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Making the decision to move out: Bicultural young adults and the negotiation of cultural demands and family relationships

Evelina Lou¹, Richard N. Lalonde¹, & Benjamin Giguère²
York University¹, McGill University²

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Corresponding Author:

Evelina Lou, Department of Psychology, York University, 4700 Keele Street, Toronto, ON, Canada, M3J 1P3

Email: elou@yorku.ca

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Abstract

The present study examined the impact of culture and family on the decision to move out of the family home among bicultural young adults with European, South Asian, and East Asian backgrounds ($N = 299$). Consistent with cross-cultural differences in autonomy ideals, with Western cultures emphasizing independence and Eastern cultures promoting interdependence and familial ties, South Asian and East Asian participants were less motivated than European participants to leave home. Given that the family is an important socializing agent of culturally-based perceptions of autonomy for biculturals, family-related factors were tested as mediators. As predicted, the observed cultural differences in moving out motivation were explained by East Asian and South Asian participants having less parental approval for moving out before marriage, and additionally for South Asians, having a self-concept that is largely defined by the family (i.e., family allocentrism). Furthermore, the mediating effects of parental approval and family allocentrism in the relation between cultural background and moving out motivation was moderated by level of conflict within the family. The implications for understanding cultural demands and family relations with respect to the decision to move out are discussed.

Key words: culture, autonomy, moving out, family allocentrism, family conflict

Making the decision to move out: Bicultural young adults and the negotiation of cultural demands and family relationships

Leaving the family home represents a major life transition for many young adults. The reasons for deciding to move out, however, can vary significantly across cultural contexts (e.g., moving out when one finishes high school or college or at the time of marriage). These variations can often be linked to different conceptualization of autonomy across cultures (e.g., Phinney, Ong, & Madden, 2000). Although the impact of these variations may be less noticeable in a monocultural context, incompatible notions of autonomous life decisions, such as moving out, can generate a considerable amount of distress for individuals who have access to multiple sets of cultural norms attached to autonomy.

The tremendous influx of immigrants in recent decades, moving predominately from Eastern to Western countries, like the U.S. and Canada, has resulted in a growing number of biculturals individuals (i.e., individuals who identify with two different cultures; LaFromboise, Coleman, & Gerton, 1993). Considering that normative notions of autonomy differ between Eastern and Western cultures (Giguère, Lalonde & Lou, 2010), it is important to understand the psychological processes underlying cross-cultural differences in order to gain insight into the types of cultural challenges faced by biculturals. Given that family is also an important socializing agent of culturally-based perceptions among biculturals (Phinney, 1990), the present study examined the role of cultural and familial factors that shape “moving out,” an important life transition that is guided by autonomy concerns.

The majority of existing research on leaving the familial home has focused on East-West comparisons, using the “Asian” pan-ethnic category to represent the “Eastern” sample (e.g., Fuligni, Tseng, & Lam, 1999; Stewart, Bond, Deeds, & Chung, 1999). Different Asian groups

(e.g., Chinese, East-Indian), however, may exhibit varied core cultural values and patterns of acculturation that are influenced by unique reasons for migration and prior contact history with the new host society (Oyserman, Coon, & Kemmelmeier, 2002). Furthermore, few studies have focused on autonomy comparisons between South Asian populations and Western or other Eastern cultural groups (see Deeds, Stewart, Bond, & Westrick, 1998; Kwak & Berry, 2001; Mitchell, 2004, for exceptions). The populations of interest for the current study were South Asian and East Asian Canadians who represent the largest recent immigrant groups in Canada (Statistics Canada, 2008) as well as a large proportion of the immigrant population in the United States. This selection also reflects a worldwide trend of individuals migrating from Eastern countries to Western ones (Dovidio & Esses, 2001).¹

Culture and Autonomy

Biculturals from recent generations of immigrant families are socialized into both Eastern (heritage) and Western (mainstream) cultures (LaFromboise et al., 1993). Heritage culture refers to the culture of birth or upbringing, whereas mainstream culture refers to the predominant cultural environment where immigration and settlement occurs (Berry, 1997; Ryder, Alden, & Paulhus, 2000). For the most part, different cultures hold similar social norms and values (e.g., politeness toward adults). In some situations, however, discrepancies between heritage and mainstream cultures can be observed (see Giguère et al. 2010).

One issue for which Eastern and Western values and belief systems differ is autonomy of the individual (LaFromboise et al., 1993; Phinney et al., 2000). Some cross-cultural theorists have suggested that autonomy is a Western cultural ideal that is concerned with having an independent self-construal (e.g., Rudy, Sheldon, Awong, & Tan, 2007). Eastern cultures, on the other hand, are thought to promote interdependence and reliance on others (e.g., Markus &

Kitayama, 2003). Previous cross-cultural work on autonomy has examined adolescents' age expectations for a range of behaviours such as going out with friends and dating (e.g., Feldman & Rosenthal, 1990, 1991; Fuligni, 1998). Other studies have found that Canadian biculturals with South Asian and East Asian backgrounds view their heritage and the mainstream autonomy norms to clash when it comes to intimate relationships (Dion & Dion, 1996), ideal mate characteristics (Lalonde, Hynie, Pannu, & Tatla, 2004), and attitudes towards interracial dating (Uskul, Lalonde, & Cheng, 2007). The present study focused on another prototypical and important autonomous behaviour—moving out of the family home. Moving out is considered an important expression of independence in Western societies (Boyd, 2000). In Eastern societies, greater emphasis is placed on family, tradition, and adhering to group norms in expressing autonomy. Adult children are often expected to remain at home until they marry to reflect an obligation to their family (Fuligni et al., 1999; Mitchell, 2004).

Cultural and Familial Influences

For bicultural young adults, who are faced with two cultural ideals of autonomy, the process of negotiating between options and choosing only one can be a difficult and complex task. Eastern cultures tend to emphasize interdependence and familial ties. Thus, individuals from these cultures may look to their family when making important decisions, such as whether to move out or not. Expressions of autonomy have been found to be highly correlated with perceptions of family environment in Eastern cultures (Deeds et al., 1998; Feldman & Rosenthal, 1991). Parents' views on moving out may be known to the child if explicitly communicated through words of approval. Given that it is common for young adults from Eastern backgrounds to live at home until marriage, their parents are less likely to communicate approval of moving out than parents of those from Western backgrounds. Views on autonomy may also be conveyed

implicitly in the form of cultural norms. Cultural norms prescribed by one's heritage culture are primarily transmitted through the family (Phinney, 1990). For first and second generation Eastern immigrants whose social system and peers are predominantly Western, family members may be their only source of exposure to the beliefs, values, and norms of the heritage culture (Kwak, 2003). It follows that adherence to heritage norms would vary according to the extent to which an individual's self-concept is tied to the family.

Lay and colleagues (1998) refer to this level of self-construal as *family allocentrism*, or collectivism at the family level. Family allocentrism reflects one's personal sense of connectedness to the family. There is consistent evidence that family allocentrism is higher among Eastern than Western individuals and that it facilitates the socialization of parental views and heritage values in immigrant children (Hynie, Lalonde, & Lee, 2006; Lalonde et al., 2004), including expectations for autonomy in Asian adolescents (see Giguère et al., 2010). In the present study, we tested whether heritage norms conveyed by parental approval and the degree one's self-concept is tied to the family (i.e., family allocentrism) account for cross-cultural differences in motivation to move out.

Family Conflict

As Eastern cultures typically encourage respect and obedience and place more importance on norms as determinants of behaviour than do Western cultures, divergence from familial expectations and expression of personal goals over in-group goals is strongly discouraged (Giguère et al., 2010; Kim, Triandis, Kagitcibasi, Choi, & Yoon, 1994). Due to differential emphases on independence and the value of autonomy between Eastern and Western cultures (Markus & Kitayama, 2003; Tsai-Chae & Nagata, 2008), issues of autonomy have the potential to be at the root of family conflict for young adults from Eastern cultures backgrounds

who are living in the Western world (Fuligni, 1998; Giguère et al., 2010; Mitchell, 2004). In the context of moving out before marriage, bicultural young adults may strive to satisfy their personal need for autonomy but feel that they must adhere to expectations to stay home that are laid out by their parents. Furthermore, they may feel like they are caught between their own goals and those set out for them by others, contributing to a sense of internal conflict as well as frequent conflict with their parents (Kwak, 2003). Young adults who have been raised in a Western context, and hence exposed to Western views of making one's own decisions, should be more likely to engage in culturally-based disagreements with others who hold an Eastern perspective.

It should be noted that intergenerational conflict and contradictory views on some norms are common regardless of cultural background (Chung, 2006; Fuligni, 1998; Lee & Liu, 2001). This conflict may be exacerbated and carry more severe implications for immigrant families than for non-immigrant families (Phinney et al., 2000). The presence or absence of such conflict can alter the impact of parental approval on youths' decisions and the extent to which their connectedness to their family influences them. Thus, whether parental approval or family allocentrism explains why young adults choose to stay home and fulfill parental expectations or to move out and assert their independence may depend on the extent to which they fight with their parents over other issues. In the present study, we explored the effects of family conflict on the impact of parental approval and family allocentrism in explaining cultural differences in the decision to move out.

Overview of the Present Study

The purpose of the present study was to investigate cultural differences in the motivation to move out of the parental home of bicultural youth as well as the potential family-related

mechanisms underlying the relation between cultural background and moving out. Family allocentrism and parental approval to move out were assessed as potential mediators of the relation between cultural background and individuals' motivation to move out. Given that culturally based familial conflict impacts the influence of family processes for bicultural youth, we investigated whether the amount of conflict within one's family would moderate these effects (i.e., whether the effects of family allocentrism and parental approval would differ across various levels of family conflict). A conceptual representation of the proposed relationships between the variables is shown in Figure 1. Although it is intuitively appealing that motivation to move out is related to parental factors and expectations, research has yet to empirically test this pattern of relationships among biculturals from East Asian and South Asian backgrounds. More importantly, by identifying some of the cognitive processes underlying this motivation research, researchers can help design effective interventions for bicultural youth and their families who are experiencing conflict and related distress due to this issue.

Four central predictions were tested in the present study: (1) Compared to European Canadians, South Asian Canadians and East Asian Canadians would be less motivated to move out, (2) in the family context, compared to European Canadians, South and East Asian Canadians would perceive less parental approval for moving out and report higher levels of family allocentrism and family conflict, (3) family allocentrism and parental approval would mediate the relation between culture and motivation to move out, and (4) family conflict would influence the explanatory roles of family allocentrism and parental approval. Analyses comparing South Asian Canadians and East Asian Canadians were exploratory.

Method

Participants

Participants were 299 students at a multicultural university in Toronto, Canada: 108 European Canadians (83 women), 112 South Asian Canadians (92 women), and 79 East Asian Canadians (51 women), M age = 19.8, SD = 2.1. Although all participants are equally considered part of Canadian society, we will refer to the groups as European, South Asian, and East Asian for the sake of simplicity. All Europeans self-identified as White and were born in Canada.² All South Asians self-identified South Asian, and all East Asians self-identified as East Asian. Of the South Asian group, 59 were first-generation immigrants who were born outside of Canada and 53 were second-generation immigrants who were born in Canada. The arrival age of the foreign-born South Asians ranged from 1 to 17 years (M = 8.40, SD = 4.34). Of the East Asian group, 35 were first-generation immigrants who were born outside of Canada and 44 were second-generation immigrants who were born in Canada. The arrival age of the foreign-born East Asians ranged from 1 to 16 years (M = 7.91, SD = 4.31). Given the relatively young age at which most of the South Asians and East Asians arrived in Canada, it is reasonable to assume that they have sufficiently acculturated to Canadian society and have acquired knowledge of its norms (Cheung, Chudek, & Heine, in press).

Procedure

Participants were asked to complete a web-based, 45-minute questionnaire consisting of the measures described below. Measures of internal consistency for all of the measures were acceptable (α 's ranging from .84 to .91) and are reported in Table 1.

Moving out motivation. Participants' motivations to move out were assessed using seven items that were adapted from a study by Lai and Lalonde (2007). Examples of items are "I am eager to live independently" and "I can't wait to move out." A factor analysis of the items and a scree plot indicated that a one-factor solution was the best fit to the data, accounting for 61.16%

of the total variance in moving out motivation. Responses were given on a 7-point scale from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*). A higher score on this measure indicated stronger motivation to move out.

Parental approval. Perceived approval from the parents for moving out was also assessed. Participants indicated the extent to which their parents would approve of them moving out with six different targets (e.g., boyfriend/girlfriend, friend of a different gender and same cultural background). A factor analysis of the six items and a scree plot revealed that all items loaded well onto a single factor that accounted for 56.97% of the total variance. Responses were given on a 7-point scale from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*). A higher average score indicated greater perceived parental approval.

Family allocentrism. The 21-item Family Allocentrism Scale (Lay et al., 1998) measures the degree of connectedness to one's family, or collectivism at the family level (e.g., "I respect my parents' wishes even if they are not my own"). The scale was developed primarily with European and Asian Canadians and has demonstrated good internal reliability and predictive validity in numerous studies (e.g., Lalonde et al., 2004). Responses were given on a 7-point scale from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*). A higher score indicated a stronger sense of connectedness to family.

Family conflict. Degree of family conflict was measured using the Asian American Conflict Scale (AACS; Lee, Choe, Kim, & Ngo, 2000). The scale consists of 10 parent-child situations that reflect possible conflicts between Asian American children and their parents (e.g., "your parents tell you what to do with your life, but you want to make your own decisions"). The use of this scale can also be extended to non-Asian American families because the situations represent conflicts that can arise in any parent-child relationship regardless of culture.

Participants rated the likelihood of each situation occurring in their own family on a 5-point scale from 1 (*almost never*) to 5 (*almost always*). They were also given the option of choosing “does not apply.” The statements tapped a range of areas for common intergenerational disagreements such as academic expectations and social life. A higher average score indicated a greater degree of family conflict.

Results

Separate 2 (Gender) by 3 (Culture) mixed factorial analysis of variance (ANOVA) on each of the primary dependent variables (parental approval, family allocentrism, family conflict, motivation to move out) showed that there were no significant gender effects or gender by culture interactions; thus, gender was omitted in the reported analyses. The pattern of results also remained the same when generational status (first-generation, second-generation) was included as a covariate in the ANOVAs; thus, generational status was also omitted from the reported results. Finally, an item bias check revealed that all cultural groups seemed to discriminate in their ratings in a consistent and meaningful manner, indicating that our findings do not result from a response bias. Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics for each of the primary measures across the three cultural groups. Table 2 presents zero-order correlations between the primary measures for the three groups.

Motivation to Move Out

Consistent with Hypothesis 1, results of a one-way ANOVA of culture on moving out motivation revealed that there were cultural group differences in motivation to move out, $F(2, 296) = 7.31, p = .001, \eta^2 = .05$. Planned post-hoc tests using the Games-Howell procedure for test of means showed that, as observed in Table 1, the European group mean was significantly higher than the means of the East Asian and South Asian groups, $ps < .01$, suggesting that

Europeans have relatively strong motivation to move out. Motivation to move out did not differ between the two Asian groups, $p = .89$.

Parental Approval, Family Allocentrism, and Conflict

The second set of hypotheses predicted that compared to their European counterparts, South and East Asians would perceive less approval from their parents from moving out and report higher levels of family allocentrism and family conflict. Three one-way ANOVAs tested the effects of culture on parental approval, family allocentrism, and family conflict and were followed by post-hoc tests of means. Results showed that the cultural groups differed in their level of perceived parental approval for moving out, $F(2, 296) = 34.57, p < .001, \eta^2 = .19$. As can be observed in Table 1, East and South Asians thought their parents would approve of moving out less than did Europeans, $ps < .001$, whereas the two Asian groups did not differ in this regard, $p = .87$. There was also an overall effect of culture on family allocentrism, $F(2, 296) = 7.97, p < .001, \eta^2 = .05$. As can be observed in Table 1, compared to the European group, family allocentrism was higher among South Asian and East Asian participants, $ps < .01$. Degree of family allocentrism did not differ between the two Asian groups, $p = .93$. Similarly, results of a one-way ANOVA indicated that there was an overall effect of culture on family conflict, $F(2, 295) = 21.61, p < .001, \eta^2 = .13$. As expected, it can be observed in Table 1 that family conflict was higher among South Asian and East Asian participants than for European participants, $ps < .001$, and did not differ between the two Asian groups, $p = .70$.

The Mediating Roles of Family Allocentrism and Parental Approval

Hypothesis 3 was that high family allocentrism and low parental approval for moving out would account for lower motivation to move out among the South and East Asian groups compared to the European group. Dummy variables were created to account for cultural group

membership, setting European Canadians as the comparison group. We examined simple mediation models using the product-of-coefficient approach (i.e., Sobel test), a formal significance test of the indirect effect. Because this approach makes the assumption that the indirect effect is normally distributed (which is very rarely the case unless the sample is very large), bootstrapping was used to complement the Sobel test (see Preacher & Hayes, 2004). Bootstrapping, a nonparametric resampling procedure, involves repeatedly sampling the data set and estimating the indirect effect using the resampled data and does not involve the same assumptions (e.g., multivariate normality) while avoiding issues of power (MacKinnon, Lockwood, & Williams, 2004; Preacher & Hayes, 2008). This procedure was repeated 5,000 times to generate an empirical approximation of the sampling distribution of the individual and joint indirect effects of family allocentrism and conflict and used to generate 95% confidence intervals (CIs). Confidence intervals that do not include zero are reflective of statistical significance at the .05 level. Thus, our third hypothesis was tested using a procedure provided by Preacher and Hayes (2004), which facilitates estimation of the indirect effect using both the Sobel test and the bootstrap strategy and does not require continuous variables to be mean-centered.

Hypothesis 3 was partially supported. Sobel test (see Table 3) revealed an indirect effect of cultural background on motivation to move out through parental approval for the two Asian groups. This result was confirmed with a bootstrapped 95% CI around the indirect effect not containing zero. Being South Asian or East Asian (as opposed to European) was associated with less parental approval to move out, which was associated with reduced motivation to move out.

Family allocentrism also mediated the relation between culture and moving out for the South Asian and for the East Asian group relative to the European group—although the test did

not reach statistical significance in the case of East Asians. Results of the Sobel test and bootstrapping indicated that being South Asian was associated with higher family allocentrism, which was associated with less motivation to move out. For East Asian participants, the indirect effect of culture on moving out motivation through family allocentrism was marginally significant; in fact, using a one-tailed test, the mediation effect would be significant.

The Moderating Role of Family Conflict

Hypothesis 4 was that family conflict would moderate the mediating roles of family allocentrism and family approval; that is, the strength of the indirect effects through family allocentrism and family approval would be conditional on the level of family conflict. Mediation occurs when the relationship between two variables occurs *because* of a third variable; in this case, we tested two mediator variables (parental approval and family allocentrism) and their role in explaining *how* culture influences motivation to move out. Moderated mediation occurs when the effect of the mediators on bicultural youth's motivation to move out depends on the presence or absence of another variable, or the moderator (in this case, family conflict). In other words, mediation explains *how* an effect occurs (i.e., the cognitive or interpersonal processes through which the effect operates) whereas moderated mediation determines *when* the *mediation* is present (i.e., the condition under which mediation varies). We used Preacher, Rucker, and Hayes's (2007) SPSS macro for moderated mediation for the significance of the indirect effect at three levels of family conflict: the mean, one standard deviation above the mean (+1 SD), and one standard deviation below the mean (-1 SD).

As seen in the top-left hand quadrant of Table 4, our hypothesis was supported such that for South Asians relative to Europeans, the conditional indirect effect through parental approval was significantly different from zero when the level of family conflict was at -1 SD (1.37), at the

mean (2.46), but not +1 SD (3.55). A similar pattern was found for the East Asian group: the indirect effect was significant at -1SD (1.28) and at the mean (2.35), but not at +1 SD (3.43) (see bottom-left quadrant of Table 4). In other words, the indirect effect of South/East Asian culture on motivation to move out through parental approval was observed when levels of family conflict were low to moderate, but not when they were high.

The conditional indirect effect of culture on moving out motivation through family allocentrism was also moderated by level of family conflict for the South Asian group (see top-right hand quadrant of Table 4), providing support for our hypothesis. Showing a pattern of conditional effects similar to that of parental approval, family allocentrism mediated the indirect effect at low and moderate levels of family conflict but not at high. Moderated mediation was also tested for the East Asian group. As shown in the bottom-right hand quadrant of Table 4, family allocentrism did not mediate the relation between culture and moving out motivation at any level of conflict.

Discussion

In the current study, we investigated the impact of culture and family on the decision to move out of the family home among young adults with European, South Asian, and East Asian backgrounds. Consistent with cross-cultural differences in autonomy ideals, with Western cultures emphasizing independence and Eastern cultures promoting interdependence and familial ties, our results indicated that young South Asian and East Asian Canadian biculturals were less motivated than European Canadians to move away from their family before marriage. Importantly, the current contributes to the literature by identifying some of the processes that may underlie these observations. Specifically, observed cultural differences in moving out motivation were attributed to East Asian and South Asian participants receiving less approval for

moving, and additionally for South Asians, having a self-understanding that is largely defined by the family (i.e., family allocentrism). Whether or not these factors played a part in biculturals' motivation to leave home, however, depended on the extent to which participants had conflict with their family over issues that are imbued with cultural norms and values and often related to autonomy (e.g., "your parents want you to sacrifice personal interests for the sake of the family, but you feel this is unfair"). These findings suggest that for South and East Asian biculturals, feeling caught between satisfying personal goals and those set out by family members (as indicated by higher levels of family conflict) may diminish the impact of cultural and family factors on the desire and goal to be independent from one's family.

Four hypotheses were tested and supported. The first hypothesis was that Europeans would be more motivated to move out than South Asians and East Asians. As predicted, Europeans had more motivation to move and saw moving out as a major life goal whereas South and East Asians were not as eager to live independently. This finding is consistent with previous evidence for varying degrees of importance placed on the self in relation to others among different cultures (Kim et al., 1994; Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Triandis, 1995).

As predicted by the second hypothesis, South and East Asians, relative to Europeans, reported that their parents would express less approval for their moving out. Consistent with past research (e.g., Lalonde et al., 2004), the participants in the Asian groups were also higher than Europeans on family allocentrism, suggesting that these young Asian adults felt strongly connected to their families and thus, are likely to have internalized the cultural values of their parents. In addition, our theoretical assumption was that compared to their European counterparts, South Asian and East Asian immigrant parents socialize their children in ways that emphasize collectivist cultural values, which include family, tradition, and group norms.

Compared to the European participants, those in the two Asian groups also reported having more family conflict over a variety of issues including social life, decision-making, academic achievement, and gender roles (see Lee et al., 2000).

Because heritage culture socialization for immigrant children occurs largely at the family-level, the third hypothesis predicted that Eastern cultural ideals of autonomy expressed, whether explicitly through approval or disapproval from the parents or implicitly through cultural norms transmitted by being part of the family collective (i.e., being family allocentric), would underlie cultural differences in moving out motivation. Significant indirect effects supported this prediction such that being South Asian or East Asian (as opposed to European) was associated with receiving less parental approval to move out, which then reduced motivation to move out. Family allocentrism was also an important factor for South Asians. South Asians' strong sense of family connectedness, and by association, stronger internalization of socio-cultural norms, helped explain why they were less motivated than Europeans to leave home for independence.

Given that family is often the primary source of heritage culture socialization for children of immigrants (Kwak, 2003), it makes sense that family-related factors may be partially responsible for cultural differences in motivation for moving out and autonomy. Cultural norms and expectations communicated explicitly and implicitly by the family (Hypothesis 3) are not the only elements to consider. The fourth hypothesis was that conflict in the family may alter the relative role of other family factors associated with moving out motivation. As predicted, our results illustrate that engaging in frequent conflict with the family, especially when the issue collides with cultural norms, can also guide the decision to leave or stay home.

Due to the possibility that intergenerational conflict itself may be interpreted as a violation of the Eastern norms of filial piety and obedience (Kim et al, 1994), high levels of

family conflict within East Asian and South Asian immigrant families can greatly disrupt close family relationships. This degree of conflict can lead young adults to more easily disregard family and cultural expectations and increase motivation to leave the uncomfortable home environment. Although the idea of family conflict as merely a push factor is intuitively appealing, it is also possible that the relationship between wanting to move out and family conflict is bidirectional. Not only may frequent conflict influence the decision to move out, but the issue of moving out itself can be a powerful source of conflict. If the bicultural young adult has a strong desire to move out and live independently but is not able to because of family and cultural expectations to sacrifice personal goals for the family, the issue of moving out may elicit ongoing disputes. Future research should investigate various aspects of cultural conflict (e.g., severity) within immigrant families and its antecedents and consequences. It will also help uncover the psychological impact on the individual and on the family dynamics and how autonomy-related behaviours (e.g., choosing one's school and academic major) can be swayed by and contribute to conflict.

Family Conflict and Cultural Conflict

The high level of family conflict described by South and East Asians and how it changed the way parental approval and family allocentrism affect motivation to move out is an example of the bicultural conflict sometimes faced by individuals who have internalized two different cultures (Giguère et al., 2010). Young adults from these two Asian groups may have a strong desire to move out and live independently of their parents—a typical “Western” tendency. At the same time, they may refer to their parents for approval or the Eastern norms of obedience and filial piety that they have internalized as their own expectations—a typical “Eastern” tendency. But personal motivation to move out and the importance of other relevant factors may be

compromised when one finds themselves conflicted between two sets of ideals, and even more so, when one considers the implications of ongoing family conflict. Although having to stay home in order to follow family expectations can instigate further conflict and resentment towards the family as described in the previous section, staying at home also allows individuals to adhere to cultural norms and in doing so, diminish the overall degree of interpersonal conflict they have with their parents.

One of our basic theoretical assumptions is that when socially-constructed norms (e.g., those prescribed by the family) are incompatible with one's personal desires, intrapersonal or interpersonal conflict may occur (Giguère et al, 2010; LaFromboise et al., 1993; Phinney et al., 2000). Having high motivation for a particular goal but not expecting to be able to realize it may be a potential source of intrapersonal conflict (e.g., "feeling torn") as well as negative psychological consequences such as stress, depression, and maladjustment among bicultural youth (Kwak, 2003; Lee & Liu, 2001). The relation between intrapersonal conflict that occurs within the self and the interpersonal conflict that occurs between parents is worth examining, particularly when the repercussions involve important life decisions.

Limitations and Future Directions

Moving out is a topic of research for which experiments are often impractical. The present study assessed participants' motivations to move out rather than their actual moving out experience. Unfortunately, it is neither possible (nor ethical) to experimentally manipulate the act of leaving the family home, nor can we directly influence family relationships and expectations that have been shaped through socialization since childhood. Future research should also consider alternative measures (e.g., behavioural) beyond survey data. These might include cross-lagged designs in which participants are assessed before, during, and after leaving home or

highly-engaging paradigms like a decision analysis task in which individuals consider the pros and cons of moving out with respect to various factors (e.g., relationship with parents, achieving a sense of personal freedom, financial constraints) and attributing a weight or value to each item.

One approach to investigating factors for which experimentation is not an option would be to conduct mediational analyses that focus on the underlying process variables. To test for indirect effects in this study, a bootstrapping procedure (Preacher & Hayes, 2008) was used alongside traditional product-of-coefficients method (i.e., Sobel test). Bootstrapping has been shown to improve power and Type 1 error rates, especially when sample sizes are small like in this study, which allows for more accurate results (Efron & Tibshirani, 1993). Thus, we emphasize the value of creative uses of mediation-type procedures to examine psychological mechanisms underlying group differences beyond traditional regression analyses.

The next steps in our research will be to consider additional motivational and societal factors that may undergird immigrant children's decision to move out. For example, leaving home to seek an educational or employment opportunity may be seen as culturally normative and even encouraged across Eastern and Western societies because potential for success is valuable at both individual and group levels (Boyd, 2000; Mitchell, 2004). In contrast, moving out to be independent is an individual-oriented decision that is promoted in Western societies but may represent a violation of family obligations in Eastern societies (Fuligni, 1998; Rudy et al., 2007). The relative impact of these factors may differ between immigrant groups. One potential consideration is who the young adult chooses to move in with (e.g., friends, romantic partner). Living together with an intimate partner outside the context of marriage may be particularly unacceptable in societies (e.g., South Asian cultures) where marriage is a lifelong arrangement made between families rather than a public demonstration of romantic love between the intimate

partners (Dion & Dion, 1996; Dugsin, 2001; Lalonde et al., 2004). Another variable that was not examined in the present study is socioeconomic status (SES). Prior work has looked at SES as an important conditional factor that can diminish or enhance the likelihood of young adults moving out, and is often included as a control variable (e.g., Boyd, 2000). It is important to consider, however, that parental expectations and the value of education are higher for some cultures than others. For example, families from East Asian cultures tend to place a strong emphasis on the importance of academic achievement (e.g., Li, 2004) and might go to great lengths to make education possible for their children; this may also be the case for South Asians and other immigrant families who moved to Canada to increase their children's opportunities. Questions focused on the family's SES and other circumstances will help provide insight on psychological situations that influence one's motivation to move out.

Lastly, we hope to generalize our findings to different regions within the same country. The present study was conducted at a large multi-ethnic university in an urban, multicultural city that boasts one of the largest immigration influxes of the country. Like the existing research on East-West biculturalism, we worked under the assumption that the social networks of the South and East Asians were predominantly Western whereas the family was the primary source of heritage culture socialization. In such a multicultural city, however, the intermingling of ethnic and cultural groups and forming of niches and communities of one's own group are common. Many diverse sources of mainstream and heritage socialization influence bicultural young adults simultaneously. In a more rural setting, the multicultural context may not be as rich and heterogeneous. There may be stronger pressure for immigrant children to assimilate to the mainstream culture, or a greater likelihood of marginalization from the rest of the community if assimilation does not occur. The influence that family members and cultural norms have over an

individual's decisions may be more or less relevant depending on the setting. A better understanding of the experiences in which mainstream and heritage cultures collide for youth in rural and urban environments can be obtained in future comparative studies.

Conclusion

The present study deepens our understanding of issues surrounding autonomy in bicultural young adults, particularly in terms of the family's role in shaping the important life decisions like moving out of the family home. In particular, it is important to focus on immigrant youth during the process of establishing their identity and developing their autonomy while being exposed to different cultural influences. Furthermore, the relative importance placed on autonomy and patterns of family dynamics observed across different ethnic groups lead to a more complex picture of the transition to adulthood.

Given the discrepancy in patterns of values between Eastern and Western cultures with respect to autonomy, this study has implications for bicultural youth who have been socialized by two different cultures and thus are likely to experience culturally-based conflicts. Enhanced theoretical understanding provided by this kind of research can greatly contribute to the development of intervention or prevention programs aimed at addressing problems commonly faced by immigrant families. For example, Szapocznik and Kurtines's (1993) bicultural effectiveness training approach was developed to help parents and their children manage their cultural differences, reduce intergenerational and intercultural conflict, and increase mutual acceptance and understanding. As rates of immigration and multiculturalism continue to soar, it is comforting to know that heritage cultural norms and an emphasis on family influences help to explain changing trends as a function of our dynamic cultural mosaic.

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Footnotes

¹ Culture serves as a base for the socialization of values, beliefs, and perceptions, and is often grounded in one's ethnic background. However, individuals from a specific ethnic group in one context (e.g., South Asians living in India) do not necessarily have cultural experiences identical to those in another context (e.g., South Asians living in Canada) as a result of the acculturation process (Berry, 1997; LaFromboise et al., 1993). Thus, culture is defined not only by ethnicity but also encompasses other contextual factors (e.g., place of residence). In this study, we use the broader term "culture" to refer to the combination of ethnic and non-ethnic influences.

² Italian Canadians, who primarily migrated from southern Italy, tend to resemble Canadians from Eastern backgrounds when it comes to family influence and traditional autonomy views (Lalonde, 2006) and thus, were not included in our sample of European Canadians.

Table 1

Descriptive statistics of the primary measures across cultural groups

Measure	α	<u>European</u>	<u>South Asian</u>	<u>East Asian</u>
		<i>M (SD)</i>	<i>M (SD)</i>	<i>M (SD)</i>
<i>n</i>		108	112	79
Motivation to move out	.91	5.37 _a (1.06)	4.84 _b (1.32)	4.75 _b (1.37)
Parental approval	.84	4.70 _a (1.50)	3.36 _b (1.20)	3.46 _b (1.14)
Family allocentrism	.88	4.24 _a (0.80)	4.60 _b (0.87)	4.64 _b (0.68)
Family conflict	.89	2.02 _a (0.97)	2.87 _b (1.03)	2.76 _b (1.05)

Note. Means in the same row that do not share a common subscript differ at $p < .05$, according to Tukey's HSD comparison.

Table 2

Zero-order correlations between the primary measures by cultural group

Measure	1	2	3	4
<i>European</i>				
1. Motivation to move	--	.41**	-.21*	.19 [†]
2. Parental approval		--	-.12	-.16
3. Family allocentrism			--	-.19 [†]
4. Family conflict				--
<i>South Asian</i>				
1. Motivation to move	--	.20*	-.34**	.30**
2. Parental approval		--	-.08	-.14
3. Family allocentrism			--	-.31**
4. Family conflict				--
<i>East Asian</i>				
1. Motivation to move	--	.21 [†]	-.10	.32**
2. Parental approval		--	-.15	-.07
3. Family allocentrism			--	-.15
4. Family conflict				--

Note. [†] $p < .10$, * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$.

Table 3

Indirect effects of culture on motivation to move out through parental approval to move out and family allocentrism

	Sobel test using normal distribution			Bootstrapping	
	Point Estimate	SE	z	Lower limit	Upper limit
<i>Parental approval to move out</i>					
South Asian vs European	-.35	.09	-3.84***	-.58	-.15
East Asian vs European	-.34	.10	-3.59***	-.56	-.14
<i>Family allocentrism</i>					
South Asian vs European	-.15	.06	-2.55*	-.28	-.04
East Asian vs European	-.10	.06	-1.80 [†]	-.24	.02

Note. Unstandardized regression coefficients are reported. Bootstrap sample size = 5,000. [†] <.10,

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

Table 4

Conditional indirect effects through parental approval to move out and family allocentrism at different levels of family conflict

Level of family conflict	Parental approval			Family allocentrism		
	Indirect effect	SE	z	Indirect effect	SE	z
<i>South Asian vs European</i>						
1.37 (-1 SD)	-.53	.11	-4.66***	-.12	.06	-2.05*
2.46 (mean)	-.36	.09	-3.98***	-.13	.05	-2.31*
3.55 (+1 SD)	-.19	.11	-1.68	-.13	.07	-1.82
<i>East Asian vs European</i>						
1.27 (-1 SD)	-.61	.14	-4.44***	-.12	.08	-1.42
2.33 (mean)	-.38	.10	-3.73***	-.05	.06	-.96
3.44 (+1 SD)	-.14	.11	-1.30	.01	.08	.13

Note. -1 SD represents one standard deviation below the mean; +1 SD represents one standard deviation above the mean. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

Figure Caption

Figure 1. The roles of parental approval, family allocentrism, and family conflict on the relation between culture and motivation to move out.

