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MEXICANS' AND UNITED STATES WHITES' COMMITMENT TO FAMILISM  
AND ITS RELATION WITH PSYCHOSOCIAL ADJUSTMENT: A CROSS NATIONAL  
COMPARISON

by

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A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy  
in the Department of Psychology  
in the College of Sciences  
at the University of Central Florida  
Orlando, Florida

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## ABSTRACT

Research has demonstrated that family of origin environment impacts outcomes for individuals; however, the extent to which attitudes toward family impact outcomes is less clear. One construct stemming from family studies is related to the importance and value individuals place on their nuclear and extended families of childhood. The construct, known as *familism*, encompasses multiple aspects of individuals' relationships with their childhood families. It has been suggested by some that cultures that tend to be collectivistic (e.g., non-European-based cultures) tend to value family unity and loyalty relatively more than individualistic cultures (e.g., European-based cultures). The purpose of this study was to examine familism from a cross-national perspective. Specifically, Mexicans and non-Latino White Americans were compared on their levels of familism in relation to psychosocial adjustment. Broadly speaking, the goal was to determine if distinct cultural groups differ on familism, and if familism—feeling supported and a sense of solidarity with one's family—is associated with a less problematic behaviors and higher psychological adjustment. Individuals completed measures assessing familism as well as psychological adjustment and problematic behaviors (psychological well-being, empathy, and symptoms of anxiety, depression, somatization, alcohol misuse, aggressiveness, antisocial features, and history of criminal acts). Interestingly, results suggested that, in practical terms, Whites and Mexicans did not differ in their endorsement of levels of familism. For both groups, familism was correlated with psychological well-being and problem behaviors. Implications of these findings and areas for future research will be discussed.

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## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Theoretical models posit that individuals' overall family-of-origin experience influences their psychological functioning and ability to form and maintain interpersonal relationships within and external to the family (Harvey & Bray, 1991). Healthy family environments generally provide family members with support and a sense of security. By contrast, conflict-laden families tend to lack warmth and often convey a lack of acceptance to family members – two characteristics believed to be critical for optimum development (Walsh, 2003). As examples, the quality of childhood families has been linked to adolescents' alcohol and substance use (Penk, Robinowitz, Kidd, & Nisle, 1979; Turner, Larimer, & Sarason, 2000), attrition from high school (Jimerson, Egeland, Sroufe, & Carlson, 2000), vulnerability to depression (Higgins, 2003), and general psychological adjustment (Kamsner & McCabe, 2000). Moreover, childhood families appear to lay the foundation for subsequent procreational family relationships. For example, family-of-origin cohesion has been linked to enhanced feelings of intimacy with spouses (Feldman, Gowen, & Fisher, 1998), less interpersonal conflict (Santos, Bohon, & Sanchez-Sosa, 1998), and overall marital adjustment and satisfaction (Amato & Booth, 2001; Andrews, Foster, Capaldi, & Hops, 2000; Conger, Cui, Bryant, & Elder, 2000; Flouri & Buchanan, 2002). All considered, the nature and quality of people's childhood family may be the most influential social group across the lifespan.

Various theories might explain adults' reciprocal concern for members of their childhood family. One theory – attachment theory – suggests that children form schemas or “internal working models” of both themselves and their relationships based on the types of relationships they witnessed and experienced during early childhood. In addition to parent-child relationships, children may have experienced mutually satisfying relationships with extended family members (Ainsworth & Bowlby, 1991; Bowlby, 1969). Once formed, the relationship models are thought

to be enduring and are carried forward into adulthood. For example, if the early child-family relationships were ones in which the children felt loved and accepted and that their needs could be satisfied, they likely would construct similar models of relationships based on a healthy self-identity and on a reciprocal concern for other family members' well-being.

Another theory—social learning theory—suggests that patterns of relating to others are acquired early in life based on contingencies of reinforcement and observation of how family members interact with others within and external to the family (Bandura & Walters, 1963; Maccoby & Martin, 1983). In essence, children learn interrelational behaviors by imitating others, especially their parents. When small, children have numerous opportunities to observe their parents and extended family members demonstrating mutual concern, loyalty, and support. To whatever degree children are socialized by receiving reinforcement for such behaviors, children will incorporate similar behaviors into their own behavior repertoires and are likely to repeat them in a reciprocal manner with both childhood and procreational family members (Amato & Booth, 2001; Bandura, 1973).

Finally, to account for the continuous nature of familism, is the problem-behavior theory (Jessor & Jessor, 1997). Problem-behavior theory does not address familism directly, but is related to the *absence* of intrafamilial loyalty and involvement. As alluded to above, the absence of family support has been linked to myriad interpersonal and behavioral problems. Problem-behavior theory is based on the notion that all behavior results from interactions between individuals and their environment. The theory is premised on three systems of psychosocial influence: personality system, perceived environment system, and the behavior system (Jessor, 1987). According to the theory, each of these systems can either instigate or mitigate problem behaviors and taken together, they influence individuals' propensity toward interpersonal and behavioral problems (Jessor). The environmental system consists of people's social milieus, such

as their social circle of family and friends, and their employment settings. It is this component of the theory that suggests that either the absence of family support or having conflicted intrafamilial relationships may lead to problems.

One construct stemming from family studies is related to the importance and value individuals place on their nuclear and extended families of childhood. The construct, known as *familism*, encompasses multiple aspects of individuals' relationships with their childhood families. The array of aspects may include a sense of loyalty and attachment, mutual support and willingness to assist, and identification and solidarity with childhood family members (Marin & Marin, 1991). Several points warrant noting about familism. As discussed later in this paper, a potential problem with the study of familism is the diverse conceptualizations and operational definitions used by different researchers (Rodriguez, Mira, Paez, & Myers, 2007). Moreover, many, if not most, researchers have employed the term to refer to a commitment to one's childhood family (nuclear and extended), although the term may include a concern for the welfare of one's children, particularly if they are adults (Gaines et al., 1997; Sabogal, Marin, Otero-Sabogal, Marin, Perez-Stable, 1987; Steidel & Contreras, 2003). Stated differently, it is rare for familism to be used in the literature to refer to support and commitment to one's spouse or underage children, although it may be assumed that commitment to family members extends to spouses and underage children. Also, Rodriguez et al. have added intrafamilial stress and conflict to the definition of familism, thereby, possibly obfuscating the original intent of the term (Marin & Marin; Ramirez & Arce, 1981).

Although concern, mutual support, and so on, for family members may be human phenomena that transcend cultures, it is conceivable, theoretically, that the degree of intrafamilial support varies across cultures. It has been suggested by some (Triandis & Geffland, 1998; Triandis, 1995) that cultures that tend to be collectivistic (e.g., non-European-based

cultures) tend to value family unity and loyalty relatively more than individualistic cultures (e.g., European-based cultures). The purpose of this study is to examine familism from a cross-national perspective. Specifically, Mexicans and non-Latino White Americans will be compared on their levels of familism in relation to psychosocial adjustment. Broadly speaking, the goal is to determine if distinct cultural groups differ on familism, and if familism—feeling supported and a sense of solidarity with one’s family—is associated with a less problematic behaviors and higher psychological adjustment.

#### Latino and non Latino White Differences on Familism

Much of the social scientific literature that has addressed the construct of familism has focused on people of Latino or Hispanic ancestry. Moreover, those who have written on this topic have suggested that, as a group, people of Latino ancestry generally place a high value on their families and possibly identify more with their families compared to non-Latino Whites (Bernal & Shapiro, 2005; Falicov, 2005; Gloria & Rodriguez, 2000; Montilla & Smith, 2006). Research on familism offers some support for that idea. However, some of the findings based on cross-ethnic comparisons have yielded less than unequivocal results on this question. Keefe, Padilla, and Carlos (1978) found family structure differences between Mexican Americans and Whites. Whites tended to live farther away from their family systems and were more likely to look for support outside of the family compared to Mexican Americans. Further, 72% of Mexican Americans reported that they sought support from relatives who lived in their same city, whereas only 29% of Whites reported doing the same. Keefe et al. concluded that although both Mexican Americans and Whites depend on relatives for emotional support, Mexican Americans may be able to receive more support due to their closer proximity to their family members.

Some research suggests that Latinos are more likely to live with extended family members (Burr & Mutchler, 1999) and have more face-to-face contact with extended relatives than Whites (Freeberg & Stein, 1996). Although most studies have found increased contact among Latino family members relative to Whites, some studies have failed to find ethnic differences in the amount of contact with extended family (Keefe & Padilla, 1987; Eisenberg, 1988; Sarkisian, Gerena, & Gerstel, 2006). For example, in their study of propensity to live near kin, Keefe and Padilla found no difference in amount of face-to-face contact between White and Mexican Americans after controlling for socioeconomic status (SES). Sarkisian, Gerena, and Gerstel also found that, controlling for SES, previously observed differences in extended family contact vanished between Whites, Mexican Americans, and Puerto Ricans.

One possible explanation for ethnic group differences in familism relates to type of support. Some studies on familial support have identified three major types of support: emotional, financial, and instrumental (Bengston & Roberts, 1991; Fischer, Sollie, Sorell, & Green, 1989). Emotional support refers to what the family does in order to foster a sense of belonging, love, and being cared for. Financial support refers to receiving money, whereas instrumental support refers to tangible measures of support such as providing childcare and other explicit interventions on family members' behalf. One study, for example, found that Mexican Americans and Puerto Ricans are less likely than Whites to provide financial support to family members, but are more likely to provide instrumental support (Sarkisian, Gerena, & Gerstel, 2006). Moreover, ethnic differences on types of support provided often are related to SES; SES is correlated positively with more financial support and negatively with proximity and contact (Sarkisian, Gerena, & Gerstel).

Researchers have noted that Latino familism may differ from other cultures' familism in that, among Latinos, familism emphasizes emotionally positive and supportive family

relationships (Marin, 1993; Sabogal et al., 1987) rather than primarily financial support which tends to be more common among Whites. Although some studies have suggested that Whites and Latinos do not differ on familism as much as previously believed, some differences still persist. Latinos have a greater tendency to socially interact and exchange support with extended family members than Whites (Keefe, Padilla, & Carlos, 1978). Moreover, Keefe, Padilla, and Carlos found that Mexican Americans, relative to Whites, prefer relying on relatives instead of friends when seeking social support. Although their results indicated that both groups frequently turned to relatives for support, Mexican Americans' physical proximity to their relatives was greater than for Whites, thereby allowing for greater access to support providers. Studies have provided empirical evidence showing that this physical proximity in the form of scholastic and personal involvement on the part of the parents is negatively correlated with externalizing behaviors in their adolescent children (Davidson & Cardemil, 2009).

Despite that familial obligations often are perceived as burdensome, Latinos, on average, appear to be more committed to such obligations than Whites. A study assessing attitudes toward family obligations found that Latino adolescents differed significantly from White adolescents on their commitment to assist, respect, and support family members (Fuligni, Tseng, & Lam, 1999). Despite some variation in their views on family roles, the Latino adolescents' emphasis on family obligations did not impair their peer relationships, suggesting that both family and peer relationships may be simultaneously valued and maintained. In that study, moderate endorsement of family obligations was associated with greater academic success.

Harrison, Wilson, Pine, Chan, and Buriel (1995) have suggested that a possible explanation for familism discrepancies between Latinos and Whites is Latinos' experiences with oppression and discrimination. They postulate that discriminatory experiences have forced Latinos to seek greater support to remain psychologically, politically, and economically strong as

a group. According to Harrison et al., the necessity for strength in numbers increases the importance of familism and may partially explain why Latinos tend to value family loyalty more than those of other ethnicities, particularly Whites. It is noted here that, at least impressionistically, many Latin Americans also embrace familism, yet have not experienced United States-based discrimination.

### Positive Outcomes Associated With Familism

Research generally links familism with positive outcomes for Latinos. Campos and colleagues (2008) examined the relation between familism and social support for pregnant Latinas. Campos et al. operationalized familism as a concern for the welfare of one's nuclear and extended family using the 10-item Familism Scale by Gaines and colleagues (1997). In their study, pregnant Latinas and Whites who scored higher on familism had more social support and lower levels of stress and pregnancy anxiety. Still, it is noted that Latinas scored higher on familism than Whites, and the correlations between familism, social support, and stress were stronger among Latinas than among Whites.

Familism also has been linked to other positive outcomes for Latinos. Ramirez and colleagues (2004) examined the relations between familism and marijuana and inhalant use among Whites and Latinos as a function of other variables such as acculturation and parental monitoring. Ramirez et al. defined familism as the perceived importance of parents, other relatives, and elders. Although Latinos in their study were found to use marijuana and inhalants more frequently than Whites, familism was associated with diminished lifetime marijuana use. The protective impact of familism has also been demonstrated in cigarette use (Kaplan, Napoles-Springer, Stewart, & Perez-Stable, 2001) and with decreases in deviant behavior. A study conducted on middle school Mexican American children found that disposition to deviance, as

measured by questions assessing ethical issues, empathy, and antisocial-like behaviors, was lower for those with higher familism scores, as measured by proximity to the family as well as use of family for emotional and instrumental support (Gil, Wagner, & Vega, 2000). When evaluated in terms of externalizing behaviors in Mexican-origin adolescents, familism has been shown to serve as a protective factor against exposure to negative deviant peers (Germán, Gonzales, & Dumka, 2009). In addition, familism has been shown to be associated with avoidance of violence in a Puerto Rican adolescent sample (Sommers, Fagan, & Baskin, 1993). Among Mexican Americans and Puerto Ricans, an emphasis on family values have been found to be associated with closer and better communicative relationships with parents and siblings and a desire to achieve at school (Fuligni, Tseng, & Lam, 1999). Last, familism has been associated with positive scholastic outcomes for Latino high school students (Esparza & Sanchez, 2008; Tseng, 2004; Valenzuela & Dornbusch, 1994). For example, Esparza and Sanchez found that familism—based on family support, interconnectedness, honor, and self-sacrifice—was associated with greater academic effort and fewer cut classes.

These findings generally attest to the value of familism. Research on the relation between non-nuclear adults in the home and positive outcomes is minimal. For example, Cherlin and Furstenburg (1986) have found that grandparents who have regular contact with their grandchildren due to their shared residence commonly function as parental authorities; as a result, they provide more guidance and discipline to their grandchildren. It is unclear if those findings generalize to other extended family relatives in the household (e.g., uncles and aunts). A study by Hamilton (2005) suggested that the mere presence of another adult in the home is correlated negatively with deviant behavior in homes with many children; however the findings also suggested the presence of another adult in the home (other than parents) is correlated positively with greater depressive symptoms among children, particularly adolescents.

## Familial Obligations

Many Latino families report that they attempt to socialize their children to assist with the care of relatives in order to promote values such as family assistance and respect for authority (Caplan, Choy, & Whitmore, 1991). Triandis (1995) suggests that these perceived obligations carry over into adulthood, and in order to best fulfill these obligations, individuals may continue living near their family. However, pressure to comply with these obligations has been found to be associated with poor academic performance among Latino adolescents, presumably because they are required to juggle the demands of their home with academics (Vazquez Garcia, Garcia Coll, Erkut, Alarcon, & Tropp, 2000).

The different aspects of familism that have been examined in prior literature focus fairly exclusively on family support and fail to consider the potential detrimental influence (Rodriguez, Mira, Paez, & Myers, 2007). Given the sometimes cumbersome demands that accompany family obligations, some Latinos may have mixed emotions about the importance of family. Keefe, Padilla, and Carlos (1978) found in their survey of Mexican Americans that, although 86% of respondents agree that they should keep in close contact with relatives and that it is positive to talk with and enjoy the company of relatives, 78% also agree that sometimes it is in their best interest not to visit with relatives very often. Moreover, results from one study highlighted one negative outcome associated with family obligations: those who perceived themselves to have the greatest familial obligations tend to obtain grades just as low, if not lower, than those who did not perceive themselves to have much familial obligation (Fuligni, Tseng, & Lam, 1999).

## Familial Individuation

Findings on the influence of individuation from family among Whites and Latinos have been mixed. There is much speculation regarding potential negative repercussions for those

overly involved and invested in family life, especially related to adolescent development. As an example, alcohol and substance use among adolescents may be related to unachieved differentiation from their parents (Baer & Bray, 1999). Family relationships—at least among Whites—that entail relative isolation from other family members, overpersonalization, and dependence between adolescents and parents are related to increases in externalizing behaviors (Boykin McElhaney & Allen, 2001). Weidman (1987) speculates that in families where under-individuation may be present in adolescent development, acting out, such as the abuse of illegal substances, might create the illusion of independence from the family while simultaneously fostering a dependence upon the family.

Bray, Adams, Getz, and McQueen (2003) examined the longitudinal relation between individuation and alcohol use among African American, Mexican American, and White adolescents. They found that healthy individuation correlated negatively with alcohol use among all three ethnic groups. Bray and colleagues had defined individuation as an ability to be personally responsible without those efforts being hindered by dominating parents. However, the findings from another study that had utilized the same measure for individuation that was used in the study by Bray et al. raised questions about the applicability of the virtues of individuation to Latinos. Baer, Prince, and Velez (2004), suggest that personal responsibility—which was how individuation was defined by Bray et al.—may explain the reduction in alcohol use among adolescents, not individuation per se. Baer et al. point to findings from other studies done in Latin America—where individuation is not necessarily valued or promoted as in the United States—that indicate that adolescents, on average, use or abuse alcohol and drugs at lower rates than adolescents in the United States (see Caetano, & Median Mora, 1988). It is noted here that individuation may not be causally related to substance abuse, given the correlational nature of the data from those studies.

## Variables Associated with Familism

Another variable that has been examined in relation to familism is acculturation.

Acculturation is a process through which individuals of one culture adapt to the beliefs and customs of another culture (Sam, 2006). Sabogal, Marin, and Otero-Sabogal (1987) studied the correlation between acculturation and familism for Latinos residing in the United States. Their familism scale was comprised of three factors: familial obligations, perceived support from the family, and family as referents (relying on relatives for guidance or advice). The results indicated that both familial obligations and relying on family as referents decreased with increasing levels of acculturation, whereas perceived levels of social support remain constant. That is, although acculturated Latinos reported feeling less obligated to help their families-of-origin and relied less on family members as referents, they (similar to less acculturated Latinos) reported that they perceived that they could still count on family members for social support in times of need. The results also revealed that although self-reported familial obligations and family as referents were inversely related to acculturation, acculturated Latinos still had higher scores across the three aspects of familism, on average, than Whites.

Romero, Robinson, Haydel, Mendoza, and Killen (2004) studied the relation between acculturation and familism among Mexican American 4<sup>th</sup> graders. Romero et al. operationalized acculturation by language preference (e.g., those who spoke either English only or both English and Spanish were considered more acculturated than those who spoke Spanish only). They defined familism as willingness to spend time with family members, respecting advice from parents and other adult family members, and feeling positive about being part of their families. Contrary to their prediction, more acculturated children had higher familism scores. The fact that less acculturated Mexican American children—who presumably adhere more to traditional Mexican cultural values—were not found to adhere more to familism—calls into question the

assumption in the literature that Latino cultures promote familism more than non-Latino White culture.

Another variable that has been linked with familism is collectivism, defined as the tendency to place the needs of one's group before one's individual needs (Triandis & Gelfand, 1998). Gaines and colleagues (1997) examined whether individualism, collectivism, and familism were divergent constructs among White, Latino, African American, and Asian American participants. They defined familism as a concern over the welfare of one's nuclear and extended family. Based on a factor analysis of the data, they found that collectivism and familism were independent constructs irrespective of gender, although the two constructs modestly (positively) correlated with each another. They also found that the African Americans, Latinos, and Asian Americans in their study obtained significantly higher scores on both collectivism and familism compared to non-Latino Whites.

#### Conceptualizations of Familism - Problems with Prior Research

One of the main problems with previous research on familism has been the discrepant operational definitions of this construct (Rodriguez et al., 2007). According to Marin (1993), there is a paucity of research properly identifying Latino values due to a lack of accurate conceptualizations and valid measures. The various definitions of familism have made it difficult to compare prior research in this domain in any meaningful way.

Three familism scales have been used in most of the research on Latino familism. The first, a 14-item Likert-type scale created by Sabogal et al. (1987), is comprised of items from scales originally developed by Bardis (1959) and by Triandis and colleagues (1982). According to a factor analysis, the scale by Sabogal et al. is comprised of three conceptual factors that account for a total of 48.4% of the variance: familial obligations, perceived support from family,

and family as referents, as discussed earlier. Another familism scale used in past studies was developed by Gaines and colleagues (1997). The scale by Gaines et al. is a 10-item Likert-type scale with all items loading onto one factor, which assesses general, reciprocal support and concern for the family. The third familism scale was developed by Steidel and Contreras (2003). The scale by Steidel and Contreras is an 18-item scale assessing attitudinal familism. Their scale was created primarily for use with less acculturated Latinos within the United States and consists of four subscales. They include familial support, familial interconnectedness, family honor, and subjugation of self for family. These three familism scales capture both distinct and overlapping facets of familism. They do not assess familism based on family member status (i.e., nuclear vs. extended), and they do not assess problematic aspects of familism (e.g., stress from having to assist family members) that was recommended by Rodriguez et al (2007).

### The Current Study

The research questions guiding this study were derived from unanswered questions in the literature on familism. Some researchers have argued that Latinos, as a group, value familism more than Whites, yet empirical findings have yet to corroborate that view consistently. One possible reason for modest and sometimes mixed findings on this question is that most studies have compared familism between two or more ethnic groups that reside in the same country, such as the United States. Ethnic groups living within the same country are likely to be influenced, albeit in different degrees, by the country's prevailing or dominant social norms, thereby, minimizing potential between-group differences. A cross-national comparison (rather than solely a cross-ethnic comparison) should be a better approach for answering this question more directly. In order to have a basis of comparison on the specific measures used in this study, data were collected and compared between a sample of White Americans and Mexican

Americans to determine if the two ethnicities differ on familism. Thus, one research question is, Do Mexican Americans manifest higher levels of familism compared to United States Whites? The remainder of the data was collected in Mexico to compare with data collected in the United States. Thus, another research question is, Do residents of a Latin American country (in this case, Mexicans)—who theoretically have not been pressured to acculturate toward the United States culture—manifest higher levels of familism compared to non-Latino White residents of the United States?

Researchers appear to have ignored the possibility that familism may vary as a function of family member status and gender. Specifically, intrafamilial commitment and loyalty (i.e., familism) may be directed toward nuclear family members (such as parents and siblings) or toward extended family members (grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, etc.). At least anecdotally (Chilman, 1993), Latinos tend not to demarcate intrafamilial relationships along nuclear versus extended family lines, whereas such a tendency may be more common among Whites in the United States. Given that the preponderance of studies on familism has focused on Latinos, researchers appear to assume that the reciprocal concern between Latino individuals and their families apply to nuclear and extended family members equally. However, that assumption warrants empirical scrutiny. Also, with few exceptions (e.g., Gaines et al., 1987), previous studies on familism have neglected to examine if women and men differ in their intrafamilial support and loyalty. Given that some authors suggest that women and men differ on relationship concerns and related behaviors (Gilligan, 1988; Jutras & Veilleux, 1991; Rubel, 1996), it is conceivable that familism will differ by gender. Thus, two other research questions are whether it is more common for familism to be directed toward nuclear family members than toward extended family members, and does familism vary as a function of gender.

The fourth question of this study relates to the notion that familism is linked to

psychological adjustment. A portion of the way familism generally is defined is distinct from how intrafamilial relations typically have been defined in other studies (Ainsworth & Bowlby, 1991; Bowlby, 1969). Unlike the measures of family-of-origin quality, the construct of familism includes a sense of loyalty and obligation toward childhood family members, including parents and grandparents. This differs, for example, in that an individual may come from a “healthy” family that maintained positive inter-family relations, yet as adults, the children feel no loyalty or obligation to tend to the welfare of childhood family members. Likewise, an individual may come from a dysfunctional, highly-conflicted childhood family, yet as an adult, feel some loyalty and obligation to tend to the welfare of members from the family-of-origin. In the current study, family support and loyalty are conceptualized and measured consistent with the construct of familism. The studies also have not examined if the association between familism and positive outcomes vary as a function of type of familism (i.e., nuclear- vs. extended-based). As a result, the correlations between nuclear- versus extended-based familism and multiple markers of psychological adjustment and problematic behaviors were examined, including as a function of ethnicity and gender. For this study, psychological adjustment is operationalized based on measures of psychological well-being, empathy, and symptoms of anxiety, depression, and somatization. Problematic behaviors are operationalized based on measures of alcohol misuse, aggressiveness, antisocial features, and history of criminal acts.

Because participants may be less willing to acknowledge behaviors deemed socially unacceptable (e.g., criminal behaviors), a measure of social desirability was included in order to control for the response set of social desirability in the analyses.

## Exploratory Questions

To further explore correlates of familism, four additional variables were included in this study. These variables include traditional indices of the quality of participants' childhood family environment on dimensions of expressiveness, conflict, and cohesion, as well as the construct of individualism/collectivism. In relation to these variables, two exploratory research questions are (a) Is familism (nuclear- and extended family-based) correlated with retrospectively recalled childhood family relations? and (b) Is familism correlated with participants' sense of individualism and collectivism. Previous research (Gaines et al. 1997) has suggested that collectivism—having a concern for the well-being of members of one's group (as opposed to concern over one's own well-being)—is linked with familism.

## Study Hypotheses

Corresponding with the research questions, four formal hypotheses are made. The first three hypotheses were guided primarily by social-learning theory; namely, individuals—irrespective of culture of origin—tend to form attitudes and behave in ways consistent with what they learned in childhood from significant others. The first hypothesis is that Mexican Americans would significantly differ from United States Whites on measures of familism. The second hypothesis is that, although both Mexicans and United States Whites, on average, will demonstrate a commitment and concern for their respective families, Mexicans will manifest more familism than United States Whites. Based on the view that family identity and solidarity are important characteristics of many Latinos residing in the United States (Chilman, 1993; Keefe, Padilla, & Carlos, 1978; Marin, 1993; Sabogal et al., 1987; Steidel & Contreras, 2003; Vega, 1995; Zinn & Wells, 2000), it is expected that between-group differences on familism will be more apparent in this cross-national comparison between Mexicans and United States Whites.

The third hypothesis is that United States Whites will express significantly more familism toward nuclear family members than toward extended family members. This hypothesis is based on literature that suggests that individualistic cultures (such as mainstream, United States culture) emphasize the nuclear family as the family unit more so than the extended family system (Brislin, 1993; Gaines et al., 1997; Keefe, Padilla, & Carlos, 1978). By implication, this hypothesis posits that no significant nuclear- versus extended-based familism will be observed among Mexicans.

The fourth hypothesis, guided by problem-behavior theory, is that both types of familism (nuclear- and extended-based) will be associated with psychological adjustment and behavioral problems. Specifically, irrespective of nationality, increases in familism are expected to be associated with increased psychological adjustment (more psychological well-being, more empathy, and less symptoms of anxiety, depression, and somatization) and decreased problematic behaviors (alcohol misuse, aggression, antisocial features, and history of criminal acts).

Finally, three exploratory questions are examined: It is expected, though not formally hypothesized, that women, on average, will obtain higher nuclear- and extended-based familism scores than men. Also, it is expected that higher qualities of families-of-origin will be positively associated with familism (that is, higher scores on family cohesion, and lower scores on family conflict, will be associated with increases in familism). Last, it is expected that collectivism will be positively associated with nuclear- and extended-based familism (by contrast, individualism is expected to be inversely associated with familism).

## Overall Study Design

Answers to these questions were pursued in two studies after an initial pilot study. In the pilot study, university students of diverse ethnicities responded to questions generated by the present author about familism as well as measures assumed to be correlated with familism in order to establish a reliable and valid measure of familism. Items generated by the present author believed to measure various constructs of familism were subjected to a factor analysis to determine which items would be included in the final scale.

In study 1, university students from the University of Central Florida (UCF) in Orlando, Florida and Texas A&M International University in Laredo, Texas responded to the familism final scale items from the pilot study related to general, nuclear, and extended familism. Data from White students at UCF were compared to data from Mexican American students at Texas A&M International University to determine if Mexican Americans and Whites differed on levels of familism.

In study 2, a different sample of students from UCF and a sample of Mexicans from Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla in Puebla, Mexico completed a questionnaire packet, including the familism measure created by the present author, and a number of variables related to psychological wellbeing and problem behaviors. The two national groups were compared to determine if they differ in their endorsement of familism and if familism differentially correlates with the measures of psychological wellbeing and problem behaviors.

Because attitudes about matters related to family values may evoke responses that are perceived to be socially desirable, a measure of social desirability was included in study 2 so that the response set of social desirability could be controlled for in the analyses. Also, prior to collecting data, this project was formally reviewed and approved by the institutional review boards (IRB) at the respective universities where these studies took place.

## CHAPTER 2: METHODS

### Pilot Study

#### *Participants*

The pilot study sample was composed of 501 (146 male, 355 female) undergraduate college students enrolled in Psychology courses at the University of Central Florida. Regarding ethnicity, 362 (72.3%) of the students self-identified as non-Hispanic White, 69 (13.8%) as Hispanic/Latino/a, 24 (4.8%) as African American, 20 (4.0%) as Asian, and 26 (5.2%) as “other.” Participants were compensated with academic credit toward their respective courses.

#### *Materials*

*Demographic questionnaire.* A demographic questionnaire was included that assessed students’ age, gender, ethnicity, class standing, parent’s educational attainment, and SES.

*Familism questionnaire.* In order to assess familism both at a nuclear family and extended family level, all students responded to a questionnaire developed by the present author. This familism scale, originally based on 109 items, contained three conceptual subscales: general pro-family attitudes, nuclear familism, and extended familism. Some items for the pilot study were adapted from the Gaines et al. (1997) Familism Scale as well as the Sabogal, Marín, & Otero-Sabogal (1987) Familism Scale and the MOS Social Support Survey (Sherbourne & Stewart, 1991). Participants responded to each item on 5 point Likert-type scale, with 1 labeled *Strongly Disagree*, 3 labeled *Unsure*, and 5 labeled *Strongly Agree*. The scale was subjected to a factor analysis. In addition to a factor analysis, interitem correlations were examined and the

Briggs and Cheek (1986) guidelines were used to determine the items that were included in the final measure. Accordingly, those with interitem correlations in each subscale above .50 were discarded due to overlap and those with interitem correlations lower than .15 were discarded due to irrelevance to the construct. In addition, items were discarded based on low factor loadings to the subscales. The internal consistency of each subscale was examined after all item deletions were made. Moreover, convergent and divergent validity were established for this new familism scale by demonstrating its correlation with related and unrelated constructs (e.g., psychological symptoms, social support, family environment, and a pre-existing familism scale). The resulting scale consisted of 5 general familism items, 10 nuclear familism items, and 10 extended familism items. Table 4 shows the Cronbach alpha reliability coefficients on all study instruments and subscales based on our participants from Study 1 and Study 2.

*Brief Symptoms Inventory.* The *Brief Symptoms Inventory* (BSI-sf) is an 18-item, short version of the SCL-90-R (Derogatis, 1977). The short form assesses three symptom scales: somatization, depression, and anxiety in addition to an overall global symptom index. Participants respond to the questions on a five point Likert-type scale according to their level of distress. The BSI manual (Derogatis, 2000) reports it correlates with the SCL-90-R scales between .91 and .96 and reports internal consistency between .74 and .90. A global symptom index of 63 and higher is considered clinically significant.

*Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support.* The MSPSS is a 12-item scale assessing various dimensions of social support from friends, family, and significant others on a 7-point Likert-type scale (Zimet, Dahlem, Zimet, & Farley, 1988). The scale has been shown to be reliable ( $\alpha = .91$ ) even with diverse populations (Dahlem, Zimet, & Walker, 1991).

*Quality of Family-of-Origin.* To measure participants' retrospectively recalled perceptions of the quality of their families-of-origin, they completed two subscales (Cohesion

and Conflict) of the *Family Environment Scale* (FES; Moos, 1974; Moos & Moos, 1994). These two scales are part of the relationship dimension of the FES. The FES is a true-false self-report measure intended to assess the actual, preferred, or expected social environment of families. A modified version of the FES was used in this study whereby respondents were instructed to respond to items in reference to their childhood family-of-origin. Consistent with previous adaptations of this measure (Negy & Snyder, 2005; Moos & Moos), items were rewritten in the past tense in order to accommodate respondents' retrospective assessment of their childhood family climate. These two subscales consist of 18 items total.

*Gaines Familism Scale.* The Gaines Familism scale was designed to measure an individuals' orientation toward the welfare of their family, both immediate and extended on a five point Likert-type scale (Gaines et al., 1997). The scale is comprised of 10 questions that assesses general, reciprocal support and concern for the family. The authors demonstrated the scale to be reliable (.88) with all factors loading on the scale at .4 or higher.

### *Procedure*

Data collection lasted approximately one hour in length. Each participant was provided with a consent form at the beginning of the session, and was asked to review the form with the researcher and sign it before continuing. Next, participants completed the questionnaires. After each data collection session, participants were shown a debriefing sheet explaining the purpose of the study.

## Study 1

### *Participants*

The overall sample was composed of 462 (107 male, 255 female) undergraduate students from the University of Central Florida and 76 (16 male, 60 female) undergraduate students from Texas A&M International University, all enrolled in Psychology. Because the focus of Study 1 was to compare non-Hispanic Whites and Mexican Americans, only data from these two ethnic groups were included for analyses. Thus, the sample included 362 students who self-identified as White American from the University of Central Florida and 76 students who self-identified as Mexican American from Texas A&M International University. Participants were compensated with academic credit toward their respective courses.

### *Materials*

Participants completed the same questionnaire packets as in the pilot study; however for this study, analyses were conducted on data only on my familism scale.

### *Procedure*

The procedure was identical to the pilot study.

## Study 2

### *Participants*

Participants included 240 non-Latino Whites (80 male, 159 female, 1 non-respondent) from the United States and 232 (75 male, 157 female) Mexicans. These participants were recruited specifically from comparable, public universities in medium-sized cities. The U.S. Whites were recruited from the University of Central Florida in Orlando, and the Mexicans were recruited from Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla in Puebla, Mexico. Participants were compensated with extra credit in their respective courses.

### *Materials*

Participants completed my familism scale, the BSI-sf, and the Quality of Family of Origin cohesion and conflict subscales in addition to the scales listed below.

*Marlowe-Crowne Social Desirability Scale.* The M-C SDS is a 33-item true/false scale designed to measure attempts by participants to be perceived in a positive manner (Crowne & Marlowe, 1960). The scale assesses responses to items that are culturally sanctioned and approved but which are relatively unlikely to occur.

*Psychological well-being.* Psychological well-being was assessed by Ryff's (1989) *Psychological Well-Being Scale*. The original scale consists of six 20-item subscales: autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relations with others, purpose in life, and self-acceptance. The scale has been shortened to 14-item, 9-item, and 3-item subscales. The current study used the 9-item subscale.

*Empathy.* To assess empathy, all participants completed the *Interpersonal Reactivity Index* (IRI: Davis, 1980). For this study, only the 7 items forming the Empathy-Concern (EC)

subscale was used because they were deemed to be most relevant to this study's focus. The EC subscale measures the tendency to experience feelings of warmth, compassion, and concern for other people. Respondents report their endorsement of the statements using a 5-point Likert-type scale, ranging from "Does Not Describe Me Well" to "Describes Me Very Well." An overall empathy score is obtained by adding responses to the items, with higher scores reflecting higher empathy.

*Alcohol Misuse.* To assess negative consequences of alcohol use, participants completed the Shortened Inventory of Problems (SIP) – Alcohol and Drugs (Blanchard, Morgenstern, Morgan, Labouvie, & Bux, 2003). The SIP is a 15-item shortened version of the Inventory of Drug Use Consequences (InDUC; Tonigan & Miller, 2002). The test measures physical, social, intrapersonal, impulsive, and interpersonal consequences of alcohol and drug use. Participants endorsed or denied consequences on drinking and drug use in the past 30 days and endorsements were tallied to create a total score.

*Aggressiveness.* To measure aggressiveness, participants completed the *Aggression Questionnaire-Short Form* (AQ-sf) (Buss & Warren, 2000). The AQ-sf consists of the first 15 items of the original 34-item version, and was designed to measure the degree to which respondents endorse statements about their levels of aggression. Items are responded to using a 5-point Likert-type scale, ranging from "Not At All Like Me" to "Completely Like Me," with higher scores indicating more aggressiveness.

*Antisocial Features.* To measure the degree to which individuals have antisocial features, all participants completed the Antisocial Features subscale of the *Personality Assessment Inventory* (PAI) short form (Morey, 1991). Participants responded to each of the 12 items on a four point Likert-type scale. The PAI short form is derived from the first 160 items of the 344 total items. Reliability estimates for the Antisocial Features Scale are .80 for alpha and .89 for

test-retest. The correlation between the Antisocial Features Scale from the short form and the Antisocial Features full scale is estimated to be .93.

*History of Delinquent Behavior.* To measure the degree to which participants have engaged in delinquent behavior they completed the *Measures of delinquency and drug use (MDDU)* that was obtained from the National Youth Survey (Elliot, Huizinga, & Ageton, 1985). The MDDU is a 45-item self-report measure of drug use, minor delinquency, index offenses, and general delinquency in which individuals are asked to estimate how many times during the past 12 months they have committed those behaviors. For this study, instead of inquiring about the past 12 months, participants were asked to estimate their past acts over their life time out of concern for a low base rate for recent commission of crimes in a population of adult college students. Three separate scores can be obtained from this scale, based on a summation of the number of times respondents have engaged in the stated behaviors. The summation of scores that creates the general delinquency scale was used for the purposes of this study, which assesses all the delinquency items except trivial items (e.g. lied about age, bought liquor for a minor).

*Individualism-Collectivism.* To measure participants' adherence to values believed to represent the constructs of individualism and collectivism, participants completed the 16 items that Triandis and Gelfand (1998) found to have high factor loadings (equal to or greater than .40) from their original 32 item instrument (Singelis, Triandis, Bhawuk, & Gelfand, 1995). Eight of the items are statements believed to reflect a preoccupation for one's own success and life pursuits (individualism), whereas the remaining eight statements are believed to reflect a concern for the well-being of one's family or larger social community (collectivism). Items are responded to using a 9-point Likert-type scale, with response options ranging from "Agree" to "Disagree."

*Steidel and Contreras Familism Scale.* A previously established measure of familism was also included in the study (Steidel & Contreras, 2003). The scale is an 18-item, 10 point Likert-type attitudinal scale ranging from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree” developed for use with less acculturated Latinos. A factor analysis of data obtained for the development of the scale lent support for four factors, accounting for 51.23% of the total variance of the scale: familial support, familial interconnectedness, familial honor, and subjugation of self for family.

*Family Stress Items.* Based on gaps in previous scales failing to measure the potential negative impact of familism on individuals, the present author developed 5 items addressing stress from emotional and instrumental support given to family members. Participants responded to the items on a 5-point Likert-type scale, with response options ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). A sample item is, “I sometimes resent having to financially help my family members.”

### *Procedure*

Consistent with the Brislin (1970) technique for translating questionnaires into a new language, a team of two bilingual (English-Spanish), bicultural researchers initially translated all questionnaires into Spanish. An independent team of two bilingual, bicultural researchers translated the Spanish version of the questionnaires back into English. Afterwards, all four researchers met to examine and compare the English-translated version with the original English version in order to address and resolve inconsistencies in translations. As an extra measure of confidence for the appropriateness of the Spanish version, before administration of the Spanish version to Mexicans, a Mexican professor of psychology at the institution where this study took place reviewed the version for a final round of modifications. Both language versions of all of

the instruments were examined for reliability estimates and were shown to have acceptable reliability (see Table 6).

## CHAPTER 3: RESULTS

### Pilot Study

An exploratory factor analysis was performed on responses to the original 109 items created by the present author to assess familism, using SPSS Windows 13.0. The analysis was based on data collected from 501 students. For all analyses, an alpha level of .05 was set unless otherwise indicated. Initially, a principal components extraction was conducted on the 109 items and yielded 21 components (using Kaiser criterion of Eigenvalue  $> 1$  for truncation). Due to the unwieldy nature of the initial outcome, the principal components analysis was limited to 5 components to correspond with the five conceptual subscales (general familism, nuclear giving support, nuclear receiving support, extended family giving support, extended family receiving support). The unrotated solution was subject to an orthogonal VARIMAX rotation in order to maximize high correlations and variance for each component so that each variable could be easily identified for a single component. The rotation converged in seven iterations. When limiting the analysis to five factors, almost all items loaded onto the first two components. Given this, the principal components analysis was limited to 2 components. The two components together accounted for 35.27 % of the variance. The unrotated solution was subject to an orthogonal VARIMAX rotation. The rotation converged in three iterations.

Component loadings were determined after suppressing all values less than .4. Items were chosen for inclusion in the final scale based on their component loading, correlation with other items, and whether they related to giving or receiving support. An equal number of giving and receiving support items were selected for each scale. In addition, within each conceptual subscale no item was included if it correlated less than .15 or greater than .5 with any other item

that had been selected for use within the subscale. Table 1 shows the factor loading of each item included in the final scale. Table 2 shows the Cronbach alpha levels of each scale.

In order to assess the validity of the familism measure, participants completed a measure of social support, family environment, psychological adjustment, and a pre-existing scale that measures the construct of familism (i.e., by Gaines et al., 1996). Correlations were conducted between each subscale of the familism measure and the aforementioned measures and are shown in Table 3. Correlations were all found to be statistically significant and in the expected direction with each extra-test measure, thereby demonstrating preliminary evidence for the validity of my familism scale.

In order to assess for test-retest reliability, 37 participants completed my familism measure twice in a two week interval. Correlations between time 1 and 2 were .85 ( $p < .0001$ ), .81 ( $p < .0001$ ), and .81 ( $p < .0001$ ) for the general familism, nuclear familism, and extended familism subscales, respectively.

## Study 1

All data were screened for normality and homogeneity of variance. All variables used in Study 1 are normally distributed and do not violate the assumption of homogeneity of variance.

In order to test the hypothesis that Mexican Americans would significantly differ from non-Hispanic Whites on measures of familism, a multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was conducted. The independent variables (IVs) were participant ethnicity and gender. The dependent variables (DVs) were the general, nuclear, and extended familism scales. Response options for all statements ranged from 1 (*Disagreement with statement*) to 5 (*Agreement with statement*), with a response of 3 indicating “*Unsure*.” Based on those options, I presume that a response of 1 reflects disagreement with the statement, 2 reflects moderate disagreement with the

statement, 3 reflects uncertainty or ambivalence toward the item, 4 reflects moderate agreement with the statement, and 5 reflects strong agreement with the statement.

Using Wilks' Lambda, neither ethnicity ( $F [3,429] = .172, p > .05$ ), gender ( $F [3,429] = .742, p > .05$ ), nor the interaction of ethnicity X gender ( $F [3,429] = .130, p > .05$ ) was significantly associated with familism overall. In absolute terms, on average, Whites and Mexican Americans indicated moderate agreement with general familism ( $M_s = 3.97$  and  $3.98$  [ $SD_s = .68$  and  $.62$ ], respectively) and nuclear familism ( $M_s = 3.99$  and  $4.03$  [ $SD_s = .52$  and  $.52$ ], respectively) and expressed uncertainty about extended familism ( $M_s = 3.38$  and  $3.39$  [ $SD_s = .65$  and  $.62$ ], respectively). Given the unequal sample sizes of the Mexican American and White samples, a separate MANOVA was performed using a random subset of the White participants to ensure equal sample size ( $n = 75$ ). The results were also non-significant for ethnicity ( $F [3, 142] = .481, p > .05$ ), gender ( $F [3, 142] = 1.315, p > .05$ ), and the interaction of ethnicity and gender ( $F [3, 142] = 1.614, p > .05$ ). Due to the non-significant findings, no follow-up analyses were conducted. These results suggest that Mexican American and White students do not significantly differ on the construct of familism. See Table 5 for means and standard deviations.

## Study 2

Similar to Study 1, all data were screened for normality and homogeneity of variance. Upon visual inspection of the graph, if variables were not normally distributed they were appropriately transformed. Such transformations are noted in the specific analyses for which they are relevant.

In order to test the hypothesis that Mexicans would manifest more familism than United States Whites, a MANCOVA was conducted with national group (Mexicans vs. U.S. Whites) and gender as the IVs, and familism (general, nuclear, extended, family stress, and the Steidel-

Contreras familism scale, separately) as the DVs. Social desirability was used as a covariate in this analysis.

Table 7 shows the means and standard deviations for each scale by nationality and gender. All familism measures were responded to using a 5-point Likert-type scale except the Steidel Contreras Familism Scale that uses a 10-point Likert-type scale. Moreover, it is worth noting that a difference between group-mean scores that are statistically significant may not represent meaningful differences (e.g. the difference between 4 and 3.6 on a 5-point scale). Statistically significant findings can occur even when differences between groups are not meaningful. For example, statistically significant findings can be a function of a large sample size and not meaningful group differences (Kline, 2004). With this in mind and consistent with Study 1, results are presented in both comparative and absolute terms based on previous guidelines for interpreting group mean responses to the familism statements.

Using Wilks' Lambda, there was a significant multivariate effect for national group ( $F [5, 437] = 12.11, p < .001; partial \eta^2 = .12$ ) and gender ( $F [5, 437] = 5.31, p < .001; partial \eta^2 = .06$ ), but not for the interaction of national group X gender ( $F [5, 437] = 1.15, p > .05$ ).

When comparing U.S. Whites and Mexicans, univariate analyses revealed that U.S. Whites endorsed significantly more general familism than did Mexicans ( $M_s = 4.00$  and  $3.60$  [ $SD_s = .72$  and  $.65$ ], respectively) ( $F [1, 441] = 39.68, p < .001; \eta^2 = .08$ ), significantly more nuclear familism than did Mexicans ( $M_s = 3.92$  and  $3.67$  [ $SD_s = .52$  and  $.45$ ], respectively) ( $F [1, 441] = 31.44, p < .001; \eta^2 = .07$ ) and significantly more extended familism than did Mexicans ( $M_s = 3.16$  and  $2.76$  [ $SD_s = .70$  and  $.72$ ], respectively) ( $F [1, 441] = 33.09, p < .0001; \eta^2 = .07$ ). Although statistically differing, on average and in absolute terms, both Mexicans and U.S. Whites agreed with the importance of general familism and nuclear familism. Both groups expressed relative uncertainty with extended family tenets. On a previously established measure

of familism (created by Steidel & Contreras [2003]), U.S. Whites endorsed significantly more familism than did Mexicans ( $M_s$  on overall score = 6.32 and 6.01 [ $SD = 1.12$  and  $1.29$ ], respectively) ( $F [1, 441] = 12.01, p = .001; \eta^2 = .03$ ). Again, despite the statistical significance, overall, both groups expressed relative uncertainty with the familism tenets set forth by Steidel and Contreras. Last, on a measure of family stress, Mexicans endorsed significantly higher levels of family stress than did U.S. Whites ( $M_s = 2.60$  and  $2.49$  [ $SD = .71$  and  $.66$ ], respectively) ( $F [1, 441] = 4.43, p = .036; \eta^2 = .01$ ). In absolute terms, both groups reported a medium-level endorsement of family stress.

Regarding gender, univariate analyses revealed that women endorsed significantly higher levels of general familism than did men ( $M_s = 3.89$  and  $3.61$  [ $SDs = .71$  and  $.70$ ], respectively) ( $F [1, 441] = 19.96, p < .001; \eta^2 = .04$ ) and significantly higher levels of nuclear familism than men ( $M_s = 3.84$  and  $3.70$  [ $SDs = .51$  and  $.49$ ], respectively) ( $F [1, 441] = 8.88, p < .01; \eta^2 = .02$ ). In absolute terms, both genders, on average, endorsed moderate agreement with the constructs. Women did not differ significantly from men on extended familism ( $M_s = 2.96$  and  $2.96$  [ $SDs = .73$  and  $.76$ ], respectively) ( $F [1, 441] = .029, p > .05$ ), on a previously established measure of familism ( $M_s = 6.19$  and  $6.12$ ,  $SDs = 1.24$  and  $1.16$ , respectively) ( $F [1, 441] = .60, p = .44$ ), or on family stress ( $M_s = 2.54$  and  $2.56$  [ $SDs = .68$  and  $.70$ ], respectively) ( $F [1, 441] = .28, p > .05$ ).

In order to test the hypothesis that U.S. Whites would express significantly more familism toward nuclear family members than toward extended family members, a t-test was conducted comparing U.S. Whites' scores on the nuclear family subscale and the extended family subscale only. The t-test revealed that Whites did endorse significantly more nuclear familism than extended ( $M_s = 3.92$  and  $3.15$  [ $SDs = .55$  and  $.70$ ], respectively) ( $t [236] = 16.84, p < .001$ ). For comparative purposes, a separate t-test comparing nuclear- vs. extended-family

scores for Mexicans was performed. Mexican students exhibited a similar commitment to their nuclear families, with their endorsement of nuclear familism being significantly higher than extended familism ( $M_s = 3.67$  and  $2.76$  [ $SD_s = .45$  and  $.72$ ], respectively) ( $t [228] = 17.89, p < .001$ ).

To test the hypothesis that familism, irrespective of ethnicity and gender, would be associated with problem behaviors and psychological adjustment, a series of Pearson product-movement correlations were calculated to assess the relations between problem behavior/psychological adjustment and the familism scales. To control for Type I error due to multiple comparisons, a Bonferroni adjustment was made to the alpha level for 11 comparisons for each scale. The new alpha level is  $.005$  ( $.05/11$ ). The results are displayed in Tables 8 and 9 for U.S. Whites and Mexicans, respectively, and are summarized here. For U.S. Whites, higher endorsement of general familism, nuclear familism, extended familism and an independent measure of familism were associated significantly with higher levels of psychological well-being ( $r_s = .39, .37, .26,$  and  $.30, p_s < .001$ , respectively). For U.S. Whites, higher endorsement of family stress was associated significantly with lower levels of psychological well-being ( $r = -.32, p < .001$ ). For Mexicans, general, nuclear, extended and an independent measure of familism were not associated significantly with psychological well being ( $r_s = .10, .07, .10, -.02, ns$ , respectively); however, higher levels of family stress correlated significantly with lower levels of psychological well-being ( $r = -.32, p < .001$ ).

Regarding symptoms of adjustment as measured by the BSI-sf (e.g., symptoms of anxiety and depression), for U.S. Whites, higher endorsement of extended familism was associated significantly with lower levels of maladjustment ( $r = -.16, p < .001$ ). Higher levels of family stress were associated significantly with higher levels of maladjustment ( $r = .22, p < .001$ ). There was not a significant relation between adjustment and the general familism, nuclear familism, or

an independent measure of familism for U.S. Whites ( $r_s = -.13, -.11, -.05, ns$ , respectively). For Mexicans, endorsement of family stress was associated significantly with higher levels of maladjustment ( $r = .25, p < .001$ ). Adjustment was not significantly associated with general familism, nuclear familism, extended familism, or an independent measure of familism ( $r_s = -.05, -.01, -.15, .03, ns$ , respectively).

Regarding delinquency, for Whites, general familism, nuclear familism, extended familism, family stress, and an independent measure of familism were not associated significantly with general delinquency ( $r_s = -.05, .01, .11, .07, -.01, ns$ , respectively). For Mexicans, higher levels of nuclear familism were associated significantly with lower levels of delinquency ( $r = -.19, p < .001$ ). General familism, extended familism, family stress, and an independent measure of familism were not associated significantly with delinquency ( $r_s = -.11, -.09, -.04, -.17, ns$ , respectively).

Regarding antisocial traits, for Whites, higher levels of general familism were associated significantly with lower levels of antisocial traits ( $r = -.22, p < .001$ ). Nuclear familism, extended familism, family stress, and an independent measure of familism were not associated significantly with antisocial traits ( $r_s = -.17, -.05, .13, -.14, ns$ , respectively). For Mexicans, general familism, nuclear familism, extended familism, family stress, and an independent measure of familism were not associated significantly with antisocial traits ( $r_s = -.17, -.04, -.06, .13, -.03, ns$ , respectively).

Regarding aggressiveness, for Whites, higher levels of general familism and nuclear familism were significantly associated with lower levels of aggressiveness ( $r_s = -.21$  and  $-.17, p_s < .001$ , respectively). In addition, higher levels of family stress were associated significantly with higher levels of aggressiveness ( $r = .22, p < .001$ ). Extended familism and an independent measure of familism were not associated significantly with aggressiveness ( $r_s = -.13$  and  $-.02$ ,

*ns*). For Mexicans, higher levels of general familism, nuclear familism, and extended familism were associated significantly with lower levels of aggressiveness ( $r_s = -.21, -.17, -.17, p < .001$ , respectively). In addition, higher levels of family stress were associated significantly with higher levels of aggressiveness ( $r = .35, p < .001$ ). The independent measure of familism was not associated significantly with aggressiveness ( $r = -.06, ns$ ).

Regarding alcohol misuse, for Whites, general familism, nuclear familism, extended familism, family stress, and an independent measure of familism were not associated significantly with alcohol misuse ( $r_s = -.08, -.07, .02, .05, -.03, ns$ , respectively). For Mexicans, general familism, nuclear familism, extended familism, family stress, and an independent measure of familism were not associated significantly with alcohol misuse ( $r_s = .08, .08, .08, .13, .07, ns$ , respectively).

Regarding empathy, for Whites, higher levels of general familism, nuclear familism, extended familism, and an independent measure of familism were associated significantly with higher levels of empathy ( $r_s = .32, .28, .17, .34, p_s < .001$ , respectively). In addition, higher levels of family stress were associated significantly with lower levels of empathy ( $r = -.23, p < .001$ ). For Mexicans, higher levels of general familism, nuclear familism, and an independent measure of familism were associated significantly with higher levels of empathy ( $r_s = .19, .26, .31, p_s < .001$ , respectively). Extended familism and family stress were not significantly associated with empathy for Mexicans ( $r_s = .16, -.09, ns$ , respectively).

In order to test the second exploratory hypothesis that family-of-origin would be positively associated with familism, a series of Pearson product-movement correlations were conducted between the familism scales and family cohesion and family conflict separately for U.S. Whites and Mexicans. Regarding family conflict, for U.S. Whites, higher levels of general familism, nuclear familism, extended familism, and an independent measure of familism were

associated significantly with lower levels of family conflict ( $r_s = -.49, -.40, -.22, \text{ and } -.35, p_s < .001$ , respectively) and higher levels of family stress were associated significantly with higher levels of family conflict ( $r = .40, p < .001$ ). For Mexicans, higher levels of general familism, nuclear familism, and an independent measure of familism were associated significantly with lower levels of family conflict ( $r_s = -.34, -.25, -.15, p_s < .001$ , respectively) and higher levels of family stress were associated significantly with higher levels of family conflict ( $r = .43, p < .001$ ). Extended familism was not associated significantly with family conflict for Mexicans ( $r = -.03, ns$ ).

Regarding family cohesion, for U.S. Whites, higher levels of general familism, nuclear familism, extended familism, and an independent measure of familism were associated significantly with higher levels of family cohesion ( $r_s = .63, .60, .36, .43, p_s < .001$ , respectively). In addition, higher levels of family stress are associated significantly with lower levels of family cohesion ( $r = -.45, p < .001$ ). For Mexicans, higher levels of general familism, nuclear familism, and an independent measure of familism were associated significantly with higher levels of family cohesion ( $r_s = .43, .39, .18, p_s < .001$ , respectively) and higher levels of family stress were associated significantly with lower levels of family cohesion ( $r = -.44, p < .001$ ). There was not a significant association between family cohesion and extended familism for Mexicans ( $r = .16, ns$ ).

In order to test the third exploratory hypothesis that collectivism would be positively associated with nuclear- and extended-based familism (by contrast, individualism was expected to be inversely associated with familism), a series of Pearson product-movement correlations were conducted between the various familism scales and the individualism and collectivism separately for Whites and Mexicans. For Whites, higher levels of collectivism were associated significantly with higher levels of general familism, nuclear familism, extended familism, and an

independent scale of familism ( $r_s = .52, .59, .42, .69, p_s < .001$ , respectively). In addition, lower levels of collectivism were associated significantly with higher levels of family stress ( $r = -.32, p < .001$ ). Individualism was not associated significantly with general familism, nuclear familism, extended familism, family stress, or an independent measure of familism ( $r_s = -.09, -.07, -.07, .11, .09, ns$ , respectively). For Mexicans, higher levels of collectivism were associated significantly with higher levels of general familism, nuclear familism, and an independent measure of ( $r_s = .38, .51, .45, p_s < .001$ , respectively). In addition, lower levels of collectivism were associated significantly with higher levels of family stress ( $r = -.20, p < .001$ ). The relation between collectivism and extended familism was not significant for Mexicans ( $r = .14, ns$ ). For Mexicans, higher levels of individualism were associated significantly with higher levels of family stress ( $r = .17, p < .001$ ). Individualism was not associated significantly with general familism, nuclear familism, extended familism, or an independent measure of familism for Mexicans ( $r_s = .08, .06, -.11, .05, ns$ ).

Given the overall relative insignificant findings on familism between Mexican Americans and White Americans and between Mexicans and U.S. Whites, particularly in absolute terms, an additional analysis was conducted to possibly glean more insight about these results based on the Steidel and Contreras items. The items from that scale measure more specific aspects of familism than the items that had been created by the present author. All items were responded to on a 10-point Likert-type scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Based on the response options, a response of 1 or 2 presumably reflects strong disagreement, 3 or 4 reflects moderate disagreement, 5 or 6 reflects uncertainty or ambivalence, 7 or 8 reflects moderate agreement, and 9 or 10 presumably reflects strong agreement with the items. Consistent with how I interpreted the findings in previous analyses, results are reported in both comparative and absolute terms.

To examine differences between nationalities and gender on this scale, a principal components analysis of Steidel and Contreras' scale was conducted to determine the components present in the current study's sample. A separate PCA was conducted for the United States and Mexican sample separately. There was significant overlap in the two analyses. Initially, a principal components extraction was conducted on the 18 items for the United States sample and yielded 4 components (using Kaiser criterion of Eigenvalue  $> 1$  for truncation). The unrotated solution was subjected to an orthogonal VARIMAX rotation. The rotation converged in six iterations. The Mexican sample was then subjected to a PCA limited to four factors. The unrotated solution also was subjected to an orthogonal VARIMAX rotation and the rotation converged in six iterations. The two PCAs were examined for overlap in their component loadings. See Tables 10 and 11 for component loadings for United States Whites and Mexicans, respectively. All items loaded onto the same components for both samples except items 1, 8, and 18. Based on the meaning of the questions that loaded onto each component, component one appears to measure mutual family assistance (items 3, 6, 9, 10, 11, & 16), component two appears to measure family cohesiveness (items 2, 4 & 5), component three appears to measure honor (7, 12, & 17), and component four appears to measure obedience to parents (13, 14, & 15). Based on these factors, a MANCOVA was conducted with nationality and gender as the IVs and the four aforementioned Steidel and Contreras scale components as the DVs. Social desirability was used as a covariate in the analyses. See Table 12 for means and standard deviations of the scale components reported by nationality.

Upon visual inspection of the graph, it was found that the fourth component of the Steidel and Contreras scale (obedience to parents) was not normally distributed (substantial positive skewness) and violated the assumption of homogeneity of variance. The variable was transformed and the transformed variable, which no longer violated the homogeneity of variance,

was used in the analyses. The means reported for component 4 are from the pre-transformed variable so that they can be meaningfully interpreted.

After adjusting for social desirability, using Wilks' Lambda, there was a significant multivariate effect for national group ( $F [4, 444] = 36.69, p < .001; \eta^2 = .25$ ) and gender ( $F [4, 444] = 6.20, p < .001; \eta^2 = .053$ ), but not for the interaction of national group X gender ( $F [4, 444] = .83, p = .51$ ).

Univariate analyses indicated that there was a significant difference between the United States and Mexican sample on components two (family cohesiveness) and three (family honor). Comparatively, U.S. Whites endorsed significantly higher levels of family cohesiveness compared to Mexicans ( $M_s = 6.44$  and  $5.31$  [ $SD_s = 1.55$  and  $1.77$ ], respectively) ( $F [1, 447] = 53.07, p < .001; \eta^2 = .106$ ). In addition, U.S. Whites endorsed significantly higher levels of family honor as compared to Mexicans ( $M_s = 6.64$  and  $5.35$  [ $SD_s = 1.80$  and  $2.07$ ], respectively) ( $F [1, 447] = 48.51, p < .001; \eta^2 = .098$ ). For both these components, in absolute terms, both Mexicans and U.S. Whites manifested ambivalence or uncertainty about the items. Comparatively, Mexicans and Whites did not differ in their endorsement of obedience to parents as compared to United States Whites ( $M_s = 3.27$  and  $2.74$  [ $SD_s = 1.77$  and  $1.46$ ], respectively) ( $F [1, 447] = 2.20, p < .14$ ) and in absolute terms, both groups expressed disagreement with the construct of obedience to parents. U.S. Whites and Mexicans did not significantly differ on mutual family assistance ( $M_s = 7.54$  and  $7.91$  [ $SD_s = 1.43$  and  $1.78$ ], respectively) ( $F [1, 447] = 2.82, p = .09$ ) with both groups, on average, generally agreeing with the importance of family assistance.

Men and women significantly differed on component 1 (mutual family assistance), with women overall, endorsing more mutual family assistance than men ( $M_s = 7.87$  and  $7.42$  [ $SD_s = 1.60$  and  $1.61$ ], respectively) ( $F [1, 447] = 8.56, p < .01, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .02$ ). In absolute terms, both

men and women generally agreed with mutual family assistance. Men and women also significantly differed on component 3 (family honor), with men overall endorsing more family honor than women ( $M_s = 6.30$  and  $5.84$  [ $SD_s = 2.02$  and  $2.05$ ], respectively) ( $F [1, 447] = 48.51, p < .05; \eta^2 = .01$ ). In absolute terms, both genders, on average, conveyed ambivalence or uncertainty over the importance of family honor. Men and women did not differ significantly on component 2 (family cohesiveness) ( $M_s = 5.84$  and  $5.89$  [ $SD_s = 1.68$  and  $1.80$ ], respectively) ( $F [1, 447] = 26, p > .05$ ), with men and women expressing uncertainty over family cohesiveness, or on component 4 (obedience to parents) ( $M_s = 3.10$  and  $2.96$  [ $SD_s = 1.62$  and  $1.66$ ], respectively) ( $F [1, 447] = .87, p > .35$ ). In absolute terms, men and women expressed disagreement with obedience to parents.

In order to examine cross-national differences on family stress, a t-test was conducted comparing U.S. Whites and Mexicans on the family stress items. U.S. Whites and Mexicans did not significantly differ on family stress ( $M_s = 2.50$  and  $2.60$  [ $SD_s = .66$  and  $.71$ ], respectively) ( $t [1,467] = -1.48, p > .05$ ) with both groups endorsing moderate agreement with family stress.

In addition, a MANCOVA was conducted examining differences between U.S. Whites and Mexicans on familism grouped by giving and receiving. There was a significant multivariate effect for national group ( $F [5,442] = 14.09, p < .001; \eta^2 = .14$ ) and for gender ( $F [5,442] = 4.52, p < .01; \text{partial } \eta^2 = .05$ ), but not for the interaction of national group X gender ( $F [5,442] = 1.84, p > .05$ ). U.S. Whites endorsed receiving significantly more support by their nuclear family members than did Mexicans ( $M_s = 4.03$  and  $3.80$  [ $SD_s = .61$  and  $.55$ ], respectively) ( $F [1, 446] = 18.54, p < .001; \text{partial } \eta^2 = .04$ ) and providing significantly more support to nuclear family members than Mexicans ( $M_s = 3.82$  and  $3.55$  [ $SD_s = .59$  and  $.55$ ], respectively) ( $F [1, 446] = 26.70, p < .001; \text{partial } \eta^2 = .06$ ). U.S. Whites also endorsed receiving significantly more support by extended family members than Mexicans ( $M_s = 3.21$  and  $2.84$  [ $SD_s = .84$  and  $1.06$ ],

respectively) ( $F [1, 446] = 14.16, p < .001$ ; partial  $\eta^2 = .03$ ) and providing significantly more support to extended family members than Mexicans ( $M_s = 3.11$  and  $2.69$  [ $SD_s = .70$  and  $.65$ ], respectively) ( $F [1, 446] = 47.86, p < .001$ ; partial  $\eta^2 = .10$ ).

A series of paired  $t$ -tests were conducted to see if U.S. Whites and Mexicans showed within group differences between giving and receiving types of familism. U.S. Whites endorsed significantly more receiving than giving for both nuclear ( $M_s = 3.81$  and  $4.03$  [ $SD_s = .61$  and  $.64$ ], respectively) ( $t [238] = 5.64, p < .001$ ) and extended familism ( $M_s = 3.10$  and  $3.20$  [ $SD_s = .70$  and  $.83$ ], respectively) ( $t [237] = 2.50, p < .05$ ). Mexicans also endorsed significantly more receiving than giving for both nuclear ( $M_s = 3.55$  and  $3.79$  [ $SD_s = .54$  and  $.55$ ], respectively) ( $t [228] = 6.10, p < .001$ ) and extended familism ( $M_s = 2.69$  and  $2.82$  [ $SD_s = .64$  and  $1.05$ ], respectively) ( $t [231] = 2.11, p < .05$ ).

## CHAPTER 4: DISCUSSION

In discussing the findings from studies 1 and 2, it is important to clarify the utility of interpreting results comparatively based on statistically significant differences vis-à-vis in absolute terms based on group-mean scores. Although both interpretative approaches may lead to worthwhile conclusions, statistically significant differences potentially obfuscate the meaning of findings in real terms (Negy & Lunt, 2008). Consequently, the findings are considered both comparatively and based on actual, group mean responses to the scales and subscales.

In Study 1, non-Hispanic White participants were compared to Mexican American participants to assess for differences in levels of general, nuclear, and extended familism. It was hypothesized that Mexican Americans would endorse higher levels of general, nuclear, and extended familism than Whites. This hypothesis was based on social-learning theory; namely, individuals—irrespective of culture of origin—tend to form attitudes and behave in ways consistent with what they learned in childhood from significant others. Contrary to prediction, Whites and Mexican Americans, on average, did not differ significantly in their endorsement of general, nuclear, or extended familism. Overall both groups showed moderate endorsement of general and nuclear familism, yet expressed relative uncertainty or ambivalence about extended familism. The lack of familism differences between the two ethnic groups seems to call into question the commonly held view that Mexican Americans are more supportive and responsive to their families than Whites.

In the absence of information that might clarify the relative comparability of familism scores obtained by this sample of Mexican American and White young adults, consideration of multiple possible explanations for the findings is important. One possible explanation is that cultural stereotypes exist for both Mexican Americans and Whites. In reference to this sample of Mexican Americans, they were found to be relatively familistic related to their general notions

about the importance of family and specifically in relation to their nuclear families. Those findings are consistent with commonly held notions about Mexican Americans and familism (Chilman, 1993; Keefe, Padilla, & Carlos, 1978; Marin, 1993; Sabogal et al., 1987; Steidel & Contreras, 2003; Vega, 1995; Zinn & Wells, 2000). However, they expressed relative uncertainty or ambivalence in reference to extended familism. Contrary to cultural stereotypes about Latinos making minimal distinctions between nuclear and extended family members, perhaps Mexican Americans—like many non-Hispanic Whites—do draw a distinction between nuclear and extended families and feel more connected to nuclear family members than extended family members. In reference to this sample of Whites, they were found to endorse general and nuclear familism, even at a level comparable to their Mexican American counterparts. These findings challenge notions about Whites not being loyal or supportive to and by their nuclear family members (Zinn & Wells, 2000; Madsen, 1969; Ramirez & Arce, 1981). Given the high value many Whites place on independence, such as teaching children to do things for themselves (Weisner, 2009; Erikson, 1968; Harwood, & Miller, 1991) expecting children to “launch” on their own subsequent to high school (Goldscheider & Goldscheider, 1993; Myers, Negy, & Meehan, 2005), a distorted or negative stereotype about Whites being relatively less connected with their childhood families may exist. By contrast, this sample of Whites’ ambivalence or uncertainty about extended family is more in line with notions about Whites feeling more connected with nuclear family members compared to extended family members.

Another possible explanation for the current findings in relation to familism is that this sample of Mexican Americans may not be representative of Mexican Americans in the general community. Perhaps older Mexican Americans within the community are more supportive of their families—relative to this sample of Mexican American and White college students—thereby fostering the conventional view about Mexican Americans being more loyal to their

families than Whites. The fact that only 7% of Mexican Americans graduate from a 4-year college (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2000) lends support to the idea that this sample of Mexican Americans may not represent their community counterparts.

A third possible explanation for the relative comparability in familism between this study's Mexican American and Whites is that Mexican American college students tend to be relatively acculturated toward the broader, United States culture (Hurtado, 1997). Although studies on Latino familism and acculturation have found mixed results, including some reporting more, rather than less acculturation being correlated with increased familism (e.g., Romero et al., 2004), because acculturation was not measured in my study, the possibility of exploring this further was not possible. The Mexican American students in this study likely are more similar than dissimilar to non-Hispanic White students in terms of social, political, and family values.

In the context of Study 2, and similar to the hypothesis for Study 1, it was hypothesized that, although both Mexicans and U.S. Whites, on average, would demonstrate a commitment and concern for their respective families, Mexicans would manifest more familism than U.S. Whites. It was anticipated that between-group differences on familism would be more apparent in this cross-national comparison between Mexicans and U.S. Whites than what was observed in the cross-ethnic comparison in Study 1 given the absence of pressure on Mexican residents to acculturate to mainstream U.S. cultural norms. However, this hypothesis was not supported. In fact, from a statistical standpoint, U.S. Whites endorsed significantly higher levels of general, nuclear, and extended familism than did Mexicans. In absolute terms, Mexicans and U.S. Whites, on average, expressed agreement with the importance of general familism and nuclear familism. Both national groups, in absolute terms, expressed relative uncertainty with respect to their perceived support to and by extended family members.

The two national groups also were compared on specific subscales of a previously established familism scale (by Steidel and Contreras, 2003). It was anticipated that this analysis might shed light on specific ways Mexican and U.S. Whites differ on familism. Based on subscales derived from a factor analysis of the scale using data from the current sample of young adults, findings revealed that U.S. Whites obtained significantly higher scores on the subscales of family cohesion and honor. The two groups did not statistically differ on mutual family assistance and obedience to parents. That is, U.S. Whites indicated a relatively higher value on the importance of maintaining family cohesion among family members and of protecting the family's name and honor than Mexicans; however, in absolute terms, both Mexicans and U.S. Whites expressed relative uncertainty regarding the importance they place on maintaining family cohesion and honor. Further, in absolute terms, both groups expressed disagreement with the importance of parental obedience.

These findings, similar to results from study 1, provide a mixed picture on familism among Mexicans and U.S. Whites. Completely counter to predictions, in a comparative sense, U.S. Whites were found to obtain higher general, nuclear, and extended familism scores than Mexicans. U.S. Whites also obtained significantly higher scores on subscales assessing the importance of maintaining family cohesion and honor than Mexicans. As discussed earlier, however, statistically significant between-group differences can misrepresent findings in absolute terms. Based on the two national groups' actual mean score performances on the study scales, one trend that seems apparent is that Mexican and U.S. White young adults are more similar than dissimilar in their views on intrafamilial relations and support. Both national groups, on average, were in agreement on the importance familism in general terms and about the nuclear family specifically. Both groups also agreed with the import of mutual family assistance. Curiously, the two groups, on average, expressed uncertainty or ambivalence about extended

family members, the value of maintaining family cohesion, and protecting the family's honor. Moreover, they disagreed with the notion that children, regardless of their ages, ought to obey parents. Also, Mexicans and U.S. Whites reported a medium level of stress related to family obligations.

At this juncture, it is important to contemplate myriad possible explanations for my findings. As discussed earlier, these results challenge cultural stereotypes. This group of Mexicans, similar to the Mexican Americans in study 1, report valuing family, including the importance of family members helping each other when necessary. Counter to cultural stereotypes, however, Mexicans expressed lukewarm sentiments about the importance of extended familism, including family cohesion and honor, and they even expressed disagreement with parental obedience. Thus, one conclusion that could be drawn is that a positive stereotype about Latinos' loyalty to family exists, and the results from both studies 1 and 2 do not support the stereotype. Padilla (2006) has discussed the idea that a positive and potentially unfounded stereotype exists about how Latinos are interconnected and supported by family members. He also indicated that for many Latinos, families are a serious source of stress—a situation that only recently has been acknowledged in the literature (e.g., Rodriguez, Myers, Mira, Flores, & Garcia-Hernandez, 2002). My findings suggest that Latinos, or at least Mexican and Mexican Americans, may not value family any more or less than others, particularly non-Hispanic Whites.

As discussed in reference to study 1, the results from study 2 partially refute negative stereotypes about U.S. Whites being unconcerned for family members. In both studies, U.S. Whites were found to value family as much as Mexican Americans in absolute and comparative terms (study 1) and as much (in absolute terms) or more (in comparative terms) than Mexicans (study 2). I do note that Whites' uncertainty about extended family and the importance of family cohesion and honor, and their disagreement with parental obedience, are fairly in line with

existing stereotypes about Whites. Thus, these findings may reflect both ethnic groups' actual views toward family—views that may not be consonant with conventional notions or stereotypes about the two groups.

Another possible explanation for the relative absence of cross-national differences on familism is related to Mexico's close proximity to the United States. The U.S. culture immeasurably influences Mexico and Mexicans' attitudes in myriad ways. U.S.-based businesses are omni-present throughout Mexico, which presumably introduces Mexican employees who work for or with such companies to the ethos associated with U.S. business practices and work-related attitudes. Also, Mexico—like many countries—is exposed to U.S. values via media, such as movies, television programs, and music. Thus, in unknown ways, Mexicans' attitudes toward familism may be influenced by U.S. culture and as a result, are increasingly approximating family values that are held by many U.S. Whites, such as placing relatively more value on the nuclear family than the extended family.

On a related note, coinciding with U.S. influences affecting Mexico is the likelihood that Mexican society independently is changing. Cultures are dynamic and evolve in response to both internal and external pressures (Matsumoto & Juang, 2004). Mexico increasingly is more industrialized and modernized, and thus, less traditional. As one example, Mexico City became the first city in all of Latin America to legalize same-sex marriage in 2009. A handful of other cities or counties in Mexico also have legalized same-sex marriage (CNN World Online). Changes in the direction of modernity may influence a society to value individuals' interests above the interests of the family. Accompanying that change may be a higher reliance on nuclear family members, with extended family members having a smaller role in providing intrafamilial support. Landale, Oropesa, and Bradatan (2006) suggests those changes are already taking place among Mexican Americans in the United States.

Along with the potential non-representativeness of university students discussed earlier, the developmental stage of these young adults may also contribute to their current views on the roles and relative importance of family. Specifically, emerging adults likely are focused on their prospective careers and individuation with an eye toward the eventual establishment of their own procreational families (Erikson, 1950; Michael, Gagnon, Laumann, & Kolata, 1995; Arnett, 2000). At this point in their lives, although they may benefit from and even take for granted the ongoing support available to them by their families-of-origin, they may be less cognizant or even wish to ignore their eventual obligations to care for and assist their aging parents and adult siblings in the distant future. The statements in the questionnaires, particularly in reference to prospective responsibilities to care for family members (such as aging parents) were presented in a way that assessed their *ideal* views. For example, the item, “Family should be willing to take in aging parents if necessary” may be responded to by their desire to not be burdened with such responsibility. Yet, when confronted with situations such as the care of aging parents decades later, some Mexicans and Mexican Americans may concede to a culturally-influenced obligation to offer their assistance. Support for such a possibility is found in the U.S. where there is little social stigma attached to adults who institutionalize elderly parents. Whites place their parents in nursing homes or similar residences disproportionately compared to Latinos (e.g., Whites, who made up 67% of the U.S. population in 2004, made up 85.5% of nursing home population; by contrast, U.S. Latinos, who made up 14.5% of the population, made up 3.8% of nursing home population [Jones, Dwyer, Bercovitz, & Strahan, 2009]). Thus, it is possible that although White participants expressed a fairly high level of familism on various familism constructs comparatively, they may be less supportive of non-procreational family later in life when responsibilities actually are encountered. By contrast, although Mexicans expressed uncertainty

or comparatively low levels of familism, they may be more supportive—even if out of social obligation—to support non-procreational family members later in life.

Gender differences in endorsement of nuclear and extended familism also were explored with the expectation that women would demonstrate higher levels of familism than men. Women, on averaged, did endorse significantly higher levels of general and nuclear familism than men. Women’s higher level of familism may be related to their presumed heightened concern over relationships and the well-being of others relative to men (Gilligan, 1988; Jutras & Veilleux, 1991; Rubel, 1996). In absolute terms, women and men from both national groups tended to express agreement with general and nuclear familism items; both genders expressed uncertainty or ambivalence about the importance of extended family. This latter finding is consistent with what has already been discovered and discussed in relation to Mexicans’ and Whites’ views on extended familism.

The third hypothesis was in reference to the relative importance of nuclear versus extended family. I hypothesized that U.S. Whites would express significantly more familism toward nuclear family members than toward extended family members. This hypothesis was based on literature that suggests that individualistic cultures (such as mainstream, U.S. culture) emphasize the nuclear family as the family unit more than the extended family system (Brislin, 1993; Gaines et al., 1997; Keefe, Padilla, & Carlos, 1978). By implication, this hypothesis posited that no significant nuclear- versus extended-based familism would be observed among Mexicans. This hypothesis was only partially supported. As expected, Whites endorsed significantly higher levels of nuclear familism than extended familism. Counter to expectation, Mexicans, on average, displayed similar endorsements in favor of nuclear familism. Given that, at least based on this researcher’s experiences, it is not uncommon to find extended family members residing in Mexicans’ and Mexican Americans’ homes, perhaps that situation reflects

an economic need on the part of the extended family member(s), rather than an equal valuing of extended family along with nuclear family.

The fourth hypothesis, guided by problem-behavior theory, was that both types of familism (nuclear- and extended-based) would be associated with psychological adjustment and behavioral problems. Specifically, irrespective of nationality, increases in familism were expected to be associated with increased psychological adjustment (more psychological well-being, more empathy, and less symptoms of anxiety, depression, and somatization) and decreased problematic behaviors (alcohol misuse, aggression, antisocial features, and history of criminal acts). By and large, this hypothesis was supported by the data. As expected, for Whites, higher endorsement of familism was positively correlated with higher levels of psychological well-being, lower levels of maladjustment, lower levels of antisocial traits, lower levels of aggressiveness, and higher levels of empathy. For Mexicans, higher levels of familism were significantly associated with higher levels of psychology well-being, lower levels of aggressiveness, and higher levels of empathy. These findings, though slightly varying between Mexican and Whites, overall are consistent with previous studies that have documented the link between familism and psychological health (Campos et al., 2008; Ramirez et al., 2004; Kaplan, Napoles-Springer, Stewart, & Perez-Stable, 2001; Gil, Wagner, & Vega, 2000; Germán, Gonzales, & Dumka, 2009; Sommers, Fagan, & Baskin, 1993; Fuligni, Tseng, & Lam, 1999; Esparza & Sanchez, 2008; Tseng, 2004; Valenzuela & Dornbusch, 1994). Although familism (family cohesion, understanding, and support) logically should influence better psychological adjustment, it is just as likely that better psychological adjustment may influence a concern and sense of responsibility to one's family. Also, the link between familism and psychological well-being simultaneously could be mutually influential.

Interestingly, for Whites, delinquency and alcohol misuse were not significantly associated with levels of familism. Delinquency, but not alcohol misuse, was significantly associated with nuclear familism for Mexicans. This finding may relate to the multifaceted nature of the etiology of alcohol use (Cox & Klinger, 2004; Labouvie & Bates, 2002). There is no reason to believe that those who are less connected with their families would necessarily turn to alcohol or illegal substances except perhaps in extreme cases. Particularly within the United States, alcohol consumption among college students may be so prevalent that it is unrelated to familism (Knight et al., 2002). Moreover, regarding delinquency, given the diversity of family relationships in the United States and the possibility that familism may be less of a cultural norm, U.S. Whites may be relatively unaffected by low to moderate levels of family closeness. By contrast, in Mexico, given presumed cultural norms that promote family loyalty and interconnectedness, individuals who, irrespective of the reason, are relatively detached from their families of origin may be mildly predisposed to delinquent behavior.

Family stress was found to correlate with myriad markers of psychological functioning for both national groups. For U.S. Whites, higher levels of family stress were associated with lower levels of psychological well-being, higher levels of poor adjustment (e.g., symptoms of anxiety and depression), higher levels of aggressiveness, and lower levels of empathy. For Mexicans, higher levels of family stress were associated with lower levels of psychological well-being, higher levels of poor adjustment, and higher levels of aggressiveness. The relation between family stress and adjustment may, in fact, be mutually influential, whereby less family stress likely influences better psychological adjustment and psychological adjustment likely leads to lower levels of family stress. Mexicans and U.S. Whites did not differ significantly in their reported levels of family stress with both indicating a medium amount of family stress.

Consistent with the stress-related findings, the data also revealed that increases in general and nuclear familism were associated with higher scores on family cohesion and lower scores on family conflict—as measured retrospectively by an established instrument of family climate (the Family Environment Scale)—for both Mexicans and U.S. Whites. For Whites, the two family climate subscales also correlated, in the same directions, with extended familism. Also, for both national groups, family stress correlated negatively with family cohesion and positively with family conflict. For Whites only, family stress correlated negatively with extended familism. These findings may not be remarkable, given that the two family climate subscales (family cohesion and conflict) likely assess similar constructs as the various familism scales. Curiously, for Mexicans only, extended familism did not correlate significantly with the family climate subscales, suggesting that extended family for this sample of Mexicans may play less of a role in their lives compared to U.S. Whites.

Last, for Mexicans and U.S. Whites, collectivism was associated positively with general, nuclear, extended and a previously established measure of familism (the Seidel and Contreras scale); collectivism was associated negatively with family stress. Interestingly, individualism did not correlate significantly with any familism scale or with family stress with one exception: For Mexicans only, individualism correlated positively with family stress. These findings suggest various implications. First, collectivism and individualism appear to be independent constructs, rather than a single construct occurring on a bidirectional continuum. Other research has suggested the independent nature of these two constructs (Triandis, 1995; Triandis & Geffland, 1998). Also, given that Mexico is considered to be a collectivist culture (Lisansky, 1981; Marin & Triandis, 1985; Triandis, Marin, Betancourt, Lisansky, & Chang, 1982; Shkordriani & Gibbons, 1995) it bears noting that Mexicans in this sample who endorsed individualism also reported higher levels of family stress—a finding that was not observed among U.S. Whites.

These results may suggest that in the United States—where individualism is considered the social norm (Hofstede, 1980; Feather, 1998; Triandis, 1995) individualism is unrelated to levels of familism and family stress. By contrast, Mexicans who do not conform to their culture’s presumed norms on this construct may experience stress as a result. Likewise, family stress among Mexicans may also cause individuals to move away from familistic and collectivistic practices and values, although the correlational nature of this study precludes a causal conclusion with certainty.

### Limitations of the Study

Various limitations of this study bear noting. One limitation is related to the usage of college students in the study. As discussed earlier, college students, irrespective of ethnicity or nationality, likely are not representative of the general population on a variety of dimensions. Moreover, because the rate of college attendance is lower among Mexican and Mexican Americans compared to U.S. Whites, my samples of Mexicans and Mexican Americans may differ in even more ways compared to U.S. Whites in this study. Another potential limitation may lie with the items on the familism questionnaires that I developed for this study. The items were piloted on individuals of diverse ethnic backgrounds with a preponderance being non-Hispanic Whites. Although many of the findings reported herein offer preliminary validity evidence for the scales with U.S. Whites, Mexican Americans, and Mexicans, without having established content, construct, or criterion validity during the construction of the scales with Mexican and Mexican American participants, it is unknown if the familism scales I had developed assessed identical constructs for all three ethnic groups to an equal degree. Each cultural group may value distinct aspects of “familism” and a better effort to identify and measure those distinct aspects for each of the three ethnic/national groups may have shed more

light on patterns of familism that may vary as a function of culture or nationality. Similarly, the items may have elicited more idealized values than actual behaviors. As discussed earlier, what respondents report in regards to what they believe is desirable does not always correspond to their subsequent behavior (Albarracin & McNatt, 2006; LaPiere, 1934; Fishbein & Ajzen, 1974; Zanna & Fazio, 1982). Most of the items forming the various familism scales assessed how respondents believed they ought to behave in reference to caring for childhood family members. Questions that assess actual behavior, such as “Have you ever loaned significant amounts of money to your relatives?,” “Do you currently help your parents with bills?,” and “Do you help your parents take care of your grandparents?” may measure commitment to familism more accurately. Last, the inclusion of two additional variables may have helped explain some of the findings. Acculturation levels were not assessed among the Mexican American participants, which might have illuminated some of the findings obtained in study 1. In addition, measuring religiosity in my study might have illuminated some of the cross-national findings on familism.

### Summary and Future Directions

Previous research examining Latinos’ and Whites’ endorsement of familism has yielded mixed results, despite the rather widely-held view that Latinos tend to be more loyal to their families than Whites. My findings generally refuted such notions; they also illuminated the complexity of familism as well as difficulties inherent to studying the phenomenon.

Comparatively, Mexican Americans and Whites did not differ on the various dimensions of familism, whereas Whites were found to convey more familism than Mexicans. However, in absolute terms, Mexican Americans, Mexicans, and U.S. Whites, on average, agreed with the importance of familism in general and with nuclear familism. All three groups were more tenuous in their views toward extended familism, and expressed, as a whole, uncertainty or

ambivalence about the role and importance of extended family members. By including a previously established scale of familism and examining Mexicans and U.S. Whites on four factor-analytically derived subscales from that scale, it was found that both Mexicans and U.S. Whites generally agreed with the importance of mutual family assistance, generally disagreed with parental obedience, and were generally uncertain about the importance of childhood families staying or living together (family cohesion) or protecting their family honor. Moreover, by and large, the findings from this study supported the view that familism tends to be linked to improved psychological adjustment and a reduction in problematic behaviors.

This study should be replicated with community samples of Mexican Americans, Mexicans, and U.S. Whites to determine if older, more established adults from the community share the views observed among my samples of college students. Also, future studies should attempt to assess behavioral indices of familism rather than items that solely assess respondents' idealized or preferred familism values. Such studies may clarify if the value or utility of extended family members is in decline or was unique to this sample of emerging adults. Finally, given the trend observed in study 2 linking familism with improved psychological adjustment and behavior, future studies are warranted that attempt to establish whether familism causes increased adjustment and lowers problematic behaviors, or whether being well-adjusted and free of behavioral problems cause individuals to embrace and value their families-of-origin.

## **APPENDIX A: TABLES**

*Table 1*  
*Component Loadings for Pilot Study*

Item	Component 1	Component 2
1 (general familism 1)	.444	
2 (general familism 2)	.465	
3 (general familism 3)	.519	
4 (general familism 4)	.486	
5 (general familism 5)	.572	
6 (nuclear familism 1)	.628	
7 (nuclear familism 2)	.608	
8 (nuclear familism 3)	.593	
9 (nuclear familism 4)	.555	
10 (nuclear familism 5)	.589	
11 (nuclear familism 6)	.707	
12 (nuclear familism 7)	.409	
13 (nuclear familism 8)	.434	
14 (nuclear familism 9)	.549	
16 (nuclear familism 10)	.491	
22 (extended familism 1)		.687
23 (extended familism 2)		.576
24 (extended familism 3)		.703
25 (extended familism 4)		.662
26 (extended familism 5)		.652
27 (extended familism 6)		.674
28 (extended familism 7)		.527
29 (extended familism 8)		.505
30 (extended familism 9)		.609
32 (extended familism 10)		.511

*Table 2*  
*Cronbach's Alpha levels for scales from pilot study sample*

	General Familism	Nuclear Familism	Extended Familism
Alpha	.76	.81	.86

Table 3  
*Pilot Study Concurrent, Convergent, and Discriminant Validity*

	FES Conflict	FES Cohesion	Gaines	BSI-sf	MSPSS
General Familism	-.24**	.32**	.68**	-.21**	.41**
Nuclear Familism	-.20**	.23**	.66**	-.18**	.38**
Extended Familism	-.10*	.20**	.41**	-.17**	.25**

Note:

\* significant at the .05 level

\*\* significant at the .01 level

FES = Family Environment Scale

Gaines = Gaines Familism Scale

BSI-sf = Brief Symptoms Inventory short form Total Score

MSPSS = Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support

*Table 4*  
*Cronbach's alpha for Study 1 Instruments/Subscales Obtained by Participants*

	General Familism	Nuclear Familism	Extended Familism	BSI	MSPSS	FES Conflict	FES Cohesion	Gaines Familism
Whites	.78	.81	.86	.90	.93	.78	.78	.92
Mexicans- Americans	.67	.75	.83	.92	.64	.77	.84	.88

*Table 5*  
*Means and standard deviations for Study 1 MANOVA*

	General Familism	Nuclear Familism	Extended Familism
Whites	3.97 (.68)	3.99 (.52)	3.38 (.65)
Mexican Americans	3.98 (.62)	4.03 (.52)	3.39 (.62)
Male	3.87 (.64)	3.92 (.52)	3.27 (.59)
Female	3.97 (.67)	4.03 (.51)	3.42 (.65)

*Table 6*  
*Cronbach's Alpha for Study 2 Instruments/Subscales Obtained by Participants.*

Ethnic Group	GF	NF	EF	BSI	MC-SDS	PWB	IRI	SIP	AQ	PAI-A	FES Conflict	FES Cohesion	Indiv.	Collect	SCFS	FSS
Whites	.77	.81	.88	.90	.67	.90	.75	.84	.86	.79	.81	.82	.69	.78	.86	.62
Mexicans	.61	.61	.65	.90	.63	.87	.63	.75	.81	.75	.74	.78	.66	.64	.78	.65

**Note:**

GF = General Familism

NF = Nuclear Familism

EF = Extended Familism

BSI-sf = Brief Symptom Inventory – short form

MC-SDS = Marlowe-Crowne Social Desirability Scale

PWB = Psychological Well-being

IRI = Interpersonal Reactivity Index (empathy)

AQ = Aggressiveness Questionnaire

PAI-A = Personality Assessment Inventory Antisocial Traits

FES = Family Environment Scale

SCFS = Steidel Contreras Familism Scale

FSS = Family Stress Scale

*Table 7*  
*Means and Standard Deviations for Study 2 Familism Scales*

	General Familism	Nuclear Familism	Extended Familism	SCFS	Family Stress Scale
Whites	4.00 (.72)	3.92 (.52)	3.16 (.70)	6.32 (1.12)	2.49 (.66)
Mexicans	3.60 (.65)	3.67 (.45)	2.76 (.72)	6.01 (1.29)	2.60 (.72)
Males	3.61 (.70)	3.70 (.49)	2.96 (.76)	6.12 (1.16)	2.56 (.68)
Females	3.89 (.71)	3.84 (.51)	2.96 (.73)	6.19 (1.24)	2.54 (.70)

Note:

SCFS = Steidel Contreras Familism Scale

Table 8

Correlations between Familism Scales and Problem Behavior and Psychological Adjustment Scales for Study 2's U.S. White sample

	General Familism	Nuclear Familism	Extended Familism	Family Stress	SCFS
PWB	.39 **	.37**	.26**	-.32**	.30**
BSI-sf	-.13*	-.11	-.16*	.22**	-.049
FES Conflict	-.49**	-.40**	-.22**	.40**	-.35**
FES Cohesion	.63**	.60**	.36**	-.45**	.43**
NYS	-.048	.008	.11	.066	-.012
Delinquency					
PAI Antisocial	-.22**	-.17*	-.051	.13*	-.14*
Aggressiveness	-.21**	-.17**	-.13	.22**	-.023
Alcohol Misuse	-.083	-.070	.023	.046	-.032
Empathy	.32**	.28**	.17**	-.23**	.34**
Individualism	-.091	-.073	-.074	.11	.094
Collectivism	.52**	.59**	.42**	-.32**	.69**

Note:

\*  $p < .01$

\*\*  $p < .001$

PWB = Psychological Well-being

BSI-sf = Brief Symptoms Inventory – short form

FES = Family Environment Scale

NYS = New York Survey

PAI = Personality Assessment Inventory

Table 9  
 Correlations between Familism Scales and Problem Behavior and Psychological Adjustment Scales for Study 2's Mexican sample

Variables	General Familism	Nuclear Familism	Extended Familism	Family Stress	S-C Familism Scale
PWB	.10	.066	.10	-.32**	-.023
BSI-sf	-.045	-.012	-.15*	.25**	.026
FES Conflict	-.34**	-.25**	-.031	.43**	-.15**
FES Cohesion	.43**	.39**	.16*	-.44**	.18**
NYS	-.11	-.19**	-.087	-.04	-.17*
Delinquency					
PAI Antisocial	-.17*	-.039	-.056	.13*	-.031
Aggressiveness	-.21**	-.17**	-.17**	.35**	-.057
Drinking	.082	.078	.078	-.13*	.068
Empathy	.19**	.36**	.16*	-.092	.21**
Individualism	.079	.057	-.11	.17**	.053
Collectivism	.38**	.51**	.14*	-.20**	.45**

Note:

\*  $p < .01$

\*\*  $p < .001$

PWB = Psychological Well-being

BSI-sf = Brief Symptoms Inventory – short form

FES = Family Environment Scale

NYS = New York Survey

PAI = Personality Assessment Inventory

Table 10  
 Steidel Contreras Component Loadings for United States Whites

Item	Component 1	Component 2	Component 3	Component 4
1	.48		.47	
2		.78		
3	.48	.55		
4	.50	.50		
5	.57	.42		
6	.43	.59		
7			.57	
8		.62		
9	.58			
10	.56			
11	.76			
12			.59	
13				.87
14				.87
15				.55
16	.71			
17			.64	
18			.77	

Table 11  
 Steidel Contreras Component Loadings for Mexicans

Item	Component 1	Component 2	Component 3	Component 4
1		.76		
2		.67		
3	.66			
4		.40	.50	
5		.61		
6	.48			
7				.70
8	.76			
9	.68			
10	.77			
11	.42			.54
12				.75
13			.56	
14			.84	
15			.69	
16	.42			
17				.52
18		.39		

*Table 12*  
*Means and Standard Deviations for Steidel Contreras Scale Components Study 2*

	Component 1	Component 2	Component 3	Component 4
Whites	7.54 (1.40)	6.44 (1.55)	6.64 (1.80)	2.74 (1.46)
Mexicans	7.91 (1.78)	5.31 (1.77)	5.35 (2.07)	3.27 (1.77)
Males	7.42 (1.61)	5.84 (1.68)	6.30 (2.02)	3.10 (1.62)
Females	7.87 (1.60)	5.89 (1.80)	5.84 (2.05)	2.96 (1.66)

## **APPENDIX B: FAMILISM QUESTIONNAIRE (ENGLISH)**

Please circle the choice that most closely matches your agreement or disagreement about the following statements. The following questions relate to family. Unless specified otherwise, for the following questions, the term FAMILY is used to signify both your childhood or nuclear family (e.g., parents and siblings) AND extended family (e.g. grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, etc.) Please answer the questions according to your feelings about family as a whole, not based on individual members.

1. I could not survive without my family.
2. Nothing can compare to the positive impact of family.
3. Sometimes being a member of my family is more trouble than it is worth.
4. Most individuals value family more than I do.
5. Family relationships are extremely important.

Please circle the choice that most closely matches your agreement or disagreement about the following statements. The following questions relate to your childhood (or nuclear) family members. That is, the following questions are in reference to your parents and siblings. These statements are NOT in reference to your extended family members (such as grandparents, aunts/uncles, cousins). When answering the questions, imagine your childhood (or nuclear) family as a whole and DO NOT answer according to a single individual in your childhood family.

1. My parents and siblings do not have much influence over my life.
2. I believe it makes my parents and siblings uncomfortable when I confide in them.
3. My life would pretty much be the same with or without my parents and siblings.
4. Compared to other individuals in my life, my parents and siblings give me advice I actually want.
5. I could live with my parents or siblings if it were necessary.
6. I am there for my parents and siblings in times of need.
7. When my parents or siblings have problems, I am not always available to help.
8. I feel responsible for my parents and siblings even when I have to put aside my own needs.
9. I am willing to provide economic assistance to my parents and siblings.
10. I feel that I should comply with the requests of my parents or siblings.

Please circle the choice that most closely matches your agreement or disagreement about the following statements. The following questions relate to extended family/relatives. For the following questions, the phrase EXTENDED FAMILY / RELATIVES refers to grandparents, aunts and uncles, and cousins. These statements are NOT in reference to your parents or siblings. When answering the questions, imagine your extended family/relatives as a whole and DO NOT answer according to a single individual in your extended family.

1. My extended family / relatives do not have much influence over my life.
2. I believe it makes my extended family / relatives uncomfortable when I confide in them.
3. My life would pretty much be the same with or without my extended family / relatives.
4. Compared to other individuals in my life, my extended family / relatives give me advice I actually want
5. I could live with my extended family / relatives if it were necessary.
6. I am there for my extended family / relatives in times of need.
7. When my extended family / relatives have problems, I am not always available to help.
8. I feel responsible for my extended family / relatives even when I have to put aside my own needs.
9. I am willing to provide economic assistance to my extended family members / relatives.
10. I feel that I should comply with the requests of extended family members / relatives.

## **APPENDIX C: FAMILISM QUESTIONNAIRE (SPANISH)**

Por favor, marque la respuesta que mejor refleje su acuerdo o desacuerdo con las siguientes frases. Las siguientes preguntas se refieren a su familia. El término “FAMILIA” se usa para describir su núcleo familiar (padres, hermanos) y su familia extendida (abuelos, tíos, primos). Por favor conteste las preguntas de acuerdo a sus sentimientos acerca de su familia entera y no acerca de sus miembros individuales.

1. No podría sobrevivir sin mi familia.
2. Nada puede compararse con el impacto positivo de la familia.
3. A veces, ser miembro de mi familia es más molesto que placentero.
4. La mayoría de las personas valoran la familia más que yo.
5. Las relaciones familiares son extremadamente importantes.

Por favor marca la respuesta que mas refleje su acuerdo o desacuerdo con las siguientes preguntas. Las siguientes preguntas se refieren a los miembros de su núcleo familiar, específicamente a sus padres y hermanos. Estas preguntas NO se refieren a su familia extendida (abuelos, tíos, primos). Cuando conteste las preguntas, imagine el núcleo familiar de su infancia, y NO conteste las preguntas pensando en solo un individuo de su núcleo familiar.

1. Mis padres y mis hermanos no tienen mucha influencia en mi vida.
2. Pienso que mis padres y mis hermanos se sienten incómodos cuando confío en ellos.
3. Mi vida seguiría casi igual con o sin mis padres y mis hermanos.
4. En comparación con otras personas en mi vida, mis padres y mis hermanos me aconsejan de la manera que espero.
5. Podría vivir con mis padres y mis hermanos si fuera necesario.
6. Estoy disponible para mis padres y mis hermanos en tiempos de necesidad.
7. No siempre estoy disponible para ayudar a mis padres y mis hermanos cuando tienen problemas.
8. Me siento responsable por mis padres y mis hermanos hasta cuando tengo que dejar a un lado mis propias necesidades.
9. Estoy dispuesto a proveer ayuda económica a mis padres y mis hermanos.
10. Siento que debo cumplir con los pedidos de mis padres y mis hermanos.

Por favor, marque la respuesta que mas refleje su acuerdo o desacuerdo con las siguientes frases. Las siguientes preguntas tratan de la familia extendida. La frase FAMILIA EXTENDIDA se refiere a los abuelos, tíos, tías y primos (no se refiere a sus padres o hermanos). Cuando responda a estas preguntas, imagine a su familia extendida como una totalidad, no en los individuos en particular que la componen.

1. Mi familia extendida no tiene mucha influencia en mi vida.
2. Pienso que mi familia extendida se siente incómoda cuando confío en ellos.
3. Mi vida seguiría casi igual con o sin mi familia extendida.
4. En comparación con otras personas en mi vida, mi familia extendida me aconseja de la manera que espero.
5. Podría vivir con mi familia extendida si fuera necesario.
6. Estoy disponible para mi familia extendida en tiempos de necesidad.
7. No siempre estoy disponible para ayudar a mi familia extendida cuando tiene problemas.
8. Me siento responsable por mi familia extendida hasta cuando tengo que dejar a un lado mis propias necesidades.

9. Estoy dispuesto a proveer ayuda económica a mi familia extendida.

10. Siento que debo cumplir con los pedidos de los miembros de mi familia extendida.

## **APPENDIX D: FAMILY STRESS ITEMS (ENGLISH)**

**Please circle the choice that most closely matches your agreement or disagreement about the following statements.**

- 1) Living close to my family members is stressful to me.
- 2) I sometimes resent having to financially help my family members.
- 3) When my family members have problems, it always affects me somehow.
- 4) The responsibility of caring for my parents (or helping with the care of my grandparents) is a source of stress for me.
- 5) It annoys me when my family members want my advice or opinions about matters that don't really concern me.

## **APPENDIX E: FAMILY STRESS ITEMS (SPANISH)**

**Por favor marque la opción más cercana a su acuerdo o desacuerdo acerca de lo siguiente:**

- 1) Vivir cerca de mi familia me causa estrés
- 2) Algunas veces resiento tener que ayudar financieramente a los miembros de mi familia.
- 3) Cuando los miembros de mi familia tienen problemas, siempre me afecta de alguna manera.
- 4) La responsabilidad de cuidar a mis padres (o ayudarlos con el cuidado de mis abuelos) es una fuente de estrés para mí
- 5) Me molesta cuando miembros de mi familia quieren mis consejos o mis opiniones acerca de asuntos que realmente no tienen nada que ver conmigo.

## **APPENDIX E: INFORMED CONSENT (ENGLISH)**

## Informed Consent

Please read this document carefully before deciding to participate in this study.

You must be 18 years of age or older to participate.

Investigator: Charles Negy, Ph.D. Department of Psychology  
University of Central Florida Orlando, Florida 32816 407-823-5861 (EEUU)  
cnegy@mail.ucf.edu  
Co-Investigators: Rachael Lunt, M.S. (University of Central Florida)

The purpose of this study is to examine your attitudes about family. Approximately 200 adults from Mexico will participate in this study. You will be asked to complete a set of questionnaires regarding your attitudes about family as well as additional information about yourself, your actions, and your beliefs.

Please read and pay attention to the following:

- 1) You will not receive any feedback about your answers on this study
- 2) The information obtained from you in this study will be kept completely confidential. Please do not write your name anywhere on the questionnaire packet in order to preserve your anonymity. Your name will not be associated with any of your answers.
- 3) Your participation in this project is voluntary. You do not have to answer any question(s) that you do not wish to answer. Please be advised that you may choose not to participate in this research, and you may withdraw from the experiment at any time without consequence.
- 4) The principal investigator (Dr. Charles Negy) is not offering any compensation for participation in this study.
- 5) Although there is minimal risk involved in your participation, some of the questions are personal and relate to close family relationships. There is a risk that participating may cause emotional discomfort. Should you feel upset after participation and wish to speak to a counselor, please contact the principal researcher (Dr. Charles Negy) who will refer you to a professional counselor in your community.

If you have any questions or comments about this research, or wish to have a copy of the final results, please contact me, Dr. Charles Negy, Department of Psychology, University of Central Florida, Orlando, FL 32826; (407) 823- 5861. Questions or concerns about research participants' rights may be directed to the UCF IRB office, University of Central Florida, Office of Research & Commercialization, 12201 Research Parkway, Suite 501, Orlando, FL 32826-3246. The telephone number is 407-823-2901.

University of Central Florida IRB IRB NUMBER: SBE-09-06004 IRB APPROVAL DATE: 1/14/2010

**APPENDIX F: INFORMED CONSENT (SPANISH)**

## Consentimiento Informado

Por favor, lea cuidadosamente este documento de consentimiento antes de que usted decida participar en este estudio.

Para poder participar debe tener 18 años o más.

Investigador: Charles Negy, Ph.D.

Charles Negy, Ph.D. Departamento de Psicología Universidad de la Florida Central Orlando, Florida 32816 407-823-5861 (EEUU) [cnegy@mail.ucf.edu](mailto:cnegy@mail.ucf.edu)

Co-Investigadores: Rachael Lunt, M.S. (University of Central Florida)

El propósito de este estudio es examinar sus actitudes sobre la familia. Aproximadamente 200 adultos de Mexico participaran en este estudio. Completaran un set de cuestionarios sobre sus ideas sobre la familia y otros datos personales.

Por favor, fíjese en el siguiente:

- 1) No recibirá ningún tipo de comentarios o comunicación sobre sus respuestas en los cuestionarios.
- 2) La información que reporta en los cuestionarios será bajo confianza. Favor de no escribir su nombre en ningún cuestionario para proteger su anonimidad.
- 3) Su participación es voluntario. Puede dejar de participar en cualquier momento sin consecuencias. También, tiene el derecho no contestar cualquier pregunta.
- 4) El investigador principal (Dr. Charles Negy) no le está ofreciendo ningún tipo de compensación por su participación.
- 5) No se prevén riesgos asociados a su participación en este estudio, pero hay preguntas sobre su familia que son personales. Si durante o después de su participación, usted cree que algunas de las preguntas o declaraciones que usted encontró en este estudio han provocado cualquier preocupación, por favor contacte con el Investigador Principal, Dr. Charles Negy, al número (407) 823-5861 a fin de que lo/a podamos referir a recursos de consejería disponibles en su comunidad.

Las investigaciones que se lleven a cabo en la Universidad de la Florida Central y que involucren participantes humanos se efectúan bajo supervisión del *Institucional Review Board* (IRB). La información con respecto a sus derechos como voluntario de la investigación se puede obtener de: IRB Coordinator, University of Central Florida, Office of Research & Commercialization, 12201 Research Parkway, Suite 501, Orlando, FL 32826-3246 o por teléfono a (407) 823-2901 o (407) 882-2276.

University of Central Florida IRB IRB NUMBER: SBE-09-06004 IRB APPROVAL DATE: 1/14/2010

## **APPENDIX G: DEBRIEFING FORM (ENGLISH)**

Thank you for your participation in this experiment. As you may have gathered from the questionnaires, we are interested in the ways in which people perceive family, both nuclear and extended. The information obtained will be used to better assess attitudes towards family. If you do not wish for your results to be part of this study, please inform the experimenter at this time. If you have any questions, comments, or concerns, or would like a copy of the final results, contact me, Dr. Charles Negy,

Department of Psychology  
University of Central Florida  
Orlando, FL 32826;  
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## **APPENDIX H: DEBRIEFING FORM (SPANISH)**

Gracias por su participación. Como probablemente piensa, tenemos interés en como percibe la familia, ambos familia núcleo y familia extendida y como tiene relación con otros variables. La información que obtener usará para entender actitudes sobre la familia. Si no quiere que sus respuestas ser usado, por favor decir al investigador ahora. Si tiene preguntas, comentarios, o preocupaciones, o si quiere una copia de los resultados, favor de contactarme, Dr. Charles Negy:

Departamento de Psicología  
Universidad de la Florida Central  
Orlando, Florida 32816  
407-823-5861 (EEUU)  
[cnegy@pegasus.cc.ucf.edu](mailto:cnegy@pegasus.cc.ucf.edu)

**APPENDIX I: IRB HUMAN SUBJECTS PERMISSION LETTER**



University of Central Florida Institutional Review Board  
Office of Research & Commercialization  
12201 Research Parkway, Suite 501  
Orlando, Florida 32826-3246  
Telephone: 407-823-2901, 407-882-2012 or 407-882-2276  
[www.research.ucf.edu/compliance/irb.html](http://www.research.ucf.edu/compliance/irb.html)

### Notice of Expedited Initial Review and Approval

From : **UCF Institutional Review Board**  
**FWA00000351, Exp. 10/8/11, IRB00001138**

To : **Rachael Lunt**

Date : **February 18, 2009**

IRB Number: **SBE-09-06004**

Study Title: **Mexicans' and United States Whites' Commitment to Familism and its Relation with Psychosocial Adjustment: A Cross-National Comparison**

Dear Researcher:

Your research protocol noted above was approved by **expedited** review by the UCF IRB Chair on 2/17/2009. **The expiration date is 2/16/2010.** Your study was determined to be minimal risk for human subjects and expeditable per federal regulations, 45 CFR 46.110. The category for which this study qualifies as expeditable research is as follows:

7. Research on individual or group characteristics or behavior (including, but not limited to, research on perception, cognition, motivation, identity, language, communication, cultural beliefs or practices, and social behavior) or research employing survey, interview, oral history, focus group, program evaluation, human factors evaluation, or quality assurance methodologies.

A **waiver of documentation of consent** has been approved for all subjects. Participants do not have to sign a consent form, but the IRB requires that you give participants a copy of the IRB-approved consent form, letter, information sheet, or statement of voluntary consent at the top of the survey.

All data, which may include signed consent form documents, must be retained in a locked file cabinet for a minimum of three years (six if HIPAA applies) past the completion of this research. Any links to the identification of participants should be maintained on a password-protected computer if electronic information is used. Additional requirements may be imposed by your funding agency, your department, or other entities. Access to data is limited to authorized individuals listed as key study personnel.

To continue this research beyond the expiration date, a Continuing Review Form must be submitted 2 – 4 weeks prior to the expiration date. Advise the IRB if you receive a subpoena for the release of this information, or if a breach of confidentiality occurs. Also report any unanticipated problems or serious adverse events (within 5 working days). Do not make changes to the protocol methodology or consent form before obtaining IRB approval. Changes can be submitted for IRB review using the Addendum/Modification Request Form. An Addendum/Modification Request Form **cannot** be used to extend the approval period of a study. All forms may be completed and submitted online at <http://iris.research.ucf.edu>.

**Failure to provide a continuing review report could lead to study suspension, a loss of funding and/or publication possibilities, or reporting of noncompliance to sponsors or funding agencies.** The IRB maintains the authority under 45 CFR 46.110(e) to observe or have a third party observe the consent process and the research.

On behalf of Tracy Dietz, Ph.D., UCF IRB Chair, this letter is signed by:

Signature applied by Janice Turchin on 02/18/2009 10:10:15 AM EST

IRB Coordinator

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