Dynamics of Mothers' Goals for Children in Ethnically Diverse Populations across the First Three Years of Life

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Abstract

Parents' socialization goals are important for cultural transmission across generations, but whether such goals vary by ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds and change over children's first years of life remains unexamined. In Study 1, African-American, Dominican immigrant, and Mexican immigrant mothers (N = 300) reported on the qualities deemed as desirable or undesirable when children were aged 1 month, 14 months, and 2 years. Mothers spontaneously referred to a common set of qualities, including achievement, self-maximization, proper demeanor, and connectedness. Most mothers emphasized achievement (desirable qualities) and disapproved of improper demeanor (undesirable qualities). Desirable qualities varied by age and socioeconomic factors more than did undesirable qualities. Mothers (N = 185) were followed up in Study 2 when children were aged three years, and ranked 21 qualities using a Q-sort instrument. Ethnic differences were revealed at this more specific level, with Latina mothers being more similar in their rankings than African-American mothers.

Keywords: socialization; ethnicity; parental attitudes; early childhood

Introduction

Parents are major socialization agents in children's development (Bornstein, 2006; Collins, Maccoby, Steinberg, Hetherington, & Bornstein, 2000). Parental socialization, typically defined as parents' views and practices around raising children, may be especially important during infancy and toddlerhood, when children have not yet begun schooling and the effects of peer socialization may be less pronounced (Bornstein, 2002). Parents' socialization goals guide parents' practices, thereby influencing children's cognitive and social development indirectly (e.g., Harwood, Schoelmerich, Schulze, & Gonzalez, 1999; Rowe & Casillas, 2010).

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One specific aspect of parental views that has received much attention is that of 'socialization goals,' which refer to the qualities that parents desire their children to develop or not develop in cognitive, social, physical, or moral areas (Durgel, Leyen-decker, Yagmurlu, & Harwood, 2009; Harkness & Super, 1996; McGillicuddy-De Lisi & Sigel, 1995; Tamis-LeMonda et al., 2008). The study of parents' socialization goals offers valuable insights into community norms around child development, provides a window onto the belief systems that shape parenting practices, and forms the theoretical basis for conceptual frameworks regarding broader cultural emphases such as individualism–collectivism, independence–interdependence, or autonomy and related-ness (Kagitcibasi, 2005; Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Triandis, 1995). However, the majority of work on socialization goals is based on single-point-in-time snapshots, rendering largely static characterizations of parents' views within and across cultural communities.

We take a dynamic approach to the study of parents' socialization goals by asking whether and how parents' goals change across children's early development (birth to two years old); whether parents of different cultural communities (i.e., mothers from African-American, Dominican, and Mexican backgrounds living in the USA) endorse similar or different goals and are similar or different in their patterns of change; and whether socialization goals are influenced by the socioeconomic contexts of families.

Developmental Changes in Socialization Goals

Guided by transactional models of socialization, in which parents' beliefs and practices are influenced by their children's characteristics (e.g., Grusec & Goodnow, 1994; Sameroff, 2009), we postulated that parents' goals are dynamic and renegotiated repeatedly in response to developmental changes in children. To date, portrayals of parents' socialization goals remain relatively static. Researchers typically examine parents' socialization goals at one point in time, leaving it unclear whether and how parents may change their goals as their children develop. However, social-cognitive scholars have long noted the need for a longitudinal, dynamic approach to the study of parenting cognitions (Goodnow, 1985; Miller, 1988). Such theorists refer to parents as active 'information processors' who are receptive to new information and rationally adjust their views and practices as new information becomes available (Miller, 1988).

A primary source of information derives from parents' direct observations of and interactions with their children. As children advance in their developmental skills during the first years of life, they interact with their worlds in new ways (Karasik, Tamis-LeMonda, & Adolph, 2011), and parents, in turn, construct new models of child development and parenting. As one example, parents' knowledge about child development changes with child age (Tamis-LeMonda, Chen, & Bornstein, 1998) and relates to the ways that parents engage with their toddlers (Damast, Tamis-LeMonda, & Bornstein, 1996).

Developmental changes in parents' socialization goals can be evidenced in both the qualities parents want children to develop and those they want children *not* to develop. Based on the regulatory focus theory (Higgins, 1997), which distinguishes between individuals' promotion of positive outcomes and prevention of negative outcomes in their goal pursuit, parents' socialization goals can be differentiated into two types: the promotion of desirable qualities and the prevention of undesirable qualities in children. According to Higgins (p. 1280), a promotion approach often reflects 'a concern with advancement, growth, and accomplishment,' whereas a prevention approach often

reflects 'a concern with protection, safety, and responsibility.' Qualities deemed as desirable and undesirable by parents for children may therefore lie in different arenas of development. For example, whereas desirable qualities may more likely involve the development of advanced cognitive and social skills, undesirable qualities may entail compliance with rules and regulations.

In a number of studies conducted by Harwood and colleagues (e.g., Harwood, 1992; Harwood, Schoelmerich, Ventura-Cook, Schulze, & Wilson, 1996; Leyendecker, Harwood, Lamb, & Scholmerich, 2002), mothers were asked separately about desirable and undesirable qualities for their children, although their responses were typically combined in analyses. In a rare study where desirable and undesirable qualities were analyzed separately, Anglo mothers and Puerto Rican mothers in the island and mainland tended to mention desirable qualities related to 'self-maximization' (i.e., being self-confident and independent, e.g., 'I guess the main thing is to feel good about themselves') and undesirable qualities related to self-control of negative impulses (e.g., 'Just not . . . blowing up easy about things') and decency (i.e., meeting basic societal standards of being responsible and honest; e.g., 'I can't stand lying'; Harwood et al., 1996, p. 2450). These findings indicate that desirable qualities reflect parents' concerns that are not necessarily mirrored in undesirable qualities. It is of theoretical import to distinguish between desirable and undesirable qualities in parents' socialization goals because it can yield a more complete picture of parents' socialization goals. Moreover, this distinction will allow us to explore whether the two types of qualities exhibit similar or different patterns of change over developmental time.

Ethnic Background

Parents of diverse ethnic/cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds display differences in their socialization goals, supporting the idea that parents enact the views and practices of their cultural communities and mediate the effects of the broader socio-cultural environments on children. In a study based on interviews with mothers of infants from different cultural communities, mothers from urban, middle-class communities in Germany, Greece, and the USA tended to adopt a cultural model of independence, viewing children as separate agents and supporting their self-maximization. In contrast, mothers from traditional, rural farming communities in Cameroon and India tended to adopt a cultural model of interdependence, viewing children in relation to others and encouraging their harmonious interactions with others (Keller et al., 2006). Moreover, those mothers with a cultural model of independence were more likely to report having autonomous socialization goals (e.g., wanting children to develop self-confidence and competitiveness) and endorse practices that would promote autonomy in their infants (e.g., emphasizing infants' early self-regulation), whereas those with an interdependent model were more likely to report having relational socialization goals (e.g., emphasizing obeying elderly people and learning to care for others) and endorse practices that would promote interpersonal connection (e.g., emphasizing body contact). These socialization goals partially explained associations between mothers' cultural models of independence and interdependence and their endorsement of specific parenting practices, suggesting that parents' goals serve as a channel for transmitting cultural values across generations (Keller & Greenfield, 2000). Notably, although cultural variation in parenting has often been interpreted using the dichotomous cultural models of individualism–collectivism and independence–interdependence (see Tamis-LeMonda et al., 2008, for a review),

investigators have increasingly moved away from this oversimplistic view to one in which the two orientations coexist within individuals; cultural variations mainly lie in the *relative* emphasis of these orientations (Tamis-LeMonda et al., 2008).

Some studies have focused on ethnic differences in parents' socialization goals within the same country, or the socialization goals of a particular ethnic minority group. Studies on ethnic differences tend to contrast the goals of native parents and ethnic minority or immigrant parents. In a pioneering study, Harwood (1992) interviewed middle- and lower-class Anglo mothers and lower-class Puerto Rican immigrant mothers in the USA about the qualities they wanted or did not want their young children aged 12–24 months to possess as adults. Anglo mothers tended to endorse children's self-maximization and self-control. In contrast, Puerto Rican mothers tended to focus on respectful, well-mannered, and obedient child behavior; they also emphasized children's lovingness or connectedness, including the ability to get along with others. These ethnic differences were replicated in a second study comparing mainland Anglo and island Puerto Rican mothers, both also of middle-class backgrounds (Harwood et al., 1999).

Mexican immigrants in the USA are another Latino group whose socialization goals have received growing attention in cross-ethnic comparisons of parenting. In a recent study that controlled for parental education, lower middle-class parents of Mexican and African-American backgrounds in the USA were found to be more likely to endorse achievement, benevolence toward others, conformity, and adherence to tradition as long-term socialization goals for their young children than their European counterparts (Suizzo, 2007). In a Q-sort study of Mexican immigrant mothers' socialization goals, mothers indicated that children's morality, school behavior, obedience, and respect were the most desirable qualities for their children, and competitiveness and independence were the least desirable (Arcia & Johnson, 1998; see also Delgado & Ford, 1998).

The emphasis on respect and obedience documented among Mexican and Puerto Rican immigrant parents is likely to be shared by their Dominican counterparts. Investigators have pointed out that the Latino cultural concepts of *bien educado* (well mannered) and *respeto* (respect), which require individuals to show proper and respectful behavior toward others, are important for understanding parenting among Latino groups (Delgado & Ford, 1998; Guilamo-Ramos et al., 2007). Although Dominican immigrant parents have received less attention in the literature than their Mexican and Puerto Rican counterparts, there is evidence that they place much emphasis on proper behavior. For example, Dominican immigrant mothers of young children indicated that they rarely ignored children's misbehavior or not followed through when disciplining children (Calzada & Eyberg, 2002).

Unfortunately, research on parents' socialization goals has rarely examined more than one Latino group in a single study, which precludes understanding the heterogeneity that may exist in the socialization goals of different Latino populations. Factors that may contribute to variation in parents' goals among different Latino groups in the USA include their reasons for and timing of immigration, and their acculturation and socioeconomic circumstances following immigration (Harwood, Leyendecker, Carlson, Asencio, & Miller, 2002). For example, Dominicans and Mexicans in New York City, the site of the current study, have very different backgrounds and histories of migration to the city.

Since the 1960s, there has been large-scale immigration from the Dominican Republic to the USA, with New York City being the common destination due to the immigrants' social network; just in the 1980s, the population of Dominican immigrants in

this city increased by 165 percent (Pessar, 1995). Dominicans in New York tend to be concentrated in ethnic enclaves characterized by high social capital and strong community supports and institutions (Yoshikawa, 2011). Because of the history of immigration policy, they are also more likely to be documented and come from urban areas in the Dominican Republic (Levitt, 2001; Passel & Cohn, 2009). As much more recent arrivals to New York City, Mexicans, on the other hand, are scattered across a variety of neighborhoods without a strong presence of community-based organizations or social networks. In addition, they are more likely to come from rural areas in their country of origin and to be undocumented, reducing their access to government supports and exposing them to additional disadvantages including lower wages, poor working conditions, and residential overcrowding (Bernhardt et al., 2009; Passel & Cohn, 2009; Yoshikawa, 2011). Being a part of networks and communities with longer-standing ties in the USA, Dominican parents may be more likely to have adopted the language, customs, and values of the mainstream American culture. Indeed, prior studies showed that acculturation is associated with variations in parents' interactions with their young children among Latino parents in the USA (e.g., Cabrera, Shannon, West, & Brooks-Gunn, 2006; Planos, Zayas, & Busch-Rossnagel, 1995).

African-Americans have a much longer history of residence in the USA than both Dominican and Mexican immigrants, although it is one characterized by slavery and segregation. The socialization goals of African-American parents are likely to reflect values that originated from their traditional community, those of the mainstream American culture, as well as those that have arisen from the unique challenges they faced as an oppressed group (García Coll, Meyer, & Brillon, 1995; McAdoo, 2002). Traditionally, much importance is placed on being obedient and respectful of elders in the family and the community (García Coll et al., 1995). In the aforementioned study (Suizzo, 2007), parents of African-American and Mexican backgrounds did not differ in their emphasis on tradition and conformity in their socialization goals. Another important socialization goal of African-American parents may involve promoting children's self-esteem, given the ubiquitous emphasis on it in the mainstream culture (Heine, Lehman, Markus, & Kitayama, 1999; Miller, Wang, Sandel, & Cho, 2002). Moreover, promoting self-esteem among children is deemed important in African-American culture as a way of buffering children from the negative effects of racism and minority status (García Coll et al., 1995; Spencer & Markstrom-Adams, 1990). There is evidence that racial socialization may contribute to positive academic outcomes by fostering children's self-esteem and ethnic pride (Hughes, Witherspoon, Rivas-Drake, & West-Bey, 2009; see also Thornton, Chatters, Taylor, & Allen, 1990). Indeed, African-American parents of young children have been found to place greater emphasis on self-maximization goals than their European counterparts (Suizzo, 2007).

Socioeconomic Background

There is some evidence that parents' socialization goals also vary with socioeconomic status (SES). Seminal studies by Miller and Swanson (1958) and Kohn (1977) revealed that conformity and obedience were more highly valued among parents from disadvantaged socioeconomic backgrounds, whereas self-confidence and independence were more highly valued among middle-class parents, with workplace emphases on these values influencing socialization goals. In another study, five groups of mothers with young children (middle- and lower-class Anglo, middle- and lower-class island Puerto Rican, and lower-class mainland Puerto Rican) were interviewed about their

socialization goals (Harwood et al., 1996). Socioeconomic background uniquely predicted the qualities that mothers wanted and did not want their young children to possess as adults. Regardless of ethnicity, middle-class mothers were more likely to express self-maximization goals and less likely to express proper demeanor goals than lower-class mothers. Similarly, a study of mothers from the Dominican Republic indicated that middle-class mothers value self-direction whereas lower-class mothers value conformity (Foucault & Schneider, 2009).

Overview of the Current Research

We conducted two studies on the socialization goals of mothers from African-American, Dominican, and Mexican backgrounds living in an urban USA setting. In Study 1, mothers were interviewed about their socialization goals when their children were at 1 month, 14 months, and 2 years of age. They were asked to indicate the qualities that they wanted their children to possess (desirable qualities) or not possess (undesirable qualities) at the age of three years.

In Study 2, mothers were followed up when their children turned three years old, and asked to rank a set of socialization goals (adapted from Study 1) according to importance for their child at that age. Unlike prior research, which has focused on mothers' goals for their children in adulthood (e.g., Harwood et al., 1996; Leyendecker et al., 2002), we chose to focus on qualities at the age of three to more closely tie mothers' socialization goals to this important developmental stage.

The two studies offer a window onto the relative endorsement of different types of desirable and undesirable qualities by mothers from ethnically diverse backgrounds, and also advance an understanding of the developmental, ethnic, and demographic correlates of mothers' goals. Firstly, guided by a developmental perspective, we investigated whether and how parents' socialization goals (for both desirable and undesirable qualities) change over the first years of children's lives, when children are undergoing rapid growth and development and interacting with the world in new and increasingly complex ways (Karasik et al., 2011; Study 1). We focused on these ages because of the rapid changes that are occurring at this time. By the age of one year, the average child is independently walking (see Adolph & Robinson, in press). Locomotion may lead parents to perceive infants as autonomous individuals who can be held responsible for their actions, thus becoming more likely to endorse the importance of self-control and abiding by rules (e.g., not touching forbidden objects; Campos, Kermoian, & Zumbahlen, 1992). Similarly, expressive language skills emerge in the second year of life (Tamis-LeMonda, Bornstein, & Baumwell, 2001), which may heighten parents' attention to children's language skills, social relationships (e.g., inviting other children to play), or support of children's autonomy (e.g., letting children choose which clothes to wear). By three years of age, many children have entered nursery school or will soon encounter such experiences, possibly inciting further change in parents' goals for achievement and social skills.

As their children grew from infancy to toddlerhood, mothers were expected to increasingly focus on children's ability to achieve and form social relationships. In terms of whether there would be different trajectories for desirable and undesirable qualities, it was expected that there might be more stability in undesirable qualities, with a continual emphasis on children's proper demeanor, because they represent mothers' minimum expectation for children, but more changes in desirable qualities, because they represent mothers' dreams for children.

Second, given that most past studies involved no more than a single Latino group, the current research sought to explore between-group variation in the goals of Latino parents from different backgrounds (Studies 1 and 2) and contrasts their reports to non-immigrant African-American mothers. We selected African-Americans because they represent the second largest racial group (after European Americans) in New York City, the site of the current study; Latinos also constitute a sizeable proportion of the city's population, with Mexicans being the second largest Latino subgroup (after Puerto Ricans; U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). Because of the well-established Dominican community in the city, this group was also examined (Pessar, 1995).

We expected that African-American mothers would be more likely to report goals related to children's self-maximization and less likely to report goals related to children's proper demeanor than their Latina counterparts. This is because high self-esteem is valued in African-American culture as a part of racial socialization (García Coll et al., 1995). Moreover, despite being an ethnic minority group, the present sample of African-Americans were at least second-generation USA-born and are therefore likely to be influenced by values in the mainstream society such as the importance of high self-esteem (Heine et al., 1999; Miller et al., 2002). Mothers of Dominican descent were expected to exhibit a pattern of goals midway between the other two groups because, as a group that has been emigrating to the study city for decades, they and their networks may be more acculturated than Mexican mothers in the city, who have been a much more recent immigrant group (Smith, 2006; Yoshikawa, 2011).

Third, although past research has focused on how socialization goals differed *between* socioeconomic classes, we asked whether specific socioeconomic factors such as maternal education and employment, and household earnings may shape socialization goals *among* low-income parents (Study 1). We took a prospective approach by examining whether socioeconomic factors at the transition to a new infant portend different patterns of change in mothers' goals for children across the first two years of life. We expected mothers with higher SES in our low-income sample to emphasize children's self-maximization and downplay children's proper demeanor when compared with mothers from relatively disadvantaged socioeconomic backgrounds, after controlling for the influence of ethnicity.

Study 1

Study 1 aimed to describe the socialization goals of mothers from diverse ethnic backgrounds and explore whether and how mothers' socialization goals might vary by child age, ethnicity, and socioeconomic background. These aims were addressed through longitudinal investigation of mothers' socialization goals when children were 1 month, 14 months, and 2 years of age.

Methods

Participants. A total of 366 low-income, ethnic minority mothers were initially recruited from hospitals serving low-income populations in New York City shortly after giving birth. The current study focuses on a subset of 300 mothers who were interviewed when their children were at 1 month, 14 months, or 2 years of age. Attrition rates from 1 to 14 months and from 14 months to 2 years were no more than 30 percent. Attrition analyses indicated no significant differences above chance between mothers with and without data at the 14-months and 2-years waves on baseline characteristics

including ethnic group, immigrant status, years in the USA, age, education, household income, receipt of public assistance, marital/cohabiting status, depression or social support, and their child's gender or birth order.

To participate, mothers had to (1) be at least 18 years of age at the birth of their infants; (2) reside in the target city, but not in a shelter; (3) have given birth to a healthy, full-term infant (birth weight > 2500 g); and (4) identify themselves as African-American, Dominican, or Mexican. All mothers identified themselves as African-American (n = 100; mean age = 25.0 years), Dominican (n = 111; mean age = 25.5 years), or Mexican (n = 89; mean age = 26.7 years) background. Beyond the criterion of ethnic self-identification, most African-American (92 percent), Dominican (97 percent), and Mexican (98 percent) mothers reported their own mother as born in the target country (i.e., USA for African-Americans, Dominican Republic for Dominicans, Mexico for Mexicans). Mothers of different ethnic backgrounds did not differ in age, $F(2, 296) = 2.29$, ns. Not surprisingly, they did in terms of their place of birth, $\chi^2(2, N = 300) = 211.07$, $p < .001$. All African-American mothers were born in the USA, whereas 78 percent of Dominican mothers and 97 percent of Mexican mothers were first-generation immigrants born outside of the USA. Dominican mothers who immigrated to the USA tended to have spent more years ($M = 10.1$, $SD = 6.3$) in the host country than did their Mexican counterparts ($M = 7.2$, $SD = 5.0$), $t(161) = 3.25$, $p = .001$.

There was an ethnic difference in the language that mothers preferred to use for the research activities, $\chi^2(2, N = 300) = 162.49$, $p < .001$. English was the preferred language of all but one African-American mother, who was included in the sample despite her language preference, given that she identified herself as African-American and reported both her parents and grandparents as USA-born. English was also preferred by 48 percent of Dominican mothers and 7 percent of Mexican mothers; the remaining mothers reported Spanish as their preferred language. Forty-five percent of African-American mothers reported their target child as female and 41 percent reported the child as firstborn; 51 percent of Dominican mothers reported their target child as female and 43 percent reported the child as firstborn; 55 percent of Mexican mothers reported their target child as female and 33 percent reported the child as firstborn. The proportions of female and firstborn child were similar across ethnic groups, $\chi^2(2, N = 300)s < 2.53$, NS.

In general, mothers had relatively low levels of education and income. For African-American mothers, 31 percent had a high school diploma or equivalent and another 30 percent had received education beyond high school, compared with 25 percent and 42 percent for Dominican mothers, and 9 percent and 10 percent for Mexican mothers, respectively; these proportions differed across ethnic groups, $\chi^2(2, N = 300)s > 14$, $ps < .001$. Mean and median household annual earnings were $21 167 and $14 459 for African-American mothers, $24 605 and $23 602 for Dominican mothers, and $17 114 and $15 139 for Mexican mothers, respectively. There was an ethnic difference in household earnings, $F(2, 258) = 4.02$, $p = .019$, which was significant between Dominican and Mexican mothers, $p = .015$. More than half of the mothers reported working outside the home in the year prior to the target child's birth (60 percent, 70 percent, and 62 percent for African-American, Dominican, and Mexican mothers, respectively), which did not differ by ethnic group, $\chi^2(2, N = 299) = 3.14$, ns. There was an ethnic difference in cohabitation status, $\chi^2(2, N = 300) = 37.45$, $p < .001$, with 45 percent of African-American mothers cohabiting with their partner at the time of the focal child's birth, compared with 61 percent of Dominican mothers and 88 percent of

Mexican mothers. Household sizes also varied by ethnic groups, $F(2, 292) = 18.05$, $p < .001$, with more members in Mexican ($M = 5.87$) than African-American ($M = 4.9$) or Dominican ($M = 4.5$) households, $ps < .001$.

Procedures. Mothers were approached and recruited by researchers in the maternity ward in three public hospitals, within a day or two of giving birth to the target child. Mothers who were interested in participating in the study were asked screening questions to determine their eligibility to participate. Eligible mothers who consented to participation were interviewed on the phone when their infants were one month old. When the child reached 14 months and 2 years of age, mothers were interviewed again in their home. Initial recruitment and interviews at all three ages were conducted by bilingual, female researchers in English or Spanish, based on mothers' preference. Mothers received monetary compensation for each interview.

Measures. At each wave, mothers were asked two open-ended questions about qualities that they considered desirable and undesirable for their children to develop. For desirable qualities, mothers were asked, 'What is one quality you would most like to see in your child when he/she is 3 years old?' For undesirable qualities, mothers were asked, 'What is one quality you would least like to see in your child when he/she is 3 years old?' After mothers described a desirable or undesirable quality, they were asked to give an example to illustrate what they meant by the quality. Mothers' responses were recorded in the original language for later coding.

Guided by prior research, each of the desirable and undesirable qualities reported was coded in two steps according to the themes that emerged (see Delgado & Ford, 1998; Harwood, 1992). Firstly, using the quality and example given by mothers as supplementary information, similar qualities were coded into 1 of 25 subcategories (see Table 1 for examples); this was done separately for desirable and undesirable qualities. The qualities reported by mothers were coded in the original language used by mothers. Responses given in English were coded by native English speakers; responses made in Spanish were coded by native Spanish speakers. All responses were coded by two coders, who resolved occasional disagreements by discussion. Inter-rater reliabilities were based on separate coders independently coding mothers' responses into 1 of the 25 subcategories; agreements averaged over 90 percent at every child age.

The subcategories were then combined into four mutually exclusive categories (see Table 1), based on research by other investigators on mothers' socialization goals for children (e.g., Harwood et al., 1996; Wang & Tamis-LeMonda, 2003; see Table 1). Achievement captures qualities pertaining to children's academic or intellectual development. Self-maximization captured qualities that emphasized children's independence, sense of agency, or child-focused positive attributes. Proper Demeanor captured qualities about children's adherence to behavioral standards such as being well mannered, obedient, and self-controlled. Connectedness captured qualities that emphasized children's ability to maintain positive, harmonious relationships with others (e.g., sharing, altruism).[1] Qualities that were uncodable or did not fall into these major categories (e.g., honesty, mental health, physical health, or awareness of danger) were excluded from analyses. For the most part, the excluded qualities were mentioned by fewer than 10 mothers at any time point, except for children's health, which was mentioned by 29 mothers at the one-month interview only. At each wave, mothers who endorsed a goal related to each category were assigned a 1 for that category; those who did not endorse a related goal were assigned a 0.

Table 1. Codes for Mothers' Desirable and Undesirable Qualities (Study 1)

	Description of subcategories	Examples	
		Desirable	Undesirable
Achievement			
Literacy	Any reference to reading, writing or learning the alphabets.	To enjoy reading.	To not read.
Language development	Any reference to speaking a language.	To talk more.	To not be speaking at all.
Curiosity and persistence in learning	Any reference to learning a skill, being interested in learning in general, or being persistent in the context of learning outside of school.	To learn how to draw.	To not be interested in things.
Intelligence	Any reference to being smart or intelligent, or having knowledge of facts or ideas.	To know a lot of things.	To not be intelligent.
School/life achievement	Any reference to academic performance, being educated, or achieving a career. Any reference to diligence in the school context but not specifically about learning.	To do well in school.	To get bad grades.
Self-maximization			
Leadership	Any reference to being confident, being assertive, or having a sense of agency.	To be sure of herself.	To follow the crowd.
Acclaim	Any reference to physical appearance such as being attractive, or fame such as being popular.	To be pretty.	(Not mentioned by any mother)
Active/athletic	Any reference to being physically active or athletic.	To play sports.	To be inactive.
Instrumental independence	Any reference to managing daily self-care needs.	To go to the bathroom by himself.	To continue using pampers.
Emotional independence	Any references to being emotionally independent.	To be less attached.	To not want to go to daycare.

Proper Demeanor			
Good manners and behaviors	Any reference to having manners or displaying appropriate behaviors in general.	To know her manners.	To be rude.
Respectfulness	Any reference to respecting others.	To be respectful.	To snatch other people's food.
Obedience	Any reference to listening to or obeying authorities outside of school	To be obedient; if you tell him to do something that he do it.	To not listen to what we tell him to do.
School obedience	Any reference to listening to or obeying authorities in school.	To follow the rules in school.	To misbehave in school.
Self-control	Any reference to controlling one's emotions or impulses.	To not be aggressive.	To throw tantrums.
Appropriate gender roles	Any reference to gender-specific expectations.	To act like a girl (the target child is a girl).	To do female things (the target child is a boy).
Connectedness			
Unselfishness/generosity	Any references to being willing to help or share things with others.	To not want everything for herself.	To not share his toys.
Affection	Any reference to showing affection.	To be sweet; to kiss and hug others.	To not show affection.
Compassion/consideration	Any reference to being understanding of others' feelings.	To be considerate.	To not understand others.
Sociability	Any reference to being social or able to get along with others.	To get along with other kids.	To be problematic, not being able to get along with other kids.

Demographic predictors were based on interviews with mothers during their recruitment in hospitals. Because mother interviews were collected at three waves, when children were 1 month, 14 months, and 2 years old, wave of data collection was used as a proxy for child age. Ethnic group membership was by self-identification and represented by a set of three dummy codes indicating African-American, Dominican, or Mexican group membership. Mothers' socioeconomic backgrounds were indicated by their education level (a set of two dummy codes indicating whether they had completed high school or attained their GED and whether they had any education beyond high school), employment status in the year prior to the child's birth (one dummy code indicating any employment), and total household earnings in the year prior to the child's birth (in thousands). Mothers also reported on their age, years of residence in the USA, and a number of family-structure variables, including the gender and birth order of the child, their cohabitation status, and the size of their household; the family-structure variables were included as covariates in the analyses.

Results

The number and percentages of mothers reporting desirable and undesirable qualities that fell into each of the four goal categories at each wave are displayed in Table 2. Overall, achievement and proper demeanor were the two categories mentioned most often as desirable qualities by mothers from all three ethnic groups across the three waves. In contrast to the dual emphasis on achievement and proper demeanor for desirable qualities, proper demeanor (i.e., the *lack* of proper demeanor) was the goal category most often endorsed for undesirable qualities by mothers from all three ethnic groups across the three assessments. This likely reflects mothers' shared concern that children might fail to adhere to behavioral standards.

We next conducted a series of analyses predicting mothers' endorsement of each of the four goal categories as either a desirable or an undesirable quality over time (at the 1-month, 14-month, and 2-year waves). Because we collected data at three points in time, the data are nested within mothers. Because mothers' endorsement of each desirable and undesirable quality is binary, data were analyzed using linear models with a generalized estimating equation and logit link function (proc genmod in SAS). As a more generalized version of a logistic regression model, these models allow examination of how the probability of endorsing a desirable or an undesirable quality in each category varies across successive waves, ethnic group, and socioeconomic factors while correcting the standard errors for the non-independence of responses due to the nested nature of the data. These models handle missing data across waves by allowing for the estimation of inferential statistics from all available data.

An initial set of eight models were run, four for each goal category endorsed as a desirable quality and four for each goal category endorsed as an undesirable quality. In each model, the primary predictors included wave, Dominican group membership, Mexican group membership (African-American group membership was the reference category), mothers' level of education, employment status and total household earnings in the year prior to the child's birth. By including both ethnic group membership and socioeconomic factors in the model, the unique contribution of each predictor net of the others can be explored. Finally, to increase the precision of the estimates and account for some sources of selection bias, all models adjusted for key covariates in the family structure domain (i.e., gender and birth order of the target child, mothers' cohabitation status, household size). Finally, to statistically examine differences

Table 2. Number of Mothers Reporting Desirable and Undesirable Qualities in Each Goal Category by Ethnicity and Age of Child (Study 1)

	African-American		Dominican		Mexican		Total	
	Desirable	Undesirable	Desirable	Undesirable	Desirable	Undesirable	Desirable	Undesirable
1 Month								
Achievement	31 (40%)	1 (1%)	22 (28%)	2 (2%)	17 (25%)	1 (1%)	70 (31%)	4 (2%)
Self-maximization	12 (16%)	5 (6%)	11 (14%)	7 (8%)	11 (16%)	4 (5%)	34 (15%)	16 (7%)
Proper demeanor	25 (32%)	70 (81%)	37 (47%)	56 (67%)	35 (51%)	55 (72%)	97 (43%)	181 (74%)
Connectedness	9 (12%)	10 (12%)	9 (11%)	19 (23%)	6 (9%)	16 (21%)	24 (11%)	45 (18%)
14 Months								
Achievement	27 (43%)	2 (3%)	28 (41%)	1 (1%)	26 (42%)	1 (2%)	81 (42%)	4 (2%)
Self-maximization	8 (13%)	4 (7%)	6 (9%)	3 (4%)	10 (16%)	3 (5%)	24 (12%)	10 (5%)
Proper demeanor	21 (33%)	45 (76%)	29 (43%)	63 (84%)	17 (27%)	52 (85%)	67 (35%)	160 (82%)
Connectedness	7 (11%)	8 (14%)	5 (7%)	8 (11%)	9 (15%)	5 (8%)	21 (11%)	21 (11%)
2 Years								
Achievement	25 (45%)	3 (5%)	27 (40%)	2 (3%)	29 (48%)	3 (5%)	81 (44%)	8 (5%)
Self-maximization	9 (16%)	3 (5%)	11 (16%)	3 (5%)	4 (7%)	6 (10%)	24 (13%)	12 (7%)
Proper demeanor	10 (18%)	41 (75%)	19 (28%)	51 (82%)	18 (30%)	41 (71%)	47 (26%)	133 (76%)
Connectedness	11 (20%)	8 (15%)	11(16%)	6 (10%)	10 (16%)	8 (14%)	32 (17%)	22 (13%)

Note: Numbers in parentheses are the percentages of mothers reporting desirable or undesirable qualities that fell into each goal category at each age of child.

between Mexican and Dominican mothers, a second, parallel set of models was run with Mexican mothers as the reference group.

For undesirable qualities, no statistically significant predictors of any of the four goal categories were found, suggesting that undesirable qualities do not vary appreciably by wave, ethnic group, or socioeconomic factors. For desirable qualities, however, differences in the endorsement of the four goal categories emerged as a function of wave, ethnic group, and socioeconomic factors (as presented below for each category).

Achievement. Wave was positively associated with the endorsement of achievement goals, $b = .37$ (.10), $p < .001$, $OR = 1.45$. At each successive wave, mothers were 45 percent more likely to endorse a goal related to their children's achievement. The endorsement of achievement goals did not differ by ethnic group membership or socioeconomic factors.

Self-maximization. Wave was not significantly related to the endorsement of self-maximization goals. In addition, there were no significant ethnic differences in the endorsement of goals related to self-maximization. However, mother's employment status in the year prior to the child's birth predicted the endorsement of self-maximization goals, $b = .88$ (.34), $p = .009$, $OR = 2.42$. Mothers who were employed in the year prior to their child's birth were 142 percent more likely to endorse a self-maximization goal than those not employed.

Proper Demeanor. Analyses revealed a significant downward trend in the endorsement of proper demeanor goals as a function of wave, $b = -.21$ (.10), $p = .04$, $OR = .81$. At each successive wave, mothers were 19 percent less likely to endorse a goal related to their child's adherence to behavioral standards. In addition, Dominican mothers were 84 percent more likely than African-American mothers to endorse a goal related to proper demeanor, $b = .61$ (.25), $p = .01$, $OR = 1.84$. But there were no significant differences in the endorsement of proper demeanor goals between Dominican and Mexican mothers or between Mexican and African-American mothers. Finally, mothers from higher socioeconomic backgrounds were less likely to endorse proper demeanor as a developmental goal for their children. Mothers with some higher education were 53 percent less likely to endorse proper demeanor goals, $b = -.75$ (.27), $p = .01$, $OR = .47$, than their less educated counterparts. In addition, household earnings in the year prior to the child's birth was negatively related to the endorsement of goals related to proper demeanor, $b = -.02$ (.006), $p = .01$, $OR = .98$. This suggests that for every \$1000 increase in household earnings, the likelihood of endorsing a proper demeanor goal was reduced by 2 percent.

Connectedness. Finally, wave was positively related to the endorsement of connectedness goals, $b = .34$ (.16), $p = .03$, $OR = 1.40$. At each successive wave, mothers were 40 percent more likely than they were in the previous wave to endorse children's social skills in the form of getting along with others. There were no significant differences in the endorsement of connectedness goals across ethnic groups. Compared with less educated mothers, those with some higher education were 149 percent more likely to hold connectedness goals for their children, $b = .91$ (.35), $p = .01$, $OR = 2.49$. In addition, household earnings was related to the endorsement of connectedness goals, $b = .02$ (.007), $p = .03$, $OR = 1.02$. For every \$1000 increase in household earnings, the likelihood of endorsing a connectedness goal was increased by 2 percent.

Discussion

Mothers predominantly emphasized the goals of achievement and proper demeanor when reporting desirable child qualities, and emphasized the lack of proper demeanor when reporting undesirable qualities. However, these general tendencies mask meaningful developmental changes in mothers' goals across children's first two years of life. Mothers shifted in their emphasis in desirable qualities from proper demeanor to intellectual (achievement) and social (connectedness) skills but displayed greater continuity in their responses regarding undesirable qualities. There was much similarity in the qualities that mothers deemed as desirable and undesirable for their children across the three ethnic groups. Moreover, maternal education and employment, and household earnings did relate to variation in mothers' socialization goals: mothers of relatively advantaged socioeconomic backgrounds placed more emphasis on their children's self-maximization and connectedness than proper demeanor compared with mothers of relatively less advantaged socioeconomic backgrounds.

Because mothers were asked to provide open-ended responses about the qualities that they considered desirable and undesirable for their children to develop, a large number of different qualities were mentioned, which were then coded into broader categories based on the themes that emerged in mothers' responses and classifications used in past research. A limitation in Study 1 was that it was not possible to compare mothers' socialization goals across ethnic groups at the subcategory level as too few mothers would be represented as mentioning a particular quality. Additionally, the use of open-ended questions to assess desirable and undesirable qualities might only measure socialization goals of which mothers were conscious and which were salient to mothers at that time (Wang & Tamis-LeMonda, 2003). Mothers of different ethnic backgrounds might otherwise vary in their goals for children when directly asked about specific qualities.

Study 2

To follow up on Study 1, we examined mothers' socialization goals across ethnic groups using a closed-ended approach that tapped mothers' views about specific qualities in Study 2. This approach allowed us to systematically compare whether, controlling for socioeconomic factors and family-structure variables, mothers of varying ethnic groups differed in their views regarding more specific child qualities represented by the broader categories in Study 1. Mothers were given a Q-sort task in which they were asked to rank a set of 21 qualities (see Figure 1) according to importance for their child at the age of three (see Arcia & Johnson, 1998; Durgel et al., 2009; Gonzalez-Ramos, Zayas, & Cohen, 1998). With the exception of honesty and happiness, all qualities were selected from the open-ended responses of mothers in Study 1 and therefore again corresponded to the categories of achievement, self-maximization, proper demeanor, and connectedness. This approach therefore drew upon goals that were relevant to the populations of interest rather than a set of predetermined goals decided by researchers (see Gonzalez-Ramos et al., 1998). Guided by prior research, it was expected that African-American mothers might emphasize qualities associated with self-maximization, whereas Dominican and Mexican mothers might emphasize proper demeanor. Achievement might be endorsed by all mothers.

The qualities of honesty and happiness were introduced in Study 2. Past studies have categorized honesty under the broad category of decency, which refers to basic societal standards of being responsible and honest, and is considered a major category of
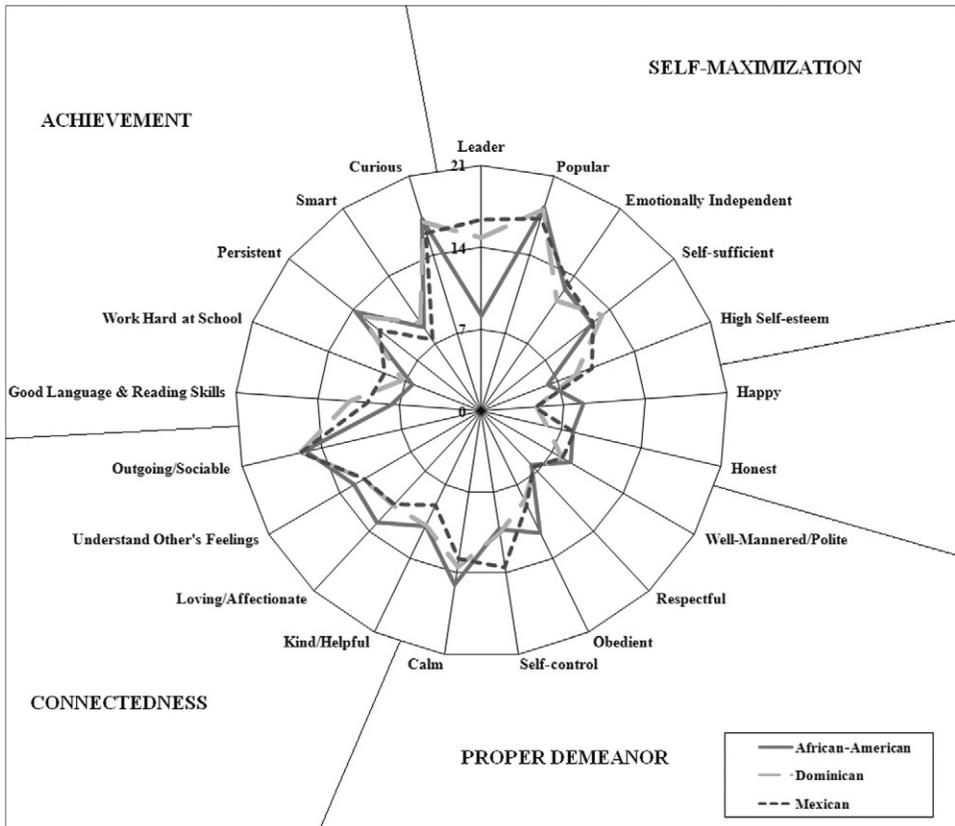
Figure 1. Average Rankings of Child Qualities by Ethnicity (Study 2). The Three Panels (Labeled 'Very Important', 'Important', and 'Not as Important') Are Represented by the Innermost, Middle, and Outermost Circles, Respectively. Smaller Numbers Represent Higher Rankings.

socialization goals, especially among low-income families and Latino families (Harwood, 1992; Harwood et al., 1996). Surprisingly, in Study 1, qualities related to decency were mentioned merely four times in this low-income sample across the three child ages, including three references to desirable qualities (being moral, distinguishing right from wrong, and being noble), and a single reference to dishonesty as an undesirable quality. Similarly, anecdotal evidence suggests that many parents often describe themselves as simply wanting their children to be happy. However, across all the data in Study 1, happiness was mentioned as a desirable quality only 13 times, and the lack of happiness was mentioned as an undesirable quality only 4 times. To investigate the importance mothers place on honesty and happiness, the two qualities were presented to mothers in Study 2. It was expected that both qualities would be viewed as uniformly high in importance by mothers across ethnic groups.

Methods

Participants. Participants were 185 mothers from Study 1, self-identified as African-American (n = 55), Dominican (n = 66), or Mexican (n = 64). The overall attrition rate

from the first assessment (i.e., one month) in Study 1 to Study 2 when children had turned three years old was 38.3 percent. Attrition was highest among African-American mothers (45 percent) and lowest among Mexican mothers (28 percent). There were only two significant differences between mothers who remained in Study 2 and those who did not on the endorsement of the four categories of goals at each of the three child ages and the 10 demographic characteristics assessed in Study 1: Mothers who remained in the sample ($M = 26.3$, $SD = 5.9$) were older than those who did not ($M = 24.7$, $SD = 4.8$), $t(297) = 2.49$, $p = .013$, and they were less likely to have mentioned an undesirable quality related to self-maximization at the last assessment (i.e., the age of two years) in Study 1 (5 percent) than those who did not remain in the sample (18 percent), $\chi^2(1, N = 181) = 6.75$, $p = .009$.[2]

Procedures. Mothers were contacted within two months of the target child's third birthday. Mothers were visited by trained research personnel in their home where they were given a Q-sort task in English or Spanish based on their preference. Mothers were compensated for their time.

Measures. Mothers were introduced to a Q-sort instrument, which included 21 laminated cards and a board containing three panels labeled 'very important,' 'important,' and 'not as important' at the top of each panel. Each card contained a printed word or phrase reflecting a child quality selected based on the results of Study 1 or prior research (see Figure 1). There were 19 qualities selected from Study 1 under the categories of achievement (e.g., 'To have good language skills/literacy'), self-maximization (e.g., 'To have good self-esteem or feel good about himself/herself'), proper demeanor (e.g., 'To be respectful'), and connectedness (e.g., 'To be kind and helpful to others'), as well as two additional qualities selected based on prior research (i.e., honesty, happiness). The Q-sort instrument was developed in English and translated into Spanish by a team of bilingual speakers with native fluency in both languages, as well as familiarity with the cultural backgrounds of this multiethnic sample.

Using mothers' language of preference, the research personnel first showed mothers each card and read the quality aloud to ensure that mothers understood the child quality printed on the card. Mothers were told 'over the past 2 years, we interviewed you and other mothers in our study about qualities they wished to see in their children. Based on these interviews, mothers identified 21 qualities as important for their children. We are going to show you the qualities that were mentioned, and ask you to rank these in order of their importance to you.' Mothers were asked to consider how important each quality was for the target child at that time (when children were three years of age), then sort the 21 cards into three piles of 7 and place each pile on the corresponding board panel (labeled 'very important', 'important', and 'not as important'). Finally, mothers were asked to sort the seven cards on each board panel according to their importance. These procedures yielded two levels of data: at the panel level, each quality fell into one of the three panels (very important, important, not as important), with panel ranking ranging from 1 to 3; at the actual ranking level, each quality received a unique ranking ranging from 1 to 21.

Results

Preliminary Analyses. The average rankings of the 21 child qualities by ethnic group are displayed in Figure 1. Because of the dependent nature of ranking data (a quality

receiving a particular ranking precluded other qualities from receiving that same ranking), all analyses were conducted at the panel level rather than the ranking level.[3] That is, for all analyses, we examined the placement of different child qualities into the panels of 'very important,' 'important,' or 'not as important.' Based on prior literature and Study 1, we focused on examining the average placement of qualities in different goal categories (achievement, self-maximization, proper demeanor, connectedness, honesty, and happiness) into each of the three panels. To create the first four categories, the panel rankings of the specific qualities within each category were averaged for each mother. The last two categories were represented by a single quality.

Overall Rankings. An omnibus Friedman test followed by a *post hoc* analysis using Wilcoxon signed-rank tests were used to examine whether there were overall differences in mothers' endorsement of each goal category (achievement, self-maximization, proper demeanor, connectedness, happiness, and honesty) at the panel level across all mothers. There was a significant difference in mothers' median ranking of goal categories, $\chi^2(5; N = 184) = 282.96$, $p < .000$. To identify between which categories these differences lay, a set of 15 *post hoc* pairwise comparisons using Wilcoxon signed-rank tests were conducted with a Bonferroni correction applied, resulting in an alpha level of .003 per test. Results indicated that, except for the comparisons between honesty and happiness, and between self-maximization and connectedness, all comparisons were significant, $ps < .001$. Specifically, mothers ranked honesty and happiness as most important overall, with median panel rankings of 1.00 (i.e., placement into the 'very important' panel), followed in order by proper demeanor, achievement, self-maximization, and connectedness, with median panel rankings of 1.80, 2.00, 2.20, and 2.25, respectively.

Ethnic Differences in Rankings. We next examined whether mothers' ethnic backgrounds predicted their placement of different child qualities into the panels of 'very important,' 'important,' or 'not as important' and whether such differences might be explained by variation in socioeconomic and family circumstances. A mixed-model multivariate analysis of variance, with goal category (achievement, self-maximization, proper demeanor, connectedness, happiness, and honesty) as the within-participant factor and ethnicity (African-American, Dominican, or Mexican) as the between-participants factor, was conducted at the panel level. This was followed by a similar multivariate analysis of covariance, with mothers' socioeconomic factors and family-structure variables in Study 1 as covariates. As anticipated, there was a main effect for ethnicity both before, $F(12, 354) = 6.49$, $p < .001$, and after, $F(12, 286) = 3.89$, $p < .001$, covariates were considered (no main effects were found for the covariates). Thus, ethnic differences in mothers' panel rankings were not merely explained by differences in socioeconomic and family circumstances. Tests of between-subjects effects indicated that mothers of different ethnic backgrounds placed achievement qualities, $F(2, 158) = 3.65$, $p = .028$, self-maximization qualities, $F(2, 158) = 4.95$, $p = .008$, and happiness, $F(2, 158) = 10.09$, $p < .001$, into different panels.

To examine whether ethnic differences were evident in the panel ranking of specific qualities under the achievement and self-maximization categories, and between which pair of panels and which pair of ethnic groups the differences lay, 11 follow-up multinomial logistic regression analyses (5 for specific achievement qualities; 5 for specific self-maximization qualities; 1 for happiness) were conducted with a Bonferroni correction, resulting in an alpha level of .005 per regression. In each analysis,

mothers' ethnicity was entered to predict the likelihood of a child quality being placed into the reference panel (e.g., 'not as important') vs. each of the other two panels. As with a typical regression, ethnicity was represented as a set of three dummy codes, two of which were entered as predictors, and the third, representing the reference group, was left out. For example, a multinomial logistic regression predicting the quality of leadership with 'not as important' as the reference panel and African-American as the reference group would provide the likelihood of leadership being placed into the 'not as important' (vs. 'important' and 'very important') for Dominican mothers (vs. African-American mothers) and Mexican mothers (vs. African-American mothers). Using the conservative, Bonferroni-adjusted alpha level of .005, only the rankings of leadership and happiness differed by ethnic group, as indicated by the significant likelihood-ratio chi-square statistics (see Table 3) when controlling for mothers' socio-economic and family-structure background.

    For these two qualities, multinomial logistic regressions were reconducted by changing the reference panel and reference group to yield additional comparisons (in the above example, this would involve 'important' as the new reference panel and Mexican as the new reference group, yielding additional contrasts between 'very important' and 'important', and Dominican and Mexican mothers). Comparisons between each pair of ethnic groups for each pair of panels for leadership and happiness are presented in

Table 3. Multinomial Logistic Regressions Predicting the Placements of Child Qualities in the Three Panels from Mothers' Ethnicity (Study 2)

	χ^2	p
Achievement		
Good language and reading skills	11.95	.018
Working hard in school	6.85	.144
Persistence	9.60	.048
Intelligence	6.16	.188
Curiosity	*2.41*	*.299*
Self-maximization		
Leadership	35.06	<.001
Popularity	*3.39*	*.184*
Emotional independence	1.35	.853
Self-sufficiency	11.52	.021
High self-esteem	9.72	.045
Happiness	*16.62*	*<.001*

Note: Mothers' socioeconomic and family-structure variables in Study 1 were included as covariates in these analyses. Child qualities with italicized chi-square statistics had two panels combined for binomial logistic regressions due to low frequencies. For curiosity and popularity, the panels labeled 'very important' and 'important' were combined; for happiness, the panels labeled 'important' and 'not as important' were combined.

Table 4; effect sizes are reported as odds ratios (e.g., the odds of Dominican mothers placing leadership into the 'very important' panel, as opposed to the 'not as important' panel, were .07 compared with African-American mothers). As shown in Table 4, African-American mothers had a distinct pattern of panel rankings when compared with the two groups of Latina mothers: they were more likely to place the quality of leadership into the 'very important' or 'important' (vs. 'not as important') panel but less likely to place happiness into the 'very important' panel than the other two panels. No differences were found between Dominican and Mexican mothers.

Discussion

Using a closed-ended approach, Study 2 was designed to systematically compare the three ethnic groups on the relative importance they assigned to a set of 21 child qualities. As anticipated, mothers across ethnic backgrounds placed the most importance on honesty and happiness. This priority was followed by a dual emphasis on achievement and proper demeanor, which coincides with prior research and Study 1 (Figure 1 showed an elongated shape that was concave at the two corresponding regions). Although this pattern of priorities was observed across ethnic groups, meaningful differences were found when mothers of different ethnic backgrounds were compared. As hypothesized, African-American mothers ranked leadership, which reflected self-maximization, as more important than did Latina mothers. They also ranked happiness as less important than did Latina mothers. It is noteworthy that despite the similar patterns obtained for the Latina mothers, Dominican mothers appeared to exhibit a pattern midway between African-American and Mexican mothers (their average rankings fell midway on 12 of the 21 goals; see Figure 1), which may reflect the longer immigration history of their group to the study city and the associated acculturation. Finally, as anticipated, the quality of honesty was uniformly valued by all mothers, which aligns with prior research showing no ethnic difference on the broader concept of decency. SES (i.e., education and household income) did not relate to rankings of honesty, which also aligns with comparisons of low-income vs. middle-income Puerto Rican mothers (Harwood et al., 1996).

General Discussion

Prior research on parents' socialization goals has primarily focused on differences between parents of different cultural heritages by studying parents at one point in time. Using a longitudinal design, we identified changes in mothers' socialization goals over the course of the first two years of children's lives, starting as early as the first month of life, and documented the dynamic nature of such goals. Moreover, using two complementary methodological approaches, the current research revealed striking similarities in the socialization goals of African-American, Dominican, and Mexican mothers at a broad level, but important differences at a more specific level. Furthermore, socialization goals varied with mothers' socioeconomic backgrounds even within this low-income sample, illustrating the sensitivity of mothers' goals to household resources. This research also demonstrates the importance of distinguishing between the promotion of desirable qualities and the prevention of undesirable qualities when examining parents' socialization goals: There was more uniformity in mothers' views about undesirable than desirable qualities across ethnicity and socioeconomic background and over time.

Table 4. Ethnic Differences in the Placements of Child Qualities in the Three Panels (Study 2)

	Very important (vs. not as important)		Very important (vs. important)		Important (vs. not as important)	
	OR	95% CI	*OR*	95% CI	*OR*	95% CI
Leadership						
Dominican vs. African-American	.07***	[.02–.25]	.53	[.16–1.76]	.14***	[.04–.46]
Mexican vs. African-American	.04***	[.01–.17]	.62	[.12–3.22]	.06***	[.01–.28]
Mexican vs. Dominican	.52	[.13–2.04]	1.17	[.22–6.33]	.44	[.11–1.71]
Happiness[a]						
Dominican vs. African-American	6.10***	[2.28–16.32]	—	—	—	—
Mexican vs. African-American	5.24**	[1.78–15.44]	—	—	—	—
Mexican vs. Dominican	.86	[.29–2.55]	—	—	—	—

Note: OR = odds ratio of placing the child quality in a specific panel rather than the reference panel; CI = confidence interval. Mothers' socioeconomic and family-structures variables in Study 1 were included as covariates in these analyses.
[a] The 'important' panel and 'not as important' panel were combined due to low frequencies.
** *p* < .01, *** *p* < .001.

A major finding of this research concerns the dynamic nature of mothers' socialization goals, which has received little attention to date. As documented in Study 1, over the course of the first two years of their children's lives, mothers gradually shifted their emphasis for desirable qualities from proper demeanor to achievement and connectedness; this is remarkable given that at all three assessments, mothers were asked about qualities they wanted children to have at the same age (three years old). The shift occurred as they witnessed their children attain major developmental milestones such as reaching, walking, and talking, suggesting that mothers formulate socialization goals that are attuned to children's current skills. The dynamic nature of mothers' goals aligns with the idea that parents' socialization is best represented by transactional models, in which parents and children jointly contribute to socialization (e.g., Grusec & Goodnow, 1994; Sameroff, 2009). It also aligns with the perspective of parents as actively modifying their personal models of child development in line with new information—namely their experiences with children (Goodnow, 1985; Miller, 1988). On the other hand, there was remarkable developmental continuity in the undesirable qualities reported, with a continual focus on the prevention of improper demeanor across the three ages. This suggests that the absence of improper demeanor remains as parents' minimum expectation for their children, even as they shift their emphasis for desirable qualities away from proper demeanor.

In terms of ethnic variation, this research shows that mothers' socialization goals are best characterized as consisting of both ethnic similarities and differences. Despite using open-ended probes as in past studies, Study 1 did not reveal ethnic differences in any of the four socialization goal categories, either concerning the promotion of desirable qualities or concerning the prevention of undesirable qualities at any of the three waves (age 1 month, 14 months, 2 years). Mothers across the three ethnic groups had a dual emphasis on the promotion of achievement and proper demeanor as desirable qualities, and an exclusive focus on preventing the undesirable quality of improper demeanor; this dual emphasis seemed to be evident in Study 2, too (see Figure 1).

When mothers were probed for their ranking of specific goals in Study 2, their implicit assumptions about priorities in socialization were revealed. Overall, mothers ranked honesty and happiness as most important, even though these qualities were rarely mentioned by mothers in Study 1 when open-ended probes were used. It could be that the expectations for children to be moral and happy are so fundamental in child rearing that they do not come to mind when mothers are asked about qualities that they desire or do not desire to see in their children. Open-ended questions may tap socialization goals that are most salient to mothers, yet socialization goals and the underlying values are not always explicit to mothers despite their influence on mothers' practices (Wang & Tamis-LeMonda, 2003). This highlights the importance of using multiple methods of inquiry when assessing goals or values that may elude consciousness.

Notably, there was evidence for ethnic differences in the importance assigned to qualities related to achievement, self-maximization, and happiness. Despite the use of a conservative alpha level, African-American mothers were found to rank the quality of leadership as more important than did Latina mothers. To the extent that this quality represents self-maximization and individualism, this coincides with prior studies showing that African-Americans, like European Americans, tend to be more individualistic than persons from other cultures. In their meta-analysis on individualism–collectivism, Oyserman, Coon, and Kemmelmeier (2002, p. 25) found that African-Americans were more individualistic than both European and Latino

Americans; the difference between African and European Americans was particularly large in studies where 'valuing personal uniqueness' was included in the assessment of individualism. Moreover, these investigators reported that African-Americans were not more collectivistic than European Americans, who were less collectivistic than Latino Americans. These findings suggest that African-American mothers' emphasis on leadership may indeed reflect an individualistic orientation toward self-maximization.

In contrast, although happiness was considered important across ethnic groups, it was ranked as more important by Latina mothers than African-American mothers. This is in line with cross-national research on subjective well-being, which found that individuals from Latino countries placed much importance on positive affect and reported themselves as happier than would be expected based on income (Oishi & Schimmack, 2010). These notions of ethnic differences, however, should be considered against the backdrop of ethnic similarities documented in Study 1, to avoid an oversimplified portrayal of cultures as either collectivistic or individualistic. Notably, the presentation of specific goals to mothers in Study 2 allowed nuanced ethnic differences to be examined among the two groups of Latina mothers. Possibly due to their shared cultural heritage and immigration history, Dominican and Mexican mothers had similar patterns of socialization goals and clearly differed from their African-American counterparts, particularly in their emphasis on happiness and the relative lack thereof on leadership.

The divergent patterns of ethnic similarities and differences in the two studies suggest that superordinate goals such as self-maximization may be differentially defined or conceptualized by different groups (Wang & Tamis-LeMonda, 2003). They also highlight the importance of considering the method of inquiry and level of analyses when examining ethnic differences in socialization. Even if parents emphasize similar goals, they might do so for different reasons (Tamis-LeMonda et al., 2008). For example, Dominican and Mexican mothers might have valued achievement because it could translate into a higher living standard for their family, which would be considered a collectivistic motive. In contrast, African-American mothers might emphasize achievement as they believe it would allow their children to actualize their potential, which would be considered an individualistic motive. Thus, a direction for future research is to inquire into the reasons parents offer for their goals by using a combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches.

Notably, mothers' socialization goals appeared to be shaped by their socioeconomic backgrounds even within this low-income sample. In Study 1, mothers of relatively advantaged socioeconomic backgrounds in terms of education, employment and earnings prior to their children's birth were consistently more likely to emphasize desirable qualities related to self-maximization and connectedness rather than proper demeanor. Jobs with higher wages, for example, provide greater opportunities for autonomy and independence (Enchautégui-de-Jesus, Yoshikawa, & McLoyd, 2006; Menaghan & Parcel, 1994). In contrast, parents from more disadvantaged backgrounds tend to have jobs that demand obedience, which may foster a focus on proper demeanor for their children (Kohn, 1977). In addition, in other works on this sample, the lower-wage jobs were more isolating jobs, such as delivery or housekeeping, in comparison with the higher-wage jobs, which were more likely to include jobs in group workplaces such as offices with more opportunities for connectedness (Yoshikawa, 2011). Whereas most studies in the developmental literature have shown that socialization goals differed between parents of middle and lower class, this research provided evidence that socioeconomic factors operate in a similar manner between the very disadvantaged and

somewhat disadvantaged families in this low-income sample. Notably, mothers' socio-economic background did not predict their report of desirable qualities related to achievement in Study 1. This could be because these low-income mothers all value education and achievement as a primary route to social mobility. Undesirable qualities also did not vary according to mothers' socioeconomic background, which may be due to the dominance of goals related to preventing improper demeanor in the entire sample.

A common theme that emerged was the important distinction between the promotion of desirable qualities and the prevention of undesirable qualities. The consistently divergent patterns of changes for desirable and undesirable qualities in Study 1 indicated that parents seemed to think of the two types of qualities differently: Whereas desirable qualities might represent parents' hopes or dreams for children, undesirable qualities might represent their fears or minimum expectations. The patterns of higher continuity and homogeneity in the undesirable than desirable qualities suggested that ensuring children would not exhibit improper demeanor might be mothers' minimum expectation in child rearing, at least during the first years of children's lives. As long as children fulfill this basic requirement, there is more leeway in the pathways they follow. On the one hand, the asymmetrical nature of undesirable and desirable qualities in parents' socialization goals might be universal, as suggested by the consistent patterns across the three ethnic groups examined. Indeed, people are found to be more concerned with undesirable than desirable outcomes (Baumeister, Bratslavsky, Finkenauer, & Vohs, 2001). On the other hand, this research focused on parents who were likely to perceive themselves as the minority due to their ethnic and immigrant backgrounds and be particularly concerned about protecting their children from prejudice and discrimination (García Coll & Pachter, 2002). An alternative explanation would be that such perceptions led them to especially shield their children from behaviors considered to be undesirable in society, because such behaviors may elicit prejudicial responses from the majority group.

This research has several limitations. Firstly, across the two studies, mothers were asked about their goals for their children at the age of three years specifically. Although this focus allowed us to examine socialization goals within this critical developmental stage, it might have limited mothers' attention to the qualities that can reasonably be expected from children during toddlerhood. This focus on toddlerhood differed from the focus on adulthood in most prior studies (e.g., Harwood et al., 1996; Leyendecker et al., 2002), which may partially explain why greater ethnic similarity was found in Study 1 than has been documented in the past. Secondly, we asked mothers to report on their goals for children but did not inquire into the processes that led to their formulation of such views. Why and how mothers come to value certain qualities in their young children is especially relevant to the study of minority and immigrant groups. Regardless of their immigration history, ethnic minority parents are likely to encounter different messages about socialization from their own community and the mainstream community; such value conflicts may exist for their mainstream society counterparts but to a much smaller extent (Holden & Edwards, 1989). Finally, although we examined changes in mothers' socialization goals at major developmental periods in early life (birth, first year, second year, third year), we did not explore other time-varying characteristics of children such as their temperament or behavior. This was beyond the scope of the current study, but future research can consider these factors in order to more fully explore the reciprocal nature of socialization goal development.

In spite of these limitations, the current research advances a dynamic and nuanced, rather than static, perspective on parents' socialization goal. Parents continually renegotiate their goals as their young children undergo rapid development, and these negotiations occur in a broader sociocultural context. In addition, the two studies complemented each other by demonstrating that although mothers of diverse ethnic backgrounds differed in the specific qualities that they deemed as desirable or undesirable for children, there was much in common in the general foci of parents' socialization goals. Moreover, by assessing low-income mothers' socioeconomic circumstances, this research indicates that the influence of socioeconomic factors in early childhood is not limited to tangible resources or cognitive stimulation, but may include socialization goals for children. Finally, the distinct patterns found for desirable and undesirable qualities highlight the importance of distinguishing between the promotion and prevention of attributes when conceptualizing parents' socialization goals.

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Notes

1. Although past studies often included a category labeled 'Decency,' which contained qualities such as honesty, these qualities were rarely mentioned by mothers in this study, making it unjustified to include a fifth category of Decency.

2. The ethnic similarities and differences in demographic and family-structure variables documented in Study 1 were also evident in Study 2. There were only two changes from Study 1 to 2: Possibly due to the reduction in statistical power, the ethnic differences in mothers' age and household size no longer reached significance, although the patterns remained the same as in Study 1.

3. Very similar results were obtained when analyses were conducted at the ranking level.