (Bolivia) also

felt this way about her siblings when her family immigrated to the U.S. She took a stance of marginalization and refused to accept mainstream American values. Her brother, on the other hand, integrated into the United States quickly and refused to speak Spanish at home.

Current thoughts about being American.

When thinking about the overall idea of America the mothers in this sample had interesting and surprising responses. Most women (55%) viewed immigrating as a chance to start a new chapter in their lives and rationalized that the United States is where they would be living for the time being, “You know, I’m not gearing up to go anywhere right now, so this is I guess, is home” (Grace, Bermuda). Grace is an example of one of the mothers who was rather contradictory in that she said the above quote but later in her interview did not consider herself American at all.

The perceptions of “being American” varied among interviews. Within the sample, 66% of the women reported being happy living in the United States and had a sense of pride in being an American. For example, Hope (Namibia) discussed the opportunities available to US citizens, “...it’s opportunity because the moment when you come from America, this is an open door for you. You can become an accountant. You can become a teacher. There’s opportunity.” Grace (Bermuda) also spoke about the concept of pride of country, “...having a sense of all that gives you a sense of pride for the country itself. So I guess that’s what being an American is. I don’t know, I’m not American. I don’t consider myself American.” The particularly interesting connection between these two quotes is that both Grace and Hope also expressed feelings of ambivalence and frustration in relation to being American. Perhaps both women felt

obligated to answer more stereotypically about being American. Conversely, Faith had equally patriotic statements to provide:

To be American, to be true to your country, to uphold the ideals of the country, to support, to defend, to be proud to be here, and I don't want to seem corny, but to also think well of your fellow Americans...It's a grand opportunity to come here from another country, to be here and be called American...It's not something I take lightly, I'm very grateful to be here...people from other countries, foreigners, immigrants have a lot to fight for, to achieve the American Dream. (Faith, Jamaica)

The appreciative tone of Faith's belief in American values challenges individuals with anti-immigrant sentiments who rally for immigrants to be kicked out of the country. These women, for the most part, want to be in the United States and want to be civically engaged, active members of their communities.

Traditional parenting beliefs accommodate cultural ideals: Research questions

2 & 3.

The second question this research hoped to address is whether or not immigrant mothers thought about their parenting similarly across cultures as an "immigrant mother experience." Previously, the concept of a 'hybridized' set of immigrant-U.S. parenting beliefs was discussed; a number of emergent themes related back to this idea. Quite a few women (55%) discussed the importance of instilling a strong sense of moral values in their children in order to prevent any negative issues from occurring. The children of these immigrants were expected to uphold strong moral values and the mothers lived by these rules as well:

To be a good mother, you need to have a good heart; you need to have love; you need to have sympathy and self-control and to care about their needs. Sometime it's not easy because you see something that you don't like, but you need to know how to overcome it and make sure your children have a strong moral identity. And through that, you'll know how to make it to be a good mother. (Hope, Namibia)

The above quote emphasizes that there are qualities that make a ‘good mother,’ suggesting that there is conversely the possibility of being a bad mother. In addition, Hope asserts that a good mother not only instills strong moral values in her children but she also must live by them herself. A third of the women commented on a similar theme—the importance of living by rules you espouse. Interestingly, American mothers were often described as hypocritical in that they do not parent and act consistently. For example, Beatriz (Bolivia) believed that it was hypocritical for parents to be so “connected” with electronic devices (e.g., iPod, Blackberry, etc.) and then obligated to moderate or take away their children’s devices when they misbehaved. She believed it was important to lead by example and in that case, practice limited electronic use.

Hybridized discipline styles.

Women in the current sample demonstrated a unique trend when discussing the discipline of their adolescents. The majority of mothers (66%) emphasized that they are a ‘parent first and a friend later.’ In other words, being a mother is the role they take on more than someone to just come to for advice or to ‘hang out’ with, as they perceived American parents to be:

I told my children at home, I’m like, “I’m your friend, but I’m your mother first.” And as long as you respect me, we have no problem. The respect at home is paramount. Of course they test the waters, of course they do. But they know what you like and what you don’t like, you know, and those things are established. So you don’t have much of a problem when those things are established. They know the boundaries and they know what the outcomes are if you overstep those boundaries. (Faith, Jamaica)

The idea of strict discipline was discussed in light of what immigrant mothers thought about American parents. Most mothers were rather critical of American mothers,

commenting that they were too relaxed with their children and discipline tactics, suggesting that American parenting beliefs were different than their own.

Almost all mothers (88%) in this study expressed a number of concerns that the way in which they grew up was not the way that they wanted to think about parenting. The authoritarian, strict disciplinary style that their parents used was moderately traumatizing for these women. The justifications provided by the participants for not using corporal punishment also spoke to this ‘hybridized’ immigrant parenting that emerged:

I was brought up by hands, corporal punishment, we used to get beat. I didn’t like it as a child, so I made an effort, conscious effort, not to use that method. I like to talk so I use my voice a lot. So I use vocal intimidation so they know when I talk with them, so that they know when I’m low, I’m angry. They know when it’s low that it’s deadly tone. It means I’m angry, not shrieking and screaming. And as I said, I talk a lot, so I ask myself and I use examples, “if this was done to you, how would you...and then the consequences come after, do you understand?”
(Chyrah, Jamaica)

This trend towards a more communication-based discipline style indicates an accommodation of authoritative parenting attitudes, a “child-centered” parenting style common to the United States. This is an illustration of a modern immigrant mother who takes the beliefs from their culture of origin, thinks about what she liked or disliked, and integrates a modified set of beliefs into their new developmental niche.

Taking and rejecting bits and pieces of American Parenting.

A large percentage of mothers (55%) noted that there has been American influence in their parenting beliefs, specifically their spiritual beliefs and discipline style. For example, Eden felt as if she looked at the context of the situation more on a case-by-case basis since arriving in the United States:

... my parenting is based on my religious culture or my relationship with God and I think that that changes constantly over a period of time, because with each child, with each situation of what's going on, of course there's a backdrop. (Eden, Jamaica)

In a more direct manner, she discussed how American parenting is different than parenting in Jamaica:

So American parenting does influence how I rear my children because I have to take the time in a certain way, like for example, you're not supposed to leave them home alone. In Jamaica you can leave your children home alone as long as you have a responsible neighbor or a responsible kid in the house, its fine. Nobody will ever bother you and we don't get in trouble for that.

In the above quote Eden indirectly addressed Bronfenbrenner's (1986) macrosystem in terms of the policies applied to citizens of the US and Jamaica. She mentions the social services and differences between the two countries. Frustration is expressed in relation to the stricter U.S. policy of not leaving your children home alone.

When asked about perceptions of American parents, mothers provided answers that were rather critical. A number of participants spoke of U.S. parents in a removed, distant manner, as if they were creatures at a zoo:

Silly, kind of silly. Kind of silly. They allow their children to, um, too much to do. You know, I think they're not perfect, it's a little wishy-washy. 'Cause I work with American parent, you see a scenario and I just sat on the porch and went, "Oh, let me at that child! Just give me a minute! Just give me a minute!" (Laughs.) You understand? (Chyrah, Jamaica)

Chyrah implies that she might discipline the child in a much harsher way than the parents she was watching in the above situation. However, this quote is also in light of the emergent sub-theme of the mothers' active choice to not hit their children. Chyrah does affirm in her statement that the way she would handle the situation would be more effective than an American mother.

Emergent Themes Based on Acculturation Level.

The nine women in this study were not broken down into Berry's four acculturation groups, as there was such a small sample. However, they were split into 'high' and 'low' acculturation levels based primarily on self-report but also the AMAS-ZAB (see Table 4). This quantitative measure had three sub-scores (language, identity, and culture) that comprised a larger "acculturation score." The overall score was looked at individually in comparison to each woman's self-report acculturation score and helped to influence the final decision of placing women into high or low acculturation groups. There were five women who were high acculturated (Azalia, Chyrah, Durene, Eden, and Ishani) and four who were low acculturated (Beatriz, Faith, Grace, and Hope). It is interesting to note that, based on acculturation levels (see Table 4), there is a distinct split on the six women from the same church. Chyrah, Durene, and Eden are high acculturation while Faith, Grace, and Hope identified as low acculturation. The rules and expectations immigrant mothers had for their children differed greatly according to acculturation level. Overall, the women wanted to shape young people who had a strong idea of where they came from and knew where they wanted to go in terms of creating an identity in the United States.

Caribbean parenting: A distinct parenting culture.

Within the subset of mothers that were recruited from the same church, there were five who were from the West Indies (either Jamaica or Bermuda). They spoke of “Caribbean parenting” as being different. Some of these women were high acculturation and others were low acculturation; interestingly, they all spoke of a generalized idea of “Caribbean parenting.” The mothers referred to themselves as Caribbean or Jamaican parents as opposed to “parents” or “American parents.” A prominent theme that emerged was that both high and low acculturation Caribbean mothers (88%) expressed a need to respect their elders (see Table 4), “...respect for us is big, um, I don’t know of a Caribbean child that will use a swear word to their parent and still be alive” (Durene, Jamaica, high acculturation). In comparison, a low acculturation, non-Caribbean mother also mentioned respect, “Respect, respect. They have to respect their elders, they have to respect me...respect my husband...they have to respect him and they also have to be humble, not egocentric” (Beatriz, Bolivia, low acculturation). Women from traditional Caribbean backgrounds had similarities to other non-Caribbean mothers in the sample.

Wearing a different hat at home and elsewhere: Navigating cultures.

Upon examination of high and low self-report of acculturation, mothers varied in their responses. One explanation for a push for more traditional values from their culture of origin is the importance for them of the public image of their children. Chyrah, a high acculturation mother, explains this idea well:

I used to work as a nanny and had to take a train to get down to the city. I took my baby with me and put her in a school nearby. On the number one train which goes on the upper west side, I felt I could be relaxed with my daughter. White people would offer us a seat. It was surprising to me that they thought I needed to rest. On the number two train which goes up to the Bronx, I was with my people (other Caribbean immigrants). I felt that I

had to keep a tight leash on her and the whole train was watching me to see if I disciplined her enough. (Chyrah, Jamaica)

The high acculturation mothers felt the need to assimilate their children in every way possible into American culture. In contrast, low acculturation mothers did not emphasize outward images as much but focused more on inward images and continuation of culture within the family system. For example, Hope spoke about children's behavior at home:

I'm still fighting about that, the sharing. In America, young children, I don't know where they are getting this culture, maybe in the book, a child can sit here and eat without to share his food with his sister or his brother. (Hope, Namibia, low acculturation)

This immigrant mother had a hard time dealing with her children adopting a set of United States values and customs. During the interview she was particularly saddened by her son's behaviors that he copied from his American friends. Hope worried very much that upon returning to Namibia, her children would be ostracized by their peers and family because they were acting so "American." Overall, the mothers who were low acculturated cared less about how their children were perceived based on their ethnicity. Those women were more concerned that the children understood their heritage.

Mothers who identified as high acculturation (55% of the total sample) noticed that their parenting was different than traditional parenting beliefs from their culture of origin. Ishani discussed a time in which she traveled back to southern India, her home region, and how her parenting style was criticized:

Even when we go back now (to India), it's not that she (a relative) tells you that you need to do something but it's more like, 'Oh, she needs to do this.' Or 'Oh is she wearing that?' There is a lot more so my parenting

does change even in my short time there. (Ishani, India. High acculturation)

Despite feeling as if she was Americanized in her beliefs and freedoms that she allowed her daughter to take, Ishani felt as though she had to act more like an “Indian mother” when in her culture of origin (see Table 4). Hence, her parenting style changed upon return to her culture of origin and made her think about how she has changed since arriving in the United States.

Quantitative Results as a Function of Themes and Acculturation.

In an analysis of the individual raw scores of the quantitative measures in relation to the emergent qualitative themes, a number of similarities and differences arose among the mothers. In reference to Table 2, descriptive statistics illuminate the sample and illustrate just how these women came to be the people they are now. For example, the average age of the participants was 45.78 years, thus representing a group of people who were older mothers and had much more experience than a young mother just starting out. This statistic helps to explain why most mothers had strong, confident statements in reference to their parenting beliefs and high parenting self efficacy scores—they simply had more time, experience, and practice.

During the ‘Immigrant Mother Interview’ (see Appendix A), women were asked whether or not they felt that they parented like an American parent. Scores ranged from 1 “American parent” to 7 “Not like an American parent at all.” The mean score of this response was 4.67, implying that most women veered toward a perception that they did not hold parenting beliefs similar to other American parents. Most women stated that they were somewhere in the middle—not distinctly immigrant but not even close to American

mothers. For example, Faith (Jamaica) stated, “I would say somewhere in the middle, about five. I take the best from both worlds.” Faith’s statement affirms the idea of a mother’s developmental niche or parental ethnotheories changing based on their immigration to the United States.

This idea of expressing autonomy in the form of change may reflect back on the idea of parental conflict and the lack thereof. Mothers (66%) reported low parental stress in their interviews and that conflict with their adolescent was not a major part of the daily routine. Beatriz (Bolivia) provided a good example of this concept:

I: It doesn’t sounds like you guys have a lot of conflict.

B: With my kids?

I: Yeah.

B: No, no way.

Other mothers mentioned that they had more of a negotiation strategy with their children or that some adolescents take the situation into their own hands:

...she (Ivari) went to a program for Asian girls this summer and she came out and expressed that “Oh you won’t let me wear this because you don’t understand why this is popular in the US” or “You won’t let me do this because you don’t think it’s proper.” I don’t know, she had never expressed it earlier or afterwards. So I guess she understands it at some latent level, but never expressed it. Yeah there is a latent thing, a feeling she has that if it was not for this group of parents then maybe she would wear something shorter. (Ishani, India)

It is unclear whether or not a situation like Ishani’s is better than constant conflict or no room for conflict at all. However, based on her moderately low parenting stress score (68), this strategy works for this family. Perhaps this finding of low parent-adolescent conflict is due to the fact that these women understood clearly that young people want to

create change and be different from their parents, as they did themselves by leaving their culture of origin.

In a final examination of all three pieces of the “immigrant mother puzzle,” it is important to look at the qualitative themes in relation to both acculturation level and the raw score results. One interesting combination of the three analyses is an assessment of the sub-theme where immigrant mothers commented that American parents were just “silly.” There were four mothers (44%) in the sample who mentioned this perception. Within this group, three women were high acculturation and all of them were from the church subset, therefore Caribbean parents. What else may have caused the mothers to discuss American mothers in a particularly critical manner? Some commonalities displayed through the quantitative scores include that they all had similar parenting self-efficacy scores, ranging from 44 to 47. In addition, these four women had autonomy-relatedness scores that did not vary much from each other, ranging from 27 to 33 (i.e., they held relational beliefs).

Comparative Case Study: Two Mothers Represent the Acculturation Process

In order to represent the two extremes of the acculturation process and the challenges they faced while immigrating to the United States, two mothers’ stories and beliefs are focused on in depth. Due to the small sample in the current study, it was not possible to place women into the four groups of acculturation proposed by Berry (1997). Instead, participants were placed into groups of high and low acculturation status based on both the self report measure and AMAS-ZAB. Focusing on the changing developmental niches of these women, it is apparent that the acculturation process and navigating cultures has been vastly different for each of them.

Azalia (Israel, high acculturation).

Originally from Israel, Azalia has been in the United States for 50 years. She represents someone who is high acculturated. Azalia holds primarily American values, raised all five of her daughters here, and identifies as American. She is a single mother who is separated from her husband due to his long-term substance abuse problem. Azalia is highly educated, holds a masters degree in education, and has been teaching at the same elementary school for over thirty years. She has an excellent command of the English language with a slight Yiddish accent when she speaks. It is hard to detect she had emigrated from another country and that English is not her first language. Adjusting to the United States was a difficult time in her life:

I found that kids would make fun of my attempts at pronouncing words in English. I was really in the dark in the class. I still remember I was in the dark about what was going on, other than math. And I remember telling my parents that I was very unhappy here and I wanted to go back to Israel. And that if they don't take me back, I'll run away and go back. As time went on, my father started going to school at night to learn English, and he would come with these books and tapes, you know, and we'd listen together, and little by little, several girls started to befriend me.

Time (in years) was a large factor in Azalia's acculturation into the United States. Change over time created a new developmental niche for her, a new identity.

Due to the amount of time spent in the United States, Azalia also adopted distinctly American parenting beliefs. She mentioned her Jewish or Israeli heritage more when we spoke about her immigration experience but her parenting was more child-focused than culture-focused in comparison to Hope, who spoke at length of her African heritage in relation to how she thought about parenting. Azalia gave her children a good deal of freedom to choose and make decisions, providing autonomy:

I was not a strict parent. Like I said, my parameters were when it came to safety. That's where I was strict, not when it came to what you want to eat and don't want to eat...I felt it was very important to have friends and I felt that their social life was more important to me than their academic life. Family, respect, and a successful career were goals and rules that other mothers (including Hope) emphasized much more than Azalia.

Hope (Namibia, low acculturation).

I have never met a woman quite like Hope before. Upon arrival into her home, she explained to me that entering her house was like entering Africa. She told me, "Welcome home, Heather, welcome home" as her daughter served me tea with a full china service. At the end of the interview she prayed for me that I would finish my thesis and gave me a pair of water buffalo earrings made in Africa. It was an emotional interview in which she discussed her brief time in the United States (five years), her difficulty with the language (it was difficult to understand her at times), and her desire to go back to Namibia:

I want to go back home because Africa need me. America, it got many, many people. It got a lot of higher, higher...many people in America are well educated and what I saw, just by seeing you can learn and I saw something that I need to go back home and help my people. And there was no feeling in that say I want to stay here, maybe tomorrow, maybe my daughter, but myself if somebody tell me to go home, I'm ready to go.

Her husband's diplomat contract will run out in about a year or so, and she looks forward to starting her life again in Africa. Hope's parenting beliefs were particularly traditional and collectivistic. She wanted her children to know that they were not American and that soon they would be returning to a place that accepted them more; in order to make this

clear to her children she told them, “When you are outside, you are in America. But when you are in my house, you are in Africa.”

Looking at the two women side by side (see Table 1), they are both strong mothers who are highly confident in their parenting skills as demonstrated by their scores on the parenting self efficacy measure (Azalia=46, Hope=42). However, they differed greatly based on parenting stress. Azalia scored an 83 and Hope a 52; this indicates that Hope was experiencing rather high levels of parenting stress. Both women had the same number of children, held the same levels of education, but their years in the US were vast in numerical difference (50 compared to five).

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to illuminate the lives of immigrant mothers with children who were born in the United States. The main contribution of this study to the greater body of psychology was that it integrated three areas of research (immigration, parenting, and culture) that had not previously been studied in conjunction with each other. To examine cultural differences and similarities in mothers’ parental ethnotheories, nine women were interviewed about their life experiences in terms of immigration within the context of parenting. These women provided rich descriptions of the ways they think about parenting, described how their parenting beliefs have changed since their arrival to the United States, and illustrated the contemporary immigration movement that is highly understudied in a social context. This work extends the acculturation theory posed by Berry (1997) by incorporating the developmental niche theory (Super & Harkness, 1996; 2003) and ecological model theorized by Bronfenbrenner (1986). These theories help to explain how parenting beliefs change as a function of life in the United States.

In order to look deeper into the issues of parenting and immigration, a mixed-methods approach was taken. The interview component was heavily weighted in the final analysis due to the detailed responses that were provided but the quantitative results enhanced the study as well. The results will first be summarized in light of the guiding research questions and then will be connected to the body of theoretical literature. Strengths and weaknesses of this paper will be considered and finally directions for future research will be recommended.

Describing An Experience Like No Other: Research Question 1

There were several questions that the present study was interested in exploring based on maternal parenting beliefs of immigrant women. First, the concept of how immigrant mothers think about their experience immigrating to the United States and their subsequent acculturation experience. Mothers thought about their powerful experiences of leaving their homeland in terms of time. In addition to the number of years they have been in the U.S. and how old they were when they immigrated, they talked about how old their children were over the course of their acculturation experience (e.g., “Ivari was ten years old when I became a citizen”).

This manner of describing an experience in the context of others is particularly important as it related to motherhood; a large component of becoming a parent has to do with sacrifice and changing your lifestyle. In particular, this has been noted in Latina cultures (i.e., “martyr mothers”). Based on both the emergent themes and quantitative results, the mothers often thought about their experience based on the lives of their children as well; their ages were the timeline stepping-stones that structured the stories. For these women (and countless other immigrants who did not participate in this study),

the possibility of having children was the reason coming to the United States was so important.

Although this study was steeped in the acculturation literature primarily posed by Berry (1997), it was surprising just how much the acculturation process framed the stories. The women in this study spoke about their immigration experience in light of their communities, both in their culture of origin and destination. As Rogoff (2003) posited, people develop as active participants in their cultural communities. Just as Hope spoke about other African immigrants welcoming her to America, or Azalia described being excited when other little girls began to befriend her, these women began to have a positive experience adjusting to the United States based, in part, by the kindness of others in their community.

In reference to Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Model (1986), this peer-group formation is an example from the mesosystem. The social networks of immigrants have been shown to be a major factor in acculturation literature; Phinney, Horenczyck, Liebkind, and Vedder (2001) found that:

“...it is typically not the parents most willing to assimilate—in the sense of ‘subtracting’ from their cultural background—who seem to motivate their children effectively, but those most inclined to reaffirm their cultural heritage within ethnic neighborhoods and communities” (p.503).

Keeping a strong cultural heritage while simultaneously forming new friendships and ethnic alliances is a direct predictor of acculturation success (Berry, 1997). These findings support previous evidence from both theoretical models.

Mothering Across Borders: Research Question 2

Second, I investigated how mothers describe their parenting in comparison to other women in their native culture. This question related directly to the parental ethnotheories posed by Super and Harkness (1996), in particular that when a niche changes, parental ethnotheories will also change. The mothers in this study all had stories that were similar concerning their rethinking of how they thought about parenting. For example, the Caribbean women from the same church all spoke about the active choice of not to hit their children. They adapted based on the liberal American, Western styles of discipline; additionally, they did not prefer the way they were treated as young girls by their parents while growing up and took that into account.

Overall, the women asserted that they took the best of both worlds. Based on the results of this study, these immigrant mothers were hyper-observant of their surroundings and decide what cultural pieces they want to take from their culture of destination and keep from their culture of origin. In other words, their parental ethnotheories change at least in part due to immigration and from prior images of what it means to be American they saw when growing up. Additionally, their developmental niche changed as well; although the cultural values are brought along with individuals from their culture of origin they change and accommodate new ideas during the acculturation process.

Immigrant Parenting as Compared to U.S. Parenting: Research Question 3

Bronfenbrenner's (1986) Ecological Model contributed significantly in understanding and in support of Research Question 3 of comparison between cultures; when a macrosystem experiences changes, microsystem-level changes can also change

(i.e., identity and opinion within an individual). In thinking about what context an immigrant mother exists within her culture of destination, it is important to start at the individual, micro level. “For the immigrant, identity negotiation involves a process of defining the self, in singular or more often multiple terms, and of finding environments that support and foster those self definitions” (Deaux, 2006, p.648). This micro level explanation and analysis helps to provide context and setting for the lives of immigrants in the United States.

Based on the interviews conducted, immigrant parenting is thought about in a number of ways that is qualitatively different than an “American mother” may think about it. Based on the results of the current study, the manner in which immigrant mothers instilled their cultural beliefs and ethnotheories varied. The mothers navigated their “multiple worlds” at a level that was nested in the macrosystem; however, these rules and beliefs were actualized throughout the other systems as well. For example, Hope (Namibia) told her children that when they were at home in her house, they were “in Africa” to emphasize that their family was still participants in the African cultural community. Grace (Bermuda) also told her children a similar rule, “When they leave their private schools on the upper east side at the end of the day, they leave their American ideas there on 92nd street. At home, they are Caribbean children.”

This awareness of their adolescent children being different than others facilitated a systematic guiding process; the mothers helped the children navigate mainstream U.S. culture while they simultaneously learned the ropes of America themselves. Not only were the mothers working on their own ideas about being a U.S. citizen, they assisted their children in doing so as well. In reference to Bronfenbrenner’s (1986) ecological

model, this concept lies in the vast differences between the macro and micro levels. Immigrant mothers are acutely aware of the parenting beliefs American mothers hold; they commented on these noticeable differences during the interviews. In acknowledging these differences, they integrated and accommodated the American ideas that they liked into their own parenting, as Faith (Jamaica) mentioned when she stated she “took the best of both worlds.”

I was also interested in immigrant mother’s thoughts on mainstream United States culture. In order to capture these perceptions and attitudes, I asked women how they felt about American parents in comparison to themselves. I had expectations that the women would have a soured view of America once living in the US for an extended period of time. However, these sentiments were not the case and most women claimed to be very happy and satisfied with their lives in the United States. Perhaps this perspective that immigrants would admit to being unhappy about immigrating to a researcher they just met should have been probed more.

Strengths and Weaknesses of the Current Study

My findings have several implications for studies of immigrant mothers’ development in their culture of destination, particularly with regard to methodology. The use of open-ended response is a strength of the present study. Open-ended responses allowed for the capture of cultural aspects of the women’s experiences. However, the present study is only a preliminary step and an exploratory investigation of immigrant mother parenting beliefs. Much work remains to be done before a thorough understanding of the area is possible. There has been little research in the field of immigration that even broaches the population of undocumented immigrants in the

United States. Hopefully there will be an increase of research that attempt to break the silence of undocumented people with the use of non-intimidating open ended response interviews, especially in light of recent immigration policy changes. Studying the identity of immigrants is important if we plan on moving forward into the 21st century as a unified country.

In terms of weaknesses in the current study, the prominent issue is that the sample size small. From this study we cannot make any generalizations of this population or immigrant parents at large. It was difficult to find participants who qualified for this study and were willing to participate. I came into contact with a number of women who said they would be willing to participate and then mysteriously dropped out or did not contact me again, therefore causing a selection effect. I believe these actions have to do with the nature of the study in terms of immigration; people are cautious to talk about immigration, even if they do hold legal status. This issue raises questions about the degree to which a particular “type” of woman volunteered to participate.

The women in this study ranged in age, number of years in the United States, and other demographic variables. This wide range relates back to the difficulty in obtaining a large sample; I had to use whoever qualified and was willing to meet with me. These variations affected the results of the study, especially in terms of acculturation as that can vary directly with the number of years in the culture of destination (Berry, 1997). The fifty-year range of the women living in the U.S. caused this sample to have a wide range of experiences concerning the immigration process. If this study were to be replicated I would take greater efforts in recruiting women who have been in the United States for a shorter period of time.

Directions for Future Research

In conceptualizing about where the body of immigrant parenting research should go from here, it is important to think in terms of the family unit as a whole (or lack thereof). One area of research that has been understudied is the role of immigrant fathers, specifically in relation to parenting beliefs of older children or adolescents. During the course of this study I was frequently asked why I did not want to interview immigrant fathers. In response, I felt it was important to first examine the mothers alone, then in the future look into the issues surrounding fathers, and eventually study mother-father dyads.

One surprising ancillary theme that emerged surrounded the “acculturation roles” that each sibling took on if a family immigrated to the U.S. as a unit. Pyke (2005) identified siblings within Asian immigrant families who adopted culturally deficient roles, termed *generational deserters*, but also those who were the cultural buffers of their parents. These roles are another way immigrants cope with acculturation stressors and navigate the multiple worlds in their culture of destination.

Another line of research that needs to be further looked into is the concept of “transnational mothering.” A number of the mothers in this study, especially the ones from Jamaica, were at some point separated from their children in that they were living in the U.S. and their children were living with relatives in Jamaica. These women would frequently work “off the books” in the childcare field while their own children were being parented by relatives abroad. Transnational mothering raises questions about parenting across countries; what is the experience like for a woman who does not see her children on a regular basis by forced economic decisions? In light of modern

technologies such as Skype, has transnational mothering become easier and more accessible for parents and children?

Additionally, the importance of understanding acculturation as it relates to families, is evident in work that examines how immigrants negotiate different cultural contexts. Sometimes individuals must learn when to express some aspect of their learned behaviors and suppress others in order to succeed in a society. One theory that explains these actions well is the Multiple Worlds model (Phelan, Davidson & Cao, 1991; Cooper & Denner, 1998; www.bridgingworlds.org). This theory was originally applied to:

...youth in diverse societies who are challenged as they attempt to move across their multiple worlds, which are defined in terms of the cultural knowledge and behavior found within the boundaries of students' particular families, peer groups, and schools...Each world contains values and beliefs, expectations, actions, and emotional responses familiar to insiders (Cooper & Denner, 1998, p.575).

The Multiple Worlds theory has been a useful model for understanding immigrant youth and has been reliably tested on school-aged children, adolescents and emerging adults from diverse backgrounds (Cooper & Denner, 1998). In previous research studying the multiple worlds of immigrant children (Phelan et al., 1991), subjects were categorized into four prototypic patterns of acculturation. These groups included young people who: a) crossed borders smoothly, b) kept their worlds separate but navigated smoothly, c) found cultural border-crossing difficult, and d) could not navigate multiple worlds at all, but hoped to be able to some day (Phelan et al., 1991).

This theoretical framework has not been extended to mothers even though it seems logical that parents are confronted with similar acculturation decisions about if,

how, and when to navigate multiple worlds in a new culture. Just as children report feeling that they are expected to act differently at home, school, and other places, it is likely that mothers have similar experiences. A mother, for example, may be the head of her household and dictate the rules at home (rules that are consistent with her culture of origin), while she must also interact with other parents, teachers, coworkers, and administrators who presumably have different parenting beliefs and practices. Thus, one important area of research requires examination of how mothers think about their parenting in the context of a diverse culture; an application of this model should be done in future studies regarding parenting and culture.

Conclusions and Implications

One question that arose during the current study surrounds the concept of acculturation and whether researchers rely on acculturation too much. It has been shown by Berry (1989; 1997) that blending cultures is the most productive and resilient acculturation strategy and that perhaps “acting American” is not as important as the general public emphasizes for immigrants. There have been a number of criticisms in contemporary immigration research that acculturation is weighed too heavily in the equation of integration “success” (e.g., Chirkov, 2009). In relation to applications of the results of the current study, it is important to ask what American mothers can do to become more integrated into immigrant culture. In other words, how can we as U.S. citizens accommodate to the needs of immigrants instead of expecting immigrants to do so for us? One answer is that different cultures bring different strengths to the parenting arena that American mothers can learn from as well. Perhaps mothers in the United States

should learn more about traditional parenting beliefs and discipline styles as the Caribbean mothers emphasized.

How should we think about policy issues in terms of acculturation and immigration? It is of the utmost importance that we as a nation move forward together on the topic of immigration. I believe that this will start at the macrosystem level, in reference to Bronfenbrenner's (1986) ecological model. For example, through social services in upstate New York, women are provided cribs in their homes for free as policy states that it is a form of abuse for children sleep with their parents. Rather than use the crib for a sleeping child, however, many of the immigrant homes that were given cribs used them as storage space, thinking that it was a ridiculous idea for babies to sleep by themselves—how would a mother know if her child needed something in the middle of the night?

In conclusion, I have learned from this mixed-methods study that to be an immigrant mother means different things for different people. Although there are commonalities between the women in this study that we can infer from, the qualitative research process has shown that each of the women in this study has a unique and individual voice that had previously been silenced. Together, they represent immigrant women from six different countries that came to the United States for different reasons but all with the overarching goal of creating a better life for their children than they had. These immigrant women are all part of a group who are inadvertently changing the world around them to welcome globalization; they travel back and forth to their country of origin, they cook the traditional food of their culture some days and give their children pizza the next, and they are raising children in a way that has never been done before.

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Table 1.
Demographic Information and Raw Scores of Questionnaire Data

<i>Participant Pseudonym</i>	<i>Adolescent Pseudonym</i>	<i>Country of Origin</i>	<i># of Years in Us</i>	<i>Raw Acculturation Score</i>	<i>Raw Parenting Self Efficacy Score</i>	<i>Raw Autonomy-Relatedness Score</i>
Azalia	Ana	Israel	50	132	46	27
Beatriz	Ben	Bolivia	20	96	44	30
Chyrah	China	Jamaica	23	88	45	27
Durene	Dahlia	Jamaica	22	86	47	30
Eden	Eric	Jamaica	18	107	46	33
Faith	Frank	Jamaica	14	120	48	30
Grace	Gerard	Bermuda	22	94	44	29
Hope	Hannah	Namibia	5	75	42	28
Ishani	Ivari	India	9	107	38	30

Table 2.
Demographic Variables & Descriptive Statistics

<i>Variable</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Range</i>	<i>%</i>
Age	45.78	6.57	20.00	
# Years in US	20.33	12.76	45.00	
# Children	3.33	1.50	4.00	
American Parenting Beliefs	4.67	1.66	6.00	
Perceived Acculturation	4.67	2.00	6.00	
Identity Subscore	23.78	6.67	19.00	
Language Subscore	48.22	5.36	13.00	
Culture Subscore	28.56	7.81	26.00	
Parenting Self Efficacy	44.44	3.00	10.00	
Autonomy-Relatedness	29.33	1.87	6.00	
Parenting Stress	74.00	9.81	34.00	
Marital Status (married)				77.80
Family Communication				100.00
Communication occurrence (Once a week or more)				55.50
Education				
HS diploma/GED				33.30
Bachelor's degree				33.30
Graduate				33.30
Employed				55.60

Table 3.
Transitional, Acculturative & Parenting Belief Themes in Immigrant Mother's Experiences

<i>Theme</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Example</i>
Transitional			
Unintended permanent stay	6	66%	I told my husband, if he doesn't take me somewhere else, I will leave him. He promised to take me. I have tried, since I came here, to get out of here. I have to get out! [Laughs.] (Beatriz)
Forced immigration by family	3	33%	I remember telling my parents that I was very unhappy here and I wanted to go back to Israel. And that if they don't take my back, I'll run away and go back. (Azalia)
Acculturative			
America is Home	5	55%	I think I do, partially, and the reason is that my children were born here. They are Americans and I cannot deny, you know, that aspect, of their culture, and so I do consider it partially home, fairly comfortable here, I've assimilated into the culture and you know, celebrate Thanksgiving, Fourth of July, and those things. But at heart, I am still really a Jamaican. (Durene)
"American Dream"	8	88%	...having that love of country, appreciate its history, understanding its politics, its ins and outs of the system of America, I guess. (Faith)
Clear boundaries about home	4	44%	When you are outside, you are in America. But when you are in my house, you are in Africa. (Hope)
Parenting			
Parenting style changes in culture of origin	6	66%	Even when we go back now, it's not that she tells you that you need to do something but it's more like, "Oh, she needs to do this." Or "Oh is she wearing that?" There is a lot more so my parenting does change even in my short time there. (Ishani)
"Parent first, friend later"	4	44%	"I'm your friend, but I'm your mother first." And as long as you respect me, we have no problem. The respect at home is paramount. (Faith)
"Silly" U.S parents	4	44%	Silly, kind of silly. Kind of silly. They allow their children to, um, too much to do. You know, I think they're not perfect, it's a little wishy-washy. 'Cause I work with American parent, you see a scenario and I just sat on the porch and went, "Oh, let me at that child! Just give me a minute! Just give me a minute!" (Chyrah)
Emphasize Religion	7	77%	The church reinforces what you have been teaching them. It's not necessarily American or Jamaica, it's the culture of being a good person, you know, being changed by your relationship with God. (Eden)
Enforce respect for elders	5	55%	Respect, respect. They have to respect their elders, they have to respect me...respect my husband...they have to respect him and they also have to be humble, not egocentric. (Beatriz)

Note. N=9

Table 4.
Participants' Selected Emerging Themes Based on Acculturation Level and Current Demographics

Participant Pseudonym	<i>Themes Based on Acculturation Level</i>				<i>Demographics</i>	
	<i>Acculturation Level</i>	<i>Unintended permanent stay in U.S</i>	<i>Emphasis on respecting elders</i>	<i>"Silly" American parents</i>	Age	Country origin
Azalia	X		X		59	Israel
Beatriz		X		X	41	Bolivia
Chyrah	X			X	53	Jamaica
Durene	X			X	45	Jamaica
Eden	X			X	42	Jamaica
Faith		X		X	46	Jamaica
Grace		X	X		39	Bermuda
Hope		X	X		47	Namibia
Ishani	X		X		40	India
<i>Summary</i> <i>M=25.33</i>	55%	44%	55%	88%	44%	<i>M=45.78</i>

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Appendix A

Immigrant mother interview

Parenting Beliefs

1. Describe your family (number of children, husband, etc.).
2. Describe yourself as a parent/what kind of parent are you?
3. Where did you learn how to parent?
4. Describe some qualities of a good parent. Do you have all of these qualities?
5. Think of the most important rule that you have for your children.
6. What characteristics do you want your children to have?

Immigration/Acculturation

7. Tell me about your experience immigrating to the United States
 - a. Why did you immigrate to the United States?
 - b. What year did you immigrate?
8. Do you consider America “home?” Please explain.
9. How often (if at all) do you return to your country of origin? How do you feel as a parent when you are there? Does your parenting change? How so?
10. What does it mean to be an American to you?
11. How Americanized do you consider yourself? (1 is not American at all, 2 is mostly identify with country of origin, 3 is equal country of origin and American, 4 is mostly American, to very American as 5)

American Parenting v. Country of Origin Parenting

12. What do you see as the main values that parents in the United States teach their children?
13. When I say “American parent” what comes to mind?
14. What are the main values that parents in (country of origin) teach their children?
15. Do you think you parent more like mothers in the United States or in (country of origin)? (How so? What do you think is different about American parenting than how you parent?)

16. On a scale from 1-7, can you rate how much you think you parent like an “American parent? (1 stands for parenting like an American parent and 7 is you do not parent like and American parent at all)

Parenting & Conflict

17. Think of a typical argument with your child and tell me about it.

- a. How often do you disagree with your child about something? (More than once each day, once a day, once a week, a few times each month)
- b. What are arguments with your children typically about? What do you do when you disagree?

18. Can you think of any arguments with your child that revolved around culture clash? How did they end?

Appendix C

Abbreviated Multidimensional Acculturation Scale (Zea et al., 2003)

The following section contains questions about your culture of origin and your native language. By culture of origin we are referring to the culture of the country either you or your parents came from (e.g., Puerto Rico, Cuba, China). By native language we refer to the language of that country, spoken by you or your parents in that country (e.g., Spanish, Quechua, Mandarin). If you come from a multicultural family, please choose the culture you relate to the most.

Instructions: Please mark the number from the scale that best corresponds to your answer.

1	2	3	4
Strongly Disagree	Disagree Somewhat	Agree Somewhat	Strongly Agree

_____ I think of myself as being U.S. American.

_____ I feel good about being U.S. American.

_____ Being U.S. American plays an important part in my life.

_____ I feel that I am part of U.S. American culture.

_____ I have a strong sense of being U.S. American.

_____ I am proud of being U.S. American.

_____ I think of myself as being (a member of my culture of origin).

_____ I feel good about being (a member of my culture of origin).

_____ Being (a member of my culture of origin) plays an important part in my life.

_____ I feel that I am part of culture (culture of origin).

_____ I have a strong sense of being (culture of origin).

_____ I am proud of being (culture of origin).

Acc

Please answer the questions below using the following responses:

1

2

3

4

Not at all

A little

Pretty well

Extremely well

How well do you speak English:

_____ at school or work

_____ with American friends

_____ on the phone

_____ with strangers

_____ in general

How well do you understand English:

_____ on television or in movies

_____ in newspapers and magazines

_____ words in songs

_____ in general

Please answer the questions below using the following responses:

1

2

3

4

Not at all

A little

Pretty well

Extremely well

How well do you speak your native language:

- _____ with family
- _____ with friends from the same country as you
- _____ with strangers
- _____ on the phone

Acc

How well do you understand your native language:

- _____ on television or in movies
- _____ in newspapers and magazines
- _____ words in songs
- _____ in general

How well do you know:

- _____ American national heroes
- _____ popular American television shows
- _____ popular American newspapers and magazines
- _____ popular American actors and actresses
- _____ American history
- _____ American political leaders

How well do you know:

- _____ national heroes from your native culture
- _____ popular television shows in your native language
- _____ popular newspapers and magazines in your native language
- _____ popular actors and actresses from your native culture
- _____ history of your native culture

Appendix D
Parenting Self-Efficacy Scale

Parents differ in how much they think they can influence their child's behavior and interests.

How much do you think you can do:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Very Little			Some			A great deal

to get your adolescent to stay out of trouble						

to help your adolescent get good grades						

to prevent your adolescent from getting in with the wrong crowd						

to get your adolescent to associate with friends who are good for him or her						

to prevent your adolescent from doing things you do not want him or her to						
do outside of the home						

to increase your adolescent's interest in school						

to get your adolescent to resist pressure from friends to do things which you						
disapprove						

Appendix E
The Parental Stress Scale (Berry & Jones, 1995)

Please respond to the following based on the 1-5 scale below:

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Strongly Agree

_____ I am happy with my role as a parent.

_____ There is little or nothing I wouldn't do for my children if it was necessary.

_____ Caring for my children sometimes takes more time and energy than I have to give.

_____ I sometimes worry whether I am doing enough for my children.

_____ I feel close to my children.

_____ I enjoy spending time with my children.

_____ My children are an important source of affection for me.

_____ Having children gives me a more certain and optimistic view for the future.

_____ The major source of stress in my life is my children.

_____ Having children leaves little time and flexibility in my life.

_____ Having children has been a financial burden.

_____ It is difficult to balance different responsibilities because of my children.

_____ The behavior of my children is often embarrassing or stressful to me.

_____ If I had to do it over again, I might decide not to have children.

_____ I feel overwhelmed by the responsibility of being a parent.

_____ Having children has meant having too few choices and too little control over my life.

_____ I am satisfied as a parent.

_____ I find my children enjoyable.

Appendix F

Autonomy-Relatedness Socialization Measure (Keller, 2007)

Please rate the following statements based on the goals below and how much you would want your adolescent to achieve them:

1

2

3

4

5

Not at all

Completely Agree

_____ Develop self-confidence

_____ Develop competitiveness

_____ Develop a sense of self-esteem

_____ Develop independence

_____ Develop competitiveness

_____ Develop a sense of self

_____ Learn to obey elderly people

_____ Learn to obey parents

_____ Learn to care for the well-being of others

_____ Learn to cheer up others

_____ Learn to control emotions

Appendix G

Descriptive snapshots of participants

Azalia

Originally born in Hungary, Azalia's parents moved to Israel to raise her and her two siblings after the Second World War and surviving the Holocaust. Once in Israel, her father decided that there was more economic opportunity in America. In this sample Azalia represents 'second wave immigration' during the 1950's that included numerous Holocaust survivors. She is the mother of five girls, ranging in age from 14-25. She currently lives in Brooklyn, New York and is an elementary school teacher.

Beatriz

Beatriz immigrated to the United States in the 1970's with her family. Her stepfather worked for the United Nations and brought the family to New York temporarily between missions, which turned into a permanent stay. She has three children, two of whom are adolescents and one a toddler. Beatriz worked her way through college and graduate school and wants to emphasize the value of education to her children. She currently works as a graphic artist in publishing.

Chyrah

Chyrah has lived in the United States for 23 years after emigrating by choice from Jamaica. She has two daughters, one of whom works in publishing and the other is still in high school. Chyrah and her family return to Jamaica on a yearly basis to visit family who remained. She has only attained a high school diploma and is currently

unemployed. Her older daughter, age 23, works in publishing, still lives at home in the Bronx and helps the family out financially.

Durene

This confident, wise woman is also from Jamaica and has lived in the United States for 22 years. She came to the United States with her husband, also a Jamaican immigrant. They have two adolescents, a boy and a girl. Her son currently attends the University of Pennsylvania and her daughter is enrolled in an elite private school in Westchester on scholarship. Durene is employed as an office assistant at her church and her entire family is heavily involved in church activities.

Eden

The Reverend of the Christian Baptist church, Eden is a leader in her community. Chyrah, Durene, Faith, Hope, and Grace attend Eden's church. She immigrated to the United States 18 years ago and has four children, ranging in age from five to fourteen years old. She was very surprised when her interview was only 40 minutes long, compared to the other women she knew whose interviews lasted at least one hour or more. Her and her husband travel to Jamaica on a regular basis for mission trips.

Faith

This mother travels to Jamaica at least two times a year to visit family. She chose to come to the United States in order to be able to spend more time with her newborn son. Her brothers had established residency in America and they supported her financially the first few years she was in the US. She now has three sons, is married and lives in the Bronx.

Hope

Born in Bermuda, Hope has lived in the United States for 22 years. She speaks to her family abroad at least once a week and travels back to Bermuda once every two years. Hope has five children, ranging in age from one to eighteen. She is legally blind. Both her and her husband (who is from Jamaica) sang in the Brooklyn Tabernacle Choir for a number of years. She now volunteers as a choir teacher to help pay for her younger daughter's elite Manhattan private school tuition.

Grace

An Ordained Priestess in her home country of Namibia, Grace also has known the role of a leader in her previous culture of origin (similar to Eden). She worked as a radio journalist for the BBC for a number of years abroad and her husband currently works at the Angolan consulate in New York City. Her family and her are in the United States on a five year contract with her husband's employment. They plan on going back to Namibia when those five years are done. Currently, Hope and her family live in the upper class Larchmont section of the Bronx, close to Westchester County.

Ishani

Originally from Bombay, India, Ishani and her husband were both working as journalists in India when her husband decided to pursue a doctoral degree in the United States. He came to America first and she traveled one year later with her one year old daughter (now fourteen). Ishani also recently received her doctorate in sociology in 2007. Her daughter attends an alternative public high school in Queens, New York.

Appendix H

Qualitative Researcher Journal

Pre-Study Thoughts (Written October 2008)

As a researcher, I plan to take a non-intrusive stance on studying the population in question. I hope to give a voice to a group who has previously been understudied, silenced, and has not had the opportunity to emerge as a unique population. Additionally, I am a novice researcher and will be immersing myself in my subjects' lives. It is also important to note that my researcher role is that of an outsider. I will not know the subjects whom I interview, and need to gain their trust in order to hear their story. I hold somewhat of an authority role over them and hopefully they will not be uncomfortable talking with me. In qualitative research the researcher is an important tool in the method of study. Without their voice and the interview process, perhaps the nature of qualitative research would be different. Each interviewer is different and the same questions could be delivered differently; therefore, it is imperative that I understand that idea and monitor my role as a researcher and biases, especially if I work with research assistants.

I have a number of preconceived biases and judgments that I cannot discard; I am not a first generation immigrant so I will never fully understand the experience that I plan on studying. I hope to monitor and minimize bias as much as possible. As a woman, I also have pre-conceived biases if I were to interview a male participant. I plan on being non-judgmental as much as possible. If any subjects are older than me it is important not to be judgmental in the choices they made. I also hope that my own biases of being Caucasian and born in America do not make it difficult for participants to trust me.

I plan to monitor each of these biases throughout the interview, transcription, and data analysis process. During the interview I will be open-minded and non-judgmental while talking with participants. While transcribing I plan to type the interviews verbatim and to instruct my research assistant to do so as well. Finally, during the analysis process it is important to code data for all themes that emerge and to not leave anything out even if it seems contradictory to my questions.

Mid-Study Thoughts (Written October 2009).

I'm right in the middle of doing all of my data collection at the moment and it has been quite the experience. I've been traveling down to New York City to meet my participants at locations convenient to them. This has included a diner in Long Island, cafes, a church in the Bronx, and a few homes. These visits have been a large part of the study for me as well. I have enjoyed traveling to new places and seeing locations that I normally wouldn't travel to.

It has been a little harrowing to be reminded of poverty, as some of the mothers are of a lower socioeconomic status than myself. Growing up in New York City has meant that I have been exposed to all walks of life. However, I lead a relatively upper middle class lifestyle at the moment and have been removed from the daily grind of the city. Visiting with some of the women at their homes reminded me that there are places that I am not comfortable going to on my own (although I did), and that New York City is incredibly segregated but no one talks about it.

Walking into Grace's home, there are the words 'FUCK YOU' written in the stairwell. Although they have been somewhat washed off (likely from a concerned parent) they are certainly still visible. This image really affected me and I kept thinking

about what it must be like for a child to grow up in an environment like that, or to be a mother who lives in a building with those words on the wall. In terms of my role as a researcher, this was my most uncomfortable moment during my study. Her home's furnishings were drab, sparse, and unclean. I felt the presence of my 'whiteness' in Grace's home and I didn't know how to address it properly. This issue also brings up whether not an immigrant mother's struggle is related to socioeconomic status (SES). I would posit that although poverty creates more problems and stress, an immigrant family, regardless of SES has to deal with more difficulties than a United States family.

Post-Study Thoughts (Written March 2010).

Amidst a stack of transcribed interviews, SPSS outputs, and journal articles, I am trying to process all that has been the experience of completing my thesis on immigrant parenting beliefs surrounding adolescence. One thing that I have noticed is that the immigrant mother community has taken a personal interest in my work. During my presentation at the Association for Research on Mothering one woman (also an immigrant mother) commented, 'I wonder what you think about my parenting beliefs!' While presenting my poster at a conference for the Society for Research on Adolescence the majority of the people who came to look at my work were immigrant parents interested in learning more about their cohort. What does this mean?

It is evident that little work has been done on immigrant parents as a group in the field of parenting beliefs. What has my role as a researcher been to facilitate this process? In my pre-study thoughts I spoke about my biases and naïveté to the world of research and I think that did play out as I expected. There were times that I didn't know how to probe a question further without sounding condescending, judgmental, or prejudiced. I

felt that some of the mothers had a tough time letting their guard down with me. In particular, I noted how formally the Reverend, Eden, spoke with me. As soon as the interview was over she was chatting away with her friends in a totally different manner, and then asked me why her interview only lasted 40 minutes while her friends' lasted more than two hours!

It was a strange experience to be viewed as a researcher and to have that role. I'm used to being viewed as a student perhaps but having my participants sign forms and asking them to fill out questionnaires felt somewhat unnatural to me. I felt as if I was 'taking' these women's stories and there was something uncomfortable about that to me. I also had some notably emotional moments during the interviews and I didn't really know how to further allow the women to process their experiences. It was hard for me to empathize with my subjects' stories, as I have never felt as strongly 'other' as they were discussing with me. For future studies this has truly been a learning experience and I can now, after nine immigrant interviews, say that I feel more comfortable and confident in my researcher role.