Immigrant Children
Dedication

To my mother, father, and family who live across are scattered across Canada and the United States. To my grandparents and Aunt Sophie who are with us in spirit.

Susan S. Chuang

To my grandparents and great-grandparents for perseverance to create a new life for themselves and their children—gracias por todo.

Robert P. Moreno
Contents

Acknowledgments ix

Chapter One Changing Lives: Theoretical and Methodological Advances on Immigrant Children and Youth
Susan S. Chuang and Robert P. Moreno 1

Overview of Immigration and Settlement Perspectives

Chapter Two Immigrant Children: Making a New Life
Carola Suárez-Orozco, Avary Carhill, and Susan S. Chuang 7

Chapter Three A Resilience Framework to Examine Immigrant and Refugee Children and Youth in Canada
David Este and Hieu Van Ngo 27

Immigration Challenges and Adaptation

Chapter Four Social Functioning and Peer Experiences in Immigrant Chinese, Canadian-born Chinese, and European Canadian Children
Xinyin Chen and Hennis Chi-Hang Tse 51

Chapter Five The Achievement/Adjustment Paradox: Understanding the Psychological Struggles of Asian American Children and Adolescents
Desiree Baolian Qin and Eun-Jin Han 75
## Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Six</td>
<td>Youth Risk Behavior among Mexican-Origin Adolescents: Cross Generational Differences</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Kate Luthar, Scott Coltrane, Ross D. Parke, Jeffrey Cookston, and Michele Adams</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Seven</td>
<td>The Acculturation and Adaptation of Second-Generation Immigrant Youth in Toronto and Montreal</td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>John W. Berry and Colette Sabatier</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Eight</td>
<td>Service Providers’ Perspectives on the Pathways of Adjustment for Newcomer Children and Youth in Canada</td>
<td>149</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Susan S. Chuang, Sarah Rasmi, and Christopher Friesen</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Family Acculturation and Relationships

| Chapter Nine | The Social Relational Perspective on Family Acculturation | 171  |
|             | *Leon Kuczyński, Geoffrey Navara, and Michael Boiger* |      |
| Chapter Ten | Psychological Aspects of Immigration among Youth Living in Portugal | 193  |
|             | *Félix Neto, Robert P. Moreno, and Susan S. Chuang* |      |
| Chapter Eleven | School Readiness in Latino Immigrant Children in the United States | 213  |
|             | *Catherine S. Tamis-LeMonda, Lisa Baumwell, and Sandra I. Dias* |      |
| Chapter Twelve | Challenges Facing Immigrant Parents and Their Involvement in Their Children’s Schooling | 239  |
|             | *Robert P. Moreno and Susan S. Chuang* |      |
| Chapter Thirteen | Acculturation-Related Conflict across Generations in Immigrant Families | 255  |
|                | *Amy Marks, Flannery Patton, and Lisa W. Coyne* |      |

### Conclusions

| Chapter Fourteen | New Arrivals: Past Advances and Future Directions in Research and Policy | 271  |
|                 | *Ross D. Parke and Susan S. Chuang* |      |
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We wish to first acknowledge the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada and their continuous support for the On New Shores Conferences in 2007, 2008, and 2010. These conferences provided an important forum for extensive discussions regarding the resources, challenges and barriers facing immigrant children and youth. Most importantly, we are grateful to all the numerous individuals who allowed us into their lives so that we can better understand their new life experiences.
Chapter 1

Immigrant Children

Change, Adaptation, and Cultural Transformation

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In this volume we have assembled a diversity of leading scholars to discuss the increasing challenges faced by immigrant children and children of immigrants. In North America, the immigrant populations are among the highest in the world. For example, between 2001 and 2006 the Canadian immigrant population increased from 17.9% to 19.8%, the highest increase in 75 years. This is four times the growth rate (3.3%) as compared to native Canadians (Statistics Canada, 2006). A similar pattern is found in the United States. In the last decade the foreign-born population has increased from 7.9% to 12% of the total U.S. population (United States Census Bureau, 2006). As of 2005, nearly one-fourth of children in the United States lived in immigrant families (Hernandez, Denton, and Macartney, 2007).

Despite the changing demographic landscape, the vast majority of research on children is drawn from non-immigrants. Consequently, our conceptual and theoretical frameworks derived from homogenous, non-immigrant populations may be ill suited to guide our thinking as we strive to understand and facilitate the development of immigrant children in our respective societies. By turning our attention to immigrant children, we are forced to reexamine our prevailing models of development (predicated on homogeneity and contextual stability) and consider developmental trajectories that are situated (by definition) in a context of change and diversity. As a result, many of the chapters here take a “goodness of fit” approach. The positive developmental outcomes are a function of a dynamic interplay the resources and liabilities inherent in the children, families, and receiving environment.

This volume is divided into three sections. The first section, Overview of Immigration and Settlement Perspectives, provides us with a discussion of the
Chapter 1

overarching issues and challenges facing immigrant children. In Chapter 2, *Immigrant Children: Making a New Life*, Carola Suárez-Orozco, Avary Carhill, and Susan Chuang provide us with a critical overview of the conditions of immigrant children and the contrasting response between the United States and Canada. First, they point out the numerous dimensions of diversity among immigrants (their origins, religion, education, legal status, and reasons for relocation). Second, they take a critical view of disciplines that take an oversimplified (“linear”) approach to immigration that focuses on pathology and neglects context (a point that is echoed in Neto, Moreno, and Chuang).

Similarly, in Chapter 3, *A Resilience Framework to Examine Immigrant and Refugee Children and Youth in Canada*, although from a different perspective, David Este and Hieu Van Ngo provide a detailed discussion on resilience in relation to the issues confronting immigrant/refugee children and youth. In addition, they point to strategies that may assist children and their families in overcoming the challenges they face as newcomers to Canada.

The second section, *Immigration Challenges and Adaptation*, provides us with a more in-depth examination of specific challenges that children and youth face. In Chapter 4, *Social Functioning and Peer Experiences in Immigrant Chinese, Canadian-Born Chinese, and European Canadian Children*, Xinyin Chen and Hennis Chi-Hang Tse examine children’s social development and the role of acculturation among Chinese Canadian (first- and second generation) and European Canadian school-aged children. Focusing on social functioning (agression, shyness) and peer experiences (acceptance, rejection) and victimization, Chen and Tse found group differences in relation to ethnicity, acculturation, and specific circumstances. For example, Chinese children were more shy and less aggressive as compared to their European counterparts. However, Chinese-born children were found to be more socially competent in school situations than immigrant Chinese and European Canadian children. Parenting practices in childrearing are discussed in relation to child socialization.

Also focusing on Asian children, Desiree Qin and Eun-Kin Han discuss academic achievement and its links to the mental health and social adjustment of Asian American children and adolescents (Chapter 5). In their Chapter, *The Achievement/Adjustment Paradox: Understanding the Psychological Struggles of Asian American Children and Adolescents*, they critically examine the stereotype of Asians as the “model minority” and how this stereotype has affected their psychological well being. Their review of the literature focuses on the struggles and stress of academic achievement on Asian students, placing these issues in both the family and school contexts. First,
how the family dynamics add to the burdens of children (e.g., high parental expectations and control) is reviewed. Next, a discussion on school and peer factors as equally as critical to the development of children and adolescents is explored.

In Chapter 6, *Youth Risk Behaviors among Mexican-Origin Adolescents: Cross Generational Differences*, Kate Luthar, Scott Coltrane, Ross Parke, Jeff Cookston, and Michele Adams investigate issues of delinquency among Mexican-origin adolescents. Specifically, they examine behaviors of externalizing, risky sexual activity, drug and alcohol use, and contact with the juvenile justice system among Mexican immigrant and Mexican American youth. Their findings are in accordance with earlier “paradoxical” findings. More specifically, the data indicate that first-generation youth are less “at-risk” than their later-generation counterparts.

In Chapter 7, *The Acculturation and Adaptation of Second-Generation Immigrant Youth in Toronto and Montreal*, John Berry and Colette Sabatier contrasts the findings of two studies conducted in two Canadian cities (Toronto and Montreal). These cities are used to illustrate the two differing contexts of *multiculturalism* and *interculturalism*. The authors ask the following three questions in each city: are there differences in the ways youth are acculturating; in the levels of psychological and social adaptation they achieve; and relationships between the ways of acculturating and levels of adaptation? The paper is a search for the answers to these questions.

In Chapter 8, *Service Providers’ Perspectives on the Pathways of Adjustment for Newcomer Children and Youth in Canada*, Susan Chuang, Sarah Rasmi, and Christopher Friesen take a different approach and examine the challenges of immigrant children through the lens of the immigrant-serving agencies and community-based organizations. These agencies are the “front line” in assisting newcomers (immigrants and refugees) in their transition to Canadian society. Thus, they have a particular vantage point that gives them unique insight into the barriers faced by newcomer children and youth. In particular, they illustrate the various challenges such as language proficiency, school-related issues, peer relations, and financial issues. Moreover, service providers report that some challenges are age-specific and stress the importance of focusing on native experiences (e.g., refugees who lived in camps and experienced trauma and violence) in relation to current adaptation and settlement needs.

The third section, *Family Acculturation and Relationships*, shifts attention from children and youth to families, and more specifically, parents and their roles in their children’s lives. As immigration needs to be taken into “context,” a greater understanding of how children and youth navigate their
new lives within a family context is necessary. In Chapter 9, *The Social Relational Perspective on Family Acculturation*, Leon Kuczyński, Geoffrey Navara, and Michael Boiger use social relational theory as a framework for examining the parent-child relationships among immigrants as they undergo the acculturation process. They argue that social relational theory is a more appropriate approach as it considers the perspectives of parents and children in a “balanced” manner. Social relational theory, they argue, takes into account dynamics that affect parent and child separately and in relation to one another. Thus, they are able to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of the adjustment process of immigrant children and youth.

In Chapter 10, *Psychological Aspects of Immigration among Youth Living in Portugal*, Félix Neto, Robert Moreno, and Susan Chuang use Portugal as a pluralistic context to examine the relationship between immigration and mental health. Pointing to a series of studies, they challenge the “oversimplified and deficit view” that migrant groups have a higher prevalence of mental health problems that lead to a heightened risk for the development of children and their parents, and argue that the relation between immigration and mental health is a complex interaction between personal and contextual factors.

The next two chapters focus on immigrant families and schooling. In Chapter 11, *School Readiness in Latino Immigrant Children in the United States*, addressing the growing presence of immigrant children and their entry into the U.S. school system, Catherine Tamis-LeMonda, Lisa Baumberg, and Sandra Dias point to the educational gaps between Latino immigrants and their European American counterparts and highlight factors that influence immigrant children’s “school readiness.” They examine various interconnected factors that may impact Latino children’s academic lives such as parents’ socioeconomic statuses (income, educational levels), parenting and literacy practices, and children’s early educational experiences (e.g., daycare, nurseries). They provide suggestions for future directions for practitioners and researchers.

In Chapter 12, *Parent Involvement in their Children’s Schooling: Issues and Challenges for Immigrant Families*, Robert Moreno and Susan Chuang also address the issue of immigrants and education, but focus on the role and nature of immigrant parents’ involvement with the school system. More specifically, they argue that the nature of involvement among immigrants is not well captured by prevailing notions of involvement. Immigrant parents face unique challenges as they attempt to interact with the school system. Basic issues such as language and cultural variations regarding parents and their children’s schooling were not considered in the initial conceptualization of “parent involvement.” In response, they offer the notion of “teachers as compadres” as an alternative perspective.
In Chapter 13, *Acculturation-Related Conflict across Generations in Immigrant Families*, Amy Marks, Flannery Patton, and Lisa Coyne examine the theoretical and empirical research of the cross-cultural experiences of acculturation and migration that may be relevant to understanding parent-child conflict in U.S. immigrant families. They argue that immigrant families experience additional daily stresses that stem from their migration and acculturation. As a result, this, in turn, may lead to increased parent-child conflict. However, this acculturation-related stress may vary as a function of differences in acculturational style, age of migration, and “value misalignment.”

Ross Parke and Susan Chuang provide a review of current research on immigrant/refugee children and youth in their chapter, *New Arrivals: Past Advances and Future Directions in Research and Policy* (Chapter 14). Parke and Chuang first point to major advancements of the immigration field from a multidisciplinary approach. Some suggestions for future directions are offered to researchers, service providers, and social policy makers, in the hope to advance the study of immigrant children in a more comprehensive, multidisciplinary, and collaborative fashion.

Gradually, social, developmental, and education scientists are recognizing that our theoretical frameworks and models of child development are lacking from a sociocultural ecological perspective. Although many will acknowledge the importance of these perspectives, they cannot fully be actualized without intense study of heterogeneous populations in a state of transition. This volume is our attempt at contributing to the ongoing dialogue to understand human development context of change, adaptation, and transformation.

**REFERENCES**


Chapter 2

Immigrant Children

Making a New Life

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The forces of globalization are transforming economies, cultures, societies, and families. International flows of trade and capital along with large-scale political, religious, and ethnic upheavals have led to unprecedented levels of worldwide migration. As a result, at the beginning of the new millennium, there are nearly 200 million immigrants and refugees worldwide (United Nations, 2005). These new immigrants are extraordinarily diverse and their experiences resist facile generalizations. Nearly 80% are of color, coming from Latin America, Asia, and the Caribbean. They bring with them an astonishingly wide array of languages, religions, cultural beliefs, and practices. Some come from highly educated professional backgrounds, and others are illiterate and low skilled, struggling in the lowest paid sectors of the service economy (Suárez-Orozco, 2000). Some are escaping political, religious, or ethnic persecution; others are lured by the promise of better jobs and the hope for better educational opportunities. Some families have officially sanctioned documented, legal status; some do not, and still others have families with mixed documentation—some siblings are documented and others are not. Some come to settle permanently, others come as sojourners with the intent to return to their homeland after a specified period of time, as others move from one migrant work camp to another. Some engage in transnational strategies living both “here and there”—shuttling between their country of birth and their country of choice (Levitt, 2001). The immigrant journey today follows complex paths bifurcating into divergent experiences and varied outcomes—some thrive with immigration and others struggle all too quickly joining the “rainbow underclasses” (Portes and Zhou, 1993).
Chapter 2

Migration is fundamentally a family affair. Young men take the migratory voyage in order to earn enough money to purchase a home so that they can start a family. Older daughters and sons leave home to send back remittances to support their parents and younger siblings. Young fathers leave home to support their wives and children when the economy in their region does not provide jobs with living wages. Widows leave their children to find employment in order to support their families. Children reunify with their parents who went ahead some years ago. More often than not, family obligations and family ties are the very foundation of the arduous immigrant voyage.

The process of migration, however, asserts tremendous stress upon the individual family members in a myriad of ways. Families are often separated for long periods of time before they can reunify. The losses and stresses of immigration often lead to parents who report feelings of depression. The pressures to survive economically in the new land while sending back remittances to the family in the country of origin lead parents to work multiple jobs and long hours. In addition, the degree to which individual family members acculturate in the new country varies, with children more likely acculturating more quickly than their parents. Especially when parents rely on their older children to be language and cultural brokers, family roles become reversed, which may lead to greater parent-child conflicts (see Marks, Patton, and Coyne, in volume). These myriad pressures serve as both centripetal and centrifugal forces in immigrant families (Falicov, 1980, 1998; Suárez-Orozco and Suárez-Orozco, 2001). Yet the family as a unit of analysis has been understudied by scholars of migration. In part, this may be linked to the challenge of conducting sound research with immigrant families given the magnitude, diversity, and complexity of the migratory phenomenon as well as the dearth of cross-culturally effective and meaningful research strategies.

At the eve of the twenty-first century, the scholarship of migration was dominated by various disciplines. Demographers focused on where the new immigrants were from and where they were settling. Economists were concerned with understanding the economic forces that push migrants from their homes and lure them to new destinations as well as establishing the fiscal and wage implications of immigrants for host society economies. Sociologists investigated how immigrants were adapting to the new society. Lastly, anthropologists inquired into what cultural practices the new immigrants brought with them and how those in the host society responded to them. For the large part, the disciplinary investigations of anthropologists and ethnographically focused sociologists, have, for the most part, taken a rather telescopic view. And the more family- and person-centered aspects of migration
Making a New Life

a logical purview of the discipline of psychology (most particularly developmental psychology) has only until fairly recently begun to systematically fall within the purview of our discipline.

Rather than contexts, the foci of the field of psychology has primarily examined the adaptive process (e.g., How is the stress of migration experienced either individually or within the family? How are new identities formed?) as well as adaptive outcomes (e.g., How are immigrants integrating into the host society?). The often unstated premise is one in which successful linear adaptation is measured against the final standard of the mainstream dominant host culture. Our review of the field (and this may be beginning to change) is that the bulk of the scholarship on migration in psychology falls into four broad domains: (1) acculturative stress and migration morbidity; (2) relational strains in family dynamics; (3) challenges in identity formation; and (4) educational adaptations and outcomes. It will be interesting to see as the field develops what new domains emerge.

By in large, the context of origin—including the economic, political, cultural, social, and personal factors that may have propelled the immigrant to leave their country of origin—has largely been ignored within the field of psychology. More specifically, the context of reception, which includes the national integration policies, the legal framework, the political climate, and the media representations about immigrants, has not appeared to be of particular interest for psychology researchers (for exception, see Deaux, 2006). However, context matters, which we will illustrate in our comparative analyses between Canada and the United States.

First, researchers need to consider the country’s immigration policies that have shaped its ethnoprofiles. Canada has had a more selective migration policy than the United States. Before the 1967 Immigration Act, the majority of newcomers to Canada were of European descent (over 80%) (Ley and Smith, 2000). After 1967, Canada introduced a points system (e.g., level of education was placed on a point system), which then did not explicitly discriminate any source countries. This new Act dramatically changed the ethnographic landscape. For example, before the Act, Asians accounted for 10% of the immigration population, which increased 63% by 2001. With the new Canadian immigration policies, Canada strategically and selectively targeted highly educated immigrants (e.g., medical doctors, engineers, teachers), who accounted for 54% of all newcomers, 27% were accepted under the family class umbrella (e.g., family reunification), 11% were refugees, and 6% were business class-immigrants (declared assets of over a million dollars (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2006). By 2010, the target goal was to have 65% of all new immigrants holding post-secondary education degrees. Similar to Canada, the United States also had historically excluded visible
minorities with policies such as the Chinese Exclusion Act. Post 1965, the United States experienced a large influx of immigrants of colors; currently approximately 80% are from Latin America, Asia, or the Caribbean (Hernandez, 2004).

Focusing on where newcomers settle, Canadian immigrants are highly concentrated in three urban areas: Toronto, Vancouver, and Montreal, where 50% of all immigrants reside (Papillon, 2002). In the United States, immigrants have been concentrated across five states: California, New York, Texas, Florida, and Illinois (Hernandez, 2004). In recent years, however, the immigrant population has spread more nationally to various states such as North Carolina, Kansas, and Nevada. These highly concentrated immigration neighborhoods may be sources of diversity as well as an enrichment to the receiving cities by contributing to their social and cultural qualities (Florida, 2000). Diversity not only contributes to the human capital of the city in the form of an expanded labor market but also can create “cultural capital” by developing an environment that becomes more conducive to creativity (bringing in new ways of thinking that may have been effective in their home countries) and innovation. When cities have an environment that fosters innovation, they can attract skilled workers, which, in turn, creates a socially sustainable environment (Kotkin, 2000). However, highly concentrated immigrant neighborhoods can also create ethnic walls within communities. High concentration of immigrants creates unique challenges for the cities in relation to human and social services, urban planning, infrastructure of institutions (e.g., schools), and the like. For example, research on U.S. cities with high immigrant concentration has found that generally these areas of segregation can lead to low levels of integration in the host society and an emergence of an immigrant underclass (Borjas, 1994; Huges, 1990). Thus, “success” of neighborhoods tended to be associated with a geographical dispersion of immigrants throughout neighborhoods, rather than segregated ethnic groups. The extent to which these findings are reflective of Canadian societies remains unclear (see Papillon, 2002, for further discussion).

The social policies for integration are quite distinct in each country. Canada implemented a multiculturalism policy that explicitly focuses on welcoming diversity (for details, see Chuang, Rasmi, and Friesen, in volume; Este and Ngo, in volume). The United States’s major immigration policy, in contrast, is focused on border control with no systematic integration policy for immigrants. Thus, the national narrative about assimilation (or lack thereof) is quite different in each country. The U.S. narrative is still based on the notion of a “melting pot” where all immigrants assimilate to the American culture, whereas the Canadian narrative is one of a “mosaic” where individual cultures
are intertwined together (Deaux, 2002). Given these distinct contexts of receptions, there seem to be emerging trajectories of adaptation that may differ by country. For example, according to the Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) findings, first- and second-generation Canadian immigrants surpassed their native-born counterparts in academic performance, whereas in the United States, both the first and second generation lagged behind non-immigrant origin peers (PISA, 1993).

Only recently have immigrant children become the topic of interest (García Coll and Magnuson, 1997; Suárez-Orozco and Suárez-Orozco, 2001). This is quite puzzling given that at the turn of the century, immigrant children and youth were a burgeoning portion of the population (22% of the child population today in the United States and projected to be one in three by 2040 (Rong and Preissle, 1998). For Canada, 36% (390,800) of the newcomers represent the immigrant and refugee children and youth 24 years of age or under (Statistics Canada, 2006). Researchers have consistently acknowledged the variety of challenges faced by immigrant youth (e.g., Chuang and CISSA-ACSEI, 2010; Fuligni, 1998; Suárez-Orozco and Suárez-Orozco, 2001). These challenges included disrupted networks of social relations and family separations (Suárez-Orozco, Todorova, and Louie, 2002), parents who are unavailable because they work long hours or are depressed (Athey and Ahearn, 1991), a hostile ethos of reception (Suárez-Orozco, 2000), neighborhood and school segregation (Orfield and Yun, 1999), educational challenges (Suárez-Orozco, Suárez-Orozco, and Todorova, 2008), as well as challenges to identity formation (Suárez-Orozco, 2004). Additionally, immigrant youth often immigrate not just to new homes but also to new family structures. In our study of 400 immigrant youth to the United States coming from a variety of countries (Central America, China, the Dominican Republic, Mexico, and Haiti), we found that 75% of the youth in this project had been separated from one or both parents for periods of several months to several years (Suárez-Orozco, Todorova, and Louie, 2001; Suárez-Orozco, Bang, and Kim, 2010). Given the numbers of youth involved, how these youth adapt, and the educational pathways they take, will have profound implications for our society. Clearly, this is a fertile area for important future research.

**SIGNIFICANT GAPS IN DEVELOPMENTAL RESEARCH ON IMMIGRANT YOUTH**

**Neglected Populations**

Research on immigrant origin groups tend to focus on so-called “problem populations.” Research abounds around why Latinos are not doing better as a group in the educational system, or how particular groups are over-represented
in the penal system or in gangs. Conversely, researchers also look towards
the other end of the continuum—the so called “model minority” (Lee, 1996).
Asian immigrants are often held up as the gold standard—why do other groups
not do as well as Asian students? This stereotype, although on the surface
flattering, politically pits groups against one another and ignores the fact that
many Asian origin Americans struggle with structural barriers (Lee, 1996).
Further, groups that tend neither to overachieve, nor to dramatically under-
achieve, are often under-researched. Filipinos are certainly an example—there
is little research among this group although they are the third largest country
of origin group in both Canada and the United States.

**Pan-Ethnic Confabulation**

Much of the research that could shed light on the immigrant family experi-
ence tends to examine pan-ethnic categories (such as Latinos, Asians, and
Blacks). This type of work, although important, tends to overshadow other
relevant issues such as the variety of incoming resources and generational
patterns that exist within these larger designations.

At over 43 million individuals, the complex category of Latinos represents
well over half of all immigrants to the United States (U.S. Census Bureau,
2006). Latinos are extraordinarily diverse—some have ancestors who were
established in the U.S. territory long before the current borders were set
through conquest and land purchases. On the other hand, 40% of Latinos are
born abroad. Mexican Americans, Puerto Ricans, and Cubans have histori-
cally been the most represented groups in the aggregated the Latino category.
In recent decades, however, large numbers of Latinos have been immigrating
from dozens of countries (such as Ecuador, Colombia, and Brazil) that fuel
this burgeoning population. Today, an estimated two-thirds of Latinos are
either immigrants or the children of immigrants (Suárez-Orozco and Paez,
2002). Latinos tend to share Spanish as the common language of origin (with
the exception of the Brazilians and indigenous speakers) but language loss
is very rapid across generations (it is rare to encounter a completely fluent
Spanish speaker by the third generation) (Portes and Rumbaut, 2001). The
sending countries, the areas of settlement, the historical timing of the migra-
tion, the political climate, and economic circumstances vary considerably
for Latinos from different countries of origin. This array of backgrounds and
experiences challenge any semblance of Latino homogeneity.

The Asian population has grown rapidly since the 1990s both in the United
States and Canada. What are called the Asian and Pacific Islander (API)
in United States are currently estimated to include 12.5 million, totaling
over 4% of the U.S. population. In Canada, what are termed Asian Visible
Minorities include 2.8 million people or roughly 8.4% of the population (Statistics Canada, 2006). This broad category includes individuals from a broad array of countries including China, the Philippines, Japan, Korea, Vietnam, Thailand, Laos, India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh, among others. These countries represent a broad range of cultural traditions, religious practices, and languages. Some are amongst the most educated (Indians on average have higher levels of educational attainment than native-born U.S. citizens), whereas others have low levels of literacy (e.g., Laotians, Hmong, and individuals from the Fujian province of China). More than two-thirds of Asians in the United States and Canada were born abroad some have been here for many generations are have high rates of inter-marriage with native-born U.S. citizens (Statistics Canada; U.S. Census Bureau, 2006).

From the earliest inception of U.S. history, Africans were brought as involuntary migrants. The descendants of slavery made up approximately 10% of the population at the turn of the twentieth century—currently Blacks make up almost 13% of the total U.S. population. At the fin de siècle, only 0.02% of the Black population were of voluntary immigrant origin. At the new millennium, however, this has changed considerably as African and West Indian/Caribbean immigrants account for over 6% of the Black population nationally (Tormala and Deaux, 2006.) In New York, nearly half of the Black population is of immigrant origin from such diverse sending countries as Ghana, Jamaica, Guyana, and Haiti. Again, within this population there is tremendous diversity. On one end of the spectrum, a high proportion of Ghanaian doctors are practicing in New York rather than in their country were they were trained (Mullan, 2005). On the other end, many of the newest wave of Haitian immigrants have limited literacy and interrupted schooling. Some arrive with elite experiences, whereas others have encountered tremendous violence and arrived with post-traumatic stress. These sending experiences have significant implications for family life and adaptation to the new society.

Focus on Pathology

Psychologists, in particular, but social scientists in general, have explored exclusively on pathology. Much of the research has investigated links between the stresses of the migratory experience and expected negative fall-out (e.g., depression, marital conflict, crises of identity, incarceration rates) resulting from that experience (Ainslie, 1998; Arrendondo-Dowd, 1980; Grinberg and Grinberg, 1990; Sluzki, 1979; Suárez-Orozco, 2000). (It should be noted that these outcomes would be most likely to be more pronounced among refugees, but in fact there is frequently little distinction made within the field of psychology between immigrants and refugees.) When sampling
from a non-clinical population, the data revealed little relationship between migration and psychopathology (Suárez-Orozco and Qin-Hilliard, 2004b). Though few studies examined mental health issues in the countries of origin, there has been some evidence that the associations between non-migrants in country of origin and migrants in a new setting are non-significant. Further, when comparing immigrants to non-immigrants, it appeared that, on the whole, immigrants did not demonstrate significantly higher rates of psychopathology as compared to non-immigrants (Noh, Speechley, Kaspar, and Wu, 1992).

This general finding that the link between migration and negative mental health outcomes is relatively weak is consistent with growing evidence that the first generation in fact appear to fare better on a variety of indicators of well-being when compared to second generation as well as the native-born peers (Davies and McKelvey, 1998; Hernandez and Charney, 1995). Several fairly recent large-scale international studies have replicated this epidemiological paradox in Canada (Beiser, Hou, Hyman, and Tousignant, 1999), in New Zealand (Davies and McKelvey, 1998) as well as in Europe. Generally, first-generation immigrants were considerably better on a number of mental and physical health indicators in spite of their higher poverty levels. Unfortunately, researchers who interpret these findings as counterintuitive or paradoxical maintain a deficit perspective of immigrant families, assuming that immigrants should not fare as well or better than their native-born counterparts. Such assumptions discount the strengths and uniqueness of families who draw upon their individual, familial, and cultural capacities to deal with stressful or challenging situations. Recently, researchers have moved toward a more strength-based perspective, focusing on the resilience of families and communities, providing greater insight into the dynamics of family functioning and relationships (e.g., see Ungar, 2005).

The underlying explanation for this phenomenon has yet to be proven, but a number of potential explanations could be considered. There may be a selective pattern of migration—individuals with greater psychological and physical robustness may be more likely to embark on the immigrant journey. First-generation immigrants may also be engaging in healthier cultural practices. The longer they are in the host country, the more likely they are to: assimilate to less healthy habits (i.e., greater dependence on processed, high-fat, low-fiber fast food), be employed in work sectors that require less physical exertion, engage in substance abuse, and so on. First generation may also be more likely to draw on the inoculating effects of the dual frame of reference between the country of origin and the new setting (e.g., “My lot is in substantive ways better here than there”) (Suárez-Orozco and Suárez-Orozco, 1995) as well as hope (Suárez-Orozco and Suárez-Orozco, 2001). Further,
the 1.5 generation and beyond may become more vulnerable as a result of developing and growing up in the face of a negative social mirror that reflects back a distorted negative image of their worth and potential (Suárez-Orozco, 2000). Future studies that focus on the psychological sequelae of migration should consider not simply pathological outcomes but also the particular strengths and resiliencies that may emerge through migration.

### Gendered Patterns of Adaptation

Gendered migratory experiences are another domain of significant neglect within the immigration research community. Scholars all too often fail to consider whether or not women are motivated by the same forces as men as well as how their experience within the new context may or may not be different than that of their male counterparts. There is ample evidence to suggest that there are many dimensions of experience that are indeed different for males and females (Hongdagneu-Sotelo, 1999; Mahler, 1999; Pessar, 1995). Females seem to do better within academic contexts for example, and young men tend to contend with a more unforgiving, hostile reception within the new country (Suárez-Orozco and Qin-Hilliard, 2004a). On the other hand, assuming that gender will lead to different experiences is problematic. Although there are differences between immigrant males and females, there are also many similarities (Cornell, 2000; Suárez-Orozco and Qin-Hilliard, 2004a, b). Interestingly, many of the dimensions we have examined over the years have revealed no gender differences including attitudes toward teachers, perceptions of school safety, attitudes toward Americans, self-reports of somatization and hostility (Suárez-Orozco and Suárez-Orozco, 1995; Suárez-Orozco and Qin-Hilliard, 2004a). We have also found that often country of origin trumps gender—that is to say being from a particular country of origin has more salience (or is more predictive) than being of a particular gender. Hence, although it is important to consider gender, as researchers it is also equally important to recognize that findings of commonalities in attitudes, behaviors, and experiences are in some ways as interesting as findings of differences. Future research should consider how, when, and why it makes a difference to be an immigrant or to be from a particular country or to be female rather than male (Eckes and Trautner, 2000).

### LESSONS FROM THE LISA STUDY

The Longitudinal Immigration Student Adaptation (LISA) study (Suárez-Orozco, Suárez-Orozco, and Todorova, 2008) was a five-year longitudinal study that used interdisciplinary and comparative approaches, mixed-methods,
and triangulated data in order to document patterns of adaptation among recently arrived newcomer immigrant youth from Central America, China, the Dominican Republic, Haiti, and Mexico. A sample of 400 (equated by country of origin and gender) were recruited with 309 remaining at the end of the fifth year of the study. Students were recruited from schools in Boston and San Francisco with high densities of immigrant students. Bilingual and bicultural research assistants conducted all of the individual interviews in the language of the participant’s preference. Interviews with the youth were conducted each year for five years and parent interviews were conducted the first and last years of the study at the participants’ homes (Suárez-Orozco et al., 2008).

LISA involved students from distinct language and cultural backgrounds. We thus sought to develop protocols that would be relevant and equivalent across groups. Scale development was informed by the “insider” of RAs, ethnographic fieldwork, and our bicultural protocol development teams. The structured interviews were translated into each of the languages by the bilingual research teams.

We used a variety of data collections strategies, which included structured interviews with open-ended as well as forced-choice questions; sentence completion tasks; narrative tasks; ethnographic interviews; case studies; behavioral checklists collected from teachers; report cards; and standardized language and achievement testing. Our data collection included a variety of predictors such as family structure, parental education, parental employment, school contexts, behavioral engagement, cognitive engagement, and relational engagement self-efficacy, attitudes about school, networks of relations, and language assessment (see Suárez-Orozco et al., 2008, for full details of study). We collected several outcome variables including report cards and academic achievement testing. To ensure the youth perspective, the parent (or caretaker) perspective, teacher perspective, as well as researcher observations, we employed triangulated data collection strategies. These methodological strategies provided us with a wealth of data that shed light into the lived experiences of youth from several different countries of origin who arrived into various sociocultural contexts of reception.

Our mixed-methods approach revealed many expected as well as unexpected findings. First, our findings were supportive of past work and consistent with our hypotheses: relevant to youth’s adjustment and adaptation processes were parental education, the level of violence in their neighborhoods, and the quality of schools. Other findings were that youth’s psychological well-being predicted academic performance, and girls academically performed better than did boys (see Suárez-Orozco et al., 2008, for more findings). However, we were surprised to find that language acquisition, to the point of being able to
do well on a standardized test, was a much lengthier process than we (or any of our policy makers) expected. Specifically, after residing in the United States on average of seven years, the mean English Language Proficiency Standard score was 74.7, translating into only about 7% of students scoring at or above the average level of that of their native speaking peers (Carhill, Suárez-Orozco, and Paez, 2008). It was also unexpected that a high percentage of our youth would experience family separation. Our sample revealed that family separations were a normative part of the migratory process. About 85% of our participants had been separated from one or both of their parents from six months to ten years as part of the migratory process (Suárez-Orozco, Todorova, and Louie, 2002). Identity did not significantly shift in newcomer youth over the course of five years. The vast majority of Chinese youth who arrived around the age 12 years old continued to feel “Chinese” five years later, as did Dominicans, Mexicans, and so on. Thus, we believe that perhaps the shift in identity may be reflective of children of 1.5, second, and third generations. On aggregate, there was a surprising downward trajectory of academic performance over time; similar trajectories were found for four of the five countries of origin (with a pattern of Chinese exceptionalism), but the Nagin Cluster analyses revealed five distinct trajectories of performance across time (Suárez-Orozco et al., 2008). Multinomial logistic regressions revealed familial factors (maternal education and family structure), school-level factors (poverty and segregation rates), and individual level (behavioral engagement, English proficiency, and psychological symptoms) associated with different trajectories of academic performance. A series of case studies triangulated many of the quantitative findings and illuminated patterns—family separations and unauthorized status (with negative trajectories) and mentorship (with positive trajectories)—undetected by the quantitative data. The mixed methods synergistically shed light on the cumulative developmental challenges immigrant students face as they adjust to their new educational settings. (Suárez-Orozco, et al., 2010)

BEST PRACTICES IN FUTURE IMMIGRANT FAMILY RESEARCH

Cross-cultural research on immigrants forces us to reexamine the traditional social science assumptions around validity and reliability (McLoyd and Steinberg, 1998; Suárez-Orozco and Suárez-Orozco, 1995). Questions and prompts that are valid for one group may not be valid for another. Hence, it is a challenge to develop single instruments or approaches that capture the experiences of individuals from a variety of backgrounds. There is a growing
consensus in the field of cross-cultural research that mixed-method designs, linking emic (outsider) and etic (insider) approaches, triangulating data, and embedding emerging findings into an ecological framework are essential to this kind of endeavor (Branch, 1999; Bronfenbrenner, 1988; Doucette-Gates, Brooks-Gunn, and Chase-Lansdale, 1998; Hughes, Seidman, and Edwards, 1993; Sue and Sue, 1987).

The lesson learned from our study is that the goal of research should be to capture the migratory experience in all of its subtleties—understanding that there are many common denominators of experience between the groups of origin while recognizing the specificity of experience of particular groups as well as individuals. To paraphrase famed anthropologist Clyde Kluckhohn (1949), every immigrant is like all other immigrants, like some other immigrants, and like no other immigrants. The accomplished researcher should strive to capture that reality.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR RESEARCHERS OF MIGRATION

Interdisciplinary Collaborations

Migrations are complex and outcomes are multiply determined. We must recognize that this domain requires inter-disciplinarily, mixed-method strategies to achieve any depth. For example, psychologists need the perspective of the sociological understanding of social forces (such as power inequities) as well as the cultural insights that anthropologists can provide. Interdisciplinary teams whose members are “bicultural” in one another’s methodologies lead to more robust research contributions.

Etic and Emic Perspectives

Combining “outsider” (etic) and “insider” (emic) approaches to diverse populations is important in the phases of both data collection and analyses (Cooper, Jackson, Azmitia, and López, 1998). Bicultural and bilingual researchers are then better able to establish rapport and trust within the communities and gain entry into immigrant populations that might otherwise be difficult to access. Further, insiders are essential for appropriate linguistic and cultural translations of protocols. Their perspective is also essential to accurate and culturally relevant interpretations. If the research is not conducted by members of the immigrant community, it is essential that cultural experts be consulted in the development of instruments as well as the interpretation of findings. Outsiders provide a new interpretive perspective and may lend
specific disciplinary expertise. Interpretive communities of “insiders” and “outsiders” as well as individuals representing a range of disciplinary expertise is highly recommended.

Culturally Sensitive Tools

Research protocols should always be provided in the language of dominance of the informant. Measures developed with mainstream English speaking populations (as are many standardized instruments) are often culturally and linguistically biased (Doucette-Gates et al., 1998). New tools, either adapting pre-existing instruments or developing entirely new approaches, often must be developed for research with immigrants. The process of development should be a dynamic, inductive one involving theoretically based formulations along with themes emerging from the field. As culturally informed questionnaires are developed they must be carefully translated and piloted.

Triangulated Data

As illustrated with our LISA study, using triangulated data in multiple settings and taking multiple perspectives are crucial when faced with the challenges of validity in conducting research with groups of diverse backgrounds. A variety of approaches and sources of data allow us to be more accurate and culturally sensitive in capturing the phenomenon under consideration. Researchers should consider various levels of analyses in their research including the individual, interpersonal relations, context-specific social groups (work force peers, church members, for example) as well as cultural dimensions. Triangulated data serves to counteract the inherent limitations of self-reported data—a problem we suspect is somewhat exaggerated among immigrant youth due to social desirability and the desire to create alliances with the researchers. By sifting through a variety of perspectives (e.g., self-, parent-, and teacher reports (in the case of youth) or other community members (in the case of adults) as well as researcher observations, concurrence and disconnections can be established, providing greater insight in the complexities of the adaptation pathways of youth.

Sending and Host Contexts Perspectives

Researchers should consider the historical, political, and cultural forces that influence the immigration processes, not only within the host context but also that of the sending countries as well. Within the sending context, for example, the circumstances surrounding the migration—the socioeconomic backgrounds
of the immigrants, potential rural-urban shifts, the cohesiveness of the families, family separation (and the extent of), and so on—can greatly affect the post-migratory adjustment. Within the receiving context, the available networks of social relations, whether or not they are documented, neighborhood segregation, the availability of work for adults, and the quality of schools for youth, as well as the social disparagement referred to as “negative social mirroring” (Suárez-Orozco, 2000) they may encounter will contribute to variable pathways of adjustment. These examples of native and host country factors are important and relevant pieces of the migration process. Although it is impossible to account for all of the contributing factors of the migration process, researchers need to at least be mindful of the complexities of pre- and post-migration.

Immigrant Generations
Researchers should recognize the differences between the first, the 1.5 generation, and the second generation and beyond in their analyses. This is an often ignored dimension of analyses. Much of the work on Latinos in particular simply ignores generational dimensions altogether. Identity research is an example of where generation is extremely relevant; while grappling to establish an ethnic, racial, and country identity is a central task of the 1.5, second, and third generation, this task is of little consequence for newly arrived immigrants (whose identity tends to stay quite country of origin linked).

Racial Awareness
Overlooking the racialized experiences of immigrants is a serious oversight. Immigrants encounter very different receptions depending upon whether or not they are “racially marked” by phenotype (Bailey, 2001; López, 2002; Waters, 1999). Given the color spectrum represented by the new immigrants, keeping this perspective in mind is essential while conducting research into the adaptation of new immigrants in a racially conscious society.

Strategic Sampling
The settings from which informants, participants, and subjects are drawn are likely to influence the kinds of conclusions we draw. If we sample from a clinical context we are likely to find more pathological outcomes. Drawing representative samples is critical, though challenging, in static group comparisons (Campbell and Stanley, 1963). In our analyses, and as we draw conclusions, we must always ask ourselves if and how our sample may or may not be representative.
Moreover, whenever possible, it is important to incorporate non-immigrants within the host culture as well as non-immigrants in the sending culture into the study design. Are immigrants different from peers who have not migrated in their country of origin or from native-born peers in the host country? These comparison groups provide “baselines” in order to contextualize findings (see Suárez-Orozco and Suárez-Orozco, 1995).

Theory Building

Researchers should be willing to engage in theory building as part of the process of doing research. When observations of differences are found, theories of why and under what circumstances those differences occur should be developed. The next stage of research should then involve testing hypotheses that emerge from those theories.

Focus on Resilience

Research should consider sources of resilience that arise from the migratory experience. For example, are such inoculating traits as hope, perseverance, and capacity to delay gratification more often found among immigrants than their native-born peers? Immigrant families bring with them many strengths (the centrality of the family unit; the value of educational pursuits; as sense of family purpose) as well as challenges (e.g., frequent and long family separations as a result of migration; poverty; acculturative tensions) (Suárez-Orozco, Suárez-Orozco, and Todorova, 2008). This shift to a consideration of both challenges and strengths has the potential to deepen our understanding considerably.

CONCLUSIONS

The worldwide phenomenon of immigration is increasing in population in both source and host countries (Global Commission on International Migration, 2005). The number of immigrant and refugee children and youth or children of immigrants in many countries such as the United States will soon become the numerical majority (Hernandez, 2004). Thus, it is important for researchers to better understand the complexities of migration for children and youth. We have outlined some of the major issues of what have historically been significant oversights in immigrant research. We have also made a number of recommendations for future research. Meaningful understanding requires insights provided by parallel fields of the social sciences.
Inter-disciplinary, triangulated research is essential to begin to unpack the nuanced effects of migration on families and youth, considering its particular challenges as well as its protective characteristics.

REFERENCES


Making a New Life


Chapter 3

Resilience and Immigrant and Refugee Children and Youth in Canada

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Considered to be the mechanism that ensures both an annual increase in population and a sufficient number of workers to meet labor market needs, immigration is of prime importance to Canada. In its annual report to parliament on immigration, the federal government identifies the number of immigrants, refugees, and other newcomers who will be allowed into the country in the subsequent year. It is expected that the number in 2010 will be consistent with the annual quota established in the past few years, which has ranged from 240,000 to 265,000 (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2009).

According to the 2006 Census report, approximately 233,200 newcomer children aged 14 and under came to Canada during the period 2001–2006, which represented one in five of the most recent immigrants. An additional 100,600 (15.1%) newcomers to Canada were youth aged 15–24, most likely from Asia and the Pacific, Africa and the Middle East, and South and Central America, which constituted the major source areas for immigrants and refugees. The Canadian Council on Social Development (CCSD) Progress Report 2006 predicts that by 2016, immigrant children will represent 25% of the nation’s child population.

In recent years, the experiences of immigrant and refugee children and youth have captured increased attention from researchers, policy makers, and service providers. The establishment of five regional research centers through the Metropolis Project has served as the catalyst for research in this area. One area identified for ongoing research by the Metropolis Project is Family, Children, and Youth. Since 1999, a group of researchers from six major urban centers has engaged in a longitudinal study examining the health and well-being of newcomer children and youth in
15 communities. Included in the selection of the communities are refugee, visible minority, non-established, immigrant, non-visible, and established groups.

Hicks, Lalonde, and Pepler (1993) maintain that “Migration entails tremendous upheavals for children and their families. As a result, immigrant and refugee [children and] youth encounter many stresses that make them unique from other children” (p. 73). Omidvar and Richmond (2003) report that the challenges of adolescence are greatly compounded by the stresses of settlement. Immigrant and refugee youth felt pulled in opposite directions between what was seemed to be irreconcilable values and cultures and a desire to adapt and fit into their new home.

This chapter examines some of the major challenges confronting this group of newcomers as they settle and adapt to life in Canada. A review of the literature on resilience is presented initially, followed by an examination of some of the major issues confronting immigrant/refugee children and youth. Integrated in the discussion of these issues are strategies or interventions to assist them and their families in overcoming the challenges. It concludes with a discussion focused on recommendations for service providers and policy makers.

WHAT IS RESILIENCE?

There is a considerable body of literature that examines individual, family, and community resilience. The past decade has witnessed what Ungar (2005) described as a “bourgeoning interest in the study of resilience” (p. xvii). Although the literature includes numerous definitions of the term resilience, there is general agreement that the ability to bounce back, recover, or successfully adapt in the face of obstacles and adversity is a common theme. Turner (2001) in her definition stated, “resilience is the remarkable capacity of individuals to withstand considerable hardship, to bounce back in the face of adversity, and to go on to live functional lives with a sense of well-being” (p. 441). Smokowski (1998) contends that resilience may be viewed as a process involving the interaction of risk and protective factors where protective factors enhance functioning for high-risk individuals but are not relevant to low-risk counterparts.

Two prevailing concepts critical in understanding resilience are protective and risk factors. In defining the two terms, Wright and Masten (2006) state, “[A protective factor] is a quality of a person or context of their interaction that predicts better outcomes, particularly in situations of adversity” (p. 19). Good cognitive skills, having effective parents, and attending good schools
are examples of protective factors. Conversely, risk factors are considered “a measurable characteristic in a group of individuals or their situation that predicts negative outcome on a specific criteria” (p. 19). Examples of risk factors include premature birth, parental divorce, poverty, and parental mental illness.

Most of the resilience literature is focused on child resilience defined by Goldstein and Brooks (2005) as follows:

Resilience can be understood as the capacity of a child to deal effectively with stress and pressure; to cope with everyday challenges; to rebound from disappointment, mistakes, trauma and adversity; to develop clear and realistic goals; to solve problems; to interact comfortably with others; and to treat oneself and others with respect and dignity (p. 2).

Resilient children feel special and appreciated, have learned a set of realistic goals and expectations for themselves, and believe they have the ability to solve problems and make sound decisions. They rely on effective coping strategies that promote positive outcomes and are not self-defeating; recognize and enjoy their strong points and talents; feel comfortable with others; and have developed effective interpersonal skills with peers and adults alike. Their self-concept is filled with images of strength and competence (Brooks, 2005).

Children, however, are unable to develop these competencies on their own. Wright and Masten (2006) believe there may be some negative consequences to viewing resilience from only an individual perspective as it perpetuates the “blaming the individual syndrome” where children who are unsuccessful are deemed to not have the ability to make it in society. This perspective negates the existence of stressors manifested by other systems where they interact. Child resilience, therefore, should not be viewed solely as an individual development but as a process that may involve a number of different systems. Wright and Masten contend that the family, school, neighborhood, community, and culture impact the child’s ability to be resilient, a sentiment shared by other writes such as Fraser, Richman, and Galinsky (1999).

A system that has gained awareness in the literature is the family. Researchers such as McCubbin and McCubbin (1988); Smokowski, Reynolds, and Bezrucko (1999); and Hill (1998) clearly stress how vital families are in fostering child and youth resilience. Lee (1994) contends that home environment, parental involvement, and family relationships contribute to the development of adolescent behavior and as such the family is the major socializing influence.

Sheridan, Eagle, and David (2006) identify four important components of family and resilience. Relational processes are critical factors in that family cohesion and adaptability provide insight into family dynamics that may impact child resiliency. They also contend that if family members are involved in experiences supporting their children, it is highly likely
Chapter 3

Educational outcomes will be stronger. The third component, adherence to shared values and beliefs, determines and reinforces specific patterns on how a family reacts to new situations, life events, and crises, all of which are valuable lessons for children and youth. Parents may need community supports to develop or enhance the skills required to foster resilience in their children. These services should attempt to cultivate competencies such as family cohesion, positive affective interactions, effective parenting styles, and family involvement.

Wright and Masten (2006) identify key family protective factors as: (a) the existence of a stable and supportive home environment characterized by a low level of parental discord, close relationship with a responsive caregiver, authoritative and caring parenting style, positive sibling relationships, supportive connections with extended family members; (b) active involvement of parents in child’s education; (c) socioeconomic advantages; (d) post-secondary education of parents; and (e) faith and religious affiliations.

**ROLE OF SCHOOLS**

Another important system that can contribute to the resilience of children and youth is the school environment. According to Taub and Pearrow (2006), schools are sites where community-based interventions can be provided to deal with the issues that confront students on a daily basis. For example, teachers can establish caring relationships by providing loving support and respecting students for who they are. They can also create opportunities within schools for students to participate and contribute (Benard, 1991).

**COMMUNITY**

There is strong consensus in the literature that the community as a system contributes to the resilience of children and youth. Friesen and Brennan (2005) believe community can directly influence the lives of children. Specifically, communities can support children directly by supplying lively and healthy neighborhoods, quality care in the community, access to mentors who can guide them, and enriching youth development programs. Indirect support can be provided to families by supporting those who provide the primary caregiving and the basic sustenance that are part of their irreducible needs.

Werner (1984) and Rutter (2006) contend individuals such as teachers, school counselors, mental health practitioners, clergy, and neighbors may contribute to resilient children positive outcomes. Communities with extensive
social networks can help children feel cared for and loved, which in turn enhances their sense of belonging and contributes to their resilient nature (Garbarino, 1992).

**STRENGTHS PERSPECTIVE**

An essential component of any discussion dealing with resilience is the strengths perspective. During the past 30 years, social workers, psychologists, and other human service professionals have been encouraged to utilize this as part of their assessment and ongoing work with clients. Weick, Rapp, Sullivan, and Kisthardt (1989) maintain there are two major attributes that form the foundation of this approach, that is, having an appreciation for the positive attributes and capabilities and a belief that the social resources individuals require can be developed and sustained. Human service professionals need to understand that individuals will do better in the long run when they are able to identify, recognize, and use their strengths and resources in their environment.

The strengths of immigrant children and their families can be regarded as protective factors as their inherent assets contribute positively to the healthy development of children and youth. When working with families, some of the areas that could be explored using a strengths perspective may be personal history (including physical, psychological, social, and spiritual assets), along with strategies for adapting to change (Graybeal, 2001).

**ECOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE**

Based on a large body of literature (Wright and Masten, 2006; Fraser, Richman, and Galinsky, 1999), it is critical to examine child and youth resilience as a series of interactions between the individual and the environment. Viewing resilience from this perspective describes what is known as the ecological theory, which, as presented by Germain and Gitterman (1996) focuses on the reciprocal relationships of the person and environment. The emphasis is on the consequences of the exchanges between the two entities.

It is essential for human service professionals such as social workers to use the person-in-environment perspective when working with newcomers (Segal and Mayadas, 2005). Practitioners must focus not only on the experiences of immigrants in their new environment but also on understanding their reasons for migrating, their migration experiences, and the resources they possess in order to function in an unknown environment. Human service practitioners must also be aware of how receptive the receiving society is to immigrants.
Drachman (1992) stresses the critical importance of human service professionals using a person-in-environment perspective when working with newcomers. This framework is explicit in identifying the type of knowledge required to help immigrant families adjust and adapt. Moreover, human service practitioners must understand the entire migration process (Drachman, 1992; Pine and Drachman, 2005; Roy and Montgomery, 2003) as failure to examine the different aspects of the process may limit a practitioner’s ability to assist newcomers in their adjustment to living in Canada.

ISSUES CONFRONTING IMMIGRANT AND REFUGEE CHILDREN AND YOUTH

As noted earlier, use of the ecological perspective is an important tool in understanding the unique concerns of immigrant and refugee children and youth as they attempt to adjust to life in Canada. Figure 3.1 highlights
the nature of this perspective in relation to this particular group of newcomers.

Table 3.1 captures some of the complex needs of these children and youth with respect to social services, health, education, and justice, as well as the contexts in which these needs and challenges emerge, namely the home, school, and community environments. Each of these environments contains both risk and protective factors that influence the settlement of newcomer children and youth.
Social Domain

In their cultural adjustment, newcomer children and youth often experience cognitive and emotional changes, a result of culture shock; new cultural norms practices; and grief at leaving behind familiar language, culture, and community (Aldous, 1999; Herberg, 1985). Many struggle to develop a positive cultural identity as they deal with community values that may conflict with those at home and is further complicated by internalized racism because of exposure to pervasive negative stereotypes of ethnic minorities. The commentary provided by this young male from Africa clearly illustrates the impact of racism, “Racism has killed my vision, emotions, and ambitions. I am dying from the inside because I will not have achieved my goals in life. My ambition and self-esteem are down” (Este, Bentley, and Kuol, 2003).

With respect to social support, many children and youth experience family separation (Herberg, 1985), difficulty establishing cross-ethnic friendships, over-reliance on support from peers with similar cultural backgrounds, alienation and isolation, and limited access to positive role models and mentors. Older children in particular often find it difficult to cultivate friendships since they arrive at an age where their peers already have well-established social networks. Unemployment is another challenge confronting this group of new Canadians. At 20%, immigrant youth have the highest rate of unemployment in Canada compared to the national rate of 8% percent (Statistics Canada, 2001). Those with sporadic education, poor literacy skills, and limited English frequently struggle when attempting to move into the labor market.

Conflicting expectations of gender roles with respect to rights, privileges, and responsibilities may create stress for children and youth. For example, in some immigrant families, females may have more household responsibilities. Khanlou, Beiser, Cole, Freire, Hyman, and Kilbride (2002) in their study cited this respondent:

And she was expected to take her . . . sister to day care . . . and then in the evening when she comes home, her mother is working during the evening so she has to . . . give the lunch or prepare lunch and give it to her dad and then to her brother, and clean the dishes, and so on. (p. 42)

Females may also experience more restrictions, parental control, and supervision than their male peers and Canadian-born counterparts, particularly with respect to dating. A female immigrant youth in Canada stated, “My parents don’t like me going out and they’re always wanting to know who I’m with, or they want me to bring my brother, but I don’t. I go out with my friends and they accept it” (Kunz and Hanvey, 2000, p. 12).
Intervention

There appears to be general agreement that primary prevention programs may offer promise to deal with the various social issues. Williams (2008) defines primary prevention as an intervention that targets a specific group (rather than individuals) within the population who are known to be at risk but have not already encountered difficulties. The goal would be to promote health or prevent maladaptation; however, since children and adolescents do not go through the acculturation process in isolation, then preventative intervention must take place within the context of the family and the community. The development of preventative programs that promote healthy choices and behavior can be viewed as an important investment into communities.

An example of primary prevention for immigrant/refugee children and youth is the Mosaic Family Resource Centre operated by Immigrant Services Calgary (previously known as the Calgary Immigrant Aid Society). Its primary goal is to collaborate with immigrant and refugee families to support them in becoming active members of the Calgary community. The Centre offers family-centered and youth-oriented programs. The family programs support the unique needs of each member of an immigrant or refugee family encompassing generations ranging from pregnant women and newborn babies to immigrant seniors in the community. Specific programs include Healthy Start Calgary, The Preschool Program, Multicultural Family and Child Training Program, and Parents as Volunteers and Partners Project. The three youth programs, The Youth Internship, Career Focus, and the Integrated Women’s Mentorship, help youth secure and retain employment in the Canadian workplace. In 2008, over 2,400 clients participated in the programs (Immigrant Services Calgary Annual Report 2008–2009, pp. 16–19).

Health

As Aldous (1999) expressed, poor health in children may have a significant impact on their physical, cognitive, and psychological, and social development. For example, immigrant children and youth who are raised in families with disadvantaged socioeconomic status are at risk for malnutrition. They may experience low birth rate and obesity and adopt unhealthy eating habits (Hicks et al., 1993). Many children and youth have immigrated from developing countries with high exposure to communicable diseases such as HIV infection, tuberculosis, acute respiratory infections, intestinal parasites, measles, Hepatitis B, diarrheal disease, cholera, and schistosomiasis (Cookson et al., 1988). For sexual and reproductive health, immigrant children and youth may come from countries with strong sexuality taboos, high incidences of sexually transmitted diseases, and cultural practices such as female genital mutilation.
Moreover, children and youth of certain immigrant groups are at higher risk for chronic conditions including blood-related diseases such as sickle cell anemia and thalassemia. Some have been exposed to environmental toxins in their home countries, others are vulnerable to respiratory conditions, particularly asthma, due to sudden climate change, poor housing conditions, and exposure to tobacco smoke at home.

**Mental Health**

The mental health needs of immigrant and refugee children and youth in Canada have received increased attention during the past two decades (Beiser et al., 1988; Aldous, 1999; Rousseau, Drapeau, and Corin, 1997). Beiser and his colleagues found several unique situations that may contribute to mental health issues for immigrant and refugee children. Some of these include language, adapting to the consequences associated with sequenced migration, disruption in the education of these individuals, and pressures to acculturate into Canadian society while adhering to the values and customs of their country of origin with some pressure by their parents. Moreover, Chambers and Ganeson (2005) focus on the process of migration where individuals may endure long periods of separation from their parents and therefore suffer some form of anxiety related to when and if they will see them again. This process, known as sequenced migration, may also represent challenges for their parents who must re-establish their parental roles. The racism to which some immigrant and refugee children are subjected in their school environment may also result in poor self-esteem and self-worth. Children and youth who were subjected to persecution, violence, loss of family members, and trauma in their home countries, in refugee camps, or during the migration process are prone to post-traumatic stress disorder. Nadeau (2008) maintains that child refugees may experience mental health conditions such as depression, anxiety (PTSD), and somatic disorders, which are the most frequent symptoms (Young, 2007).

In the effort to facilitate resilience in refugee children, Leiper de Monchy (1991) provides the following principles: (a) trauma experiences need to be acknowledged as they have impacted the child’s development, perception of the world, and vision of the future; (b) the success of refugees as survivors and offering their wisdom and strength that are essential to helping improve their self-esteem must be recognized; and (c) cross-cultural living skills must be taught to help the children and youth develop positive bicultural identities.

**Interventions.**

There appears to be a general consensus that health care professionals are well situated to contribute to fostering the resilience of newcomer children
and their families. According to Culhane-Pera et al. (1997), three dimensions associated with health care practice can help with the concerns encountered by immigrants and refugees. First, health care practitioners need to understand what is meant by culture and how it impacts how newcomer families interpret and make meaning of their sociocultural contexts. Culture may influence the type of help newcomer families seek, the type of coping style and support they utilize, and how much stigma is attached to specific illnesses such as mental health. Collectively, these attributes must be explored. The need to respect values and behavior of patients and their families; develop an awareness of the influence of sociocultural factors on patients, providers, the clinical encounter, and interpersonal relationships; and the appreciation of the heterogeneity within cultural groups is important.

The second dimension deals with the skill sets of health care professionals. As alluded to earlier, these individuals must have strong assessment skills in order to obtain information on the beliefs, practices, and values of patients and their families as they pertain to their health concerns. Closely related, it is imperative for health care practitioners to acquire a medical history while considering cultural information. The same action is required in the diagnostic and therapeutic planning processes. As language barriers may hinder the relationship between the health care provider and newcomer patients, working with interpreters is an effective mechanism to ensure the needs of children/youth and their parents are being addressed.

**Education**

In a new school environment, immigrant children are expected to understand its routines, rights and responsibilities, and social customs. Their parents must learn to access support services. Linguistic and cultural barriers, socio-economic status, patterns of acculturation, and other issues can make it difficult to identify and assess the educational and social needs of immigrant children and youth (Quairoe, 2006). In major urban school boards, between 20% and 50% of the students are of an English as an alternative language background (Dawson, 1998; Dempster and Albert, 1998; McInnes, 1993). These students either arrive from non-English speaking countries or are born in Canada to immigrant families who do not speak English at home. They require between two and five years of explicit English language instruction to develop basic communication skills and between five and seven years to develop academic language proficiency (Collier, 1989; Cummins, 1994). English as a Second Language (ESL) learners require structured language instruction from qualified ESL teachers in a setting with explicit language support for content classes. Many continue to need ESL support well into their post-secondary years.
Chapter 3

The first language of ESL learners plays a dynamic role in facilitating understanding of culture, bridging intergenerational gaps with parents, and developing a healthy cultural identity. It can serve as a springboard for cognitive development in the English language. Unfortunately, many immigrant children and youth do not have access to opportunities to learn and practice their heritage language. The practice of age-appropriate placement in Canada can leave immigrant children and youth at a loss in their classes. Those with sporadic education and limited literacy skills require concrete literacy and academic support in order to achieve a level of success equivalent to their Canadian-born, English-speaking counterparts of the same age. On the other hand, children and youth who are inappropriately placed in classrooms with children several years younger may, as a consequence, experience socio-psychological difficulties.

Unique linguistic and sociocultural challenges, compounded by the lack of responsive support in the education system, have limited the academic success of immigrant children and youth. Those with an ESL background are two or more years behind their native English-speaking counterparts by the time they reach sixth grade (Cummins, 1981). The dropout rate among ESL learners is between 61% and 74% (Alberta Education, 1992; Gunderson, 2004; Watt and Roessingh, 1994, 2001). Communication skills and GPAs of university students who are sons and daughters of immigrants, independent of length of time in Canada, are not as high as those of native-born, English-speaking Canadians (Grayson, 2004).

Immigrant and refugee children may be subjected to racial discrimination perpetuated by both teachers and fellow students. In a study examining how racism and other forms of violence impact the health and well-being of individuals of African descent, the following words were voiced by a recent African newcomer to Calgary, “Our children experience racism at school and we, as parents, are left to pick up the pieces. The psychological damage to our children is immense.” Being subjected to this type of behavior negatively impacts the self-esteem and confidence of the immigrant and refugee children (Este et al., 2003).

It is therefore crucial that teachers and other professionals who work in schools receive training in anti-racist education and develop the skills to intervene when this behavior is manifested. As classrooms in Canadian schools become more diverse, teacher preparation programs must provide their students with the knowledge and skills required to be effective teachers for all students from diverse sociocultural contexts.

Interventions

The literature dealing with the integration of immigrants and refugees into Canadian society stresses that being proficient in either English or French is a major protective factor. Ngo (2004) maintains there is a strong need for: (a) a
continuum of ESL (FSL) services, including identification of those individuals in need, initial assessment, subsequent placement, explicit ESL instruction, and tracking of individuals; (b) the development and implementation of ESL (FSL) programs of study; (c) associated psychological, sociocultural, and academic support to assist immigrant refugee children and youth with language acquisition or development; (d) adequate and sustainable funding for these programs; (e) professional standards in ESL education; (f) ongoing research and knowledge development in ESL; and (g) sufficient infrastructure at both the local and provincial levels to support the development and implementation of ESL (FSL) programs and to evaluate their effectiveness.

Justice Arena

There is a persistent public perception that the crime rate among immigrant youth is on the rise. In a recent opinion poll of 8,431 Canadians (Mulgrew, 2006), nearly two-thirds believe immigrants and minorities are responsible for crime in Canada. A number of recent studies conducted in the city of Calgary have called attention to the issue of criminal gang involvement of immigrant youth. In a comprehensive assessment of multicultural youth in east Calgary, young people identified gang involvement as their most serious issue of concern (peer pressure was ranked number one). The youth also reported high levels of involvement in negative behavior such as gang involvement (25% male, 13% female); criminal activity (23% male, 13% female); violence against others (28% male, 18% female); and use of drugs and alcohol (40% male, 37% female).

Hurlock, McCullagh, and Schissel (2004) report that immigrant youth, community members, and service providers identified youth violence and the risk of criminal gang involvement as emerging priority areas, while service providers within the justice system noted the involvement of a disproportionately high number of immigrant youth. When immigrant youth are in conflict with the law, they may experience in their contact with the police and youth justice court procedures a wide range of issues including distrust and fear of authority figures, limited knowledge about the Canadian judicial system, lack of understanding of their constitutional rights, and providing accurate information during investigations and court proceeding caused by limited English and cultural misinterpretation in communication.

Intervention

Given the increased attention to the involvement of immigrant and refugee youth in gang-related activities, a Comprehensive Gang Model (Spergel and Grossman, 1997) proposes a multifaceted intervention that consists of four
interrelated strategies: (a) community mobilization; (b) provision of social intervention and opportunities; (c) suppression and social control; and (d) organizational change and development.

**Community Mobilization**

This strategy involves initiating and supporting collaborative efforts in the community to build and share practical action domain knowledge about gang involvement and activities in the local geographical area, as well as developing a strategy to support gang-involved and high-risk immigrant and refugee youth.

**Provision of Social Intervention and Opportunities**

This part of the intervention plan recommends the use of a multidisciplinary team for providing gang-involved and high-risk newcomer youth with educational, life skill, and employment-related services and personal support; connecting these youth to services and resources in the community to enhance their social well-being and connections; and supporting former gang-involved youth to develop leadership skills in the areas of community organization, organizational, and project management.

**Suppression and Social Control**

Utilizing support provided by the local police services, a culturally competent plan will be formulated to address gang issues and to support stakeholders in implementing suppression activities.

**Organizational Development and Change**

The final component of the intervention is focused on community-based organizations and their efforts in planning and implementing strategies to provide culturally responsive services to gang-involved and high-risk immigrant youth.

**Home Environment**

The home environment may influence the well-being and success of immigrant youth. Newcomer children and youth are growing up in households impacted by socio-economic issues such as culture and language barriers, unemployment or underemployment barriers, social isolation, illiteracy, discrimination, and limited civic participation, to mention a few. With a poverty rate of 30% for immigrants living in cities (Lee, 2000), these households struggle to meet basic needs such as food, housing, clothing, child care, and transportation. From a resilience perspective, these conditions depict risk factors that may negatively impact the well-being of the children and youth.

Relationships in newcomer families are identified as a major issue. As they gain an understanding of their rights in Canadian society, the youth may object to the discipline of their parents, which in turn may be disconcerting to the parents (Aldous, 1999). Chuang and colleagues (2010) stated:
in some cultures where parents were able to use corporal punishment with their children and youth, they [parents] may not initially realize that abuse is legally not acceptable in Canada. As children and youth socialize with their peers, they quickly learn that such behaviors are illegal and that children and youth have individual rights. Thus some parents feel that they are unable to ‘control’ and ‘discipline’ their children and youth (p. 17).

In a study conducted with fathers from Calgary’s Sudanese community, this issue emerged as a major concern, “It is difficult to be a father in Canada because the children are controlled by the government. The parents do not have the right to tell the children what is really needed” (Este and Tachble, 2009, p. 463).

Hynie (1996) and Dion and Dion (2001) maintain that intergenerational conflict may emerge. Hynie affirms that immigrant children may become immersed in the individualistic culture that is characteristic of Canadian society and these children may take on the new culture’s values more rapidly than their parents. This increases the potential for intergenerational conflict as in collectivist cultures, child rearing stresses reliability, proper behavior, and obedience to authority, most notably to one’s parents.

Another risk factor that may impact the home environment of immigrant and refugee families is financial insecurity. Although newcomers who are trained professionals expect to find employment opportunities similar to those in their country of origin, there is strong evidence that many experience the phenomenon of underemployment. Grant and Nadin (2007) examined the experiences of 180 skilled immigrants to Canada from Asia and Africa who were encountering credentialing problems. Despite the fact that most of the respondents had advanced post-secondary training and a job requiring a high level of skill prior to migrating to Canada, they took work for which they were overqualified, volunteered, had their qualifications assessed, and upgraded their training. Grant and Nadin also reported that most of the study participants were surprised and upset that it was so difficult to obtain a suitable job in their profession.

Intervention—Intergenerational

Intergenerational programs for immigrant/refugee youth and children may be an effective intervention to address some of the issues that emerge as families make the transition to residing in their new environment. An example of this type of program was the Immigrant Intergenerational Skill Building and Support Program implemented by the Calgary Immigrant Aid Society in the late 1990s and offered for several years. The primary purpose of the program was to reduce the risk if adolescent maltreatment and delinquency
among first-generation immigrants through the implementation of a multi-level intervention strategy. The program offered a wide range of services to address the issues associated with intergenerational conflict such as the Parallel Adolescent Skill Building Group, Parent Self-Help Groups, and Peer Support Groups (youth); Drop-in Resource Centre, EAL/Tutoring, Recreation and Cultural Celebrations; and home visits and the provision of counseling services (Merali, Bon Bernard, and Pollock, 1997).

**Community Environment**

Increasingly, the role of the community in contributing to the resilience of children and youth is being realized by researchers (Friesen and Brennan, 2005; Nettles, Mucherah, and Jones, 2000). Having access to services as well as activities in which they can participate are deemed important protective factors. When services are available, service providers frequently are uncertain as to where immigrant and refugee children should be referred due to the complexity of individual needs and issues and whether the services are inclusive and accessible to these children and youth. Another issue is the limited availability of translation and interpretation services that are regarded as essential components to assist in settlement and adaptation to Canadian society.

Collectively, these issues speak to the need for services related to health, education, justice, and social services to be delivered in a manner that recognizes the impact of the entire migration process on immigrant children and youth and the importance one’s culture plays when seeking services and interacting with service providers. More specifically, several researchers (Galambos, 2003; McPhatter, 1997; Petrovich, 2005) maintain that services must be delivered in a culturally competent manner. One of the challenges encountered by service providers is integrating cultural diversity into all aspects of their work, including policy and service development, communication, resource allocation, hiring, and professional development.

At the community level, a combination of the lack of culturally inclusive programs and limited awareness of community resources and services has resulted in low levels of participation by immigrant children and youth (Ngo, 2009). Individual, institutional, and cultural racism and discrimination have denied many immigrant children and youth a sense of belonging and has driven them into social isolation and alienation. Concentrations of immigrant families in neighborhoods with low socioeconomic status further hinder young people from accessing a wide range of community resources and opportunities. Newcomer children and youth living in impoverished areas are also more likely to be exposed to negative influences such as aggressive recruitment by criminal gangs.
Interventions

The broader community can play an important role in fostering resilience in immigrant children and youth. It is imperative that this population maintains a positive sense of its culture. Access to cultural programs and activities in the community, as well as involvement with their respective ethnic communities, are strategies that can be utilized. Having opportunities to socialize with friends and to play sports are two activities that may help these children and youth adapt to Canadian society.

Challenges in Service Delivery to Immigrant Children and Youth

Although several service issues have impacted the accessibility of resources to immigrant and refugee children and youth, one of the major challenges confronting service providers is the lack of sustainable funding. A participant in the study on immigrant youth in Canada conducted by Kunz and Hanvey (2000) stated, “No salary increases, benefits, job security, or pension plans” (p. 22). Another individual said, “Historically, immigrant services are underfunded and not a high priority for funding by all three levels of government” (p. 22).

Service providers are challenged by the lack of coordination and comprehensiveness of support. Even with services available for this population, some providers may not know where to refer immigrant children and youth. Because their needs are complex, service providers also struggle with realizing their needs and connecting with these young people, and there is uncertainty as to whether they have the capability to deal with the issues of these young people. One of the salient barriers identified by Kunz and Hanvey (2000) is that agency “staff did not have a full understanding of their client’s cultural difference as well as the lived experiences of newcomer youth” (p. 17). These concerns speak to the need to develop culturally competent services related to health, education, justice, and social services.

Cross, Bazran, Dennis, and Isaacs (1989) stated, “Cultural competency embraces the importance of culture, the assessment of cross-cultural relations, vigilance towards the dynamics that result from cultural differences, the expansion of cultural knowledge, and the adaptation of services to meet culturally unique needs” (p. 16). In her conceptualization of the term, McPhatter (1997) writes, “Cultural competence denotes the ability to transform knowledge and cultural awareness into health and/or psychological interventions that support healthy client system functioning within the appropriate cultural context” (p. 261). The provision of these types of services will contribute to the health and well-being of immigrant and refugee children and youth.
Chapter 3

In an era of dwindling resources, funding competitions have reduced the sharing of information between service providers and, as a result, has impeded the development of partnerships. There is a need for service providers to fully explore and capitalize on partnership opportunities among schools, family resource agencies, mainstream organizations, immigrant-serving agencies, and ethno-cultural groups. Collectively, these partnerships may be positioned to undertake joint advocacy efforts to address the systemic factors such as poverty, language, health, education, and employment that impact immigrant children and youth and their families.

CONCLUSION

For many immigrant and refugee parents, one of the primary reasons for their migration to Canada is the desire to ensure their children will have a brighter future. More specifically, parents want them to take advantage of the educational opportunities this country has to offer as they believe they are the pathway to meaningful, well-paid employment opportunities, which in turn will lead to financial stability. However, as stated earlier, immigrant/refugee children and youth may encounter a range of barriers in their attempts to settle in Canada, including changing family relations, communication difficulties, adjusting to new educational systems, and being victims of racism and discrimination. For those who resided in rural areas in their country of origin, the transition to life in a large urban center may result in a tremendous “culture shock.” They also may be impacted by the circumstances in which the parents find themselves, most notably the family dynamics if parents experience underemployment or unemployment. Collectively, these adjustment challenges may result in increased stress for the children/youth and their families.

Examples of potential interventions to address some of the obstacles newcomers may face when adapting to Canadian society have been provided. One of the salient themes, however, that dominates both research literature and policy papers is the need for all key stakeholders to work in a collaborative and coordinated fashion to ensure newcomers realize and maximize their potential in this new environment. Hence, the ultimate goal is to foster the resilience of the children/youth and their families. As noted by Beiser, Armstrong, Ogilvie, Oxman-Martinez, and Rummens (2005):

Canada is committed to a National Children’s Agenda that will provide equitable access to whatever it takes to ensure that tomorrow’s citizens are healthy, strong, and are able to realize their potential to the common good. In this spirit, Canada cannot go on ignoring the children of its newest settlers. It must, instead,
help them create a vision as unblinkered as possible by trauma and hurt, and as open as possible to the potential contributions they and their parents can make to this country. (p. 24)

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Chapter 4

Social Functioning and Peer Experiences in Immigrant Chinese, Canadian-born Chinese, and European Canadian Children

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How children function in peer context is an important issue in the study of social development. Some children display socially appropriate and competent behaviors, but others display antisocial, deviant, or incompetent behaviors in social settings such as aggression and shyness (e.g., Asendorpf, Denissen, and van Aken, 2008; Caspi et al., 2003; Rubin, Bukowski, and Parker, 2006). Children’s social functioning is associated with peer relationships (see Rubin et al.); whereas sociable-prosocial behavior is associated with peer acceptance, aggression and shyness-wariness are typically associated with difficulties in social relationships such as peer rejection, isolation, and victimization (Coie, Terry, Lenox, Lochman, and Hyman, 1995; Coplan, Prakash, O’Neil, and Armer, 2004; Morison and Masten, 1991; Rubin, Chen, McDougall, Bowker, and McKinnon, 1995; Schwartz, Chang, and Farver, 2001). Together, social functioning and peer experiences may have a long-term impact on individual development in various areas including school performance, juvenile delinquency, and psychological well-being (Coplan et al.; Hartup, 1992; Ladd and Burgess, 2001; Ollendick, Weist, Borden, and Greene, 1992; Rubin, Coplan, and Bowker, 2009; Schmidt and Fox, 1998).

Social functioning and peer relationships may play a particularly important role in the adjustment of immigrant children and children of an ethnic background in North American societies (e.g., Azmitia and Cooper, 2004; Way, 2006; Zhou, Peverly, Xin, Huang, and Wang, 2003). Social experiences in peer groups are a major source of stress as well as developmental assets for children in ethnic groups (Sue and Sue, 1987; Zhou et al.). During peer interactions, they face challenges and difficulties that are related to their ethnic or immigrant status such as discrepancies between cultural...
norms on social behaviors, stereotypical and prejudiced attitudes, and language obstacles. At the same time, these children learn from others how to cope with the challenges, and display their ethnically or culturally related strengths and competencies. The adaptation of children with an ethnic background depends, to a large extent, on how they react to challenges, behave according to social norms, and obtain acceptance and support in the peer group.

Developmental researchers have been interested in recent years in Chinese children and adolescents, one of the largest and fastest growing ethnic groups in Canada and the United States (e.g., Sue, 1998; Zhou et al., 2003). The research, however, has focused mainly on academic performance and psycho-emotional adjustment (e.g., Berry, Phinney, Sam, and Vedder, 2006; Chao, 2001; Sam, Vedder, Liebkind, Neto, and Virta, 2008; Zhou et al., 2003). Moreover, most of the studies of Chinese children were about individual performance or feelings, based largely on self-reports, with little attention to the social context in which children interacted with each other. As a result, it is largely unknown how Chinese children in North American societies behave in social situations, how their behaviors are related to adjustment, and what factors may contribute to their social functioning and adjustment in the peer group.

THE ROLE OF ETHNIC BACKGROUND AND CIRCUMSTANCE OF IMMIGRATION

In this chapter, we discuss and examine how Chinese Canadian and European Canadian children are different and similar in social functioning and adjustment in the school. We are interested in three main issues: (1) ethnic and generational differences in children’s social functioning and adjustment; (2) relations between social functioning and peer experiences among children with different ethnic and immigration backgrounds; and (3) the effect of acculturation, as indicated mainly by the length of residence in the new country and language proficiency, on social functioning and adjustment of immigrant children.

Ethnic and Generational Differences in Social Functioning and Adjustment

Chinese children in North America are a heterogeneous group. An important factor that differentiates the group is whether the child is foreign- or native-born. Researchers have found significant differences between first-generation
immigrant (foreign born) and second- or later-generation American-born Chinese children in school performance and family socialization patterns (e.g., Chao, 2001; Fuligni, 1998). In general, whereas first-generation immigrant Chinese children may differ from children with a European background in a substantial manner, second- or later-generation Chinese children often appear to fall between these two groups. The generational differences in academic and psychological adjustment in Chinese children remain significant after controlling for parental education and income (e.g., Harris, 1999).

A major difference between immigrant and Canadian-born Chinese children is the extent to which they are socialized in different environments. Immigrant Chinese children develop attitudes and behaviors according to expectations and requirements in China before they immigrate to Canada. They may maintain these attitudes and behaviors after immigration, at least for a certain period. It has been argued that unlike in Western cultures, the socialization goal in Chinese society is to help children develop qualities that are conducive to group functioning (Ho, 1986; Oyserman, Coon, and Kemmelmeier, 2002). For example, children in China are encouraged to learn self-control and group-oriented behaviors such as cooperation, compliance, and obedience to the authority (Chen et al., 2003; Ekblad and Olweus, 1986; Ho; Orlick, Zhou, and Partington, 1990). Behaviors that may threaten group well-being such as defiance and disruption are strictly prohibited in schools and other social settings. It has also been found that shy, wary, and anxious behaviors, which are considered socially incompetent and maladaptive in North America (e.g., Rubin et al., 2009), tend to be endorsed in traditional Chinese cultures (Chen, Dong, and Zhou, 1997; Chen, Rubin, and Sun, 1992), although recent findings indicate the declined adjustment status of shy-sensitive children as Chinese society is undergoing dramatic changes toward the market-oriented economy (Cheah and Rubin, 2004; Chen, Cen, Li, and He, 2005; Chen and Chen, in press).

Chinese children are likely to experience difficulties in social interactions after they immigrate to Canada because their behavioral styles may be perceived and responded to differently by others. Restrained and nonassertive behaviors that are acceptable in China may no longer be viewed as adaptive or appropriate by peers in Canadian schools. The different expectations of behaviors may have significant negative effects on social adjustment of immigrant Chinese children when combined with other factors related to the transition to the new society (e.g., Berry et al., 2006; Zhou et al., 2003). Whereas children who are born in Canada often form and maintain stable social networks in the school, immigrant children need to re-establish their social relationships and support systems. The adverse social conditions and language barriers may prevent them from effectively communicating and
showing their strengths (e.g., Nicassio, Soloman, Guest, and McCullough, 1986; Sam et al., 2008). Moreover, the experience of prejudice due to a foreign accent or lifestyle may serve to exacerbate their social adjustment difficulties (Moran, Smith, Thompson, and Whitney, 1993; Zhou, 1997).

Compared with first-generation immigrant children, Chinese children who are born in Canada may have different behavioral styles and experiences. Like other Canadian-born children, these children do not go through major life transitions from one country to another and experience the stress in adjusting to a new environment. Language and communication are typically not particular problems for them in social interactions. Thus, it is conceivable that Canadian-born Chinese children are more likely than immigrant Chinese children to display competent behaviors in social situations and develop positive peer relationships.

How do Canadian-born Chinese children compare with their European Canadian counterparts on social functioning and adjustment? It may depend on whether the socialization experience of Chinese children in the family is conducive or detrimental to social interactions in peer context. Research has indicated that Chinese parents in North America often use childrearing practices that are valued in traditional Chinese culture such as emphasis on obedience, respect for adults, and family responsibility (e.g., Chao, 2001; Dornbusch, Ritter, Leiderman, Poberts, and Fraleigh, 1987; Fuligni, 1998). These childrearing practices may not be consistent with the emphasis on autonomy, social assertiveness, and individual decision making in North American societies. From the “assimilation” perspective (e.g., Gordon, 1964), the experience of Chinese children in the family may impede the process of assimilating of the child into the “mainstream” culture and thus, result in difficulties in children’s interactions with peers outside the family. Moreover, the different or conflictual expectations and standards that adults and peers hold in the home and the school may place a pressure on Chinese-Canadian children, which may lead to confusion, frustration, and distress in social interactions.

According to the pluralist-constructivist perspective (Conzen, Gerber, Morawska, Pozzetta, and Vecoli, 1992; Hong, Morris, Chiu, and Benet-Martinez, 2000; Zhou, 1997), however, ethnicity and mixed family and school influences can serve as a resource rather than a burden. Different socialization expectations and practices may help children learn diverse and perhaps complementary values such as interpersonal cooperation, responsibility, achievement orientation, and independent skills (e.g., Fuligni, 2001). Children with mixed family and social backgrounds may be generally expected to learn behavioral codes that are appropriate to different social situations. Unlike immigrant children who encounter abrupt changes in their
lives and are confronted with a variety of obstacles in the new environment, Canadian-born Chinese children may be able to gradually integrate diverse values and behavioral norms in their interactions with family members and peers, and develop coherent and sophisticated personal belief and behavioral systems (García Coll et al., 1996).

The integration of various values and norms may be particularly beneficial for the development of social competence. It has been argued that maintaining a balance between pursuing one’s own ends and establishing group harmony is important for peer interactions (e.g., Maccoby, 1998). As a major index of social competence, children’s ability to act effectively in achieving personal goals and appropriately in cooperating with others has been found to be associated with peer acceptance and social status in a number of studies (see Newcomb, Bukowski, and Pattee, 1993; Chen and French, 2008; Rubin et al., 2006; Waters and Sroufe, 1983 for reviews). To behave competently in social situations, children need to display adequate levels of social initiative (e.g., ability to initiate and participate in social interactions) as well as self-control or regulation (e.g., prosocial behavior, taking responsibility for others) (e.g., Chen, Wang, and DeSouza, 2006; Rothbart and Bates, 1998; Rubin et al., 2009). During socialization, Canadian-born Chinese children are likely to engage in a “process of construction” that incorporates various social and behavioral attributes and construct new strategies to function flexibly and effectively in different settings (Chen and French; Conzen et al., 1992, Zhou, 1997). Consequently, these children may have the advantage over both immigrant Chinese children and European Canadian children of learning various skills that are necessary for the attainment of peer acceptance and approval.

Relations between Social Functioning and Peer Experiences

We are interested in relations between social functioning and adjustment in the peer group. An inquiry of the relations might shed light on how children with different behavioral characteristics adjust to the social environment at the individual level and how social functioning is relevant to peer relationships in specific context. Researchers who study children’s social functioning often focus on three major aspects of children’s social functioning: sociability-cooperation, aggression-disruption, and shyness-sensitivity (e.g., Morison and Masten, 1991; Rubin et al., 1995). In general, sociability-cooperation is likely to be associated with peer acceptance in all three groups because socially competent children may be capable of developing effective strategies to cope with stress and adapting to various circumstances (e.g., Chen, Rubin, and Li, 1995; Masten and Coatsworth, 1995). In contrast, as aggressive-disruptive behavior may threaten the well-being of others and
group harmony, it seems reasonable to expect that aggression is associated with peer rejection and adjustment problems.

Due to the emphasis on social assertiveness, expressiveness, and competitiveness in North American societies (Larson, 1999), shy and wary behaviors are considered maladaptive for social interactions. In the literature (Asendorpf, 1991; Stevenson-Hinde and Shouldice, 1993), shy, wary, and sensitive behavior in social situations, derived from conflictual approach-avoidance motives, is taken to reflect internal anxiety and fearfulness and a lack of self-confidence. Children who display shy and sensitive behavior are regarded as socially incompetent, immature, and deviant (Rubin et al., 2009). Thus, shy and sensitive children in North America are likely to experience social problems including peer rejection and victimization (e.g., Rubin et al., 1995). Given the generally negative evaluation of shy and anxious behaviors in North American societies, regardless of their ethnic background, shy children are likely to have problems in peer relationships. However, the social problems of first-generation immigrant Chinese shy children may be aggravated by their difficulties in the transition to the new environment. There is evidence that shy children are particularly vulnerable to unstable, challenging social situations and experience heightened distress in these situations (e.g., Chen et al., 1995; Chen et al., 2005; Rubin et al., 2009). The negative effects of shyness on adjustment may be strengthened by the stressful social conditions of immigrant children. The distress and frustration that shy immigrant children experience may lead to their negative attitudes toward others and themselves, which may, in turn, increase their feelings of insecurity and social difficulties. Therefore, the associations between shyness and rejection and victimization by peers may be particularly evident in immigrant Chinese Canadian children.

The Role of English Proficiency and Exposure to Canada in Social Functioning and Adjustment among Immigrant Children

Research based on adult immigrants has indicated that acculturation, which refers to how contact with the new culture changes the attitudes and behaviors of immigrant and ethnic minority individuals (e.g., Berry et al., 2006), is associated with psychoemotional adjustment (e.g., Zhou, 1997). However, there is little information about how acculturation may affect social behaviors and relationships, particularly in children and adolescents. It seems reasonable to argue that as immigrant children have greater exposure to the new environment and more opportunities to understand and learn new social and cultural norms, they become more competent in interacting with others in ways that are acceptable in the environment. Consequently, these children
Social Functioning and Peer Experiences

may form more positive relationships with peers and obtain higher social status in the group. In addition to exposure to the new society, English proficiency, as another major indicator of acculturation (Nicassio et al., 1986; Schwartz, Pantin, Sullivan, Prado, and Szapocznik, 2006), may play a critical role in social adjustment of immigrant children.

Acculturation, as indicated by length of residence in Canada and English proficiency, may also moderate the associations between social behaviors and peer experiences in immigrant children. Although shy immigrant children as a group may experience heightened difficulties in peer interactions and social relationships, their difficulties in social situations may decline with time as shy immigrant children gradually acquire English proficiency and have greater exposure to the new society. Shy immigrant children may also develop more effective coping strategies and social support systems with time to reduce their difficulties in peer interactions. As a result, the associations between shyness and peer rejection and victimization in immigrant children may be weakened by acculturation.

Exploring Social Functioning and Peer Experiences: The “Social Lives of Immigrant Children” Project

To explore contextual effects on socioemotional development, we conducted a study concerning the social lives of immigrant children in six ethnically diverse schools in the metropolitan area of Toronto, Canada. The primary purpose of the study was to examine the social functioning and peer relationships of children from immigrant families in Canada. We were particularly interested in how children with a Chinese background would behave in the peer context and whether Chinese ethnic background and the circumstance of immigration would play a role in children’s social functioning and adjustment.

METHOD

Participants and Procedures

A sample of 723 children (370 girls) in grades 4 to 8 (Mean age = 11.4 years, SD = 1.47) participated in the study. There were 128 (64 girls), 228 (114 girls) and 367 (175 boys and 192 girls) children in the first-generation immigrant Chinese, Canadian-born Chinese, and European (primarily third or later generations) Canadian groups, respectively. All Chinese children or their families initially came from mainland China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan.

The percentage of parents with a college or university education was 35.9%, 31.6%, and 57.2% for mothers, and 53.1%, 38.6%, and 50.0% for
fathers, in the immigrant Chinese, Canadian-born Chinese, and European Canadian groups, respectively. Mothers’ education for the European Canadian group was significantly higher than the Chinese Canadian groups, \( F(2, 720) = 25.78, p < .001 \), and fathers’ education for immigrant Chinese and the European Canadian groups was significantly higher than that for the Canadian-born Chinese group, \( F(2, 720) = 6.29, p < .01 \). The average initial age of immigration was 7.19 years (\( SD = 2.88 \)), and the average length of residence in Canada was 4.00 years (\( SD = 2.72 \)), for the immigrant Chinese group.

We group-administered a peer assessment measure of social functioning, a sociometric nomination measure regarding peer acceptance and rejection, and a measure of victimization by peers. In addition, we asked immigrant Chinese children to complete a self-report measure of English proficiency. In assessing children’s social functioning, children were requested to nominate up to three classmates who could best play each of the roles in a class play (Masten, Morison, and Pelligrini, 1985). Nominations received from all classmates were used to compute each item score for each child. The item scores were standardized within the class to adjust for differences in the number of nominators. Based on factor analysis, three variables were formed: Sociability-cooperation (e.g., “Makes new friends easily,” “Helps others when they need it”), Aggression-disruption (e.g., “Gets into a lot of fights,” “Picks on other kids”), and Shyness-sensitivity (e.g., “Very shy,” “Feelings get hurt easily”) (see Chen et al., 1992; Masten et al., 1985 for further detail about the measure).

In assessing peer acceptance and rejection, children were asked to nominate up to three classmates whom he/she most liked to play with and three classmates whom he/she least liked to play with. Positive and negative nominations received from peers provided indexes of how a child was liked and disliked by peers in the class. Children were also asked to nominate up to three peers to fit each of the descriptors tapping direct, overt, as well as indirect, relational types of victimization (“Get picked on or teased by other kids,” “Get hit or pushed by other kids,” “Other kids make fun of him/her by calling names,” “Get left out on purpose during activity or play time”) (Schwartz et al., 2001). Nominations received from all classmates were used to compute each item score for each child.

In addition, immigrant Chinese Canadian children completed a self-report measure concerning their English proficiency (Suinn, Rikard-Figueroa, Lew, and Vigil, 1987). Children were asked to rate on a five-point scale how well they speak, read and write English (1 = extremely poor; 5 = extremely well). Their responses were summed, with higher scores indicating greater English proficiency.
RESULTS

Social Functioning and Adjustment: 
Group and Gender Differences

Means and standard deviations of the variables for boys and girls in each group are presented in Table 4.1. A multivariate analysis of covariance (MANCOVA) was conducted to examine the overall effects of gender, ethnic/generational group, and their interaction on all the variables, with maternal and paternal educations controlled as covariates. Significant effects of gender, $F(6, 710) = 17.83$, $\text{wilks} = .87$, $p < .001$, group, $F(12, 1420) = 7.62$, $\text{wilks} = .88$, $p < .001$, and gender x group interaction, $F(12, 1420) = 3.73$, $\text{wilks} = .94$, $p < .001$, were found, $\eta^2 = .13$, .06, and .03, respectively.

Follow-up univariate analyses, as presented in Table 4.1, indicated that boys had higher scores on aggression, negative sociometric nominations, and victimization, and lower scores on sociability, shyness, and positive sociometric nominations than girls. The analyses of the group differences first indicated that Canadian-born Chinese children had higher scores than European Canadian children, which in turn had higher scores than immigrant Chinese children, on sociability. European Canadians had higher scores than the two Chinese groups on aggression and negative sociometric nominations. Immigrant and Canadian-born Chinese children had higher scores than European Canadian children on shyness-sensitivity. Canadian-born Chinese children had higher scores than the other two groups on positive sociometric nominations. Finally, immigrant Chinese had higher scores than Canadian-born Chinese on victimization. $\eta^2$ ranged from .02 to .05. The analyses revealed a gender x group interaction on victimization. Immigrant Chinese boys had significantly higher scores on victimization than boys in the other groups, but the difference was nonsignificant for girls.

Relations between Social Functioning, Adjustment, 
and Group Differences

Relations between social behaviors and adjustment variables and group differences in the relations were examined through the multi-group invariance test using LISREL 8.71. The analysis involved comparing nested models with and without specific relations constrained equal across the groups (e.g., Joreskog, 1971). A significant $X^2$ value resulting from the constraint would indicate that the relation is different across the group. An invariance test was first conducted to examine the overall model in which the three social functioning variables (sociability, aggression, and shyness) were associated with all adjustment variables (positive sociometric nominations, negative
Table 4.1. Means and Standard Deviations of Social Functioning and Adjustment Variables in Chinese- and European-Canadian Children

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Immigrant Chinese</th>
<th>Canadian-born Chinese</th>
<th>European Canadians</th>
<th>$F$ value</th>
<th>Gender (Ge)</th>
<th>Group (Gr)</th>
<th>Ge x Gr</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>Girls</td>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>Girls</td>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>Girls</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sociability-cooperation</td>
<td>−.39</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>.78</td>
<td>−.12</td>
<td>.22</td>
<td>34.37***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.66)</td>
<td>(1.16)</td>
<td>(.82)</td>
<td>(1.22)</td>
<td>(.95)</td>
<td>(1.08)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aggression-disruption</td>
<td>−.15</td>
<td>−.39</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>−.35</td>
<td>.50</td>
<td>−.08</td>
<td>27.22***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.67)</td>
<td>(.44)</td>
<td>(1.02)</td>
<td>(.36)</td>
<td>(1.49)</td>
<td>(.78)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shyness-sensitivity</td>
<td>−.02</td>
<td>.35</td>
<td>−.13</td>
<td>.45</td>
<td>−.11</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>19.26***</td>
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<td></td>
<td>(1.06)</td>
<td>(1.23)</td>
<td>(.79)</td>
<td>(1.31)</td>
<td>(.96)</td>
<td>(.97)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive socio. nomi.</td>
<td>−.33</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>.21</td>
<td>.56</td>
<td>−.15</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>14.86***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.79)</td>
<td>(1.04)</td>
<td>(1.01)</td>
<td>(1.09)</td>
<td>(.98)</td>
<td>(.95)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative socio. nomi.</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td>−.34</td>
<td>−.01</td>
<td>−.19</td>
<td>.39</td>
<td>−.03</td>
<td>17.21***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(1.18)</td>
<td>(.56)</td>
<td>(.85)</td>
<td>(.73)</td>
<td>(1.37)</td>
<td>(.90)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victimization</td>
<td>.70</td>
<td>−.23</td>
<td>−.06</td>
<td>−.11</td>
<td>.18</td>
<td>−.01</td>
<td>20.18***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(1.60)</td>
<td>(.68)</td>
<td>(.72)</td>
<td>(.99)</td>
<td>(1.11)</td>
<td>(.95)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Variables are standardized scores. Standard deviations are in parentheses under M scores; *$p < .05$; **$p < .01$; ***$p < .001$. 
sociometric nominations, and peer victimization). A significant difference was found between the original unconstrained model and the constrained model with all the relations set equal across the groups, \(X^2(18) = 55.76, p < .001\), indicating that there were overall significant group differences in the relations between social behaviors and adjustment variables. Next, multi-group invariance tests were conducted separately for the relations between each of the social behaviors and the entire set of adjustment variables. The analyses revealed significant differences across the groups in the relations between shyness and adjustment variables, \(X^2(6) = 18.62, p < .01\), but not in the relations between sociability and aggression and adjustment variables.

Follow-up group invariance analyses, separate for each individual adjustment variable, were conducted to detect sources of group differences in the relations between shyness and adjustment variables. The results of the cross-group tests and the effects of social behaviors in predicting specific adjustment variables are presented in Table 4.2. The results indicated that the relations between shyness and negative sociometric nominations and victimization were stronger in immigrant Chinese children than in Canadian-born Chinese children, \(X^2(1) = 11.64\) and 7.09, \(p < .001\) and .01, respectively. The relation between shyness and victimization was also stronger in European Canadian children than in Canadian-born Chinese children, \(X^2(1) = 3.90, p < .05\). No other group differences were found in the relations. In general, shyness was positively associated with negative sociometric nominations and victimization in the immigrant Chinese children and European Canadian children. However, the associations were weaker or nonsignificant in the Canadian-born Chinese children.

The results indicated that sociability was positively associated with positive sociometric nominations, and negatively associated with negative sociometric nominations and victimization in all three groups. In contrast, aggression was positively associated with negative sociometric nominations and victimization in all three groups.

**English Proficiency and Exposure to Canada: Effects on Social Functioning and Adjustment**

Next, we examined whether social functioning and adjustment were associated with English proficiency, length of residence in Canada, and age in which children immigrated to Canada, through regression analyses. In the analyses, child gender was controlled in the first step. Language or immigration experience variables were entered next, followed by its interaction with child gender. The regression results indicated that English proficiency was associated positively with positive sociometric nominations and negatively with
Table 4.2. Effects of Social Functioning in Predicting Adjustment Variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Adjustment Variable</th>
<th>Immigrant Chinese</th>
<th>Canadian-born Chinese</th>
<th>European Canadians</th>
<th>Pooled Effect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B (SE)</td>
<td>t value</td>
<td>B (SE)</td>
<td>t value</td>
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<tr>
<td>Social Variable</td>
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<tr>
<td>Positive Sociometric Nominations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sociability-cooperation</td>
<td>.76 (.07)</td>
<td>11.04***</td>
<td>.56 (.06)</td>
<td>9.54***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aggression-disruption</td>
<td>-.02 (.14)</td>
<td>-.15</td>
<td>-.02 (.09)</td>
<td>-.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Shyness-sensitivity</td>
<td>-.06 (.05)</td>
<td>-1.22</td>
<td>-.07 (.05)</td>
<td>-1.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Negative Sociometric Nominations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sociability-cooperation</td>
<td>-.05 (.08)</td>
<td>-.59</td>
<td>-.09 (.04)</td>
<td>-2.21*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aggression-disruption</td>
<td>.83 (.18)</td>
<td>4.72***</td>
<td>.72 (.06)</td>
<td>11.12***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shyness-sensitivity</td>
<td>.31 (.06)</td>
<td>5.26***</td>
<td>.05 (.04)</td>
<td>1.28</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victimization</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sociability-cooperation</td>
<td>-.04 (.10)</td>
<td>-.39</td>
<td>-.18 (.05)</td>
<td>-3.74***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aggression-disruption</td>
<td>.76 (.22)</td>
<td>3.47***</td>
<td>.35 (.07)</td>
<td>4.72***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shyness-sensitivity</td>
<td>.57 (.08)</td>
<td>7.28***</td>
<td>.30 (.05)</td>
<td>6.42***</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. The effects of gender and grade were controlled in the analyses; *p < .05; ** p < .01; ***p < .001.
shyness-sensitivity, $B = .20$ and $-.29$, $SE = .08$ and .10, $t = 2.46$ and $-2.82$, $p < .05$ and .01, respectively. There were significant interactions between gender and length of residence in Canada and immigration age in predicting victimization, $B = .42$ and $-.31$, $SE = .12$ and .12, $t = 3.47$ and $-2.67$, $p < .001$ and .01, respectively. The associations of length of residence and immigration age with victimization were significant for boys, $B = -.68$ and .49, $SE = .26$ and .25, $t = -2.58$ and 1.98, $p < .01$ and .05, respectively, but not for girls.

Finally, we examined whether the relations between social functioning and adjustment were moderated by English proficiency and exposure to Canada. Significant interactions among gender, shyness, English proficiency, years of residence in Canada, and immigration age were found in predicting negative sociometric nominations, $B = .34$, .30, and $-.25$, $SE = .07$, .08 and .07, $t = 5.26$, 3.91, and $-3.51$, ps < .001, respectively. Specifically, English proficiency, years of residence in Canada, and immigration age had significant moderating effects on the relation between shyness and negative sociometric nominations in boys, $B = -.52$, $-.56$, and .44, $SE = .13$, .17 and .16, $t = -4.05$, $-3.18$, and 2.85, $p < .001$, .01 and .01, respectively, but not in girls.

To understand the nature of the interactions, we examined simple slopes of the regression of negative sociometric nominations on shyness-sensitivity at a high value and a low value (one standard deviation above and one standard deviation below the mean) of English proficiency, length of residence in Canada, and immigration age, as described by Aiken and West (1991). The results indicated that shyness was positively associated with negative sociometric nominations for boys with low scores on English proficiency and length of residence in Canada and high scores on immigration age. The relations were nonsignificant for boys with high scores on English proficiency and length of residence or low scores on immigration age. No other moderating effects were found. These results suggested that shyness was associated with peer rejection more strongly for recent immigrant boys with less fluent English.

**DISCUSSION AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS**

In the past 50 years, North America has witnessed a large influx of immigrants of Asian, particularly Chinese, backgrounds. How immigrant children and children of immigrants adjust to their social environment has become a concern for the public and professionals. Research on Asian children and adolescents has focused mainly on academic performance and psycho-emotional adjustment (e.g., Steinberg, Dornbusch, and Brown, 1992; Sue and Sue, 1987). To fill the gap, we examined social behaviors and adjustment among immigrant Chinese, Canadian-born Chinese, and European Canadian children. The
results concerning the group differences in social functioning and peer experiences and their relations indicate that ethnicity, acculturation, and specific circumstances may play a significant role in social development.

**Significance of Ethnicity and Immigration Experiences for Children’s Social Functioning and Peer Experiences**

We found that Chinese children, both immigrant and Canadian-born, had lower scores on aggression and higher scores on shyness than European Canadian children. These results are largely consistent with our expectations. As indicated earlier, relative to North American parents, Chinese parents emphasize behavioral control and group interests in a more consistent and absolute manner (Chao, 1995; Chen et al., 2003; Ho, 1986). A major task for Chinese parents during socialization is to help children develop abilities and skills to regulate their impulsive and disruptive behaviors (Chen et al., 2006; Liu et al., 2005). Children are required to learn to control their frustration, anger, and defiance from the early years. To achieve this goal, Chinese parents are encouraged to use a variety of practices including inductive guidance as well as power assertion (Chen et al., 2003). The specific socialization beliefs and practices may explain, in part, the relatively lower aggressive and disruptive behaviors in Chinese children.

Concerning shyness, researchers have found that Chinese- and European-heritage children may display different behaviors in stressful social settings in early childhood (e.g., Chen et al., 1998; Freedman, 1974; Kagan, Kearsley, and Zelazo, 1978; Tseng and Hsu, 1969–70). For example, Kagan et al. (1978) reported that compared with their European American peers, Chinese-American children tended to react more strongly to novel situations in the autonomic nervous system such as heart rate variability. Similarly, Chen et al. (1998) found that Chinese children in China displayed more vigilant and anxious reactions to novel social situations than children with a European background in Canada. Consistent with these findings, immigrant and Canadian-born Chinese children were found to be more shy-sensitive than were European Canadian children. Thus, Chinese children as an ethnic group seem to display a behavioral pattern that is distinct from those displayed by their counterparts with a European background. To what extent the behavioral pattern is due to dispositional/biological influences or socialization practices is obviously an important question. There is evidence suggesting that parental childrearing attitudes and parenting behaviors may be associated with child shyness-inhibition. Chen et al., for example, found that whereas shyness-inhibition was associated positively with maternal disappointment, dissatisfaction, and punishment orientation in the European Canadian sam-
ple, this behavior was associated positively with maternal acceptance and approval in the Chinese sample. Similar results have been found in a sample of Chinese children in middle childhood (Chen et al., 1997). It has also been argued that shy-anxious behavior is a characteristic that may be biologically rooted (Asendorpf, 1991; Kagan, 1998; Rubin et al., 2009). It will be interesting in the future to investigate whether there are differences between Chinese and North American children in various aspects of psychophysiological functioning, particularly the regulatory processes such as frontal brain activities involved in anxious reactivity (Fox et al., 1995), which may be relevant to socialization experiences.

Canadian-born Chinese children appeared to be more competent in school social situations than immigrant Chinese and European Canadian children. The differences between Canadian-born and immigrant Chinese children are not surprising given that the challenges that immigrant children were encountering in the transition to the new society might undermine their abilities to display competent behaviors in peer interactions and obtain peer acceptance (e.g., Zhou et al., 2003). The association found between English proficiency and positive sociometric nominations in the immigrant sample suggest that, as immigrant children improve their English, they are likely to be more accepted by peers.

The results concerning the differences between Canadian-born Chinese children and European Canadian children on social competence and peer relationships seem to support the pluralist-constructivist perspective on the role of ethnicity in social adaptation (Conzen et al., 1992; Hong et al., 2000). According to this perspective, Canadian-born Chinese children may construct their adjustment patterns and developmental trajectories based on various strengths from their ethnic backgrounds (García Coll et al., 1996). Integrated diverse values and competencies such as social initiative and self-regulatory skills learned in the family and the school may be helpful for a balanced pursuit of individual goals and interpersonal cooperation in social interactions. Nevertheless, the differences between Chinese Canadian and European Canadian children on social competence need to be examined more carefully. Our analysis indicated that Chinese children were perceived as more socially competent by themselves than European Canadian children. There were no differences on sociability and peer acceptance according to the assessments of European Canadian children and other non-Chinese children. These results seem to indicate an in-group bias (favorable evaluation of own group) of Chinese Canadian children in their social evaluations. It will be interesting to examine how other factors, such as strong emphasis on particular aspects of social competence such as self-control in peer interactions and social evaluations among Chinese children (e.g., Chen, Li, Li, Li,
and Liu, 2000), contribute to the in-group bias. In general, the results clearly indicate that Chinese children born in Canada do not have difficulties in social adjustment as often described in the literature (e.g., Lee and Zhan, 1998; Kao, 1999). These children apparently are able to develop skills that are required to fulfill social expectations in peer interactions, and exhibit the same, if not higher, level of social competence as European Canadian children in the school.

The within-group associations between sociability-cooperation and aggression-disruption and peer acceptance and rejection are consistent with the literature (e.g., Chen et al., 1995; Rubin et al., 2006; Schwartz et al., 2001). Despite the different social, cultural, and socialization backgrounds of immigrant Chinese, Canadian-born Chinese, and European Canadian children, sociability-cooperation appears to be an important behavioral characteristic that is conducive to the establishment and maintenance of positive peer relationships and social status. This may be because socially competent children are capable of developing effective strategies to cope with stress and adapting to various circumstances (e.g., Chen et al.; Masten and Coatsworth, 1995). In contrast, since aggressive-disruptive children tend to express their anger and frustration in an explosive manner and cause damage and harm on others, it is understandable that they are likely to have problems in peer relationships.

Due to the emphasis on social assertiveness and expressiveness in North American societies (Larson, 1999), shy and wary behaviors are considered maladaptive for social interactions (e.g., Rubin et al., 2009). Empirical findings have indicated that shy-sensitive children in North American schools are more likely than others to experience difficulties in peer relationships such as peer rejection or neglect (e.g., Coplan et al., 2004; Rubin et al., 1995). Inconsistent with the Western literature, however, it has been found that shyness-sensitivity is associated with indexes of social and psychological adjustment such as peer acceptance in China (e.g., Chen et al., 1992; Chen et al., 1999). Accordingly, it has been argued that shy, wary, and sensitive behavior has been valued and encouraged in traditional Chinese cultures; shy-sensitive children are regarded as well-behaved and socially mature (e.g., Chen et al., 2006; Yang, 1986). Nevertheless, it has been recently reported that as Chinese society is undergoing dramatic changes toward the market-oriented system in the social and economic reforms, shy, anxious, and restrained behaviors are no longer regarded as adaptive and competent because they become unsuitable for the demands of the changing society. As a result, shy-sensitive children are increasingly at a disadvantage in obtaining social acceptance and maintaining social status (Chang, 2003; Cheah and Rubin, 2004; Chen et al., 2005; Chen and Chen, in press; Hart et al., 2000; Schwartz, 2001).
Shyness-sensitivity was positively associated with peer rejection and victimization in immigrant Chinese and European Canadian children. Shyness-sensitivity was also positively associated with peer victimization in Canadian-born Chinese children. However, the association was significantly weaker. Moreover, shyness-sensitivity was not associated with peer rejection in Canadian-born Chinese children. The different relations across the groups, particularly the nonsignificant or weaker relations in Canadian-born Chinese children, are rather interesting, given that children are generally encouraged to display assertive and autonomous behaviors in North American schools (e.g., Larson, 1999). Several explanations may be offered. First, the relatively higher prevalence of shy-sensitive behavior in Chinese children may affect social judgments and attitudes in peer interactions. For Canadian-born Chinese children, who do not have evident difficulties in language and life adjustment as recent immigrant children do, shyness-sensitivity itself may not necessarily be perceived by peers as indicating a lack of social competence or “deviancy” from the norm. Peers may attribute the behavioral style beyond the personal level (Verkuyten, 2006). If this is the case, the “stereotype” of shyness in Chinese children as a group may serve a protective function that buffers against social rejection.

Alternatively, it is possible that Canadian-born Chinese children develop social and behavioral skills to cope with or overcome the difficulties resulted from their shy-sensitive behavior. As indicated earlier, Chinese parents often expect and help their children to develop self-regulatory or control skills and display cooperative and responsible behaviors in the early years (e.g., Chen et al., 2003; Ho, 1986). It has been argued that regulatory processes may determine, to a large extent, how the child copes with challenging social situations (e.g., Rubin et al., 2009). If Canadian-born Chinese children integrate mixed values and behavioral norms that they learn in the family and school, they may be able to display their shy-sensitive behavior in a relatively acceptable manner (e.g., engaging in parallel play activities, Asendorpf, 1993; Coplan et al., 2004). Moreover, they may establish intimate, supportive, and perhaps dyadic relationships with others through displaying cooperative behaviors, and thus minimize the negative consequences of their shy behavior on peer relationships.

Shy children in the immigrant Chinese and European Canadian groups are both likely to be rejected and victimized by peers. However, the reasons for peer rejection and victimization of shy children in the two groups may be somewhat different. Whereas the social difficulties of shy children are generally related to the dysregulation of anxious reactivity in social situations, the negative peer experiences of shy immigrant children may also be contributed by their adverse circumstances in the transition to the new environment.
Chapter 4

(Boulton, 1995; Moran et al., 1993; Zhou et al., 2003). Shy and wary children often display heightened distress such as felt insecurity and fearfulness in novel social situations (e.g., Chen et al., 2005; Rubin et al., 2009), which may undermine their self-confidence in exploring the new environment and impede their expression of competencies. Immigration to a different country is a major life change, which is likely to result in a high level of stress for children. Thus, like shy children in contemporary China, shy immigrant Chinese children tend to display difficulties in social adjustment. The acquisition of language and communication skills and social support resources may help shy immigrant Chinese children cope with stress and serve to buffer against their social difficulties. The moderating effects of English proficiency, years spent in Canada, and initial immigration age on the relations between shyness and peer rejection in immigrant boys clearly indicate that language and experiences in the new environment play a significant role in social development of immigrant children. As shy immigrant children, particularly boys who were more vulnerable than girls to peer victimization (e.g., Rubin et al., 2009), gradually improve their English proficiency and adapt to the new environment, they become more similar to Canadian-born Chinese children and experience less difficulties in peer relationships. These results have practical implications for education and for developing remediation programs. It is important for educators, parents, and professionals to provide support and specific assistance for immigrant children to overcome language barriers and encourage them to participate actively in social activities.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

A number of important contextual and personal factors may be related to the social adjustment of Chinese children in Canada. For example, it has been found that Chinese and Western parents may use different parenting styles and practices in childrearing (e.g., Chao, 2001; Chen et al., 1998). It will be important to investigate how parenting and other factors in the family influence social behaviors and peer relationships in Chinese children in North America. In addition, more recent research has indicated that ethnic identification may be relevant to school adjustment such as academic attitude and achievement among Asian and Latino American adolescents (Fuligni, Witkow, and García, 2005). It will be interesting to examine in the future whether and how individual ethnic identity such as feelings toward own group is related to social functioning and adjustment.

We examined children’s social functioning, overall peer acceptance and rejection, and victimization. Dyadic intimate relationships and group
networks are also important aspects of peer experiences. Researchers have demonstrated that support from friends and peer groups is important for the adaptation of immigrant children and their families to the new country (e.g., Azmitia and Cooper, 2004). Moreover, social and cultural beliefs and norms may affect the function and significance of friendships and the organization of peer groups (e.g., French, Riansari, Pidada, Nelwan, and Buhrmester, 2001; Way, 2006; Way and Chen, 2000). Future research on children in ethnic groups should be expanded to broader social contexts such as peer group networks.

In this chapter, we focused on Chinese children in Canada. It is an interesting question whether the social adjustment of Chinese Canadian children is related to the nation’s immigration policy and multicultural context. Do immigrant youth differ on social adjustment in countries that highly support, value, and encourages the maintenance of diverse ethnic traditions, cultures, and lifestyles and in countries that do not? In a society such as the United States, for example, immigrants have greater pressure to assimilate or emerge into the majority culture, it may be more difficult for peers to understand and accept the different social and behavioral styles of children with an ethnic background. It will be important to investigate social functioning and adjustment of immigrant children and children with different ethnic backgrounds in the United States and other countries.

REFERENCES


Chapter 4


The United States has witnessed a massive immigration of Asians since the passage of the 1965 Immigration Reform Act that increased the quota on Asian immigrants. With this increase, the number of Asian American children and adolescents has also grown tremendously in the last few decades. Research on Asian American children and adolescents has focused predominantly on their exceptional educational achievement. The image of Asian Americans as the “model minority” creates a stereotype that they are successful both in their academic achievement and in their psychosocial adjustment. A number of recent studies, however, suggest that Asian American students can experience significant stress in their psychological adjustment, indicating a perplexing high achievement/low adjustment paradox (e.g., Center for Disease Control, 1995, 1997; Choi, Meininger, and Roberts, 2006; Green, Way, and Pahl, 2006; Qin, Way, and Mukherjee, 2008; Rhee, Chang, and Rhee, 2003). In this chapter, we review studies on the psychosocial adjustment of Asian American children and adolescents and aim to understand the contributing factors to this paradox. We also briefly examine some intervention efforts that may help promote the psychosocial adjustment of children from Asian immigrant families.

DEMOGRAPHICS OF ASIAN AMERICAN CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS

Since 1965, on average, the United States annually admits more than 220,000 Asian immigrants, accounting for 35% of the total immigrants to the country (Min, 2006). Asians are the second largest minority group in the United
States following Hispanics. As of July 2007, the estimated number of Asian Americans (including Asian alone and Asian in combination with one or more races) reached 15.2 million, comprising 5% of the total U. S. population (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2009). The Census Bureau projected that the Asian population could increase to 40.6 million—close to 10% of the total U.S. population—by 2050. Among the various Asian American groups, the largest proportions are Chinese, Filipino, and Asian Indian, followed by Vietnamese, Korean, and Japanese. The majority of the Asian American population are recent immigrants or children of immigrants.

Chinese, the largest sub-group, make up 11% of all Asian Americans (Yeh, Kim, Pituc, and Atkins, 2008). Chinese Americans came to the United States mainly from China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan. Despite their long immigration history, over 60% of Chinese American adults were born abroad (Reeves and Bennett, 2004). The Filipino American community is the second largest Asian American group, sending the largest number of professional immigrants to the United States (Rumbaut, 1991). Asian Indians represent a relatively new immigrant group to the United States, and they tend to enter the country with high levels of education and middle-class status. Close to two-thirds of the Asian Indian population possess at least a bachelor’s degree. The Vietnamese population is considered one of the fastest growing populations in the United States, constituting 11% of all Asian ethnicities in the United States (Asian-Nation, 2005). Koreans are the next largest group. Three-quarters of Korean Americans were foreign-born and more than one of every five Korean Americans were children under 18 years of age (U.S. Census Bureau, 2007). The Japanese represents another considerable group in the Asian American population, dominated by offspring of early immigrants.

According to the 2000 Census, the Asian American population is heavily urbanized, with nearly three-quarters living in metropolitan areas with a population greater than 2.5 million. Concentrations of Asians outside of suburbs of large metropolitan areas were typically located near colleges and universities. Over half of the Asian population lived in just three states: California, New York, and Hawaii, and 75% of Asians live in only 10 states including Texas, Illinois, New Jersey, Washington, Florida, Virginia, and Massachusetts. California had the largest Asian population (4.2 million), followed by New York (1.2 million) and Hawaii (0.7 million).

With the growth of the Asian population in North America, the number of school-age Asian children also increased dramatically. Between 1960 and 1990, the number grew about six-fold and continues to grow at a high rate. According to the 2000 U.S. Census, approximately a quarter of the total Asian population in the United States was under 18 years old. More specifically, over 20% of Chinese, Filipino, Korean, and Asian Indian populations were under 18. For the
Cambodian, Laotian, and Pakistani populations, the percentages are over 30%. The massive Asian immigration has also had an impact on America's higher education with increased Asian admissions (Min, 2006; The College Board, 2008). Furthermore, 56% of all Asian American students attend schools that are at least 50% minority, and 30% of all Asian American students attend high-poverty schools, compared to just 18% of white students (Orfield and Lee, 2005).

Most research on Asian American children has focused on their educational achievement. Much less research has been devoted to understanding their psychological adaptation. In this chapter, we highlight an important general pattern of development among Asian American children and adolescents, the achievement/adjustment paradox. We then discuss the contributing factors including immigration, family, peer, school, and identity issues that may add stress to the adjustment of Asian American children and adolescents. To conclude, we discuss potential intervention efforts that may help support the psychosocial development of these children.

The Achievement/Adjustment Paradox

The educational achievement of Asian American students is a relatively new phenomenon. As late as the 1940s, Asian Americans still fell far behind Whites in educational attainment (Siu, 1996). However, since the 1960s, the image of the “model minority” has dominated scholarly and public discourse on Asian American students (e.g., Sue and Okazaki, 1990). Asian American students have been documented to outperform students from other ethnic groups, including Whites, in standardized test scores and high school GPAs (Mau, 1995). They also have lower high school dropout rates (Peng and Wright, 1994), higher college attendance rates than students from other ethnic groups, and enroll in elite universities at disproportionately high rates (Siu, 1996). The Asian ethnicity effect holds strong even after important demographic factors such as SES are considered (Kao, 1995). Some scholars call this the “Asian effect.” This contributed to a popular media portrayal of Asian Americans as the “model minority.” For example, in a content analysis of more than 1,300 prime time television advertisements, Taylor and Stern (1997) found that Asian Americans were often portrayed in business roles and associations with high intelligence, affluence, and professional status.

Scholars have argued that the “model minority” characterization not only ignores the tremendous diversity of the Asian American population (e.g., Siu, 1996), it also has a negative impact on Asian Americans who are not upwardly mobile. We argue that a particularly detrimental effect of the image of the “model minority” is the lack of attention to the psychological and social maladjustment of Asian American children and adolescents.
On level of adjustment, Asian American students seem to adjust quite well. In school, they tend to be perceived as quiet and hard working, rarely causing trouble. Asian Americans are also significantly less likely than other ethnic groups to utilize mainstream psychological services (Gee, 2004; Sue, Sue, Sue, and Takeuchi, 1995). As a result, teachers and counselors often believe that Asian American students do not have any psychological or social difficulties (Qin, Way, and Mukherjee, 2008; Uba, 1994). As Sung (1987) poignantly commented on Chinese immigrant students, “if a child makes no demands, sits quietly, seldom opens his mouth, and withdraws when confronted with a problem, he may pass completely unnoticed and my even be praised for causing no trouble” (p. 205).

Partly as a result of the well-adapted image, there is much less research on the mental health of Asian Americans compared to other ethnic groups in the United States. There is a particular lack of large-scale epidemiological studies documenting Asian American youth’s mental health (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2001; Takeuchi et al., 2007). This may also be due to the small size of Asian Americans compared to other ethnic groups (Zhou and Xiong, 2005). Our review of the available research gives rise for much concern. Contrary to the popular belief or their image as “well-functioning” and “problem-free,” research demonstrates that Asian American students were less well-adjusted than perceived (e.g., Choi, Meininger, and Roberts, 2006; Rhee, Chang, and Rhee, 2003; Twenge and Crocker, 2002). Studies drawing on college student samples, first started in the 1970s, have consistently shown that Asian American students reported higher levels of distress and emotional and social adjustment difficulties than White Americans (see Abe and Zane, 1990, for a review). Subsequent studies confirm the earlier findings (e.g., Choi et al.; Okazaki, 1997).

Besides studies comparing Asian students with White students, some recent studies documented that Asian American students had higher levels of internal disturbances, including depression, anxiety, withdrawal, and low self-esteem, than other minority students as well. Two Center for Disease Control reports (1995, 1997) found that Asian American girls 15–24 years of age had higher rates of depressive symptoms and suicide than did Whites, Blacks, and Hispanics in the same age group. In another large-scale study, 30% of Asian American girls who were in the 5th through 12th grades reported depressive symptoms, the highest rates of any ethnic/racial group (also see Schoen et al., 1997). Studies on Asian American boys also demonstrated concerns of psychological health. Chang and colleagues’ study (1995) showed that they tended to be more withdrawn and depressed compared to the American norm. Way and her colleagues’ research with adolescent boys from diverse ethnic backgrounds in New York found that, compared with African and Latino
adolescent boys, Asian American boys reported the lowest level of psychological functioning measured by levels of depression and self-esteem (Way and Chen, 2000; Way and Pahl, 2001). Other studies show that Asian American students tend to have higher levels of anxiety (Chun and Sue, 1998) and lower levels of self-esteem compared to their non-Asian peers (Greene, Way, and Pahl, 2006; Rhee et al., 2003; Twenge and Crocker, 2002).

Even on external disturbances, recent research showed that the behaviors and attitudes of Asian American students were far more complex than previously perceived. Choi and Lahey’s (2006) research of nationally representative high school student data showed that their behaviors and attitudes were far closer to those of White youth, and in some cases worse. In particular, the following groups of youth reported more problem behaviors such as violent and petty crime behaviors: Filipino, “other” Asian (Cambodian, Laotian, Hmong, and Pacific Islanders), and Asian youth with multiple Asian ethnicities (Choi and Lahey).

Child and adolescent psychological well-being is an increasingly important issue in Asian American communities as cases of high-achieving, “well-functioning” model students committing suicide rise. In a study using the Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 28% of Asian American high school youth reported depressed feelings disrupted their usual activities, with 19% reporting having made a suicide plan (CDC, 2003). Cornell University counselor Wai Kwong Wong (2005) reported that Asian and Asian-American students committed 50% of suicides in the past decade at Cornell (they make up just 17% of the enrollment). National data from the Center for Disease Control report (2001) showed that suicide was the third leading cause of death among young people aged 15 to 24, but second among young Asians and Pacific Islanders (unintentional injuries rank first).

To conclude, extant research showed that despite their high levels of educational achievement, Asian American students experienced higher risks in the psychological and social development than expected. This is perplexing. We often assume that students’ academic achievement is positively linked to their psychological state: when a student is doing well in school, with the approval of parents and teachers, he should be feeling good. The pattern in Asian American children and adolescent development indicates a perplexing achievement/adjustment paradox. This pattern of disconnect has been documented by other researchers working with Asian American youth. In their study of foreign-born Asian American college students, for example, psychologists Sue and Zane (1985) cautioned that “academic performance should not be used as an indicator of psychological well-being or adjustment for newly arrived Chinese college students” (p. 578). In examining the assimilation pattern of Filipino American youth, Rumbaut (1997) also found
that they had high levels of education and professional success, but low levels of psychological functioning measured by self-esteem and depression. Similarly, in a study examining data from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health, Bankston and Zhou (2002) found that Asian adolescents reported the lowest levels of self-esteem and the highest grade-point averages among the major racial/ethnic groups.

A question arises: What are the factors that may lead to the psychological and social adjustment difficulties for these Asian American students? In the next section, we examine factors that may contribute to this paradox, especially the psychosocial stresses facing these children and adolescents.

**UNDERSTANDING THE CONTRIBUTING FACTORS**

**Immigration and Acculturation Stress**

Immigration and acculturative stresses seem to be significant factors that contribute to Asian American children and adolescents’ high levels of psychological distress (Cho and Bae, 2005). Once migrated to the United States, first-generation Asian immigrant youth faced a myriad of challenges, including language and communication barriers, access and building social support, adjusting to a new school environment, and having to negotiate different cultures (Yeh et al., 2005; Zheng and Berry, 1991). Research showed that maintaining a well-balanced psychological adjustment may be more difficult for Asian American adolescents than for European American adolescents (Kim, 2006) as Asian American adolescents faced the challenges of dealing with both American and Asian cultures (Kim and Choi, 1994).

Some studies indicated that the level of acculturation has a significant impact on the development of self-esteem, and a higher level of acculturation was associated with higher self-esteem (Phinney and Chavira, 1992). However, there were also studies indicating that this might not necessarily be the case. Immigrant students with relatively low levels of acculturation may also exhibit high levels of self-esteem, especially if they lived in or close to an ethnic enclave where acculturation was not as essential to their every day functioning. For example, in a study of 117 recent Chinese immigrant adolescents in New York City, the respondents displayed a low level of acculturation, but had a moderately high level of self-esteem. Most of the respondents participated in family activities and were exposed to Chinese-language mass media (Yu, 1996).

**Immigrant Family Dynamics**

One of the most important developmental contexts for children is the family. Decades of research have suggested a link between the family context and
child adjustment. Family, as “a primary agency in the immigrant saga” (Gil and Vega, 1996, p. 436), is instrumental in helping children to overcome barriers in the new society, for example, racism and harsh urban school and neighborhood environments (Portes and Rumbaut, 2001). Immigrant families, however, are not just a “haven in a heartless world but a place where conflict and negotiations also take place” (Foner, 1997, p. 961). Immigration often brings changes to familial roles and tends to destabilize family relations over time.

There are tremendous challenges facing parent-child relations in Asian immigrant families in the United States. This is particularly the case for immigrant families where a host of different factors can lead to increasing conflicts and emotional estrangements between parents and children (Qin, 2006, 2008). Qin’s research drawing on longitudinal data collected on Chinese immigrant families suggested that parent-child separation, language barriers, bicultural conflicts, lack of parent-child communication, and high parental expectations exacerbated parent-child relations in many families. Similar challenges have been documented in Korean immigrant families (Cho and Bae, 2005; Kim et al., 1997; Moon, Wolfer, and Robinson, 2001). Studies of Asian immigrant families found that some of the most serious difficulties Asian American children experience included unrealistic parental expectations in terms of academic and career achievements; parents’ high level of control; and conflicts at home (Lee, 1997; Stevensen and Lee, 1990; Uba, 1994; Way and Chen, 2000). In the following section, we will examine these key issues facing Asian American immigrant families that have an important influence on children’s psychosocial adjustment.

**High Parental Expectations/Parental Control**

Research has consistently documented that Asian American parents had higher expectations for their children’s education and future mobility than did parents from other ethnic backgrounds (Kao, 1995). High parental expectations have been cited as one major contribution to Asian American children’s educational achievement (Sue and Okazaki, 1990). However, excessively high parental expectations can place tremendous pressure on children and lead to conflicts and alienation in families, which in turn may be associated with psychological distress in children’s development (Qin, 2008). In their study of Vietnamese immigrant families, Bankston and Zhou (2002) found that due to an intensified parental pressure, the children of immigrants may be especially prone to anxiety, depression, and low self-esteem. Similarly, in a study exploring the family experiences of second-generation Filipino students in California, the students described their alienation as a result of not being able to communicate with their parents and not being seen for who they are. They expressed a sense of being pushed to be someone they are not,
often being compared to a cousin or a friend’s child, or the parent when he was young (Wolf, 1997).

Further, research has shown that when Asian American parents have high expectations for their children’s education, they often cannot give their children the helpful academic instructions needed for success due to their limited English ability and/or long work hours. Excessively high parental pressures in this context of little support can be especially difficult for children’s psychosocial adjustment. This combination often contributes to children’s reluctance to communicate with parents and decreases emotional closeness with parents, as a form of “passive rebellion” (Louie, 2004).

Another issue that was often studied in Asian immigrant families was parental control. Research showed that Asian parents tended to be control-oriented and fitted the typology of authoritarian parenting (Chao, 1994). For example, in the study investigating parental influences on academic achievement among groups of Asian-immigrant and American-born Asian American and White American high school students, Mau (1995) found that Asian parents tended to control and restrict their children’s non-academic activities far more than did White parents. Research has also shown that high levels of control did not necessarily lead to low levels of educational achievement in Asian children; in fact, quite the opposite may be true (Chao, 1994, 2001). However, high levels of parental control can still have a negative impact on children’s psychosocial adjustment. For example, Sue and Okazaki (1990) argued that high levels of parental authoritarianism were typically associated with low self-esteem.

**Family Conflict**

Another salient issue in Asian immigrant families is conflict at home due to acculturation differences between parents and children (Portes and Rumbaut, 2001). After migration, children often learn English and absorb the new culture at a faster speed than their parents, who are often more removed from the American culture. This is especially the case if immigrant parents work with co-ethnics—as is typical for many new immigrants (Suárez-Orozco, Todorova, and Qin, 2006). In some families, children may be forced to take on some parental responsibility due to their parents’ lack of English proficiency. This can cause significant stresses for families that used to operate on parental authority and strict generational boundaries (García Coll and Magnuson, 1997).

Studies have shown that in Asian immigrant families, parents and children also struggle with acculturation conflicts (Rosenthal, 1987; Suárez-Orozco, 2001). Immigrant Asian parents tend to retain their native language, traditional values and lifestyles, and child-rearing practices, while their children
Psychological Struggles of Asian American Children

absorb mainstream cultural beliefs and behavioral patterns at a faster rate. Therefore, a substantial generation gap has become common for many immigrant Asian families (Lee, Choe, Kim, and Ngo, 2000). Parents think that their children are too Americanized, whereas children think that their parents are too Asian (Suárez-Orozco, 2001). For example, studies have shown that a key element of Korean American adolescents’ psychological problems is the stress caused by cultural conflict with their parents. Korean American adolescents and young adults experience conflicts with their parents while working with acculturation issues and ethnic identity problems (Kim, 1997; Min, 1995; Moon et al., 2001).

Family conflict often occurs as a result of different perspectives on culturally pertinent issues such as academic achievement, appropriate social behavior, parental respect, and familial obligation (Min, 1995; Moon et al., 2001; Sung, 1985). For example, research showed that Korean American parents had high expectations of academic and occupational achievement, which caused a great deal of tension among family members (Moon, 2008). Children’s loss of the native language further adds to the difficulty in communication and conflict resolution in Asian immigrant families. In a study examining cultural adjustment difficulties and coping strategies in a sample of 274 Chinese, Japanese, and Korean adolescent immigrants, Yeh and Inose (2002) found that the most common problem across all three groups was communication difficulties.

School and Peer Factors

In addition to the family context, the peer context is also considered a critical context of development for children and adolescents (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Peer relations have been shown to have a significant impact on adolescent psychological well-being (e.g., Roeser and Eccles, 1998). High-quality peer relations protected adolescents from social anxieties (La Greca and Harrison, 2005), enhanced social competence and interpersonal sensitivity, and were linked to positive psychological adjustment (Greene et al., 2006; Way and Pahl, 2001). Negative peer relations (e.g., peer discrimination and victimization) were associated with low self-esteem (Fisher, Wallace, and Fenton, 2000; Greene et al.), social avoidance, loneliness (Storch and Masia-Warner, 2004), depressive symptoms, and social anxiety in adolescents (La Greca and Harrison). A recent study showed that among Chinese American youth, peer discrimination was more influential in the prediction of psychological well-being than peer support (Greene et al.).

Consistent research findings showed that Asian American students report high levels of ethnic/race-based peer discrimination (Alvarez, Juang, and
Liang, 2006; Fisher, Wallet, and Fenton, 2000; Goto, Gee, and Takeuchi, 2002; Greene et al., 2006; Grossman and Liang, 2008). Peer discrimination and victimization by non-Asian peers were a major challenge for many Asian American youths across the United States (Fisher et al.; Greene et al.; Kiang, 1996; Rosenbloom and Way, 2004). In an Associated Press article (November 13, 2005), a reporter described the experiences of Chinese immigrant students in Brooklyn’s Lafayette High School:

Chinese immigrant students . . . are harassed and bullied so routinely that school officials in June agreed to a Department of Justice consent decree to curb alleged ‘severe and pervasive harassment directed at Asian-American students by their classmates.’ . . . Nationwide, Asian students say they’re often beaten, threatened, and called ethnic slurs by other young people, and school safety data suggest that the problem may be worsening. Youth advocates say these Asian teens, stereotyped as high-achieving students who rarely fight back, have for years borne the brunt of ethnic tension as Asian communities expand and neighborhoods become more racially diverse (p. 1).

Similarly, research has documented prevalent racial harassment directed toward Asian American students in middle and high schools (Kiang, 1996). For example, in a study of ethnic identity and self-esteem among second-generation immigrant youth, Rumbaut (1996) found that almost two-thirds of the Filipino sample had experienced discrimination, and their depression scores were higher than those who had not experienced it. Fisher and colleagues (2000) found that over 80% of Chinese and Korean American students reported being called names and close to 50% reported being excluded from social activities or threatened as a result of their race. In two recent papers, Qin and Way have examined the issue of peer bullying among Chinese American students, drawing on qualitative interview data from two separate studies (Qin, Way, and Mukherjee, 2008; Qin, Way, and Rana, 2008). Similar to previous studies, their analyses showed that close to half of the students in the combined sample (n = 120) reported incidents of ethnic tension and peer discrimination at school. Many Chinese students talked at length about their experiences of being discriminated and bullied by their non-Chinese peers at school, mostly by White and Black students. The form of discrimination included physical harassment as well as verbal taunts and slurs. Students reported being “beaten,” “bullied,” “tripped,” “hit,” “pushed,” and “kicked,” and “thrown things at” both inside the school (e.g., in the hallway or in the bathroom) and outside (e.g., in a park or on the school bus). Students also reported verbal harassment at schools (e.g., being “cursed,” called racial slurs like “Chino,” and “told to go back to China”). Besides these visible and audible forms of harassment and bullying, students also reported subtler, non-verbal forms of
poor treatment by some of their peers. For example, being ignored, socially ostracized, hindered with certain “disgusted bad looks,” or other students occupying seats and not allowing Chinese students to sit. They also found that recently arrived immigrant youth not only face inter-racial tension, but also intra-racial discrimination by other Asian peers who have arrived earlier and are more assimilated (Rosenbloom, Rakoski, and Way, 2004).

Peer harassment was due to multiple factors including immigration status, language ability, the model minority myth, and physique (see Qin et al., 2008; Qin, Way, and Rana, 2008). Peer harassment is an understudied issue that has a very negative impact on Asian American children and adolescents’ psychosocial adjustment.

Asian American Identity

Identity is another issue that may have an important impact on Asian American children’s psychosocial adjustment. Research in the last few decades has consistently shown that preserving one’s ethnic identity is associated with lower levels of psychosocial risks including higher levels of self-esteem (Portes and Zhou, 1993; Phinney, 1990). For adolescents from immigrant families, a strong sense of ethnic identity may serve to anchor and buffer them against risk factors such as discrimination as they try to negotiate different expectations they face at home and school (Suárez-Orozco and Suárez-Orozco, 2001). However, the task of forming an identity for immigrant adolescents can be further complicated by the multiple cultural worlds they traverse and the often conflicted expectations they face in daily life (García Coll and Magnuson, 1997). For Asian adolescents from immigrant families, the inherent differences between the American and the Chinese cultures can induce cultural conflicts that make the process of identity formation more challenging (Chan and Leong, 1994). The messages children receive in school, which include the importance of personal freedom and independence, are likely to conflict with the hierarchical relations that often characterize parent-child relations in many immigrant families (Sung, 1987).

Perpetual foreignness can also undermine Asian American youth’s identity. Despite their history in the United States, Asian Americans are still viewed as perpetual foreigners in a White-dominated society. They received fewer economic returns for their education than White co-workers, and they encountered racism, prejudice, and discrimination like other minorities (Kibria, 2002). In a study of second-generation Chinese Americans’ and Korean Americans’ ethnic identities, Kibria found that second-generation Chinese and Korean Americans simultaneously felt aligned with the ethnic American model and that their ethnic and American self could co-exist in accord. Yet they also felt marginalized in American society because of their
racial minority status, which prevented them from being fully accepted as American. According to Kibria (2002), the experience of upward mobilization into mainstream America through educational attainment and enhanced occupational status helped Asian Americans feel as though they were honorary Whites. However, their everyday experiences of marginalization and social exclusion conflicted with their grasping their American identity, which reinforces feelings of the forever foreigner.

Ethnic identity seems to be closely associated with the mental health consequences of racial and ethnic discrimination. Racial discrimination can have very negative consequences on mental health. For example, Joel San Juan, a sociologist working within the Filipino community in San Diego, suggests that higher rates of depression and suicidal thoughts among Filipino youth are connected to a history of colonialism in the Philippines and racism in the United States, both of which created feelings of inferiority (Wolf, 1997).

Studies spanning adolescence to late adulthood find that ethnic identity buffered the negative psychological impact of discrimination (Yip, Gee, and Takeuchi, 2008). A healthy sense of ethnic identity and minimal exposure to discrimination are critical factors in shaping Asian American adolescents’ psychological well-being and their adaptive behaviors (Shrake and Rhee, 2004). On the other hand, cultural marginalization is significantly associated with depressive symptoms in Asian American adolescents (Kim, Gonzales, Stroh, and Wang, 2006). The model minority myth seems to be another challenge facing Asian Americans. On the surface, the model minority myth seems to favor Asian Americans; however, it denotes an expression of resentment toward Asian Americans for their achievements and the competitive threat posed by these achievements (Kibria, 2002). The false image can instigate negativity toward Asian Pacific Islanders (API), including resentment over their perceived success, and may contribute to an increase in hate crimes directed at API individuals (Ho and Jackson, 2001). The positive aspects of the model minority stereotype are often mixed with negative images of overachievement, excessive competition, and social awkwardness and isolation (Lin et al., 2005).

**POTENTIAL PREVENTION EFFORTS**

Given the reviewed mental health outcomes for Asian American children and adolescents, it is important to develop intervention and prevention programs to support these children and their families (Xiong et al., 2006). However, since research on psychosocial challenges facing Asian American children and adolescents is relatively new, there have not been many intervention efforts, especially school-based, that have been designed to meet the needs of this group of children who had been considered successful. In this section,
we review some efforts that aim to strengthen immigrant families as well as to connect children with their ethnic heritage and community. Both can have positive impacts on children’s psychosocial adjustment.

The attention to challenges facing immigrant families can be especially beneficial. By providing culturally sensitive parenting programs for Asian immigrant parents, family conflicts caused by misunderstandings between Asian parents and their children can be decreased. It is important to note that Asian American adolescents are a very diverse group who come from many different countries. They differ in methods and time of migration, language, social class, religion, life experience, and history (Rumbaut, 1995; Serafica, 1999). Thus parenting programs should not be provided under the practice (or assumption) of “one size fits all.” For instance, among Southeast Asians, immigrants from Vietnam and Laos tended to be urban dwellers, whereas Hmong and Cambodians used to be rural residents prior to resettling in the United States (Lee, 1996). Therefore, prior to designing parenting programs, these cultural differences should be taken into consideration. One of the examples is the Helping Youth Succeed (HYS) Curriculum, a culturally specific parent education program for Southeast Asian immigrant families such as Cambodian, Hmong, Lao, and Vietnamese that would address and minimize conflict between parents and their adolescent children (Zhou, 1997).

Connecting immigrant children and their families to community resources has been documented to have a positive impact on the well-being of Asian American children and their families. In a study examining both high- and low-achieving Korean American students in urban schools, Lew (2006) found that ties to first-generation parents and co-ethnic networks are particularly important for Korean American youths. Community-based heritage language and cultural centers provide other important resource for immigrant families to draw support from the larger immigrant community. Some ethnic communities in the United States have well-developed weekend or evening schools that provide study of their heritage languages (see Wang, 1996). In a study examining Vietnamese refugees in New Orleans, Zhou and Bankston (1998) found that Vietnamese youth were able to successfully adapt to aspects of life in the United States despite acute poverty. The authors attributed the academic success of the Vietnamese youth to the strong and supportive ethnic community. Specifically, the authors showed how Vietnamese children were able to attain upward mobility through the strong ethnic community and the maintenance of traditional cultural norms, such as cooperation, family loyalty, and repayment of obligations.

Heritage language schools that are normally operated by local community members are an integral part of the ethnic communities across the United States. Active parent participation has long been an important part of many community heritage language programs. For example, most Chinese
language schools are organized and operated by parents interested in maintaining their home language and cultural traditions (Wang, 1996). When parents enroll their children in a heritage language school, they will be expected to assist the school in multiple ways. Some parents become active members of the school’s administrative staff, while others prefer classroom teaching and helping teachers with learning activities (Chao, 1996). Regardless of the type of participation, the interaction among parents, teachers, and children helps build a positive environment for learning Chinese and engaging in Chinese language cultural events. Chinese heritage community language schools are an integral part of the Chinese community across the United States (Chao, 1997). Approximately 83,000 students are taking Chinese in 634 language schools across the country (National Council of Associations of Chinese Language Schools). Not unlike Chinese language schools, Korean language schools in the United States are also important when enriching Korean American students’ academic and cultural life. In addition to providing Korean language lessons, the schools offer various programs such as after-school tutoring programs and recreational and cultural programs. Teachers also take on the role of teaching immigrant values; family values such as filial piety and respect for authority and hard work are reinforced in the classroom (Zhou and Kim, 2007).

To Korean and Chinese immigrant children, the ethnic language schools and other related ethnic institutions provide an alternative space in which children can express their feelings of growing up in immigrant families. Although there are many benefits associated with ethnic institutions, there are some unintended negative consequences as well. There is tremendous pressure on both children and parents for school achievement, which can lead to intense intergenerational conflict, rebellious behavior, and alienation from the networks that are supposed to help (Zhou and Kim, 2006).

A number of studies on new ethnic and immigrant congregations support the perspective that religious activities reinforce the ethnicity of participants and connect them to the ethnic group (Herberg 1960; Warner 1993; Williams 1988). Zhou and Bankston’s study (1998) of the New Orleans Vietnamese youth showed that church participation seemed to protect some Vietnamese immigrant youth from inner city youth subculture. Religion bound these youth to ethnic culture and networks that helped their parents exert control over them and supported their schoolwork, which had a positive impact on their scholastic performance as well. Research on Korean and Vietnamese ethnic religious institutions has found that the churches and temples of these new Asian immigrant groups played a major part in maintaining ethnic identity across generations and in offering psychological support (Choy, 1979).
In a recent study evaluating a school-based intervention program developed for the cultural adjustment of recent Chinese immigrant youth, Yeh and her colleagues (2008) found a significant increase in scores on social connectedness, bonding to teachers, and college and career advise-seeking after participating in the exploratory program. A greater number of Korean, South Asian, Japanese, and West Asian students took outside classes than White youth (Kao, 1995), yet not every student from immigrant families could afford to take the academic enrichment programs. According to Zhou and Kim (2006), access to the ethnic system of supplementary education was more restricted for working-class families than for middle-class families in both Korean and Chinese immigrant families because the academic and specialized enrichment programs were much more expensive than ethnic language schools and church-affiliated after-school programs. An association of nonprofit or church-affiliated ethnic-language schools and private ethnic institutions specializing in academic and extracurricular programs establishes a sophisticated system of supplementary education in Korean and Chinese immigrant communities. These ethnic institutions not only provide academic and enrichment programs, but also serve as the locus of social support and control, network building, and social capital formation.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter, we examined some challenges Asian American students face that may lead to psychological and social adjustment difficulties. The preponderance of research demonstrates that Asian American students face substantial challenges and difficulties in their psychological and social adjustment, which have been overlooked by researchers, parents, and teachers. The model minority stereotype creates the image of Asian students as hard-working, high-achieving, and problem-free both at home and at school. However, in light of the research findings presented, it is critical for scholars to pay attention to and understand the complex social and psychological worlds of Asian American students behind the model minority façade.

Our review shows that acculturation gaps, bicultural conflicts, ineffective communication, and high parental expectations can estrange parent-child relations in immigrant families. We hope that through presenting these challenges, parents and practitioners working together can gain more awareness of potential issues in immigrant family dynamics, particularly as children enter adolescence. Often it is the immigrant parenting modality, that is, how the parents approach the challenges facing them in a different cultural context from the one that they grew up in, which made a difference
in terms of the relations they have with their children (Qin, 2008). It is important for professionals working with Asian American children to reach out to parents and try to facilitate parent-child communication and bridge intergenerational gaps and parallel dual frames of reference. Schools and other social institutions working with immigrant families can also help by providing parents with more information and resources for understanding and dealing with challenging dynamics at home. In addition, since Asian Americans are from many different ethnic groups (Sue, 1998), school personnel working with Asian American children and adolescents are highly encouraged to become familiar with the historical backgrounds of their students’ country of origin. Although Asian American ethnic groups share similar cultural values, it would be detrimental to assume that all Asian Americans are similar.

In terms of peer relations, it is important that parents be aware of the issues that their children could face at school. Immigration status, language barriers, and the perception of Asian students as quiet, nerdy, and not retaliating often lead to verbal or physical peer bullying and harassment at school. Peer bullying does not victimize every Asian American student. It often depends on the school context. Students attending big urban schools in low-income areas with peers from different ethnic groups tend to report more bullying than those attending Chinese-only schools or suburban schools in middle-class neighborhoods. Peer bullying also occurs more in middle school than in high school (Rosenbloom and Way, 2004). Overall, peer harassment does happen more often than what parents, teachers, and school personnel know. When parents can discuss these issues with their children, hear their experiences, and help them think of coping strategies, and when school personnel can establish policies that aim to reduce peer bullying, they can alleviate much psychological stress for the children. Children who are left to cope with bullying and harassment on a regular basis on their own become distressed and develop low self-esteem. Some students, particularly boys, resort to fighting or joining gangs for protection. This is likely to influence their education.

Our review also shows other factors that can contribute to the psychological stress experienced by Asian American students. For example, the need to negotiate the differences between Asian and American cultures can cause children significant levels of psychological distress (Rosenthal and Feldman, 1990). Tsou (2002) argued that most Asian adolescents in the United States must negotiate three cultures: the dominant U.S. culture, the Asian culture, and the values and norms of the U.S. adolescents. While they encounter the normal developmental tasks of other adolescents in the United States, they carry the added burden of integrating conflicting values of the Asian and American culture. For many students, particularly second-generation youth,
achieving a sense of ethnic belonging is a constant struggle. Mainstream society’s racial stereotypes also impact the identity formation of Asian American students (Lei, 2003).

It is important to note that research drawing on large data sets of Asian American students to understand their psychological and social adjustment remains limited. The emphasis of educational achievement and the model minority image have eclipsed the psychological and social needs of Asian American students both in research and in practice. As reviewed in this chapter, Asian American children and adolescents face tremendous challenges in their psychosocial adjustment both at home and at school. It is important for researchers to examine and understand these challenges and then help inform intervention efforts supporting their healthy development.

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Chapter 6
Youth Risk Behavior among
Mexican-Origin Adolescents

Cross Generational Differences

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Although the correlates of delinquency from biological factors (genetic, prenatal, and perinatal risks), social factors (single-family structure, harsh parenting, and risky peer groups), and contextual indices (poor/high-crime neighborhood or violent schools) have been extensively documented (Dodge and Pettit, 2003; Elliott et al., 2006), less is known about the role of these factors in the development of delinquency among Latino youth. The goal of this chapter is to specifically address these issues by examining factors of delinquency among Mexican-origin adolescents. To understand delinquency and other problematic behaviors among Latino youth, scholars have focused attention on the role of acculturation and generational status (e.g., Buriel, Calzada, and Vasquez, 1982; Cota-Robles, 2002; Samaniego and Gonzales, 1999; Vega, Khoury, Zimmerman, Gil, and Warheit, 1995). Drawing on this research, we examined the problematic behaviors of externalizing, risky sexual activity, drug and alcohol use, and contact with the juvenile justice system among Mexican immigrant and Mexican American youth, framing our discussion around the concepts of generational status, familism, and parental monitoring.

It is crucial to better understand risky and delinquent behavior among Latino youth, in part because the U.S. Census Bureau (2004) projected that by the year 2050, Latinos will comprise approximately one-fourth of the overall population. In comparison to the rest of the U.S. population, the rate of growth of the Latino population is four times higher (Rumbaut, 2006). It is particularly important to focus on understanding Mexican-origin Latinos, as they comprise the largest subgroup of Latinos in the United States.
Before examining youth outcomes among Mexican-origin Latinos, we discuss Mexican American families in general. Mexican American families differ from other American families in a number of ways. First, the demographics of Mexican American households are typically larger than non-Latino households (Landale, Oropesa, and Bradatan, 2006). According to the U.S. Census (2003), over 30% of Mexican American households included at least five people, compared to approximately 11% for non-Latino White households. A larger percentage (8% versus 3%) of Mexican American families included extended family members compared to non-Latino whites (Landale et al.). Second, fertility rates of Mexican Americans tended to be higher than those of other ethnic groups. Finally, Latino families experienced high rates of both poverty and concentrated poverty (Gonzales et al., 2008; Huston, Garcia Coll, and McLoyd, 1994; Portes and Rumbaut, 2001). Specifically, 30% of Mexican American youth under the age of 18 years lived in poverty, a figure that was significantly higher than that of 11% of non-Latino White children living below the poverty line (U.S. Census, 2007).

In addition to these demographic and socioeconomic differences, Latino families, and particularly Mexican American families, are known for a high degree of “familism,” emphasizing the importance of the family’s well-being instead of the individual members’ well-being (Coltrane, Parke, and Adams, 2004; Landale et al., 2006; Vega, 1995). This collective family focus distinguishes Latino families from their non-Latino White counterparts, who tend to endorse values of individualism (Vega). Compared to other ethnic groups, Latino families generally displayed higher levels of familism. As some researchers reported, familism has been conceived as a protective factor for Latino families that can reduce the negative effects of poverty on problem behaviors and has been associated with lower levels of delinquent outcomes (Cota-Robles, 2002). For example, among Mexican-origin youth, familism was shown to be protective against aggression, school conduct problems, and rule breaking (Germán, Gonzales, and Dumka, 2009; Marsiglia, Parsai, and Kulis, 2009). Thus, familism and various socio-demographic factors distinguished Mexican-origin families from their non-Latino counterparts, potentially contributing to youth outcomes in distinct ways.

**Delinquency among Latinos**

Although familism can act as a protective factor for Mexican-origin youth, these youth are more at risk than the rest of the population for “serious
behavioral consequences” (Gonzales et al., 2008, p. 151). For example, in comparison to White adolescents, Latino adolescents were more likely to be arrested for delinquent behavior (Villarruel and Walker, 2002). Latino adolescents also were at greater risk for engaging in other unsafe or illegal activities. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2007), Latino youth were more likely to use drugs (lifetime and current cocaine use, lifetime use of heroin, methamphetamine, and ecstasy) than were non-Latino White and African American youth. For adolescent alcohol use (both current and lifetime), Latinos were more likely to use than non-Latino Whites, who were, in turn, more likely to use than African American youth. Furthermore, both Latino and African American youth were more likely than their non-Latino White counterparts to engage in sexual activity prior to the age 13, to have multiple sexual partners (four or more sexual partners), and to be involved in physical fights.

The high rate of family poverty has commonly been cited as one of the primary reasons for the increased risk of delinquency and other problem-atic behavior among youth of Mexican origin (Gonzales et al., 2008). Even though the majority of Mexican-origin youth reside in two-parent families (Landale et al., 2006), they still faced disproportionate rates of poverty (U.S. Census, 2007). Due to limited resources, many Mexican-origin families also live in areas of concentrated poverty (Gonzales et al.), which adds another layer of disadvantage by limiting opportunities and constraints for positive social interaction and support. Residing in areas of concentrated poverty has presented special problems, challenges, and threats for impoverished minority youth, including heightened exposure to violence and homicide in their neighborhoods (Coltrane, Melzer, Vega, and Parke, 2005; Gephart, 1997; Lee, 2000).

Generational Status and Delinquency

When studying the well-being of Mexican-origin youth, scholars have paid particular attention to the role of generational status, a categorical variable that classified immigrant populations into groups based on where they and their parents were born (i.e., first generation as “foreign born,” second generation as “native born of foreign parentage,” and third generation as “native born of native parentage,” Landale and Oropesa, 2007, p. 385). Generational status has been used to better understand the experiences of Latino youth, including recent scholarship that addressed a variety of issues such as academic achievement (Kalogrides, 2009), friendship choices (Kao and Vaquera, 2006), and how well adolescents can resist peer pressure (Umaña-Taylor and Bámaca-Gómez, 2003).
In addition to generational status, scholars have also focused on levels of acculturation to better understand the experiences of Mexican-origin youth. Acculturation refers to "the process of change that occurs when culturally distinct groups and individuals come into contact with another culture" (McQueen, Getz, and Bray, 2003, p. 1737). By acculturating, individuals come to acquire skills and behaviors that provide ease of navigation within the adopted culture (Gibson, 2001; Sullivan et al., 2007). The acculturation process involves acquisition of the language, beliefs, and values of the host culture, and learning the culture’s normative behaviors (Berry, 1980; McQueen et al.). Acculturation is also a multi-dimensional and bi-directional process with immigrants retaining parts of their culture of origin and adapting to a new culture (Cabassa, 2003; Sullivan et al.).

Although acculturation and generational status are distinct constructs, they are conceptually related as levels of acculturation increase across successive generations of immigrant families. In fact, a variety of indicators have been used as a proxy for acculturation, including generational status, years in the United States, place of birth, and language spoken in the home or during the interview (Cruz, Marshall, Bowling, and Villaveces, 2008; Samaniego and Gonzales, 1999). Generally, acculturation levels vary by generation, with second- and third-generation immigrants exhibiting higher levels of acculturation than first-generation immigrants (Gilbert, 1991; McQueen et al., 2003), although variability and exceptions to this pattern exist.

Many scholars who study delinquency and other problematic behaviors among Latino youth have directed their attention to the relationship between acculturation, as well as generational status and youth outcomes (e.g., Buriel et al., 1982; Cota-Robles, 2002; Samaniego and Gonzales, 1999; Vega et al., 1995). These scholars have suggested that both acculturation and/or generational status of Latino youth are related to delinquency. Higher levels of acculturation (or being second or third generation) have been associated with increased levels of risky and delinquent outcomes. Despite the fact that studies examining this topic do not consistently use the same measures of either construct, researchers have generally found that both acculturation and generational status show similar links with delinquency such that more acculturated (typically later generation) youth were more prone to delinquency than their more traditional (first-generation) peers. Even in the face of variations in the operationalization of the acculturation concept, the associations between acculturation and adjustment have been strong, which underscores the robustness of this link.

Buriel and colleagues (1982) conducted the seminal study on generational status and delinquency, finding different rates of delinquency (e.g.,
theft, fighting, drunkenness, drug use, and vandalism) among Mexican American boys based on their generational status. Overall, third-generation Mexican American males participated in higher rates of delinquent behaviors than did their first- or second-generation counterparts. Although the sample in Buriel’s study was comprised exclusively of boys, more recent studies on this topic, such as Samaniego and Gonzales (1999), have found similar findings using samples consisting of both Latino boys and girls. Other scholars have replicated Buriel’s findings (e.g., Cota-Robles, 2002; Fridrich and Flannery, 1995; Samaniego, and Gonzales; Vega, Gil, Warheit, Zimmerman, and Apospori, 1993) and supported the links between acculturation or generational status and a variety of outcomes for Latino youth, including teen pregnancy (Kaplan, Erickson, and Juarez-Reyes, 2002), alcohol use (Lovato et al., 1994), drug abuse (Gfroerer and De La Rosa, 1993), and delinquency (Buriel et al.; Fridrich and Flannery). In all of these studies, higher levels of acculturation to the behaviors and values of the United States (or being of a later generation) were related to higher levels of problem outcomes.

In connection with these findings, Cota-Robles (2002) explained:

Affiliation with Hispanic culture and values appears to serve not as a risk factor for delinquency but in fact as a protective factor against delinquency, either by minimizing the risk associated with ethnicity or by promoting other factors which have been found to minimize the risk for delinquency (p. 33).

In this regard, typically less acculturated first-generation Mexican-origin youth’s connection to their Mexican culture helped to explain differing rates of delinquency by generational status or acculturation level. In addition, other factors may have contributed to the association between acculturation and delinquency for Mexican-origin youth (see Guerra and Phillips Smith, 2005; Samaniego and Gonzales, 1999). First, stress may result from the acculturation process, which may in turn be related to delinquency and other troublesome outcomes (for a discussion specific to bicultural stress, see Samaniego and Gonzales; Romero, Martinez, and Carvajal, 2007). For instance, as youth become more acculturated, they may become more aware of negative views of their ethnic group held by the larger society (Buriel et al., 1982). This understanding of stereotypes, prejudice, and/or discrimination may result in negative behavioral outcomes among minority youth. Specifically, Vega et al. (1995) found that perceptions of discrimination predicted problem behavior among U.S.-born Latino youth, but that it did not predict such behavior for their immigrant counterparts.
Peers and friends have also been found to be important in understanding the acculturation-delinquency link (Parsai, Voisine, Marsiglia, Kulis, and Nieri, 2009; Samaniego and Gonzales, 1999). For instance, Wall, Power, and Arbona (1993) found that first-generation Mexican American youth who were more highly acculturated were more prone to the influence of harmful peer pressure. Moreover, outside influences, such as peer pressure, may be especially important for acculturated Mexican American youth. According to Reuschenberg and Buriel (1989), compared to less acculturated families, more acculturated families tend to be more active in institutions and social systems outside of the home. For youth, these outside influences may include their schools and their peers. Thus, if more acculturated youth are both more prone to peer pressure and more involved with their peers, this could help to explain the connection between acculturation and delinquency.

Segmented assimilation (Portes and Rumbaut, 2001; Portes and Zhou, 1993) is a theoretical perspective that is relevant to this issue. Segmented assimilation theory is concerned with the section of society to which the new generation will assimilate. The theory also suggests there are different paths that immigrants may follow during the assimilation process (Morenhoff and Astor, 2006). According to Portes and Rumbaut’s segmented assimilation model (2001), second-generation immigrants’ outcomes may be impacted by a variety of challenges, including discrimination, “bifurcated labor markets,” and the subculture of the inner cities in which some of these families reside (p. 63). How the second generation reacts to these challenges depends on the support they receive from their families and the community. Furthermore, the type of support they receive is related to their acculturation. For example, compared to those who acculturate more slowly and to a lesser degree, those who fall into the “dissonant acculturation” category (i.e., learning English, losing their immigrant culture, and becoming “American,” all at a pace faster than their parents) are not buffered from the challenges presented by the inner-city subculture by either close family ties or support from the wider Latino community. This, in turn, may increase the chances for “downward assimilation.” Portes and Rumbaut’s work helps us to understand the differences in risky and delinquent outcomes by acculturation or generational status by taking into account discrimination, labor markets, and the communities in which these immigrants reside, in addition to also paying attention to the support provided by family.

Parental Monitoring

When trying to understand risky and delinquent outcomes, one important form of parenting to consider is monitoring. Monitoring is a type of family strategy that parents adopt to regulate their children’s behaviors. Although
parental monitoring has been defined and measured differently within the literature, according to Dishion and McMahon (1998), parental monitoring refers to “a set of correlated parenting behaviors involving attention to and tracking of the child’s whereabouts, activities, and adaptations” (p. 61). Parental monitoring can also be considered a combination of control and supervision over one’s children, with the “added connotation of tracking the child’s behavior from a distance” (Crouter, Helms-Erikson, Updegraff, and McHale, 1999, p. 246). Thus, because monitoring indicates a parent’s knowledge of their child’s behavior, which is related to their ability to restrict the actions of their child or advise them, it is valuable to examine monitoring as a predictor of youth outcomes.

Although much of the research regarding parental monitoring has explored White or African American families (Cota-Robles and Gamble, 2006; Shillington et al., 2005), some attention has focused on Latino samples. For instance, parental monitoring among Latino families has been found to be negatively related to deviance (Baer, 1999; Halgunseth et al., 2006) and delinquency (Cota-Robles, 2002). Past research also suggested that time spent with families (Pabon, 1998; Rodriguez and Weisburd, 1991; Sommers, Fagan, and Baskin, 1993) and being involved in activities with parents (Smith and Krohn, 1995) were related to lower risks of delinquency among Latino samples (Cota-Robles and Gamble). These factors were also linked to parental monitoring. With the limited amount of research on this topic, it is important to further explore the role of parental monitoring on Latino youth outcomes.

Our research extends current research in several ways. First, our study examined participation in a variety of risky and delinquent behaviors among Mexican immigrant and Mexican American youth in contrast to the typical focus on a single risky behavior outcome. Specifically, we examined behaviors that included externalizing, risky sexual behavior, drug and alcohol use, and contact with the police and juvenile justice system. Second, our focus allowed us to determine whether the significance of generational status on risky behavior was generalizable across a variety of indices or whether the effect was limited to a specific set of health outcomes. The processes that account for the link between generational status and risky behavior are unclear and thus we also explored the role of friendships in accounting for these effects. Within the criminology literature, similar rates of delinquency between friends have consistently been found (Agnew, 1991; Elliot, Huizinga, and Ageton, 1985). Thus, we examined the level of involvement of peers in at risk activities to assess whether friends’ involvement in these activities accounts for the link between generational status and risky behavior. Measures of friends’ problematic behaviors allowed us to explore one
process that may yield insight into the relation between generational status and risk among Mexican origin youth. Lastly, we also explored familism and parental monitoring in relation to generational status and their influence on risky and delinquent youth behaviors.

METHOD

Participants and Procedures

Participants were part of a two-site three-wave longitudinal study of the role of fathers in adolescent development. Three hundred and ninety-three families were recruited from six school districts in two southwest U.S. metropolitan areas (Riverside/San Bernardino, CA and Phoenix/ Tempe, AZ). There were three waves of data collection. Specifically, interviews were conducted when the target child was in grade 7, 8 or 9, and 10 (32 children had started 11th grade at the time of the last interview, but reported on behaviors during the previous year when they were in the 10th grade). At the start of data collection, 188 boys ($M = 12.52$ years of age, $SD = .59$) and 205 girls ($M = 12.41$ years of age, $SD = .55$) were interviewed. The families were of either Mexican origin ($n = 194$) or European American descent ($n = 199$), with all three family members of the same self-identified ethnicity. The sample consisted of two-parent families, either intact (i.e., two birth parents, $n = 218$) or stepfather (i.e., a birthmother and a stepfather, $n = 175$). Stepfather families were defined as those in which the target child’s birthmother had been living with a man who was not the child’s birthfather for at least the past year and in which the target child lived with the mother more than half time.

Significant differences were found on many of these variables between the Mexican immigrant and Mexican American families. Significant differences existed between the two groups in terms of annual income, $F(1, 147) = 16.87$, $p < .001$. Mexican American families ($M = 59,664$, $SD = 29,078$) earned significantly more than Mexican immigrant families ($M = 42,386$, $SD = 21,732$). Likewise, differences were found regarding mothers’ education between the two groups, $F(1,147) = 28.33$, $p < .001$. On average, Mexican immigrant mothers completed 9.60 ($SD = 4.00$) years of schooling, which in some regions of Mexico is equivalent to attending high school. Mexican American mothers completed 12.66 ($SD = 1.61$) years of schooling. Similarly, significant differences were found between the two groups in terms of fathers’ education, $F(1, 147) = 15.95$, $p < .001$. On average, Mexican immigrant and Mexican American fathers completed 9.36 and 11.83 years of school ($SD$’s = 4.26, 1.93, respectively).
Mexican immigrant fathers averaged 48.78 ($SD = 14.44$) hours of work per week, followed by Mexican American fathers ($M = 45.08$, $SD = 16.37$). Mexican American mothers worked an average of 35.01 ($SD = 18.25$) hours per week, whereas Mexican immigrant mothers worked 25.09 ($SD = 22.75$) hours. Significant differences between groups were found only for mothers’ work hours, $F(1, 147) = 7.43, p < .01$.

For family size, Mexican immigrant and Mexican American families were similar. Mexican American families averaged 6.02 persons ($SD = 2.17$) and Mexican immigrant families averaged 5.86 persons ($SD = 1.74$). Additionally, Mexican immigrant families were slightly more likely than Mexican American families to have a grandparent or adult relative living in the home. Approximately 22% percent of Mexican immigrant and 17% of Mexican American families had a grandparent or adult relative living in the home.

For familism, significant differences were found between the two groups, $F(1, 147) = 16.55, p < .001$. Mexican immigrant families had significantly higher levels of familism ($M = 67.07$, $SD = 5.51$) than Mexican American families ($M = 63.57$, $SD = 3.98$). Regarding parental monitoring, significant differences were not found between Mexican immigrant ($M = 4.18$, $SD = .45$) and Mexican American ($M = 4.10$, $SD = .64$) families.

The interviews at wave 1 and 3 were conducted in the families’ home or in a campus research center (in a few cases, third-wave interviews were conducted over the phone with families who had moved out of the area or were experiencing family hardships that did not allow them to be interviewed in person). Wave 2 interviews were conducted via telephone. Children, mothers, and fathers were interviewed individually in their language of preference (57% of Mexican origin parent interviews and 12% of Mexican origin child interviews were conducted in Spanish). Interviews lasted between 1 to 3 hours and used both interviewer-led and self-administered questions.

For the current analyses, all youth outcome measures were taken from the third wave of data collection and included 88% of the original sample from the first wave. Thus, for this chapter, 149 Mexican origin families where the child reported on his or her behavior in 10th grade were examined. The 149 Mexican origin families were divided into two groups by generational status as determined by the birthplace of the parents. In the majority of cases, the birthplaces of the mother and the father were the same, but if they were different, generational status was based on the mother’s birthplace (Rumbaut, 2004). Mexican-origin families were classified as either Mexican immigrant or Mexican American families. In the Mexican immigrant families, youth were born in either Mexico ($n = 28$) or the United States ($n = 68$), but the parents were born in Mexico and then immigrated to the United States. Thus, in some of the Mexican immigrant families, the children were immigrants,
whereas others were children of immigrant parents. In the Mexican American families \((n = 53)\), youth and parents were both born in the United States.

**Measures**

All measures and open-ended questions were available in both Spanish and English. For questionnaires in Spanish, translations were completed by a native Spanish speaker of Mexican origin. To guarantee the quality of the translation, all interview materials were back-translated and double-checked for consistency of meaning. For the interviewer-led portion of the questionnaire, interviewers read the questions aloud to the participants and filled in the answers on the questionnaire. For the self-administered portion of the survey, the participants read and filled out the questionnaires on their own. In some cases, if the participant’s reading level was limited, project staff assisted by reading the items on the self-administered questionnaire to the participants. Less than 10% needed assistance and no differences were found between assisted and non-assisted groups.

**Externalizing**

Externalizing, which refers to a variety of aggressive and delinquent behaviors, was assessed using a modified subscale of the Behavior Problems Index (33 items adapted by Peterson and Zill, 1986, which originated with Achenbach’s 1991 Child Behavior Checklist). This combined measure contained four items regarding delinquency and eight items regarding aggression (Cronbach’s \(\alpha = .70\) for Mexican immigrant youth and \(.81\) for Mexican American youth). Representative items included: “In the past month ‘you got in many fights,’ (aggression) and ‘you stole from places other than home’” (delinquency). Responses ranged from 1 (not true) to 3 (very true) with cumulative scores ranging from 12.00 to 26.00 and a sample mean of 16.14 (\(SD = 3.26\)).

**Risky Sexual Behavior**

Youth’s sexual behavior was assessed using seven questions from the Youth Risk Behavior Survey (CDC, 1993). Youth were asked, “Have you ever had sexual intercourse (also asked for oral sex)?” and if they answered yes, they also answered: “How old were you when you had first sexual intercourse (also asked for oral sex); During the past year, how many different partners have you had sexual intercourse with (also asked for oral sex); and How often have you and/or your partner used some form of contraception.” With the different response sets to questions in this measure, all scores were standardized and
means were then computed to create a score based on the youth’s responses. Due to the type of items in this measure (onset and event), alphas were not used (this is also relevant for the measures of alcohol and drug use). Because these items informed our latent construct of risky sexual behavior, we conceptualized the items as causal rather than effect indicators (Bollen and Lennox, 1991). Higher scores indicated having sex, having sex at a younger age, having sex with more partners, and less contraception use. Responses ranged from –.48 to 2.41 and the mean for the sample was .01 (SD = .74).

Alcohol Consumption

Alcohol consumption was assessed by using two modified questions from the CDC’s 1993 Youth Risk Behavior Survey (CDC, 1993). In wave 3 of the survey, youth were asked “If you have ever had more than a few sips of alcohol, how old were you when you first drank that much alcohol,” and “during the past 30 days, on how many days did you have at least one drink of alcohol.” Due to the different response sets to questions in this measure, all scores were standardized and means were then computed to create a score based on the youth’s responses. Higher scores indicated a higher frequency and an earlier onset of alcohol use. Responses ranged from –.68 to 2.95 and the mean for the sample was .01 (SD = .84).

Drug Use

Like alcohol use, drug use was assessed by using nine questions modified from the CDC’s 1993 Youth Risk Behavior Survey. In wave 3, youth were asked about using marijuana, illegal drugs (cocaine, crack, ecstasy, speed, PCP, LSD, heroin, crystal meth, crank, ice, or pills without a doctor’s prescription), inhalants, and steroids. Steroid use was dropped from the overall scale because it was infrequent and primarily used by males. Youth were first asked “if you have ever tried any form of [drug type], how old were you when you tried it for the first time,” followed by “in the past 30 days, how many days did you use [drug type] and “in the past 30 days, how many times did you use [drug type].” Due to the different response sets to questions in this measure, all scores were standardized and means computed from the causal indicators. Higher scores indicated a higher frequency and an earlier onset of drug use. Responses ranged from –.36 to 4.41 and the mean for the sample was .03 (SD = .68).

Contact with the Police and Juvenile Justice System

Contact with the police and juvenile justice system was measured using adapted items from the Family Bereavement Program 6 Year Follow-Up
(ASU Prevention and Research Center http://www.asu.edu/clas/asuprc/fbpfu.html) (Cronbach’s $\alpha = .74$ for Mexican immigrant youth and .74 for Mexican American youth). In wave 3 of the survey, youth were asked to reflect on the past 12 months and indicate whether they had received a ticket or been placed in a police car, referred to a diversion program, arrested, or found guilty of a crime. Youth who endorsed an event were asked how many times the event had occurred (1 time, 2–3 times, 4–6 times, or more than 6 times). Due to the different response sets to questions in this measure, all scores were standardized and means were then computed based on $z$-scores to create a summary measure of the youth’s responses. Responses ranged from –.28 to 4.01 and the mean for the sample was .06 ($SD = .75$).

**Friends’ Problematic Behaviors**

Youth answered 15 questions regarding their friends’ problematic behaviors. Questions for this measure were drawn from a variety of sources including the Denver Youth Survey (Huizinga, Esbensen, and Weiher, 1991; Mason, Cauce, Gonzales, and Hiraga, 1994). Questions included: “During the past year how many of your friends: Used force (e.g., threats or fighting) to get things from people? Have been in gang fights? Stole something worth $50 or more? Got in trouble at school? Have gotten drunk or high?” Cronbach’s $\alpha$ was .95 for Mexican immigrant and .94 Mexican American youth. Responses to items regarding friends’ problematic behaviors ranged from “none” (1) to “almost all” (5). Responses ranged from 1.00 to 4.80 and the mean for the sample was 1.86 ($SD = .79$).

**Familism**

The familism measure was developed using items from the Mexican American Cultural Values Scale (MACVS; Knight et al., 2010; Gonzales et al., 2008). The MACVS is a 63-item scale, with various subscales that measure traditional cultural values. The overall familism measure for wave 1 was comprised of 15 items for each parent with a total of 30 items in this measure (Cronbach’s $\alpha = .86$ for Mexican immigrant parents and .59 for Mexican American parents). This general measure of familism contained variables from three subscales: family obligation, family as a referent, and family support and emotional closeness. Representative items included: “children should be taught that it is their duty to care for their parents when their parents get old,” “children should always do things to make their parents happy,” and “family provides a sense of security because they will always be there.” Responses to all items ranged between 1 (strongly disagree) and 5 (strongly
agree). Responses ranged from 39.50 to 75.00 and the mean for the sample was 65.83 ($SD = 5.28$).

**Parental Monitoring**

Three selected items from Stattin and Kerr’s (2000) monitoring measure were used to assess parental monitoring. Mother, father, and child reports were correlated and combined (Cronbach’s $\alpha = .62$ for Mexican immigrant families and .81 for Mexican American families). Twelve questions were used to assess parental monitoring in wave 3; youth responded to three questions regarding maternal monitoring and three questions regarding paternal monitoring, while mothers and fathers each responded to three questions pertaining to their own monitoring of their child. For the youth, the measure was comprised of these questions: “In the past 3 months, how much did your step/father (and mother) normally know about where you went and what you did after school,” “Think again of the past 3 months. Does your step/father (and mother) know who you have as friends during your free time,” and “In the last 3 months, how often did your step/father (and mother) have no idea of where you were at night” (items were reverse coded). Each youth answered these questions in reference to their step/father and their mother. The parents’ questions were similar to the youth’s questions and asked whether they knew who their child’s friends were, what their child did after school, and if they knew where their child was at night. Answers to these questions ranged between 1 and 5. Responses ranged from 1.67 to 5.00 and the mean for the sample was 4.15 ($SD = .52$).

**RESULTS**

To better understand youth outcomes (externalizing, risky sexual activity, alcohol use, drug use, contact with the police and juvenile justice system, and friends’ problematic behaviors) among Mexican-origin families, we examined the role of generational status, familism, parental monitoring, and gender. Although gender was not a central focus of the analyses, gender was included as a factor in our models and any gender effects are noted. First, a series of bivariate correlations examined the potential association among different risky and delinquent behaviors. As shown in Table 6.1, almost all risky and delinquent behaviors were significantly correlated for the Mexican immigrant adolescents. Contact with the juvenile justice system and externalizing were the only variables that were not correlated. However, for the
Table 6.1. Correlations between Risky and Delinquent Behaviors for Mexican Immigrant and Mexican American Youth

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Externalizing</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>.35*</td>
<td>.43***</td>
<td>.54***</td>
<td>.21</td>
<td>.58***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Risky Sex</td>
<td>.37***</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>.55***</td>
<td>.47***</td>
<td>.28*</td>
<td>.55***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Alcohol</td>
<td>.41***</td>
<td>.54***</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>.63***</td>
<td>.17</td>
<td>.53***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Drugs</td>
<td>.38***</td>
<td>.48***</td>
<td>.68***</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>.19</td>
<td>.53***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. JJS &amp;</td>
<td>.17</td>
<td>.47***</td>
<td>.49***</td>
<td>.38***</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>.36**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Friends' Behavior</td>
<td>.40***</td>
<td>.26*</td>
<td>.36***</td>
<td>.31**</td>
<td>.29**</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Mexican American’s report is above the diagonal and Mexican immigrant’s report is below the diagonal; *Juvenile Justice System; ** p < .05; *** p < .01; **** p < .001.

Mexican American youth, externalizing, alcohol use, and drug use were not significantly correlated with contact with the juvenile justice system.

We next used hierarchical regression and tested three steps for each form of risky or delinquent behavior. Step 1 included family income, parental education, gender of youth, and generational status, and Step 2 added familism. Parental monitoring was incorporated in Step 3. In the models, where it was appropriate, we also tested for mediation (Baron and Kenny, 1986).

Predicting Externalizing and Alcohol Use:
The Role of Parental Monitoring

Parental monitoring partially explained the externalizing behavior and alcohol use of Mexican-origin adolescents. As shown in Step 1 of Table 6.2, none of the control variables (parental income, parental education, and gender of the child) or the independent variable (generational status) significantly predicted externalizing behavior. Likewise, with the addition of familism in Step 2, the control and independent variables did not help to explain youth’s externalizing behavior. In Step 3, parental monitoring was significant ($β = -.30, p < .001$) and helped to explain 11% of the variance. Higher levels of parental monitoring were related to lower levels of externalizing.

When explaining alcohol use (see Table 6.2) in Step 1, family income, parental education, youth’s gender, and generational status were not statistically significant. In Step 2, familism was added to the model, but again none of the variables reached significance. In Step 3, parental monitoring ($β = -.33, p < .001$) helped to explain 15% of the variance. Thus, higher levels of parental monitoring were related to lower levels of adolescent alcohol use.
Table 6.2. Regression Predicting Externalizing, Alcohol Use, and Risky Sexual Behavior

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Externalizing</th>
<th>Alcohol Use</th>
<th>Risky Sexual Behavior</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<td>$F$</td>
<td>$B$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 1:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Income</td>
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<td>.00</td>
<td>.00</td>
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<tr>
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<td>.09</td>
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<tr>
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<td>.21</td>
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<tr>
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<td>.16†</td>
<td>.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 2:</td>
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<td>.00</td>
<td>.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Income</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parental Education</td>
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<td>.08</td>
<td>.04</td>
</tr>
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<td>Gender of the Youth</td>
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<tr>
<td>Familism</td>
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<td>Parental Education</td>
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</tr>
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<tr>
<td>Parental Monitoring</td>
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<td>-.30***</td>
<td>-.53</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Males = 1 and Females = 0; Mexican American = 1 and Mexican Immigrant = 0; † $p < .10$; * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$. 
Predicting Risky Sexual Behavior and Drug Use: The Role of Generational Status and Parental Monitoring

In addition to the significant role of parental monitoring when explaining externalizing and alcohol use in the previous models, generational status was significant in the models explaining youth’s risky sexual behavior and drug use. As Table 6.2 shows, in Step 1 generational status ($\beta = .21, p < .05$) and the gender of youth ($\beta = .17, p < .05$) predicted risky sexual behavior. Being a Mexican American youth and being male were related to higher levels of risky sexual behavior. In Step 2, generational status ($\beta = .19, p < .05$) and the gender of youth ($\beta = .17, p < .05$) again predicted youth’s engagement in risky sexual behavior. In Step 3, gender of youth ($\beta = .14, p < .10$) was reduced to a statistical trend, while generational status ($\beta = .18, p < .05$) and parental monitoring ($\beta = -.21, p < .01$) were significant. This model explained 16% of the variance. Being a Mexican American youth was associated with risky sexual behavior, and higher levels of parental monitoring were related to lower levels of risky sexual behavior.

Drug use also followed a similar pattern (See Table 6.3). In Step 1, generational status ($\beta = .21, p < .05$) predicted youth’s drug use. Thus, being a Mexican American youth was related to higher levels of drug use. In Step 2, generational status ($\beta = .19, p < .05$) predicted youth’s drug use. In Step 3, generational status ($\beta = .18, p < .05$) and parental monitoring ($\beta = -.43, p < .001$) were significant and helped to explain 21% of the variance. Again, being a Mexican American youth was associated with drug use, and higher levels of parental monitoring were related to lower levels of drug use.

Contact with the Juvenile Justice System and Friends’ Problematic Behaviors: The Role of Familism and Parental Monitoring

In contrast to the previous models, familism and parental monitoring were important when trying to understand contact with the juvenile justice system and friends’ problematic behaviors. As shown in Step 1 of Table 6.3, youth’s gender ($\beta = .19, p < .05$) helped to explain youth’s contact with police and the juvenile justice system. Being a male was related to contact with the juvenile justice system. In Step 2, family income ($\beta = -.18, p < .05$), youth’s gender ($\beta = .20, p < .05$), and familism ($\beta = -.22, p < .05$) were related to youth’s contact with police and the juvenile justice system. In addition to being a male predicting contact with the juvenile justice system, higher levels of family income and familism were associated with lower levels of contact with the juvenile justice system. In Step 3, with the addition of parental monitoring,
Table 6.3. Regression Predicting Drug Use, Contact with the Juvenile Justice System, and Friends’ Problematic Behaviors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Drug Use</th>
<th>Contact with the JJS</th>
<th>Friends’ Problematic Behaviors</th>
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<tr>
<td>Parental Education</td>
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<tr>
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<td>.03</td>
<td>.29</td>
</tr>
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<td>Step 2:</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
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<td>.01</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>-.08</td>
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<tr>
<td>Step 3:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Family Income</td>
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<td>Gender of the Youth</td>
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<tr>
<td>Parental Monitoring</td>
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<td>-.43***</td>
<td>-.30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Males = 1 and Females = 0; Mexican American = 1 and Mexican Immigrant = 0; $\dagger p < .10; * p < .05; ** p < .01; *** p < .001.$
the model explained 13% of the variance. Youth’s gender ($\beta = .17, p < .05$), familism ($\beta = –.19, p < .05$), and parental monitoring ($\beta = –.21, p < .01$) were significant. Being a male was associated with contact with the juvenile justice system, whereas higher levels of familism and parental monitoring were associated with lower levels of contact with the juvenile justice system.

Similarly, youth’s friends’ problematic behavior was also explained by familism and parental monitoring. In Model 1 (see Table 6.3), family income, parental education, gender of youth, and generational status did not significantly predict their friends’ behavior. In Model 2, familism ($\beta = –.19, p < .05$) significantly predicted youth’s friends’ problematic behavior. Higher levels of familism were associated with lower levels of problematic behavior among youth’s friends. In Step 3, with the addition of parental monitoring, familism was no longer significant. Parental monitoring ($\beta = –.40, p < .001$) helped to explain 20% of the variance. Again, higher levels of parental monitoring were associated with lower levels of problematic behavior among the youth’s friends. Baron and Kenny’s (1986) tests were used to determine whether parental monitoring mediated the relationship between familism and youth’s friends’ problematic behavior. The conditions for mediation were not met and parental monitoring did not serve as a mediator between familism and problem behavior.

To orient the reader to our findings we provide a brief overview of our main results. After examining the hierarchal regression models, it is apparent generational status, familism, and parental monitoring played distinct and at times complementary roles when predicting problematic behaviors among Mexican-origin youth. First, parental monitoring helped to explain externalizing and alcohol use. Second, generational status and parental monitoring predicted risky sexual behavior and drug use. Third, familism and parental monitoring predicted contact with the police and juvenile justice system and friends’ problematic behavior.

**DISCUSSION**

Our study extends our current understanding of the link between generational status and problematic youth behavior, providing novel insights into the correlates of risky and delinquent behavior among Mexican-origin youth. First, our study supported previous findings (Buriel et al., 1982; Cota-Robles, 2002) that risky behavior is associated with generational status among Mexican-origin youth. We suggest that the generation-risky behavior link is evident across a range of negative outcomes, not just delinquency. Specifically, generational status was associated, to some extent, with externalizing
behavior, engagement in risky sexual behavior, drug use, and contact with police and the juvenile justice system. It appears that first-generation adolescents who have retained close ties with their parents and traditional values of their Mexican heritage were less likely to exhibit at risk behaviors, whereas second- (and subsequent) generation Mexican-origin youth who were more acculturated exhibited the highest rates of at risk behaviors.

The relatively consistent pattern across at risk behaviors is reminiscent of earlier theories of comorbidity (Kim, Conger, Elder, and Lorenz, 2003; Pennington, 2005) arguing that “bad things often go together.” Both the intercorrelations among our risk outcomes and the similarity of patterns across our risk measures support this viewpoint. The absence of significant correlations between externalizing and police contact for Mexican immigrant youth and between externalizing, alcohol use, and drug use with police contact for Mexican American youth may suggest generational differences in community environment. We speculate that Mexican-origin youth in general, and more acculturated second- and subsequent generation youth in particular, may be subjected to more police scrutiny than their individual risk behaviors may warrant. The level of surveillance Mexican-origin youth experience is likely to influence their perceptions of discrimination or opportunity, and investigation of such links in future research would help us better understand their chances for success in later life.

However, there were some exceptions to this pattern of links between generational status and risky behavior. Neither rates of alcohol use nor friends’ problematic behaviors were explained by generational status. Perhaps the relative ease of availability and the use of alcohol across all segments of the adolescent population (75% of youth have consumed alcohol; CDC, 2007) may have yielded a truncated range that made it difficult to detect cross-group differences. Similarly, association with friends who engage in problematic behavior was unrelated to generational status. It may be that Mexican-origin youth, regardless of generational status, are friends with youth who engage in comparable levels of problematic behavior.

Gender of the youth was also significant in two of the models. It appears that gender helped explain both risky sexual behavior and contact with the juvenile justice system. First, being a male was associated with risky sexual behavior. This finding concurs with recent CDC (2010) data on Latino adolescents that found males were more likely to have engaged in sexual intercourse, to have had sex with four or more partners, and to have had sex before the age of 13 than females. Second, being a male was associated with increased contact with the juvenile justice system, which has been consistently found in past studies. For example, according to the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (2010), the majority of youth in the U.S. juvenile court system are male.
Following the work of Portes and Rumbaut (2001), it appears that in comparison to the Mexican immigrant youth, the Mexican American youth may be experiencing downward assimilation. Likewise, our findings regarding generational status and negative outcomes can be situated within the literature on the “healthy immigrant effect” (for a discussion of this concept, see McDonald and Kennedy, 2004; the healthy immigrant effect is also referred to as the “immigrant paradox”). The healthy immigrant effect is “an observed time path in which the health of immigrants just after migration is substantially better than that of comparable native-born people, but worsens with additional years in the new country” (McDonald and Kennedy, p. 1,613). Even though these outcomes are commonly health-related (e.g., cancer, heart disease, asthma, and allergies; McDonald and Kennedy; Newbold, 2006) and are very different from risky and delinquent outcomes, the idea of the healthy immigrant effect can provide a framework for understanding differences in delinquency by level of acculturation or generational status. In the present study, we extended the healthy immigrant effect to mental health (e.g., externalizing), substance abuse (e.g., drug and alcohol use), and behavioral risk (e.g., contact with the juvenile justice system). These risky behaviors can, in turn, be linked to future health outcomes (e.g., drug use can result in harmful health consequences). Based on a variety of indicators, the Mexican immigrant youth appear to be significantly “healthier” than the Mexican American youth, which suggests that traditional Mexican family values such as familism may serve as a protective factor for less acculturated youth.

In addition to generational status, we also examined the effects of familism and parental monitoring on youth’s risky and delinquent behaviors. First, higher levels of familism were related to lower levels of friends’ problematic behavior and contact with the juvenile justice system. Although generational status was not statistically significant in these models, these findings suggest that familism, which was correlated with generational status (results not shown), was important to examine when trying to understand youth outcomes. It appears that higher levels of familism served as a protective factor for Mexican-origin youth. These findings support past research (Germán et al., 2009; Sommers, Fagan, and Baskin, 1994) that explored the protective nature of familism. Further analyses are necessary to better understand the significance of familism on some outcomes, whereas not on others. Second, parental monitoring was related to youth outcomes. In all the models, higher levels of parental monitoring were related to lower levels of risky and delinquent outcomes. This follows much previous literature (e.g., DiClemente et al., 2001; Shillington et al., 2005) that suggested parental monitoring can work as a protective factor against negative youth outcomes.
This research has implications for prevention and intervention programs. Specifically, educators and mental health workers need to be aware of cross-generational patterns and risks associated with experience with the host culture that accompanies later generational status. Greater acceptance of a bicultural pattern should be encouraged as a protection against the downward spiral associated with acculturation to the host country alone. Further, the role of familism in protection against delinquency should be embraced and promoted within Mexican-origin families. The role of friendships as a potential source of influence also needs to be recognized as well, and parents should be aware of the impact of how their friendship choices may influence their behaviors. Increased monitoring of friendship choices by parents would be one strategy to diminish the negative impact of high-risk friendships on later generation youth. Finally, we need to establish whether these patterns are valid for other Latino groups, especially in view of intra-ethnic group variability before we use these findings as a guide to intervention program development among Latino groups beyond those of Mexican origin.

Our analysis confirms an earlier paradoxical finding: later-generation immigrant youth may be more at risk than first-generation youth. Rather than assuming that adoption of dominant American cultural norms and practices will lead to positive outcomes for subsequent generations, we should explore more comprehensively the extent to which specific immigration contexts and experiences can influence youth. Our study is a reminder of the pitfalls associated with later generational status and calls for a fuller appreciation of the strengths that immigrant groups bring to our country (Parke, Coltrane, and Schofield, 2007). By affording greater respect for the cultural traditions of immigrants, we may be able to reduce the negative impact of the acculturation process for our immigrant youth. Finally, it is important to acknowledge the variability in acculturation within immigrant families and recognize that maintaining close family ties can reduce some of the negative effects of acculturation on youth outcomes (Schofield, Parke, Kim, and Coltrane, 2008). Further efforts to reduce the negative impact accompanying successive generations in the United States would clearly be worthwhile.

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Chapter 6


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Youth Risk Behavior


Chapter 6


Chapter 7

The Acculturation and Adaptation of Second-Generation Immigrant Youth in Toronto and Montreal

John W. Berry and Colette Sabatier
Queen’s University, Canada, and Université Victor Segalen, France

Immigrant youth have become a topic of major importance in public discourse over the past few years. Many researchers and policy makers have asked questions concerning the sense of belonging and the degree of participation that such youth develop with respect to their heritage cultures and to their new societies. In particular, second-generation youth have been seen as having the challenge of working out how to live with, and between, their parents’ cultural heritage and community and that of their peers in the new society. Recent international research (Berry, Phinney, Sam, and Vedder, 2006; Sabatier and Berry, 2008) has shown that youth work out their orientations to these two cultural communities in highly variable ways; they also achieve different levels of adaptation in the psychological and social domains of their lives. In this paper, we present findings from studies of immigrant youth in two Canadian cities (Toronto and Montreal). These cities differ in their contexts for receiving and settling newcomers; Toronto has over half its population not born in Canada and follows the general Canadian policy of multiculturality, while Montreal has about one-fifth of its population not born in the country and follows the Quebec policy called interculturalism (to be explained further below).

We ask the following three questions in each city: are there differences (1) in the ways youth are acculturating; (2) in the levels of psychological and social adaptation they achieve; and (3) relationships between the ways of acculturating and levels of adaptation? The paper is essentially a search for answers to these three questions in two cities rather than a comparison between them. However, we note some differences in the answers that appear to be related to these contextual differences.
The study of immigrant acculturation and adaptation has a long history in the social sciences (see Berry, 1997; Sam and Berry, 2006; van Oudenhoven, 2006 for overviews). An international comparative study of acculturation and adaptation involves using a number of societies of settlement and different immigrant groups; this comparative approach has many advantages. The most obvious and important advantage is the ability to examine the generalizability of findings by contrasting settlement contexts. The issue is whether we can discover general principles that can be extracted from a variety of acculturation arenas; if so, then it may be possible to generate “best practice” policies and programs for immigrant youth. However, if research findings suggest more context-specific outcomes, then efforts can be devoted to sort out the reasons behind such variation. The over-riding issue is whether features of the society of settlement influence how youth acculturate and how well they adapt (Berry and Sabatier, 2010; Sabatier and Berry, 2008). In this paper, this question will be asked using variations in context between two cities within one country. We address two aspects: is the general acculturation pattern in Canada consistent with that found in international studies; and are contextual variations between Toronto and Montreal associated with variations in this pattern of acculturation? We do not engage in a strict comparison, but seek answers to these questions in two different contexts. Before dealing with these two issues, we present some information about the concepts of acculturation and adaptation and a framework that explains the concept of acculturation strategies.

ACCULTURATION AND ADAPTATION

Acculturation is the process of cultural and psychological change that takes place as a result of contact between cultural groups and their individual members (Redfield, Linton, and Herskovits, 1936). Such contact and change occurs during colonization, military invasion, migration, and sojourning (such as tourism, international study, and overseas posting). It continues after initial contact in all societies where ethnocultural communities maintain features of their heritage cultures. The adaptations that groups and individuals make to living in culture-contact settings take place over time; occasionally this process is stressful, but often it results in some form of mutual accommodation (understood as the changes that groups and individuals in both groups make in order to live together in relative harmony). Following an initial period of work with colonized peoples, recent acculturation research has focused on how immigrants (both voluntary and involuntary) changed following their entry and settlement into receiving societies. Most
recently, research has examined how ethnocultural groups and individuals relate to each other, and change, as a result of their attempts to live together in culturally plural societies (see Sam and Berry, 2006 for an overview of this literature). Nowadays, all peoples in contact are important, as globalization results in ever-increasing trading and political relations: indigenous national populations experience neo-colonization, new waves of immigrants, sojourners (especially guest workers), and refugees flow from these economic and political changes, and large ethnocultural populations become established in most countries.

Graves (1967) introduced the concept of psychological acculturation, which refers to changes in an individual who is a participant in a culture contact situation being influenced both by the external (usually dominant) culture and by the changing culture (usually non-dominant) of which the individual is a member. There are two reasons for keeping the cultural and psychological levels distinct. The first is that in cross-cultural psychology, we view individual human behavior as interacting with the cultural context within which it occurs; hence separate conceptions and measurements are required at the two levels (Berry, Poortinga, Segall, and Dasen, 2002). The second reason is that not every individual enters into, participates in, or changes in the same way during their acculturation. There are vast individual differences in psychological acculturation, even among individuals who have the same cultural origin and who live in the same acculturative arena (Sam and Berry, 2006).

The concept of adaptation is used to refer to how well immigrants engage their new lives. In this domain, we are addressing the fact that not all immigrants adapt equally well in their new societies. A distinction has been made between psychological and sociocultural adaptation (Ward, 1996). Psychological adaptation refers to personal qualities of well being, such as self-esteem and life satisfaction, and a lack of symptoms such as depression and anxiety. Sociocultural adaptation refers to qualities of relationships between the acculturating individual and their social contexts; these include knowledge of life skills, doing well in school or work, and a lack of problem behaviors in the community (such as truancy, addictions, and anti-social behaviors). In this paper, we examine both psychological and sociocultural adaptation of immigrant adolescents.

ACCULTURATION STRATEGIES

When we refer to how immigrant youth acculturate, we are addressing the fact that not all immigrants acculturate in the same way. Using the concept of acculturation strategies, we explore variations in preferences and
behaviors among acculturating individuals using the concepts of *assimilation*, *integration*, *marginalization*, and *separation* for immigrant youth. To make explicit how we use these terms, Figure 7.1 displays them within two parallel acculturation spaces; on the left is that for non-dominant groups (e.g., immigrants and ethnocultural groups) and on the right is that for the larger national society.

Early research assumed that acculturating individuals would orient themselves either to one group or to the other, in a sense choosing between them. This view was the basis for assessing the ways of acculturating of individuals on a single dimension from preferring one’s heritage culture to preferring the society of settlement (e.g., Gordon, 1964). However, an alternative view was proposed by Berry (1974, 1980), who argued that there are two dimensions along which individuals orient themselves. In this view, it is proposed that everyone experiencing acculturation holds attitudes toward two distinct and fundamental aspects of acculturation: *cultural maintenance* and *intercultural contact*. For each issue, a dimension is shown, with a positive orientation at one end and a negative one at the other. This two-dimensional conception has been validated in a number of studies (e.g., Ryder, Alden, and Paulhus, 2000; Sabatier and Berry, 2008).

Among immigrants, *acculturation attitudes* are based on the intersection of these two issues: to what extent do immigrants or other non-dominant groups wish to maintain (or give up) their cultural attributes; and to what extent do they wish to have contact with (or avoid) others outside their group? When examined among the population at large (e.g., the dominant or national group), views about how immigrants and other non-dominant ethnocultural groups should acculturate have been termed *acculturation expectations* (Berry, 2003). For members of the non-dominant ethnocultural group (on the left), the main question is “How shall *we* deal with these two issues?” while for the larger national society (on the right) the question is “How should *they* (e.g., immigrants and ethnocultural groups) deal with them?”

These two issues define an intercultural contact space (the circles) within which individuals occupy a preferred attitudinal position. Each sector of the circles in Figure 7.1 carries a name that has a long-standing usage in acculturation studies. From the point of view of ethnocultural groups (on the left of Figure 7.1), when individuals do not wish to maintain their cultural heritage and seek daily participation with other cultures in the larger society, the *assimilation* attitude is defined. In contrast, when ethnocultural group members place a value on holding on to their original culture, and at the same time wish to avoid interaction with others, then the *separation* alternative is defined. When there is an interest in both maintaining one’s original culture and interacting with other groups, *integration* is the attitude. Here, individuals
Figure 7.1.
maintain a degree of cultural integrity, while at the same time they seek to participate as an integral part of the larger society. Finally, when there is little possibility or interest in cultural maintenance (often for reasons of enforced cultural loss) and little interest in having relations with other groups (often for reasons of discrimination), then marginalization is defined.

These two basic issues were initially approached by using the concept of acculturation strategies with non-dominant ethnocultural groups. However, the original anthropological definition clearly established that both groups in contact would change and become acculturated. Hence, a third dimension was added: that of the powerful role played by the dominant group in influencing the way in which mutual acculturation would take place (Berry, 1974). The addition of this third dimension produces the right side of Figure 7.1, where the concept used is that of acculturation expectations held by the larger society (Berry, 2003).

Assimilation, when sought by the dominant group, is termed the melting pot. When separation is forced by the dominant group it is segregation. Marginalization, when imposed by the dominant group, is exclusion. Finally, for integration, when diversity is a widely accepted feature of the society as a whole, including all the various ethnocultural groups, it is called multiculturalism.

MULTICULTURALISM POLICY IN CANADA

In 1971, Canada became the first country to explicitly advocate multiculturalism as a way of living together in a culturally diverse society. The Federal Policy of Multiculturalism (Government of Canada, 1971) has two main and equally important goals: (1) to promote a high degree of support for maintaining cultural distinctiveness among ethnocultural groups and more generally of cultural diversity in the larger Canadian society; and (2) to promote full and equitable participation by all ethnocultural groups and individuals in the life of the larger society (Berry, 1984). As noted in the description of Figure 7.1, this multicultural way of living together in the larger society corresponds to the integration strategy among ethnocultural groups. This policy of promoting diversity and equity, and the public programs that implement it, places Canada at the forefront of immigrant-receiving societies that promote the multicultural vision of the appropriate way to organize intercultural relations in plural societies (Noels and Berry, 2006).

The Federal Canadian policy of multiculturalism is supplemented by provincial and municipal policies and programs, including those in Quebec/Montreal and Ontario/Toronto. A version of this general policy approach is the Quebec policy of interculturalism, which promotes a type of social contract between immigrants and the receiving province. It may be characterized
as essentially multicultural, but it has somewhat more of an assimilationist flavor than the Federal and Ontario policies. In the Canadian policy, “although there are two official languages, there are no official cultures” (Government of Canada, 1971). However, in the Quebec policy, French language and culture are given a privileged status (Bouchard and Taylor, 2008), although still emphasizing the two main components of Canadian multiculturalism: heritage cultural maintenance and the encouragement of full social participation by all ethnocultural groups.

Early research (Berry, Kalin, and Taylor, 1997) and follow-up studies (Berry and Kalin, 1995) have found that attitudes toward multiculturalism and toward immigrants are somewhat less favorable among Francophones in Quebec than among Anglophones in the rest of Canada. This difference has been traced to a lower sense of cultural security among Quebeois; there is a feeling that their culture and language may be threatened by both the flow of immigration into Quebec and by the multicultural view of Canadian society (see Berry, 2006, for a review of the evidence).

TWO STUDIES

In the balance of this paper, we report on two studies of acculturation and adaptation of second-generation immigrant youth settled in two Canadian cities: Toronto (in Ontario) and Montreal (in Quebec). Although there is a generally high level of immigration to Canada (with nearly 20% of the current population not born in the country; Statistics Canada, 2007), this percentage is highest for Toronto (51%) and lower for Montreal (22%). We focus on second-generation youth because they can be seen as having the special challenge of making sense of being raised in their parental society of settlement (including being schooled and having community relationships there) while being members of their parents’ immigrant families and communities (Sam and Berry, 2009). In addition, we consider that acculturation is a continuous process that takes place over generations, just as long as cultural differences remain and intercultural relations continue. The use of the concept of second-generation immigrant is consistent with this view, and in our view is preferable to the concept of ethnic minority.

Study 1: Toronto

Participants and Measures

In Toronto, three second-generation adolescent immigrant groups (total N = 163) were sampled: 41 Koreans, 81 South Asians, and 41 Vietnamese. The
Chapter 7

mean age was 15.5 years of age (SD = 1.6; ranging from 13 to 18 years of age). In the past few decades in Canada, immigrants from various parts of Asia have dominated the flow of peoples, and this pattern continues, with over 65% of annual settlement in Toronto coming from this region. Thus, Asian immigration is an important area of research to pursue. Adolescents were recruited on an individual basis through several means, mainly through schools, but also through community networks. These adolescents have been recruited for the purpose of the International Comparative Study of Ethnocultural Youth—the ICSEY project (Berry et al., 2006, see Note 1).

**Acculturation Attitudes**

We assessed four acculturation attitudes using four scales, one each for assimilation, integration, separation, and marginalization. The items concern five domains of life: cultural traditions, language, marriage, social activities, and friends. There were 20 items, five for each attitude, responded to on a five-point Likert style. For example, the items in the social activities domain include four questions: Integration: “I prefer social activities which involve both [nationals] and [my ethnic group]”; Assimilation: “I prefer social activities which involve [nationals] only”; Separation: “I prefer social activities which involve [members of my own ethnic group] only”; and Marginalization: “I don’t want to attend either [national] or [ethnic] social activities.” Reliabilities (Cronbach α’s) were: integration .60; assimilation, .61; separation, .60; and marginalization .59.

**Cultural Identity**

Two types of identities, ethnic and national, were examined. *Ethnic identity* was measured with eight items from the MEIM (Phinney, 1992) assessing ethnic affirmation (e.g., sense of belonging, positive feelings about being group member). A sample item was “I feel that I am part of [ethnic] culture.” (Cronbach’s α = .89). *National identity* was assessed with four items of national affirmation and the importance of one’s national identity. A sample item is: “I am happy that I am [national].” (Cronbach’s α = .70).

**Language Proficiency and Language Use**

The scale for ethnic language proficiency (four items) inquired about a person’s abilities to understand, speak, read, and write the ethnic language. An example was, “How well do you speak [ethnic language]?” Answers were given on a five-point scale from not at all (1) to very well (5) (Cronbach’s α = .78). Proficiency in the national language (four items) was assessed with the same
self-report questions, but with respect to the national language (Cronbach’s $\alpha = .91$). Language use refers to the extent to which adolescents use either their ethnic language or the national language when talking with their parents or their siblings. Their communication practices (four items) were measured on a five-point scale ranging from not at all (1) to all the time (5). Higher scores expressed a relatively more frequent usage of the national language.

Ethnic and National Peer Contact

The two scales assessed the frequency of interaction with peers from one’s own ethnic group (four items; Cronbach’s $\alpha = .79$), or from the national group (four items; Cronbach’s $\alpha = .70$). An example was, “How often do you spend free time with peers from your own ethnocultural group?” Participants responded on a scale ranging from never (1) to very often (5).

Family Relationship Values

Family obligations included 10 items (e.g., “Children should obey their parents.” Cronbach’s $\alpha = .73$). Four items assessed the extent of acceptance of children’s autonomy, which we refer to as adolescents’ rights, (e.g., “When a girl reaches the age of 16, it is all right for her to decide whom to date.” Cronbach’s $\alpha = .88$).

Adaptation

Two scales, psychological and sociocultural adaptation, were used to measure youth’s level of adaptation into Canada. Psychological adaptation was measured with Rosenberg’s (1965) 10-item Self-Esteem scale (five-point response scale; Cronbach’s $\alpha = .80$). A sample item was, “On the whole I am satisfied with myself.” Sociocultural adaptation was assessed using a behavior problems scale. Two sample items of the scale were “I have cursed at a teacher” and “I have purposely destroyed seats in a bus or a movie theater.” A five-point response category ranging from Never to Several times in the course of a 12-month period was used (Cronbach’s $\alpha = .84$).

Perceived Discrimination

This scale consisted of nine items (Cronbach’s $\alpha = .87$), four items that assessed perceived frequency of being treated unfairly or negatively because of one’s ethnic background by other students, other kids outside school, teachers, and other adults, and five items that assessed being teased, threatened, or feeling unaccepted because of one’s ethnicity (e.g., “I have been
teased or insulted because of my ethnic background”). Participants responded on a scale ranging from never (1) to very often (5).

Acculturation Profiles

Using the international sample of immigrant youth (Berry et al., 2006), cluster analysis was carried out with all the variables associated with the acculturation process (see Note 1 for details). These were: acculturation attitudes (integration, separation, assimilation, marginalization), ethnic and national identities, ethnic and national language knowledge, language use (with high scores indicating greater national language use), ethnic and national peer social contacts, and family relationship values (family obligations and adolescents’ rights). The analyses were conducted using scores standardized within country and ethnic groups, using the $k$-means method. The analysis yielded a four-factor solution. Collectively, the clusters constituted four acculturation profiles: integration; ethnic; national; and diffuse.

Integration

The integration profile was the most frequently occurring profile. It consisted of adolescents who strongly endorsed integration and gave low endorsement to assimilation, separation, and marginalization. These adolescents were high on both ethnic and national identities and indicated relatively high involvement in both their ethnic and national cultures. They reported high national language proficiency and average ethnic language proficiency; their language usage suggested balanced use of both languages. They had peer contacts with both their own group and the national group. They were near the mean on family relationships values. These adolescents appeared to be comfortable in both the ethnic and national contexts, in terms of identity, language, peer contacts, and values. This way of acculturating corresponds to the term integration as defined in Figure 7.1.

National

This profile included adolescents who showed a strong orientation toward the national society in which they were living. These adolescents had a strong endorsement of assimilation and were high on national identity and very low on ethnic identity. They were proficient in the national language and used it predominantly. Their peer contacts were largely with members of the national group, and they showed low support for family obligations. These adolescents appear to exemplify the idea of
assimilation, indicating a lack of retention of their ethnic culture and identity. This way of acculturating corresponds to the term *assimilation* as defined in Figure 7.1.

**Ethnic**

This profile consisted of adolescents who showed a clear orientation toward their own ethnic group. Their profile is a mirror image of the national profile. They endorsed the separation attitude and scored low on assimilation attitudes. They had high ethnic identity, ethnic language proficiency and usage, and ethnic peer contacts, but low national identity and contacts with the national group. Their support for the two family relationship values was well above the average. They represent young people who are largely embedded within their own culture and show little involvement with the larger society. This way of acculturating corresponds to the term *separation* as defined in Figure 7.1.

**Diffuse**

The *diffuse* profile endorsed three contradictory acculturation attitudes: marginalization, assimilation, and separation. These youth reported high proficiency in, and usage of, the ethnic language; however, they also reported low ethnic identity. They had low proficiency in the national language, and they reported somewhat low national identity and national peer contacts. This inconsistent pattern suggests that these young people are uncertain about their place in society, perhaps wanting to be part of the larger society but lacking the skills and ability to make contacts. This profile appears similar to young people described in the identity formation literature as “diffuse,” characterized by a lack of commitment to a direction or purpose in their lives and often socially isolated (Marcia, 1994). Therefore this profile was termed a *diffuse* profile and corresponds well with the concept of *marginalization* as defined in Figure 7.1.

**RESULTS**

We extracted second-generation youth from the four profiles obtained in the international study. The profile distribution of the youth in Toronto were: 88 Integration (54% of sample); 52 National (Assimilation; 32%); 11 Ethnic (Separation; 7%); and 8 Diffuse (Marginalization; 5%). These percentages differ somewhat from those in the overall international sample, where there were fewer youth in the integration and assimilation profiles and more in the separation and marginalization profiles.
Chapter 7

To examine the relationship between the various acculturation profiles (integration, national, ethnic, and diffuse) and how well immigrant youth adapted, we carried out a non-parametric median test across the four ways of acculturating (using the profiles) and the adaptation scores, with t-tests for the comparison between acculturation profiles.

There were variations across the four acculturation profiles in self-esteem but not in deviance. For perceived discrimination, only one difference between two groups appeared. For self-esteem, t-tests indicated that those who adopt an integration profile have higher self-esteem than those who adopted a national or a diffuse profile, and those with national profile had higher self-esteem than those with a diffuse profile. Within the ethnic profile, the standard deviation was too large according to the size of the sample to draw any conclusion. For perceived discrimination, t-tests indicated that those with an integration profile perceived less discrimination than those with a national profile.

Some insight into these findings can be found in examining the Pearson correlations between the four acculturation attitudes and the three adaptation scores (see Table 7.1). In Toronto, attitude of marginalization was negatively correlated with self-esteem, and positively with deviance and discrimination. Interestingly, deviance and discrimination are also positively correlated with positive attitudes toward assimilation and separation. There were no significant relationships between a preference for integration and any of the three adaptation variables. This pattern suggests that an exclusive orientation toward either the larger society or toward the heritage culture, is linked somehow with a propensity for deviant behavior.

Table 7.1. Toronto Sample: Correlations among Four Acculturation Attitudes and Three Adaptation Variables in Toronto

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Self-Esteem</th>
<th>Deviance</th>
<th>Discrimination</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assimilation</td>
<td>-0.04</td>
<td>0.23 **</td>
<td>0.18 *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integration</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>-0.01</td>
<td>-0.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marginalization</td>
<td>-0.21 **</td>
<td>0.16 *</td>
<td>0.17 *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Separation</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.15 +</td>
<td>0.25 **</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To examine the relationship between the various acculturation profiles (integration, national, ethnic, and diffuse) and how well immigrant youth adapted, we carried out a non-parametric median test across the four ways of acculturating (using the profiles) and the adaptation scores, with t-tests for the comparison between acculturation profiles.

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Study 2: Montreal

Participants and Measures

In Montreal, four ethnic groups (total $N = 323$) were sampled (88 Greek, 94 Haitian, 83 Italian, and 58 Vietnamese). These samples were not part of the ICSEY study and were carried out independently. Adolescents were
recruited on an individual basis through several means, mainly through school lists, but also through social networks of the participants themselves. The mean age is 15.5 years of age ($SD = 1.8$; ranging from 12 to 19 years of age).

**Acculturation Attitudes**

In the ICSEY study, we assessed acculturation strategies by using four scales, one for each way of acculturating. However, there are other methods available to assess these orientations (Arends-Toth and Van de Vijver, 2006). Following the procedure of Berry, Kim, Power, Young, and Bujaki (1989) and adopting the structure of Donà and Berry (1994), we used a two-scale approach. These two scales represent acculturation with respect to the heritage and national culture.

The scales were developed in a pilot study, using a series of qualitative interviews; these were conducted with 15 second-generation adolescents and 10 parents from the same four ethnocultural groups. Participants were engaged in individual face-to-face open-ended interviews in an attempt to discover what acculturation issues are of greatest concern for them. They were asked to identify the most important issues for them during the process of acculturation and adaptation for themselves (or their second-generation children in the case of parents) and adolescents more generally. The participants identified a number of the behavioral domains such as food language and typical acculturation indices such as marriage and given name. In addition, adolescent participants were especially concerned with the parent-child relationship. This was indicative of psychological acculturation as noted by Nguyen and von Eye (2002) and by Stevens, Pels, and Vollebergh (2004).

On the basis of these qualitative interviews, a 60-item questionnaire was developed (with two sets of questions concerning each of the ethnic and national cultures) and was administered to 30 adolescents. After factor analysis, a sub-set of 45 questions was retained. Although the internal consistencies (Cronbach’s $\alpha$) were good for each cultural group (Greek, Haitian, Italian, and Vietnamese), the factorial analysis revealed different loading across groups. As a result, we decided to proceed to a series of exploratory and confirmatory factorial analyses in order to obtain the same factorial analysis for all groups with two orthogonal dimensions. This procedure resulted in two sets of questions (one set for ethnic and one set for national acculturation attitudes) dealing with different domains that are relevant to adolescents: language, marriage, social networks, values, emotions, parent-child relationship, and cultural transmission. Parallel questions (one for national and one ethnic orientation) that appeared to be on a bipolar dimension were discarded after this last step of analysis. By doing this, we obtained a true orthogonality.
and avoided the question of bipolarity as mentioned by Nguyen et al. (2002). Two scales were constructed, with eight questions for national acculturation (e.g., “I believe that (ethnic) parents should make an effort for their children to develop ties with the Canadian society outside of school”; Cronbach’s $\alpha = .77$) and 15 questions for ethnic acculturation (e.g., “I find it important that the (ethnic) culture be maintained from generation to generation”; Cronbach’s $\alpha = .86$).

**Cultural Identity**

Adolescents were asked to evaluate how much ethnicity or national identity (1–5 point) is one part of their self-concept. For example, one question asked, “To what degree do you feel yourself to be Canadian (or Italian)?”

**Ethnic Behaviors**

Three sets of questions evaluated the commitment of adolescents to engage in behaviors related to their heritage culture or which can sustain their ethnic identity (see Berry et al., 1989; Knight, Bernal, Garzza, Cota, and Ocampo, 1993; Rosenthal and Cichello, 1986). The first set comprised three questions on peer social networks, proportion of ethnic friends, and the use of ethnic peers for material support and for emotional support. An example was, “Among your closest friends how many are from the same ethnic origin as you?.” The second assessed ethnic media use (radio and TV), and the third set evaluated the competence in ethnic language (Cronbach’s $\alpha = .84$). These questions were used to construct an overall index (five-point scale).

**Acculturation Orientations**

In order to obtain an overall score that encompassed attitudes, identity, and behavior, a factor analysis was conducted with the scale score for the two acculturation scales, the ethnic behaviors scale, and the two identity questions. This resulted in two overall scores. *Ethnic acculturation orientation* scores are the combined factor score of ethnic acculturation attitudes, ethnic identity, and ethnic behavior. The *national acculturation orientation* scores are made up of national acculturation attitudes and national identity.

**Self-esteem**

The Rosenberg (1965) Self-Esteem Scale was used that included 10 items (four-point response scale) which focused on general self-esteem (Cronbach’s $\alpha = .77$). A sample item was, “On the whole, I am satisfied with myself.”

**Deviance**

There were 11 questions (Dornbusch, Ritter, Chen, and Mont-Reynaud, 1989), ranging from minor behavior problems (being late at school) to more serious ones (using drugs or having trouble with the police). Sample items were, “How often are you late at school?” or “How often are you getting in
Perceived Discrimination.
We use six items (Cronbach’s $\alpha = .79$) that focus on personal discrimination within the school context and the neighborhood (derived from Tchoryk-Pelletier, 1989). A sample item was, “At school, do you have the feeling you are less accepted than Canadians because you are (ethnic)?”

RESULTS

In the Montreal sample, the distribution of acculturation strategies using the median split on the two dimensions showed that individuals in the four quadrants were as follows: 94 Integration (29% of sample); 65 Assimilation (20%); 84 Separation (26%); and 80 Marginalization (25%). Using the acculturation orientation scores, the distribution was: 94 Integration (29%); 86 Assimilation (27%); 65 Separation (20%); and 74 Marginalization (23%). Note that because of the differing method of assigning acculturation strategies between Toronto and Montreal, no direct comparison of percentages is possible. However, integration remains the most preferred way of acculturating.

To examine the relationship between these ways of acculturating and how well immigrant youth were adapting, we conducted a series of analyses of variance, the first with acculturation attitudes as group variables and the second with acculturation orientation measures (see Table 7.2). For the median split and factor score analyses, there was significant variation across ways of acculturating, self-esteem, and discrimination; however, there was no significant variation for deviance. The general pattern for self-esteem was to the be highest among those categorized in the integration strategy and lowest among those marginalized. A reverse pattern was present for discrimination: it was lowest for integration and highest for marginalization (as well as for separation).

Some insight into these findings can be found in examining the Pearson correlations between the acculturation variables and the adaptation scores (see Table 7.3). Self-esteem was correlated positively with both ethnic acculturation attitudes and ethnic orientation and national attitudes and national orientation, supporting the finding that a double cultural involvement (our definition of integration) was beneficial for psychological adaptation. However, there were no important relationships with deviance. For perceived discrimination, national attitudes and national orientation are negatively correlated, although there were no relationships with either ethnic attitudes or ethnic orientation.
Table 7.2. Montreal Sample: Analysis of Variance of Three Adaptation Variables, Using Median Split on the Acculturation Attitudes and Acculturation Factor Scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Integration</th>
<th>Assimilation</th>
<th>Separation</th>
<th>Marginalization</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acculturation N</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-esteem</td>
<td>3.38b</td>
<td>0.47</td>
<td>3.21ab</td>
<td>0.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deviance</td>
<td>1.28</td>
<td>0.30</td>
<td>1.29</td>
<td>0.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived discrimination</td>
<td>1.39a</td>
<td>0.46</td>
<td>1.58ab</td>
<td>0.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acculturation orientation Factor score N</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-esteem</td>
<td>3.46b</td>
<td>0.44</td>
<td>3.22a</td>
<td>0.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deviance</td>
<td>1.21</td>
<td>0.23</td>
<td>1.29</td>
<td>0.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived Discrimination</td>
<td>1.36a</td>
<td>0.49</td>
<td>1.56ab</td>
<td>0.68</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. a b indicate the homogeneity subsets for each variable across acculturation strategies according to Tukey’s post-hoc test.
The first question posed in this study was whether the general international findings regarding the acculturation and adaptation of immigrant youth could be replicated in Canada, and more specifically in the two cities of Toronto and Montreal. This first question includes the presence of four acculturation strategies and the relationship between these strategies and the adaptation of immigrant youth. The second question was whether the differences in the social contexts between the two cities might reveal themselves in the acculturation strategies, the level of adaptation of immigrant youth, and the relationship between them.

With respect to acculturation strategies, the general pattern in the ICSEY study was for integration to be most preferred (36% of all youth). This was also the case in the two Canadian cities: 54% for the Toronto sample and 29% for the youth in Montreal for both the attitudes and general orientation scores. For assimilation, the percentage in the overall ICSEY study was 19%; in contrast, assimilation was higher for Toronto (33%) and Montreal (26%). For separation, the overall ICSEY percentage was 23%; in Toronto it was 7%, and in Montreal it was 27%. Finally, for marginalization, the overall ICSEY international percentage was 22%; in Toronto it was 5%, and in Montreal it was 25%. These distributions are not directly comparable because of the different measures used to assess the acculturation strategies of youth, both internationally and in the two cities. However, it is clear that there is a widespread preference for integration as a way of acculturating. It is numerically the highest percentage in all three cases, no matter how this preference is assessed. It is somewhat higher in Toronto than in the ICSEY study, and considerably higher in Toronto than in Montreal. Moreover, despite the different ways of assessing acculturation strategies, it is clear that there is a higher preference for assimilation in the two Canadian cities than internationally. In fact, assimilation is ranked in second place in Canada, whereas it was in last place internationally. Since these two strategies share an interest in participating in the daily life of the larger society, this finding is consistent

Table 7.3. Montreal Sample: Correlations among Acculturation and Identity Variables, and Three Adaptation Variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Self-Esteem</th>
<th>Deviance</th>
<th>Discrimination</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ethnic acculturation</td>
<td>0.28 ***</td>
<td>– 0.07</td>
<td>– 0.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National acculturation</td>
<td>0.16 **</td>
<td>– 0.07</td>
<td>– 0.32 ***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnic orientation</td>
<td>0.27 ***</td>
<td>– 0.09</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National orientation</td>
<td>0.24 ***</td>
<td>– 0.13 *</td>
<td>– 0.38 ***</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. * p < .10 *p < .05; **p < .01; ***p < .001.
Chapter 7

with one element of Canadian multiculturalism policy that advocates full and equitable participation in the larger Canadian society. For integration (but not for assimilation) it is consistent with the policy promotion of heritage cultural maintenance.

When we examine preferences for separation and marginalization we see a major divergence in Toronto (7% and 5%, respectively) from the international findings (23% and 22%, respectively). This is a valid difference, since the same assessment procedure was used. However, for Montreal there is little apparent difference with the international scores, but they are substantially higher than the scores in Toronto. In both Toronto and Montreal, perceived discrimination is highest for those preferring separation and marginalization. Although direct comparisons between the perceived discrimination scores in the two cities are problematic (because of different measures), it is possible that in Montreal the experience of the more negative climate for immigrants and multiculturalism (Berry et al., 1997; Berry and Kalin, 1995) becomes a factor in pushing immigrant youth away from involvement in Montreal and Quebec society.

It is difficult to say whether these differences in acculturation preferences can be interpreted in relation to the differences between the two cities in their somewhat different policies. Because the Quebec policy of interculturalism promotes a more assimilationist strategy, one might expect that immigrant youth in Montreal might adopt assimilation more and separation less than in Toronto; however, the opposite appears to be the case. One possible interpretation of this pattern may lie in the multiculturalism hypothesis (Berry, 2006; Berry, Kalin, and Taylor, 1977). This hypothesis is based on a statement in the Canadian multiculturalism policy that confidence in one’s identity will lead to respect for others and to the reduction of discriminatory attitudes. Thus, a sense of personal and cultural security in who one is can lead to positive orientation to those who are culturally different. Conversely, when one is threatened, either by discrimination or other negative acts, then there will be a reaction against the source of such threats. Findings from national surveys (Berry et al., 1977; Berry and Kalin, 1995) lend support to this link between security and the acceptance of others. Since we first introduced the multiculturalism hypothesis and measures of cultural security as part of our examination of the psychological underpinnings of the Canadian policy, similar concepts have been proposed, and empirical studies have been carried out, that establish the essential validity of this assumption (e.g., Esses, Hodson, and Dovidio, 2003; Stephan, Stephan, and Gudykunst, 1999). Whether phrased in positive terms (security is a prerequisite for tolerance of others) or in negative terms (threats to, or anxiety about, one’s cultural identity and cultural rights underpins rejection of other), there is little doubt that there are
intimate links between being accepted by others and accepting others. Thus, it is possible that a lower preference for assimilation and a higher preference for separation (and marginalization) in Montreal is a joint result of discrimination and the Quebec interculturalism policy that promotes closer links with Quebec society.

With respect to the relationships between how youth acculturate and how well they adapt, we find the same pattern in the two Canadian cities as in the ICSEY study for psychological adaptation. For youth in both Toronto and Montreal, those pursuing the integration way of acculturating have higher self-esteem scores that those preferring other ways of acculturating. And, in keeping with the international pattern, those youth who are in the marginalization way have the poorest self-esteem. For both cities, youth pursuing assimilation and separation have self-esteem scores that fall in between these two extremes, and there appears to be no differences between the two cities in the relationships between ways of acculturating and self-esteem scores.

For sociocultural adaptation, the Canadian youth differ from the international pattern, where it was found that it was highest for those pursuing integration and lowest for those pursuing marginalization. However, in these two cities, there is no variation in scores on either deviance measure according to the ways they are acculturating. While the deviance scores are numerically the smallest for those who pursue integration, the differences are not significant. In another analysis of the Montreal data (Sabatier and Berry, 2008), we found no relationship between ways of acculturating and deviance. However, there was an indirect relationship: acculturation strategies have an effect on perceived discrimination and discrimination has an effect on deviance.

From this examination of youth acculturation and adaptation in two Canadian cities, we find a replication of the broader general findings in the international literature. With respect to how immigrant youth in Canada acculturate, there is a preference for integration, as in the international studies. However, there is some indication that they have an orientation that differs somewhat from the international pattern: they have a relatively higher preference for assimilation. As noted above, these two acculturation strategies are consistent with Canadian multiculturalism policy, which encourages both heritage cultural maintenance and participation in the daily life of the larger society.

With respect to the relationship between how youth acculturate and how well they adapt, we again find some correspondence in both cities with the international pattern. When second-generation immigrant youth orient themselves to both the larger society into which they have settled and to their
heritage culture by way of integration, they experience less discrimination, and have better self-esteem. This relationship corresponds with most of the international research findings. However, unlike much of the international literature, there is no difference in the degree to which they engage in deviant behaviors.

**SOME POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

If there is a reliable relationship between how youth acculturate and how well they adapt, then there is the possibility that a “best practice” can be formulated for the development of public policies and programs. In this paper, and more generally in the literature, we believe that there is sufficient evidence for such a relationship, one that supports the adoption of an integration strategy by immigrant youth (and their families and ethnocultural communities) and of a policy of multiculturalism by the societies in which they settle. Clearly, assimilationist policies and practices do not lead to their well being, and marginalization has the most negative consequences. As we have argued, integration as an individual strategy and multiculturalism as public policy and practice have two essential components. On the part of immigrants, these are the desire to continue their heritage culture during the process of acculturation and the desire to be full and equal participants and in the life of the larger society into which they have settled. On the part of the society of settlement, these are the willingness to accept and incorporate these heritage cultures into the evolving larger society and to do so with equitable treatment of members of the various ethnocultural groups who have come to share their civic space. Hostility, including negative attitudes and discrimination, on the part of either group clearly undermines the possibility of attaining such a balanced relationship. Of course, each society of settlement needs to carry out parallel research to examine whether these relationships hold and whether such integration and multicultural policies can work.

**NOTE**

Research with immigrant youth (the International comparative Study of Ethnocultural Youth—the ICSEY Project: Berry, Phinney, Sam, and Vedder, 2006) examined the same three questions that guided research presented in this chapter. Using a sample of 5,366 immigrant youth (aged 13 to 18) settled in 13 countries, the authors examined variables that assessed how
youth were acculturating, how well they were adapting, and some social and demographic indicators that might help explain our findings. We also sampled from non-immigrant youth (n = 2631) and some parents of each (n = 2302 and 863, respectively).

To examine how youth were acculturating, we used a number of acculturation variables. These were: acculturation attitudes (preferences for integration, assimilation, separation, and marginalization); and cultural identities, language knowledge and use, and social relationships with peers (all assessed with respect to both their heritage group and the national society). Using cluster analysis, we found that the most preferred way was integration, defined as being oriented to both their heritage cultures and their new society (36% of the sample exhibited this pattern). In this group, there was a positive attitude toward integration, positive identities with both cultural groups, knowledge and use of both languages, and friendships with members of both cultures. In second place (23%) were those with an ethnic orientation, with a positive attitude toward separation and a pattern of being oriented mainly to their heritage culture. A diffuse orientation was in third place (22%); these youth appeared to be uncertain about how to acculturate. They had a positive attitude toward marginalization, had negative identities with both cultural groups, had poor national language facility, and had few friends in either group. A national orientation was least preferred (19%); they had a positive attitude toward assimilation and exhibited a pattern on the other acculturation variables of being oriented mainly to the new national society.

To examine how well youth were doing, adaptation was assessed by two variables: psychological well-being (self esteem, life satisfaction, and lack of psychological problems, such as being sad or worrying frequently) and sociocultural adaptation (school adjustment and lack of behavior problems in the community, such as vandalism and petty theft). It is important to note that there were no overall differences in either form of adaptation between national and immigrant youth.

To examine relationships between how youth were acculturating and how well immigrant youth were adapting, the authors provided evidence on their relationships. First, those with an integration profile had the best psychological and sociocultural adaptation outcomes, while those with a marginalization/diffuse profile had the worst; in between, those with an separation/ethnic profile had moderately good psychological adaptation but poorer sociocultural adaptation, while those with an assimilation/national profile had moderately poor psychological adaptation and slightly negative sociocultural adaptation. This pattern of results was largely replicated using structural equation modeling.
REFERENCES


Chapter 8

Service Providers’ Perspectives on the Pathways of Adjustment for Newcomer Children and Youth in Canada

Susan S. Chuang, Sarah Rasmi, and Christopher Friesen

Over the past several decades, the demographic population of Canada has significantly transformed. Most striking is the influx of recent immigrant families into Canada, which currently hosts the second highest population of immigrants and refugees in the world. Almost one of every five Canadians is an immigrant, with 36% (390,800) representing immigrant and refugee children and youth 24 years of age or under. It has been estimated that by 2017, visible ethnic minorities will account for up to 23% of Canada’s population (Statistics Canada, 2006). As the young population lead the way for a “new” Canada, it is imperative for researchers, service providers, and social policymakers to investigate and overcome the multiple challenges and barriers that newcomer children and youth face as they navigate through their adjustment and settlement pathways.

As children and youth recreate their lives in a new country, they undergo an acculturation process that entails them to adjust behaviorally, psychologically, and socially into the mainstream society (see Berry and Sabetier, in volume). Although the migratory process is bounded by the complexities of pre- and post-settlement and adjustment factors, there are some shared challenges and barriers. First, the experience of migration leads to significant life changes to one’s physical and sociocultural environments as well as interpersonal relationships (Anisef, 2005). Many newcomers will struggle with the official language of the host country. For example, in 2001, 46% of all immigrants reported that they could not speak either English or French. Those under 15 years of age were the least likely to
understand English or French when they came to Canada (Service Canada, 2005). As some have reported, the challenging migration process has led to lasting negative effects such as newcomers becoming more fearful of the future, loneliness, alienation, school difficulties, sense of inferiority (Isralowitz and Slomin-Nevo, 2002), and other mental and physical health problems (see Anisef).

These acculturative challenges intersect with the developmental issues that children and youth face. For instance, adolescence strive for greater autonomy and independence from their parents (Erikson, 1968). In addition, friendships (peer relations) become of greater importance to their psychological and emotional well-being (see Chan and Birman, 2009, for review). To date, few have investigated the immigration challenges of younger children, with more attention to adolescent development (e.g., Chuang and Gielen, 2009; Chuang and Tamis-LeMonda, 2009). To address these issues, the present study explores the immigration challenges and barriers faced by both children and youth (up to 18 years of age). Comparative work of children and youth will elucidate the unique developmental needs and challenges of each group, providing greater insight for service providers to develop age-appropriate and culturally sensitive services and programs.

ADVANCES ON CANADA’S IMMIGRATION POLICIES AND INFRASTRUCTURE

With the tremendous transformation of Canada’s ethnoprofile landscape, the ethnic, racial, linguistic, and religious diversity have guided Canada to develop a national multiculturalism policy. This multiculturalism policy was officially declared in 1971 and acknowledged that diversity is fundamental to Canada’s identity. According to the revised Canadian Multiculturalism Act (1988), the first policy objective for Canada was to “recognize and promote the understanding that multiculturalism reflects the cultural and racial diversity of Canadian society and acknowledges the freedom of all members of Canadian society to preserve, enhance and share their cultural heritage” (Department of Canadian Heritage, 2006). Canada’s operationalization of the multiculturalism policy has been and continues to be extensive and comprehensive at both the federal and provincial levels in regards to the funding that supports numerous services and programs specifically targeted to newcomers. Specifically, there are currently close to 450 immigrant-serving agencies (ISAs), largely community-based not-for-profit organizations across Canada, that have increasingly stepped forward to support
immigrants. Numerous community organizations also provide services and programs for their local immigrant families. For example, the Community Connection (formerly known as the Host Program) is a federally funded program that recruits native Canadians to volunteer to become one-on-one host volunteers for immigrant families. These volunteers provide invaluable social and instrumental support (usually 4–6 hours per week over 6 months) (e.g., practice speaking the local official language, answer questions, provide orientation of the local community organizations) and become a part of the newcomers’ social network (for details, see Anisef, 2005). Other examples of programs include free language training for children, youth, and adults that are implemented in local schools (English as an Additional Language), community colleges, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) (settlement and family-based organizations) (see Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2006, for details).

Over the past 15 years, the trend of greater attention from adult-oriented services to at risk children and youth populations has increased. This significant focus on the younger immigrant population is reflective in the new Canadian Immigration Act, Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (IRPA), which was passed in 2001. Numerous school-based and community services and programs have been developed and implemented for new immigrant and refugee children and youth throughout Canada, illustrating the complexities and challenges of migration. As immigrant-serving agencies (ISAs) are typically the first contact point for newcomers, it is important to explore how ISAs interpret the challenges and issues that young newcomers face. Thus, ISAs have a unique perspective of elucidating the challenges, barriers, and issues that young immigrants experience in their first several years in Canada. Thus, this study was developed to examine ISAs’ and community-based organizations’ perspective and response to the diverse needs of this particular population. Specifically, the primary objectives of this study was to explore the adjustment and settlement challenges and barriers. In addition, we examine age differences (children versus youth) and how children’s developmental challenges intersect with their patterns of immigration.

**METHOD**

**Participants**

A total of 40 individuals (primarily front-line staff who directly assist children and youth, program managers, and senior management) from 24 organizations
Chapter 8

across all ten provinces participated in this study. There were 18 immigrant serving agencies (ISAs) and six non-settlement, community-based organizations (CBOs) (e.g., Boys and Girls Club, YMCA).

Interview

Telephone interviews consisted of in-depth, semi-structured interviews, lasting approximately 60 to 90 minutes. The questions were developed in consultation with Citizenship and Immigration Canada (federal government). The questions that were posed were: (1) What challenges and issues do children face (3 to 10 years of age)?; and (2) What challenges and issues do youth face (11 to 18 years of age)? Most interviews were conducted individually, with some organizations opting for a group interview. Notes were taken and sent back to the interviewees to check for accuracy and additional comments.

Coding System

The first author conducted all of the interviews. The interviews were transcribed, and a thematic analysis was used to identify the significant challenges and barriers reported by the participants. Two graduate students were trained to code the interview responses. As some organizations had several participants, the responses were combined to represent one organization as not to overrepresent any one organization (e.g., if two interviewees from the same organization mentioned the same issue, the issue counted only once). Based on the interview responses, major themes were identified. As many of the responses were multidimensional, the primary theme was coded. For example, in many cases, language barriers were inherent to the challenge of making friends. However, the primary theme in this instance would be making friends.

The coding analyses resulted in 11 themes: (1) accessing programs; (2) Canadian culture; (3) negative/antisocial behaviors; (4) financial issues; (5) language acquisition and learning; (6) mental health; (7) parent-child relationships; (8) parent separation; (9) peer relations and friendships; (10) discrimination and racism; and (11) school challenges and barriers (see Table 8.1 for definitions). For ease of presentation, some themes such as financial issues and accessing programs were discussed together. Moreover, the responses were aggregated by topics rather than by province or by type of sector (ISA, CBO). However, the detailed responses have been placed in Table 8.2 by province and by type of sector, divided into five regions: (1) British Columbia; (2) Prairie Region (Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba); (3) Ontario; (4) Quebéc; and (5) Atlantic Canada Region.
Table 8.1. Coding System for Challenges and Issues Faced by Immigrant and Refugee Children and Youth

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accessing programs</td>
<td>Lack of ability to access programs, due to funding or transportation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canadian culture</td>
<td>General issues about Canadian culture, customs, and climate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discrimination/Racism</td>
<td>Racial or discriminatory behavior toward children/youth, from peers, teachers, and other individuals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finances</td>
<td>Issues that are related to finances, employment, or careers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language Proficiency</td>
<td>General communication issues, assessments, language disorders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental health</td>
<td>Mental health issues that are related to past trauma and stress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative behaviors</td>
<td>Behaviors that are linked to delinquency and deviancy, negative peer pressure, gang-related issues, aggression, and bullying</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent-child</td>
<td>Conflicts, discipline and abuse, language brokering, and role reversal relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent separation</td>
<td>Issues surrounding difficulties of children separating from parents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psycho-social/Peer relationships</td>
<td>Psychological (e.g., self-esteem, identity) and social (e.g., fitting in, sense of belonging) issues; language issues relating to loneliness and lack of friends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School issues</td>
<td>Student-related: Cultural disconnect - verbal and nonverbal misunderstandings/misinterpretations Parent involvement: disconnect or lack of parental knowledge about school issues, culture, lack of involvement such as assisting with homework School cultural barriers: curriculum, rules, regulations, settings</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Results and Discussion

Adjustment Challenges for Children and Youth

As immigrant and refugee children and youth (IRCY) settled in Canada, they faced many challenges in all aspects of their lives, including family, school, and the broader community (see Table 8.2). The adjustment challenges were complex and multifaceted. Thus, we attempted to tease out the overarching theme of the challenge. There were four primary challenges (capturing about one-half to two-thirds of the responses) that were similar for both age groups, including: (1) language acquisition and learning; (2) psycho-social and peer relationship issues; (3) school-related issues; and (4) financial issues. The other challenges which were more age-related will follow.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Challenge</th>
<th>Atlantic</th>
<th>B.C.</th>
<th>Ontario</th>
<th>Prairies</th>
<th>Québec</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>C</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6^2</td>
<td>6^1</td>
<td>5^1</td>
<td>5^1</td>
<td>6^1</td>
<td>7^1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language Proficiency</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>2^1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4^2</td>
<td>1^1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psycho-Social/Peers</td>
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<td>5^1</td>
<td>4^1</td>
<td>5^1</td>
<td>1^1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School</td>
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<td>4^1</td>
<td>3^1</td>
<td>2^1</td>
<td>3^1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accessing Programs</td>
<td>4^1</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3^1</td>
<td>3^1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canadian Culture</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finances</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1^1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent-Child Relationships</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>2^1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1^1</td>
<td>2^1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative Behaviors</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3^2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental Health</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1^1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent Separation</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>3^2</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent Discipline</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>1^1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discrimination/Racism</td>
<td>1^1</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>1^1</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. B.C. = British Columbia; C = Child; Y = Youth; superscript numbers represent the number of community-based organizations that endorsed the response.
Language Acquisition and Proficiency

Many families who immigrate to Canada face language barriers. As a primary struggle, many IRCY had significant difficulties in communicating with others, expressing their own intentions, and understanding their social world. Fifteen service provider organizations (SPOs), including 10 immigrant serving agencies (ISAs) and 5 community-based organizations (CBOs), viewed this challenge as the top struggle for IRCY (see Table 8.2). As researchers have reported, language, to a large extent, mediates one’s psychological processes and social interactions (Kilbride, Anisef, Baichman-Anisef, and Khattar, 2010; Wertsch, Del Rio, and Alvarez, 2002). During our interviews service providers discussed how many of their young clients struggled to verbally express themselves to their classmates and teachers. Their inability to effectively communicate led to frustration, and in turn, to a psychological “shut down.” More specifically, newcomers’ limited second-language knowledge resulted in confusion, anxiety, fear, and withdrawal of their social environment (Kilbride et al.). In contrast, the more competent the newcomer was at mastering the host language (English or French in Canada), the quicker they were at communicating with their peers and adults (e.g., teachers), which, in turn, resulted in less acculturative adjustment problems (Lee and Chen, 2000).

Service providers also stressed the complexities of language and how the lack of language proficiency may have masked other serious issues such as learning or physical disabilities. With increased numbers of immigrant and refugee families migrating to Canada, and Canada’s shift of the national humanitarian refugee resettlement program toward refugee protection, healthy newcomer development has become more of a concern. Thus, it is important for service providers and social policy makers to develop effective and efficient strategies to assess IRCY’s language and learning abilities and potential health impairments.

The inability to communicate has also led to additional negative consequences for refugees. Many SPOs discussed how refugee boys’ inability to communicate to their peers and teachers resulted in aggressive behaviors. For example, their experience with war and the brutality of refugee camps led some boys to develop a number of survival behaviors such as hoarding or taking something without explicit permission. Although necessary in their previous environment, these types of behaviors were misinterpreted as delinquency (stealing), although their intentions or motivations stemmed from previously formed survival strategies. According to SPOs, the discrepancies of cultural/life customs and behaviors between native and host countries have led to negative psychological and social development.
Developing Peer Relationships and Friendships

Successful adaptations among immigrant students are linked to the quality of peer relationships in their social worlds, including school settings (Portes and Rumbaut, 2001). Peers and friends serve multiple purposes for IRCY. As seen in Table 8.2, many respondents (10 ISAs and 4 CBOs for children; 15 ISAs, 3 CBOs for youth) emphasized the link between social relationships and mental health, stating that IRCY had difficulties in “fitting in”, feeling a sense of belonging, thus experiencing emotional strains. These findings are supportive of past studies (which have primarily focused on youth). For example, close friendships with peers have been positively associated with self-esteem (Cauce, 1986; Keefe and Berndt, 1996) and negatively associated with depression (Aseltime, Gore, and Colten, 1994). Kilbride and colleagues (2010) reported that “fitting in” constitutes a significant amount of immigrants’ stress as they attempted to re-establish their social networks. Specifically, social support has been found to provide a variety of protective functions for newcomers, including giving newcomers a sense of belonging, emotional support, tangible assistance and information, cognitive guidance, and positive feedback (Sarason, Sarason, and Pierce, 1990; Wills, 1985).

Peers also are integral to the academic adaptation of students in general, and immigrant students in particular (e.g., Levitt, Guacci-Franco, and Levitt, 1994; Wentzel, 1999). For example, researchers have found that peer relations in school played a crucial role in promoting newcomer students’ socially competent behavior in the classroom and fostered academic engagement and achievement (Fredricks, Blumenfeld, and Paris, 2004; Furrer and Skinner, 2003).

School Challenges and Barriers

School and academic performance was viewed as the second greatest challenge for immigrant students (for children, 11 ISAs, 3 CBOs; for youth, 8 ISAs, 2 CBOs) (see Table 8.2). This was expected as language barriers have also been linked to academic achievement and performance (Ruiz-de-Velasco, Fix, and Clewell, 2001), as well as the newcomers’ ability to detect the important social nuances in the school setting (Muñoz-Sandoval, Cummins, Alvarado, and Ruef, 1998). Although verbal proficiency can be developed within a couple of years, some researchers have estimated that the level of language skills necessary to be competitive with their native-born peers in the classroom may require as much as 5 to 7 years of language experience (Collier, 1992; Leventhal, Xue, and Brooks-Gunn, 2006). Thus, it is not surprising that many newcomers faced these types of challenges in school.
As expected, school stressors included the immigrants’ adjustment to a new school environment (both physical space and social climate) and their abilities to understand aspects of the school system such as grading, regulations, and school norms. Recent studies have consistently found that even though immigrant youth may have more positive attitudes toward their schools (Suárez-Orozco and Suárez-Orozco, 1995), higher academic aspirations (Portes and Rumbaut, 2001), and higher optimism about their future (Kao and Tienda, 1995; Suárez-Orozco and Suárez-Orozco, 2001) than their native-born peers, many were not as academically successful, as indicated by their achievement tests, grades, and college attendance (Gándara, 1994; Orfield, 2002; Ruiz-de-Velasco et al., 2001). Service providers discussed several reasons for these academic struggles. First, academic achievement was complicated by newcomers’ school experiences, or lack thereof. This was especially the case for refugee children and youth who may have had limited or no school experience (e.g., living in war-torn camps). Their placement in a typical Canadian classroom was an unfamiliar experience. Compounding the complexities of their learning experiences, their academic placement was determined by their developmental age, not their appropriate grade level. Second, their limited understanding of the local school culture also hindered immigrants’ adjustment to the school system. Although a portion of immigrant children were from countries where their previous school’s culture, social norms, and behaviors were similar, others may have had little or very divergent school experiences. For example, one service provider discussed how a child was ridiculed by her classmates because she would stand up when the teacher entered the room, as per classroom etiquette in her home country.

These academic challenges are consistent with past findings. For example, Anisef and Bunch (1994) reported that visible minority youth faced challenges of coping with the school system. Specifically, they found that these students performed poorly in class, suffered from behavioral problems, or dropped out of school. These negative outcomes were linked to school policies, discriminatory attitudes of teachers, and a lack of support and encouragement for academic achievement among minority youth. These types of environment negatively impacted newcomer students, resulting in truancy, fostering feelings of hostility toward school, and increased delinquency.

Another school challenge focused on newcomer parents’ involvement in their children’s schooling. As Moreno and Chuang (in volume) discussed (also see Moreno, Lewis-Menchaca, and Rodríguez, in press), how parents and teachers conceptualized parent involvement and who was responsible for their children’s academic learning may have added to IRCY’s acculturation challenges. According to service providers, many parents believed in a clear
division between home and school. For example, many immigrant parents viewed the school as having the primary responsibility of educating their children. They viewed teachers as the experts; thus, questioning teachers or interfering with school activities was seen as disrespectful. Unfortunately, this was perceived by some teachers as a “lack of care.” Other school-family disconnects have been demonstrated in IRCY families’ understanding of the school culture. As one SPO illustrated, in some countries such as China, students were expected to be respectful of teachers, obedient, and quiet, and thus, parents trained and socialized their children in line with their cultural expectations. However, Canadian teachers often expected their students to be assertive, vocal, and ask questions. This cultural disconnect between parents and teachers of student expectations and behaviors ultimately limit their children’s academic advancement and standing in the classrooms.

Adding to the complexities of families and schools, many newcomer families have migrated to Canada with limited financial income. According to Statistics Canada (2008), recent immigrants are more likely than their Canadian-born counterparts to be of low income, especially visible minority newcomers. More specifically, the poverty rate for recent immigrants (in Canada for 10 years or less) was significantly higher (52%) than the national average (25%). As some have found, socioeconomic status has been linked with children’s academic performance. Low-income households were less likely to: (1) be able to afford materials to support learning (e.g., computers, internet access); (2) provide a conducive learning environment for their children (e.g., space for children to do their homework); (3) provide nutritional foods; and (4) assist their children with their homework, as parents may not have the relevant educational background for the tasks at hand. These issues, combined with institutional barriers, were found to impact children’s self-esteem and motivation to academically succeed (Ansief and Bunch, 1994).

**Finances and Accessing Programs**

According to Statistics Canada (2004), newcomer families are more likely to have higher rates of low income and poverty than other Canadians. Service providers discussed the multidimensionality of financial strain on families and, more specifically, on children and youth (9 ISAs, 1 CBO for children; 10 ISAs for youth) (see Table 8.2). Researchers have revealed that positive employment experiences were associated with healthy social and economic development of newcomer youth (Johnson and Peters, 1994). However, SPOs stated that many of their youth were facing difficulties in finding employment, with some finding other avenues of support that may be illegal (e.g., being runners for drug dealers) as employment opportunities are often limited by prejudice (Kilbride...
Thus, newcomers are placed in precarious situations where financial needs are great but funds are limited. Some youth also take on some of the financial burdens of the family. Such burdens increase the acculturative stress for youth, which may force some youth to drop out of school.

Finances have also been linked to children’s psychological well-being. When children, and especially youth, want to “fit in” with their peers, they feel the pressures of dressing like them and joining them in activities (which may include cost for transportation, the activity itself) that, more likely than not, require money for unbudgeted expenses. SPOs noted that some parents were unaware of how certain merchandise (e.g., wearing trendy clothing) were their children’s ways of “fitting in” socially and gaining social acceptance with their peers. Meanwhile, children and youth may not fully understand the degree to which their parents were struggling to make ends meet. Thus, parent-child tension arose between children’s desire for social activities and the latest fashion and parents’ view of these as unnecessary expenses.

Limited funding also has serious consequences to the degree to which children and youth can transition into their new social environment. First, some service providers discussed how many families (especially families of younger children) had issues with affording fee-based programs. Unfortunately, these cost-prohibitive programs may have assisted children and youth in overcoming some of their adjustment challenges (e.g., academic assistance, social activities that may increase opportunities for newcomers to make friends). However, even if programs and services were free, other barriers such as transportation were also identified as a serious concern. For example, affordable housing was generally located further from the city (where many of the organizations and agencies are located). With the limited financial resources for housing, affordable housing was generally located further from the city (where many of the organizations and agencies are located). Subsequently, the cost of transportation restricted families from taking advantage of the various services and programs offered to all newcomers.

Lastly, these economic stresses and hardships in families were linked to emotional distress, marital relations, and parenting practices (for review, see Conger and Donnellan, 2007). For example, Mistry, Benner, Tan, and Kim (2009) reported that Chinese American youth’s perceptions of their families’ economic stress and constraints predicted their levels of emotional distress and educational success.

Shifts within the Parent-Child Relationship

Research has revealed that children tend to acquire a new language and aspects of the settlement society’s culture more readily and quickly than do
their parents (Gonzales, Knight, Morgan-Lopez, Saenz, and Sirolli, 2002). Participants indicated that discrepancies in intergenerational adaptation to a new culture had been found to negatively impact parent-child relations (10 SPOs for youth; 6 SPOS for children). Thus, as families cope with, and adapt to, the significant sociocultural lifestyle and environmental changes, many immigrant parents tend to rely on their children to help them function effectively in the new society (Santisteban, Muir-Malcolm, Mitrani, and Szapocznik, 2002). Consequently, children and youth adopt an increased level of responsibility and may even need to assume some adult roles in their families (see Suárez-Orozco and Suárez-Orozco, 2001). For example, children often become the intermediaries or “brokers” between the two cultural and linguistic worlds, assisting their parents by translating and interpreting, often in complex situations (Tse, 1995a). Language and cultural brokering positions children in very influential roles in the families, and these roles may or may not be developmentally appropriate (Tse, 1995b). Many have found that such role reversals had negative consequences on children and youth, including emotional and somatic problems (e.g., Johnson, 1990) and psychological problems such as anxiety, depression, low self-esteem, and the like (e.g., Oznobishin and Kurman, 2009; Parke and Chuang, in volume).

SPOs also revealed that IRCY’s need for independence was a common challenge between children and their parents. Independence or personal freedom (the ability to have personal preferences and choices) has been viewed as a necessary aspect for one’s psychological well-being and for the formation of a child’s social self (Nucci and Lee, 1993). Especially among older children, youth may expect higher levels of independence and less parental control (Fuligni, 1998; Yau and Smetana, 2003), leading to more parent-adolescent conflicts (e.g., see Kwak, 2003; Smokowski, Rose, and Bacallao, 2008; Tar-dif and Geva, 2006). This issue was particularly salient for newcomer families, as service providers discussed how parents were very concerned for their children’s and youth’s well-being. Specifically, parents endeavored to protect their children from negative influences, but youth viewed this level of control as inappropriate. This struggle with control has led some parents to blame the “individualistic/Westernized” culture of Canada for the difficulty with their children, claiming that Canadian parents are permissive and provide their children with too much freedom.

The discrepancies of acculturation levels between parents and their children may lead to increased conflicts. The extant literature suggests that parent-youth conflict is related to a number of important psychological, academic, behavioral, and familial outcomes, including psychological symptoms and depression (Dennis, Basanez, and Farahman, 2010; Lim, Yeh, Liang, Lau, and McCabe, 2009), emotional distress (Chung, Flook, and Fuligini,
Service Providers’ Perspectives on Immigration Challenges

2009), academic achievement (Dotterer, Hoffman, and Updegraff, 2008),
delinquency (van Doorn, Branje, and Meeus, 2008), and family satisfac-
tion (Lee, Su, and Yoshida, 2005). These findings stress the importance for
researchers to better understand the complexities of parent-child relationships
in immigrant families and for SPOs to develop and modify current services
and programs to address these issues.

**Immigrants’ Aggressive and Negative Behaviors**

A fairly unexplored area of research is the negative behaviors and delinquency
conducted by newcomer children and youth. There has been some attention
to the negative outcomes of immigrants who struggle academically and the
impact of perceived discrimination and racism and how newcomers have
been victimized. However, little attention has focused on how newcomers
engage in aggressive and/or delinquent behaviors and activities (see García
Coll and Magnuson, 1997; Massey and Denton, 1993). As illustrated by ser-
vice providers, whether intentional or unintentional, negative and anti-social
behaviors by some newcomers have increased their difficulties in adjusting
into their new social environment (10 SPOs for youth; 4 ISAs for children)
(see Table 8.2). For example, confounded by the challenges and struggles of
learning a new language, fitting in, making friends, and financial needs, some
newcomer children and youth become enticed into joining gangs. As some
SPOs witnessed, gang members tend to “hang around” settlement agencies,
hoping to meet vulnerable immigrants and refugees that may be willing to
engage in illegal activities to make some money.

Currently, no research has explicitly explored how immigrants’ lives
and social skills developed in the home country impacted children’s level
of adjustment and settlement in the host country. This focus of research is
particularly important for groups such as refugees from war-torn or hostile
areas. As illustrated by the respondents of the present study, although their
modes of adaptation may have been essential to survive in camps (where
food and resources were scarce), their behaviors conflicted with the values
and practices of the host country. Unfortunately, refugee children may be
unaware that their survival and social skills are incompatible with their new
social world and “learn the hard way.” Teachers and peers may misinterpret
these behaviors, leading them to experience greater negative school and
social experiences. According the participants, difficulties were compounded
by the fact that many refugees arrive to Canada with post-traumatic stress
disorders following exposure to violence and great hardship. However, the
mental health services may be either unavailable or limited and thus, their
challenges of adapting to Canada are much more complex.
Discrimination and Racism

Researchers have consistently reported that discrimination and racism have deleterious effects on one’s psychological and physical development. More specifically, experiences of prejudice and discrimination have led to lower self-esteem and other psychological functioning (e.g., anxiety, elevated stress, depression) (Dubois, Burk-Braxton, Swenson, Tevendale, Lockerd, and Moran, 2002; Surko, Ciro, Blackwood, Nembhard, and Peake, 2005) as well as physical health issues and behavioral problems (Williams, Neighbors, and Jackson, 2003). Unfortunately, some service providers had young clients facing these challenges and barriers as they adjusted into their new schools and communities (1 SPO for children, 5 SPOs for youth). IRCY described to service providers a variety of incidences of why they were discriminated against, including language barriers, clothing, color of their skin, the food they ate, and so on. Discrimination took on many forms, including group exclusion at school, lack of friends, teasing, and bullying. An expected consequence is that many IRCY felt alienated, depressed, and isolated.

Other Challenges

Especially for children, a significant portion of ISAs (10 and 6 ISAs, respectively) mentioned that newcomers had considerable difficulties in understanding and adjusting to the Canadian culture (e.g., social norms, food) and weather (i.e., winter). First, some informants mentioned that IRCY had adjustment issues in the Canadian’s multicultural society where they were interacting with other ethnic minority groups for the first time. Thus, “being Canadian” was an elusive meaning, creating additional pressures on IRCY to “fit in” with their diverse peer groups. SPOs reported that even the Canadian weather, and more specifically, the winter, provided a significant challenge, as newcomers may not have been fully prepared for the harshness of the Canadian weather and the additional cost that would be incurred.

Seven SPOs (5 ISAs, 2 CBOs) discussed mental health challenges for children, whereas three ISAs mentioned these types of issues for youth. There was a particular focus on refugee children and youth and their past experiences in refugee camps. Participants reported that many refugees witnessed and/or experienced traumatizing violent crimes (e.g., family members being killed in front of them). With limited resources and infrastructure of schools and community agencies, some children and youth had difficulties in adapting into their new lives. Some suffered from post-traumatic stress disorder that remained undiagnosed and untreated. Unfortunately, these challenges then impacted their lives in various ways, such as their abilities to concentrate
in school (leading to lower academic achievement) to socially interacting with their peers (leading to higher levels of loneliness, anxiety, depression, and decreased sense of belongingness).

Parent-child separation was also mentioned as a challenge for newcomer children and youth (3 ISAs, 2 CBOs for children; 1 ISA for youth). Others found that children struggled with separation anxiety from their parents in day care/school. Parental discipline was also mentioned by a few SPOs, especially in relation to physical punishment. As some cultures condone the use of corporal punishment, some parents may not initially realize that physically disciplining one’s child was illegal in Canada. Thus, some parents felt that they were unable to “control and discipline” their children and youth (4 ISAs for children; 1 ISA, 1 CBO for youth).

CONCLUSIONS

Especially in Canada, where significant efforts of the federal and provincial governments have supported over 450 immigrant serving agencies and other community-based organizations to provide services and programs for newcomer families, it is important for us to tap into the perspectives of service providers. This study provides insight into the various challenges that service providers have indicated as serious issues for newcomer children and youth. Although immigrant families have remarkable strengths and resources (family ties, high educational aspirations, and optimism about the future), many struggle as they navigate the terrain of the new country. They encounter formidable barriers such as language, discrimination and racism, and changes in family dynamics and relationships, and must re-construct their social world (e.g., Suárez-Orozco and Suárez-Orozco, 2001). The situation is exacerbated when children and youth contemplate that the decision to migrate to a new country was not theirs (see Levitt, Lane, and Levitt, 2005).

Immigrant-serving agencies as well as non-settlement, community-based organizations have attempted to provide effective programs and services that are instrumental in young immigrants’ adjustment into Canada. Through their experiences, service providers afford us with unique insights into the lives of immigrants. There are myriad of challenges and barriers that immigrant and refugee children and youth face, with some challenges being more complex than others. Although it is necessary to translate and provide information to families about institutions, local practices, and even the Canadian weather, it is not sufficient to permeate the deeper aspect of one’s life (e.g., school, friends). Problems such as discrimination, poverty, and violence complicate the acculturation process, taxing even the most resilient immigrants’ coping capacities.
However, SPOs can be instrumental in developing protective factors. When students believed that they are competent and have some level of control, they are likely to engage in learning a new language and forge new interpersonal relationships (National Research Council, 2004; Schunk, 1991).

Although greater attention has focused on the adjustment of newcomers, we need to be more proactive in developing early intervention settlement programs and services that will provide newcomer children and youth with enhanced skills, tools, and opportunities to successfully transition into Canada. To accomplish this, we must build collaborative efforts with various stakeholders (academics, service providers, policy makers) to move toward a more systematic and effective research and action agenda in dealing with the challenges and barriers of immigration and settlement that not only children and youth face but their families’ as well.

AUTHOR NOTE

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REFERENCES


Service Providers’ Perspectives on Immigration Challenges


**APPENDIX A**

**Organization Contributors**

*British Columbia*

1. Boys and Girls Club of Greater Vancouver*
2. Inter-Cultural Association of Greater Victoria
3. Immigrant Services Society of BC
4. MOSAIC
5. SUCCESS

*Prairie Region*

Alberta

1. Edmonton Immigrant Services
2. Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers

Manitoba

1. IRCOM HOUSE
2. Manitoba Interfaith Immigration Council, Inc
3. NEEDS CENTRE

Saskatchewan

1. Regina Open Door Society
2. Saskatoon Open Door Society

*Ontario*

1. Advisory and Support Services
2. New Canadians’ Centre of Excellence Inc.
3. Peel Children’s Aid Society*
4. Region of Peel*
5. Settlement & Integration Services Organization (SISO)

*Québec*

1. PROMIS
Chapter 8

Atlantic Canada Region

New Brunswick
1. Multicultural Association of the Greater Moncton Area

Newfoundland
1. Association for New Canadians
2. Daybreak Parent Child Centre*

Nova Scotia
1. YMCA*
2. Metropolitan Immigrant Settlement Association (MISA)

Prince Edward Island
1. PEI Association for Newcomers to Canada

* Denotes non-immigrant settlement community-based organizations
Chapter 9

The Social Relational Perspective on Family Acculturation

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When families immigrate to a country whose dominant culture differs from their own, they willingly or unwillingly engage in a process of cultural, psychological, and family change known as acculturation. Immigrant parents may find that their beliefs, values, and practices may be supported or challenged in the country of settlement. Their children also may be faced with conflicting messages from their parents and the culture in which they will live out their lives. The choices that parents and children collectively make as they interact with each other and the surrounding culture contribute to change in both cultures as a result of contact with one another (Berry, Poortinga, Segal, and Dasen, 2002; Redfield, Linton, and Herskovits, 1936). Parents, and children separately experience individual changes in their attitudes, values, and identity (Graves, 1967).

Acculturation may also have consequences for family relationships. Parents and children have been found to adapt asynchronously to the new culture resulting in acculturation gaps between the two generations (Birman and Trickett, 2001; Kim, Ahn, and Lam, 2009), parent-child conflict (Kwak, 2003; Phinney, Ong, and Madden, 2000), and stress (Gil and Vega, 1996; Parke et al., 2004). Relatively little is known about the social processes involved when family members undergo changes due to acculturation.

In this chapter, we outline a social relational framework for studying how parents and children interact with each other, maintain their relationships, and how the parent-child relationship itself may change as families undergo many years of adaptation to the new culture. We begin by linking research on acculturation with recent models of socialization in the family. Such a linkage is
possible because contemporary theory at these two levels of analysis has converged to focus on socialization as a dynamic process involving bidirectional influences between human agents and their changing contexts. Sociocultural perspectives consider the role of individuals as agents in the construction and reshaping of culture (Berry et al., 2002; Oppedal, 2006) during recurrent interactions between persons, groups, and their environment (Phalet and Schönpflug, 2001). Similarly, social relational theory emphasizes bidirectional influence in the family and the purposive actions and interpretive activities of both parents and children in promoting both change and continuity between the generations (Kuczyński and Navara, 2006). We argue that acculturation provides a unique opportunity to disentangle classic processes of enculturation and socialization and, in so doing, provides a lens on the unique problems facing parent-child relations in immigrant families. We focus on the acculturation of values and parent-child relationships as two foci for intergenerational tensions that have implications for parent-child relations. Lastly, we consider the separate perspectives and strategies of immigrant parents and their children as they adapt, not only to a new culture, but also to each other in the new society in which they settle.

**SOCIAL RELATIONAL THEORY**

Social relational theory (Kuczyński and Parkin, 2007, 2009) was developed to help researchers visualize parent-child relationships and interactions in a more dynamic way than was possible under unidirectional models of socialization of the previous century. Social relational theory is based on a dialectical conception of bidirectional processes in socialization. Parents and children are considered to interact as human agents within a system of culturally embedded social relationships. Processes of contradiction, including conflict, expectancy violations, ambiguity, and ambivalence are interpreted dialectically: they are inherent within parent-child relationships and set the conditions for qualitative change (Kuczyński and Parkin, 2009; Kuczyński, Pitman and Mitchell, 2009) as parents and children continuously adapt to each other over time. In a dialectical conception, the various forms of contradiction are not viewed negatively; instead they are viewed as the driving force of qualitative change such as that encompassed by the idea of acculturation.

A distinctive feature of social relational theory is that it places equal emphasis on the perspectives and actions of children as well as those of parents. In the context of acculturation, it considers the different socio-cultural contexts of parents and children following immigration and focuses on the strategic
actions and relational dynamics that occur as parents and children pursue both
different and shared goals as they undergo acculturation. The dialectical prin-
ciple of holism implies that the different goals, interpretations, and actions of
parents and children are embedded within a mutual relationship that both con-
strains and facilitates their exercise of agency (Kuczyński, 2003). Individuals
exercise their agency with reference to their social relationships and cultural
contexts (Ratner, 2000). Thus, although the model draws attention to the sepa-
rate perspectives of parents and children, both parents and children attempt
to cope with or resolve conflicting views because they share a continuing
interdependent relationship. Bidirectional influence comes about as parents
and children interpret or construct meanings from each other’s behaviors and
resist, negotiate, and accommodate each other’s perspectives within the con-
straints of their relationship.

An important focus of social relational theory concerns qualitative
change. The outcome of processes such as socialization is assumed to be
more than exact compliance or transmission of similarity from the older
generation to the younger generation. A key construct and a replacement for
passive models of cultural transmission (Lawrence and Valsiner, 1993) is the
idea of working models of culture. This conception builds on constructionist
views of culture as a system of meanings (Bruner, 1996) or personal models
(Valsiner, 2001), actively constructed by individuals in the process of inter-
acting with and interpreting their social environments. Working models of
relationships, beliefs, values, and culture are temporary and are periodically
revised to accommodate contradictory information (Kuczyński, Marshall,
and Schell, 1997; Kuczyński and Navara, 2006). As a result of different
life experiences and transactions with each other and other working models
available in their ecological contexts, mothers, fathers, and each child in the
family develop separate interpretations of that culture. For example, Navara
and Lollis (2009) found that parents and children in Jamaican immigrant
families living in Canada maintained different constructions of the core
cultural value of “respect” from each other. It was found that this value was
malleable over time and that adolescents attributed changes to their social
interactions with the host culture.

FAMILY ACCULTURATION: INTEGRATING WITHIN FAMILY
AND SOCIETAL PROCESSES

Socialization and enculturation form the basis of the transmission of values
and beliefs between generations (Berry et al., 2002). Socialization is the
intentional process of communicating cultural values, beliefs, customs, and
behaviors through modeling, direct instruction, and other parenting strategies such as managing the child’s environment (Parke et al., 2003). In contrast, enculturation is a largely unconscious process, whereby individuals learn the ideas and practices of a culture by being enfolded in the culture. Values and beliefs are communicated through the process of engaging in the mundane, everyday activities of residing in a particular cultural group and the interactions within social relationships in which the individual is embedded. Enculturation can be construed as learning without awareness. For individuals embedded in a culture, everyday ideas and practices acquired through enculturation constitutes common sense (Kuczyński, Lollis, and Koguchi, 2003). For example, children may not question the childrearing practices of their parents because children “have little say, explicit consciousness, or comparative examples outside their own cultural milieu about how parents behave or how they go about the business of being parents” (Xiong, Detzner, and Cleveland, 2004, p. 2). The implicit hoped outcome of both socialization and enculturation is that the individual internalizes appropriate cultural norms and expectations to become a competent, functional, and skilful member of the cultural group.

The phenomenon of family acculturation provides a natural field experiment for teasing out the separate processes of enculturation and socialization. Goodnow (1997) proposes that a great deal of cultural transmission is accomplished more through the “doing” of cultural practices (or enculturation) rather than consciously teaching them (socialization). For parents raising children within their own cultural context, enculturation and socialization are tightly intertwined and the transmission of cultural values and practices is often taken for granted. Moreover, parents benefit from group processes, such as living in communities that share similar values and practices, that support the transmission of parental values independently of their individual efforts.

Immigrant families differ in that some children immigrate at different ages together with their parents and some are born in the new cultural setting. However, in the prototypical case of family acculturation, where the parental generation raised in one culture raises children in another culture, the processes of socialization and enculturation are somewhat separable. In Figure 9.1, we depict the central problem of acculturation for parents and children by considering how parents and children both carry forward and modify the values and practices of their generation and of their culture. This theoretical framework considers the process of acculturation for families as a contradiction between the parents’ working models of generation and of culture and those of children. We will use this framework to analyze the relative influence of enculturation and socialization in the development of difference versus continuity in parents’ and children’s personal constructions of culture.
Figure 9.1.
Chapter 9

The bottom of Figure 9.1 considers generational change, a process that is common both to within culture socialization and acculturation. Parents form their working models from ideas prevalent in the collective working models of their generation. After immigration, parents may be able to preserve their working models through support and input from cultural organizations, religious groups, and schools (Berry et al., 2002). Indigenous cultures change over time. For example, many Asian cultures such as Taiwan (Chuang, 2006) and China (Goh and Kuczyński, 2009) are experiencing transformations in the interpretation of Confucian ideals with regard to childrearing beliefs and practices in response to increasing urbanization and rapid social change.

However, to the extent that parents are disconnected from the social forces experienced by their generational peers who did not emigrate, their models of culture may fail to keep up with changes in the culture of origin. Indeed, the ideas that immigrant parents may attempt to transmit may not only differ from those of their children, who are forming a generation of their own in the adopted culture, but are becoming outdated in their culture of origin. The first author remembers learning practices such as formally bowing and kissing women’s hands and dancing the tango as basic social skills that may have been current in the parental generation in Poland in the 1930s but fit neither Polish culture or the Canadian culture of settlement in the 1960s. Studies with South Asian (Farver, Bhadha, and Narang, 2002) and Portuguese families (Navara and James, 2003) suggest that cultural norms and values remained relatively static over the years after immigration and bore little resemblance to the norms or values currently accepted and practiced in their culture of origin. Farver et al. (2002) found that Asian Indian adolescents were more likely to identify with American culture, whereas their parents, who had spent much more time in the United States, put more emphasis on traditional Indian religious values.

The contribution of working models of culture in the context of acculturation is depicted in the top portion of Figure 9.1. For immigrant parents, acculturation adds to the problem of generation by increasing distance between parent and child values (Knafo and Shwartz, 2001). Parents’ working models of culture are formed in the culture of origin, whereas children’s working models are rapidly formed through interactions with peers, schools, and media of the adopted culture (Costigan and Dokis, 2006). This separation of working models has unique consequences for family processes during acculturation. For families raised and living in the same culture, intergenerational transmission is somewhat easier because parents’ direct efforts as socializing agents are supported by processes of within-culture enculturation. With the exception of generational change, both parents and children are exposed to the same medium of enculturation. For families undergoing acculturation,
parents and children have different experiences of enculturation. As will be described later in this chapter, immigrant parents who wish to preserve and transmit their ethnic heritage culture without the support that would have been taken for granted in their country of origin must do so primarily by means of their own conscious efforts and strategies. Children of immigrants who are immersed both in the cultural norms and practices experienced in family life and also the norms and practices of the host culture are faced with choices with regard to their own developing models of culture and quandaries with regard to their allegiances to their parents and to the culture in which they will live out their lives.

The amount of overlap or continuity that results is dependent on numerous factors. Most important is the nature of the specific culture of origin and culture of settlement under consideration. The amount of tension between imported cultural values and the values prevalent in the society of settlement experienced by immigrant families is influenced by the cultural distance between the two cultures (Berry, 2006). Cultural distance reflects dissimilarities between the prevalent working models in the culture of origin and the culture of settlement. For example, a Honduran family living in Guatemala is likely to experience less cultural distance between their own and the adopted culture’s working model than the same family relocating to Canada. Under conditions of low cultural distance, the development of intergenerational continuity is supported by enculturation.

### ACCULTURATION OF VALUES AND PARENT-CHILD RELATIONSHIPS

A key finding of acculturation research is that parents and children change at different rates following exposure to a new culture with children adapting more quickly than parents. The presence of such “acculturation gaps” (Birman and Trickett, 2001; Kim et al., 2009) depends on the specific content of ideas that are assessed. This is because not all values are equally likely to lead to contradictions between parents and children following immigration. For example, there is evidence that children maintained and valued a shared ethnic heritage with their parents and showed broad acceptance of ideas of familial loyalty and responsibility. In a study of Chinese families acculturating to the Canadian context, Costigan and Dokis (2006) found no differences between parents and children in general orientations toward Asian cultural values of collectivism (humility, following social norms, and high achievement) or in Chinese ethnic identity. However, parents and children differed in their preferences for ethnic versus Canadian language and media. Similarly,
there is evidence that children preserve a cultural emphasis of family centeredness and relatedness, respect for parents, and responsibilities and obligations at home (Xiong et al., 2004). Children of immigrants may perceive that a bicultural identity adds valued dimension to their lives in comparison to their peers. In a study of Jamaican families in Canada, adolescents reported that with the possible exception of “Canadian beer and hockey” their Canadian counterparts were culturally impoverished because they did not have valued cultural culinary experiences such as Jamaican jerk chicken, akee salt fish, or Jamaican patties or artistic expressions such as reggae music (Navara, 2006).

Children undergoing acculturation are constantly exposed to alternative models of values and family relationships communicated by peers, schools, and media that confront them with numerous contradictions in their own lives. However, to the extent that immigrant parents seek to transmit values discrepant with the values of a host culture to their children, children’s dissonant acculturation experiences may have negative repercussions for family relationships. Children may reject or confront specific parental values that are contrary to what they may perceive to be desirable alternatives in the culture in which they will live out their lives. Extensive negotiations may occur as parents attempt to transmit core elements of their culture of origin to children and children attempt to reconcile the teachings of their parents with their experiences in the host culture (Kwak, 2003). Potential areas of parent-child conflict that may be exacerbated by acculturation include autonomy, values regarding inclusion and tolerance of diversity, and norms for parent-child relationships.

Acculturation of Autonomy

Conflict over personal freedom and autonomy and resentment over perceived over-protectiveness and constraint is a frequent finding in the acculturation literature (Costigan and Dokis, 2006; Kim et al., 2009; Kwak and Berry, 2001; Xiong et al., 2004). Kwak (2003) argued that there is a major tension between immigrant parents’ preference for family interdependence and embeddedness and children’s striving for their own independence and autonomy. In various traditional cultures, children’s exercise of autonomy and conflict over autonomy issues may be constrained by the child’s family and community to a greater extent than in the culture of settlement. However, children of immigrants have the possibility to contrast the personal freedoms of their dominant culture peers versus the constraints imposed by their own parents.

Conflict over autonomy may have a gendered dimension. This occurs when cultures that strongly emphasize conformity to traditional sex roles in
the socialization of children come in contact with cultures that promote gender equality. Traditional female sex roles vary from differential expectations of obedience and freedom between males and females (Tang and Dion, 1999) to relatively severe forms of discrimination in some cultures that emphasize male supremacy and female subordination and impose seclusion on the lives of daughters (Dhruvarajan, 1993; Turiel, 2002). Talbani and Hasanali (2000) showed that in South Asia and among South Asian immigrants, gender roles were maintained through gender segregation, control over social activities of girls, arranged marriage, and perceived high social cost attached to protest and dissent. Generational discrepancy between self and perceived parental values was found for Chinese women in Canada but not for men in the study by Tang and Dion (1999), suggesting greater conflict with regard to traditional gender role and cultural values for women.

Acculturation of Values Regarding Exclusion

Another area of value discrepancy that has received little acknowledgement or research concerns values regarding exclusion versus tolerance of diversity. All cultures have experienced histories of religious or political strife and may include ideas and attitudes endorsing racial, ethnic, national, and religious intolerance, exclusion, and inequality as part of their heritage (Kuczyński and Navara, 2006). Such values may be contested in countries with multicultural policies that officially promote mutual harmony, tolerance, and cooperation among cultures. Evidence for the transmission of racial and ethnic intolerance within immigrant groups is currently scarce but suggests that children take a moral stance when evaluating the fairness of such attitudes in parents (Killen, Lee-Kim, McGlothlin, and Stangor, 2002). The emerging literature on racial socialization has tended to focus on positive outcomes when parents focus on ethnic heritage, history, and participation in cultural activities (Abu-Rayya, 2006). However, views of racial mistrust have been found when parents focus on their own history of discrimination. Parent-child tensions may ensue when parents communicate negative messages regarding interethnic and interracial dating and friendships (Kuczyński, Navara, and Boiger, 2007).

Acculturation of Parent-Child Relationships

Cultures differ in their ideas of appropriate power relations, intimacy, and communication in parent-child relationships (Kuczyński, 2003; Trommsdorff and Kornadt, 2003). Immigrant parents may be challenged by new norms for parent-child relationships that are unsupportive of traditional childrearing practices and modes of relating that they may attempt to maintain in the
new environment. Much of the research documenting conflict over norms in parent-child interactions and relationships concern Asian families. In countries such as China, Korea, and Vietnam, parent-child relations are influenced by Confucian philosophy that traditionally prescribed hierarchal power relations in the family including the authority of the father, obedience of wives to husbands and children to parents, and submission of self to family (Ho, 1996; Kim, 1997). These are reinforced by values of filial piety that are communicated in the form of rules governing parent-child relationships, including mutual obligations, appropriate modes of communication, expressiveness, social interaction, and etiquette (Kim, 2006).

As children develop into adolescence, they may come to notice that norms for parent-child relationships in their culture of settlement differ in many ways from the models of relationships practiced in their own homes (Wu and Chao, 2005) and may detrimentally evaluate or challenge culturally discrepant aspects of their own parent-child relationships (Kim et al., 2009; Nguyen and Williams, 1989; Pyke, 2000). For example, adolescents may evaluate positively the more democratic power arrangements evident in the families of friends where conflicts are negotiated rather than suppressed (Zhou and Bankston, 1996). They may interpret parental expectations regarding school achievement and choice of career, family, and marital partner as unrealistically high or explicit (Le, Boiger, and Kuczynski, 2007). Interactions with parents may be perceived as coercive or psychologically controlling (Dinh, Sarason, and Sarason, 1994; Herz and Gullone, 1999; Lamborn, Mounts, Steinberg, and Dornbusch 1991; Xiong et al., 2004).

Children continue to love and respect their parents, but may experience communications with their parents, particularly fathers, as relatively distant and non-intimate (Shwalb, Nakazawa, Yamamoto, and Hyun, 2004). Although they may appreciate the sacrifices that their parents have made for them, they may wish for the direct expressions of praise, warmth, love, and affection as communicated by the parents of their friends (Chao and Tseng, 2002; Pyke, 2000).

**FAMILY ACCULTURATION: PARENTS AND CHILDREN AS AGENTS**

Thus far we have considered the macro context of family acculturation. We now describe a social relational framework for understanding how parents and children, considered as human agents, maneuver tensions in their relationships brought on by exposure to a new culture. In a dialectical perspective, tensions such as conflict, ambiguity, and ambivalence are conceptu-
alized as forms of contradiction that may be a potential catalyst for qualitative change in development (Kuczyński and Navara, 2006; Kuczyński and Parkin, 2009). Exposure to new models of values of autonomy, morality, and family relationships gives children scope for new interpretations and action that they would not have encountered in the parents’ culture of origin. Exposure to the norms of the new culture and resulting challenges from their children may also instigate changes in the continuing adult development of immigrant parents. In the following sections, we consider cognitive and behavioral aspects of agency from the separate perspectives of parents and children that are highlighted by social relational theory. Because research from the agentic perspective that we advocate is rare, we draw on several recent qualitative studies on parent-child relationships of Jamaican, Chinese, and Vietnamese immigrants living in Canada.

Parents’ Perspective on Acculturation

Reconstructing Working Models

Immigration can be considered as a significant transaction continuing adult resocialization and development of parents. Although the specific reasons for immigrating vary, most parents deliberately undertake the challenge of relocating to a new county in order to change the quality of life for themselves and their families. In considering parents as agents in the process of acculturation, we first highlight parental cognitive activities, which we will refer to as reconstructing working models. We assume that parental processes for reevaluating and reconstructing their values, beliefs, and practices partly reflect reactive adaptation to the changed environment of the new culture, partly reflect their responses to influences from their own children, and partly reflect proactive exploration of new possibilities for thought and action afforded by the new culture. Moreover, we assume that developing a new working model of culture evokes considerable ambivalence not only with respect to weighing the costs and benefits of abandoning, adapting, or maintaining specific values, beliefs, and practices but also with respect to their own emotional connectedness to the cultural meaning of these ideas (Navara and James, 2003). Along with this personal process of acculturation, parents are faced with the task of evaluating and adapting their parental ethnotheories—the values, beliefs, and practices that guide the parent in socializing their child (Harkness and Super, 1995). How much the parent has invested in these particular values influences the level of importance placed upon the socialization attempts, the strategies adopted, and how vigorously the parent uses these strategies (Padilla-Walker and Thompson, 2005).
Available research indicates that parents adapt their childrearing goals following immigration. Parents balance their desire for children to adopt cultural norms that will ensure scholastic success and financial security (Chopra and Satinder, 2003) and, at the same time, wish for their children’s values to be rooted in the beliefs of their culture of origin (MacDonald and Jessica, 2006). Although these two goals are not mutually exclusive, they are expected to generate contradictions. How parents as human agents respond to this contradiction is a fertile arena for research. Possible responses include the use of coping strategies to alleviate acculturative stress and shedding of cultural values that are no longer adaptive in the new situation (Berry, 1993). Such strategies imply a process of selection and reevaluation. Nagel (1994) uses a shopping cart analogy—parents select elements from their ethnic culture (such as religion, norms, values, symbols, myths, customs, art, music, and dress) to transmit to their children. In this regard, one would expect that parents “choose their battles” so as to foster ideas that are core to their working models of culture.

Perhaps, the area most in need of research concerns parents’ generation of innovative solutions to the problem of rearing their children in a new culture (Kuczyński and Navara, 2006; Kwak, 2003). Recently, a qualitative study involving Chinese-Canadian immigrant parents examined their attitudes toward traditional parental ethnotheories in China and changes to those ethnotheories due to living in Canada (Xu, 2007). During the interviews, considerable ambivalence regarding various values and norms as they exist in mainland China and in Canada was noted. For example, from the vantage point of their newly adopted culture, mothers were critical of the one-sided focus on academic achievement in China, where additional extracurricular lessons are valued at the expense of social activities. At the same time, their evaluations of Canadian norms were ambivalent in that they appreciated the value placed on social interactions with peers but disparaged what they perceived as lack of rigor in Canadian academic standards. Mothers showed evidence of adapting their ethnotheories for the Canadian context. The mothers not only attempted to find “the middle road” between Chinese and Canadian values regarding ideas such as filial piety and high academic achievement but retooled their childrearing strategies, producing a novel synthesis of traditional Chinese socialization strategies better suited for the Canadian context.

Parenting Strategies

As described earlier in this chapter, the separation of parents from social supports for en culturation of the country of origin requires that they develop specialized strategies for the unique problem of fostering in children the
cultural values and beliefs that parents bring into the new cultural context. Padilla-Walker and Thompson (2005) reported the use of direct instruction, including persuasive tactics such as reasoned explanation and encouragement for the child to participate and accept the values endorsed by the parent, and unexplained power assertion or discipline to promote compliance. Hughes and colleagues (2006) found that parents utilized two proactive strategies: (a) cultural socialization—where the parent provided messages to the child about ethnic pride, history, and heritage; and (b) preparation for bias—where the parent provided messages about discrimination and racial bias that the child will encounter over their lifetime. Goodnow (1997) conceptualized the latter strategy as pre-arming, which involves anticipating the potential conflicting values that the child may encounter and providing the child with a set of arguments and skills to deal with those encounters. Pre-arming strategies range from helpful advice from parents on how to resist competing values to the disparagement of opposing values. Evidence of pre-arming strategies was seen in a study examining the parent-child relationship of Jamaican families living in Canada (Navara, 2006). The adolescent children of these families described various times when their parents used stories to communicate that their own cultural advantages in comparison to the dominant Canadian culture. In addition, parents told stories of their own experiences with prejudice and stereotypes living in Canada in an attempt to assist their children in their own encounters with discrimination.

Particularly interesting are enculturation strategies whereby the parent intentionally harnesses environmental supports to compliment their efforts of direct socialization. The immigrant parent faces the predicament of needing to reconstruct what is an unconscious process in their culture of origin into a socialization strategy by deliberately manipulating the ecological context so that elements of enculturation can occur. For example, a parent may choose to live in culturally compatible neighborhoods and enroll children in culturally supportive youth groups and schools. An important degree of enculturation occurs by virtue of living in a network of close relationships. Kwak (2003) found that core cultural values are supported not only by family practices and views, but also by being embedded within an ethnocultural social network. These social networks are a form of social capital from which the family can benefit as they navigate through the constraints and opportunities of their new culture (Parke et al., 2004).

Other enculturation strategies include cocooning and guided participation. According to Goodnow (1997), cocooning lies at the comprehensive end of intentional enculturation strategies. Cocooning (Goodnow, 1997) involves attempts by the parent to shield or protect the child from the influence of
values that compete with those endorsed by the parent. Cocooning strategies may include tactics such as choosing to live in isolated religious communities, choosing to live in ethnic neighborhoods, and enrolling children in ethnic or religious schools (Knafo, 2003). Navara (2006) found that Jamaican immigrant parents living in Canada often filled their children’s time with acceptable activities, such as church activities, Jamaican Canadian cultural association functions, and household chores that left less time for contact with the dominant culture. They also cocoon by restricting interactions with individuals espousing potentially competing values by encouraging their children to interact with other family members, such as siblings, cousins, and schoolmates who were also from Jamaican ancestry and by encouraging children to marry within their own cultural group.

Guided participation is a less restrictive enculturation strategy that involves providing opportunities for children to participate in selected cultural activities such as celebration of traditional meals, holidays, dance, and music so that they can be voluntarily integrated into the children’s life preferences. For example, Navara (2006) found that Jamaican-Canadian parents strongly encouraged their children to participate in cultural activities, such as cultural festivals, extracurricular heritage schools, church, Jamaican music concerts, or joining Jamaican-Canadian youth associations. The parents themselves may not have been directly involved in these community organizations, but instead relied upon their children’s involvement with the group to communicate various cultural values and beliefs deemed important by the parent.

It is important to be alert to the idea that immigrant parents may not be single minded in their transmission of cultural values. Parents may wish to encourage children’s development and expression of autonomy in the new culture or mitigate their efforts at control as a way of achieving a higher goal of preserving their relationships with children. With this perspective in mind, compromise and receptivity to the child’s views (Padilla-Walker and Thompson, 2005) may not be a sign of failed parental control but a conscious strategy of balancing goals for cultural transmission with goals for a satisfactory continuing relationship with their children.

Children’s Perspective on Acculturation

Internalization Strategies

Children are agents and, like parents, construct their own working models of culture. Children of immigrants approach the problem of integrating cultures from a different standpoint than their parents because they acculturate more quickly through emersion in the new culture (Birman and Tricket, 2001) and
are more oriented to the new culture as the context for their future lives. Thus, like parents, children may also experience considerable ambivalence. On the one hand, they must weigh the costs and benefits of two sets of cultural values. On the other hand, they may reject the sometimes ill-fitting values of their parents while at the same time seeking to preserve a valued relationship with them.

A recent qualitative interview study of 20 Vietnamese adolescents in Canada (Boiger, Kuczynski, Le, and Osland, 2008) illustrated the importance of ambivalence and contradiction in children’s acculturation in the family. The interviews focused on adolescents’ views of parental values and Canadian cultural values. Most adolescents could easily produce lists of detailed parental expectations, many of which were identified by children as having a cultural origin. The most frequently reported parental expectations concerned children’s future professions (preferably medical doctors and lawyers), family obligations (role models for younger siblings, caring of parents in old age), and the (preferably Vietnamese or Chinese) ethnicity of their children’s dating partners. The conflicts over parental expectations that children reported were in the majority of cases due to a tension between explicit parental expectations and the children’s wish for freedom of action and thought, which they tied closely to “being Canadian.”

In addition, Vietnamese adolescents spontaneously evaluated the ideas and actions of their parents (Boiger et al., 2008). Although straightforward positive or negative evaluations did occur, the majority of children’s assessments of their parents’ working models were ambivalent. Ambivalence took various forms, for example, disapproving of parents’ ideas while acknowledging parents’ good intentions, feeling love for parents yet finding it impossible to follow their expectations, or approving of the parents goals but not their socialization strategies. The frequent display of ambivalent evaluations demonstrates not only the existence of contradictions between the working models of children and the working models of their parents but also elements of a process of constructing a new working model in which children simultaneously protect their relationship with their parents and also preserve their own autonomous choices and self-constructed perspective on values. In contrast to straightforward rejection of parental values, ambivalence allows adolescents space to reconcile and integrate these motives. The experience of ambivalence is thus important from a dialectical perspective. It may lead children to generate novel integrations of cultural ideas and values in their personal working models so as to achieve goals of autonomy coexisting with family interdependence. Consequently, these tensions are not considered as inevitably detrimental, but as a powerful catalyst for change and immigrant family acculturation.
Strategies for Managing Parents

As children interact with their parents, they draw on working models that may contradict or conflict with the parental expectations. For example, children may share a liberal perspective on dating with their Canadian peers that is contrary to parents who emphasize academic achievement and view dating as an unnecessary distraction. In the study by Boiger and colleagues (2008), three major “parent management strategies” for dealing with conflicting expectations have been identified: resistance, negotiation or communication, and accommodation. Resistance strategies included a range of behaviors that demonstrated little regard for the parents’ perspective. The most common strategies in this category were convincing parents, using a “take it or leave it” or ‘fait accompli’ stance, hiding actions from parents, and reacting emotionally or throwing tantrums. Negotiation or communication strategies emphasized compromise and communication and indicate a concern for reconciling both points of view in a conflict. Accommodation strategies included different forms of secondary control where children adjusted themselves or accepted circumstances as they were (Morling and Evered, 2006). Three accommodation strategies were identified: acceptance, where parental values were willingly incorporated; compliance, where adherence to parental demands was only behavioral; and avoidance/maintenance strategies, which aimed at avoiding conflict and maintaining the status quo without necessarily accepting the parents’ views. All of these strategies differed in effectiveness, and most adolescents used more than one strategy depending on the nature of the conflict. For example, hiding was the most common strategy in the dating domain, while convincing was the most common strategy in the domain of family values. When talking about the different ways of exercising and experiencing autonomy, it again became evident that adolescents wished to preserve the relationships with parents and cherish selected aspects of the parental culture. Effective strategies by which children felt that they could pursue their ideas while preserving the relationship with their parents were, for example, accommodation, negotiation, communicating, and hiding actions from parents.

CONCLUSIONS

Social relational theory (Kuczyński, 2003; Kuczyński and Navara, 2006) provides a useful framework for exploring the dynamics of family relationships undergoing acculturation because in considering the perspectives of parents and children in a balanced manner, it highlights numerous dynamics that affect them separately and in their relationship together. Moreover, as a dialectical
Social Relational Perspective on Family Acculturation

model, it is concerned with processes of change—concepts that are central to the very idea of acculturation. It has been well documented that cultures, individuals, and families change as a consequence of immigration; however, the processes by which change comes about remain relatively unknown. A direction for the future is to encourage research into the processes by which change occurs in the context of family life. Research is needed on both parents’ and children’s strategies for achieving their separate and relational goals regarding specific issues that arise as a direct consequence of rearing children in a multicultural context. Research is also needed on parents’ and children’s cognitive activities in the process of resolving the dilemmas that arise when integrating two cultures.

REFERENCES


A central issue for psychologists is how our field might contribute to our understanding of how people of diverse cultural backgrounds live successfully in cultural plural societies (Chuang, and Gielen, 2009). Two lines of research that help us in this task are the areas of acculturation and ethnic relations (Berry, 2005). Acculturation is a psychosocial phenomenon that involves individual and group-level changes in cultural patterns for ethnic minorities as a consequence of contact with the ethnic majority (Chun, Organista, and Marin, 2003). These cultural changes can be significant (i.e., second language, customs, beliefs); thus acculturation is of considerable interest in mental health. The second line of research, ethnic relations, is concerned with understanding how individuals perceive, evaluate, and behave toward each other, both within and across ethnic group boundaries. In this chapter, we will illustrate these two research lines in the Portuguese cultural context. Specifically, we examine the relationship between acculturation and mental health among Portuguese adolescents from immigrant families as well as returning immigrant adolescents from France. We then focus on ethnic relations and examine the attitudes of young people toward immigration.

The Cultural Context of Portugal

Portugal is a country (90,000 km²) located in the southwestern part of Europe in the Iberian Peninsula. Portugal has two small archipelagos of volcanic origin: the Azores and the Madeira. Her own smallness, long Atlantic coast,
intense Christianity, proximity to the north of Africa, commercial ambition, and adventurous spirit have pushed the Portuguese, from long ago, into a vocation of sailors and new land discoveries. These were the primary reasons why such a small country had expanded her influence and culture throughout other continents, namely to Africa, India, East and Southeast Asia, and South America, particularly between the 15th and 18th centuries. Later, this tradition of leaving Portugal was continued in the form of a substantial emigration flow to other countries.

At the present time, Portugal is simultaneously an emigration and an immigration country (Neto, 2008). Historians consider Portuguese emigration as a “structural historical phenomenon” (Serrão, 1974) or as a “structural constant” (Godinho, 1978). In 2002, the number of Portuguese residing abroad was close to 4.6 million according to MNE/DGACC (Ministério dos Negócios Estrangeiros/ Direcção Geral de Assuntos Consulares e Comunidades Portuguesas). Among these Portuguese abroad, 61.1% live in the Americas, 27.1% in Europe, 7.5% in Africa, 3.6% in Asia, and 0.7% in Oceania. The United States, Brazil, France, Canada, Venezuela, and South Africa are the countries where great numbers of Portuguese reside (more than 300,000; Neto, 2010).

Currently, Portugal is reversing her traditional role of an emigration country and is fast becoming an immigration country. A variety of ethnic groups compose the immigrant population in Portugal. Some immigrants are officially registered as “foreign residents,” and others are clandestine arrivals. The official number of legally registered foreigners in 2006 was 409,185, or 4.1% of the population resident in Portugal and 8.0% of the working population. The growth of the immigrant communities has basically been from the 1990s onward, when there were only approximately 100,000 immigrants. These numbers reflect a 400% increase over the past 16 years (SEF, 2007).

In 2006, the top three immigrant groups, in order, were the Cape-Verdeans (16.0%), the Brazilians (16.0%), and the Ukrainians (9.3%). The immigrants from Portuguese-speaking African countries (PALC) represented 34.1% of the total legally registered foreigners, which corresponds to almost double the number of European Union residents. Almost half the foreigners live in the Lisbon (46.2%), Faro (13.7%), Setúbal (10.5%), and Porto areas (6.4%). The concentration of foreigners in the Lisbon metropolitan area is not a surprise “due especially to the labor market features displayed, in particular diversity and segmentation supported by an increasing service economy requiring highly qualified professionals but also thousands of unskilled workers” (Malheiros and Vala, 2004, p. 1070). The majority of foreign workers were mostly employed in five main areas:
agriculture, manufacturing, industry, building and civil engineering, and services. Immigrants of European Union origin were mainly in the professional and service sectors, most Brazilians were employed in the service sector, whereas the majority of Africans worked in the industrial and construction sectors (SEF, 2007) (see Table 10.1).

Portugal has a reputation of being tolerant of cultural diversity, and positive attitudes prevail. This may be due to Portugal’s long history of contact with other cultures. Marriage between Portuguese and native peoples was more frequent in Portuguese colonies than in other European colonies (Bastide, 1971). In a previous study, Neto (2006) found that the perception of personal discrimination from personal acts of discrimination had a relatively low occurrence among adolescents from immigrant background in Portugal. In fact, a unique aspect of immigration in Portugal is that the majority of immigrants came from Portuguese-speaking countries or from countries in which Portuguese was the formal lingua franca. These were mainly former colonies where Portugal had influenced the local culture, religion, the judicial system, and the educational structures, including the educational curriculum. Due to this influence, the adaptation and transition may have been less challenging as compared to other immigrants who had to deal with a larger cultural distance or disconnect (e.g., Galchenko and Van de Vijver, 2007).

### Table 10.1. Foreigners with Legal Residence in Portugal in 2006

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nationality</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cape Verde</td>
<td>65,485</td>
<td>16.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brazil</td>
<td>65,463</td>
<td>16.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ukraine</td>
<td>37,851</td>
<td>9.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Angola</td>
<td>33,215</td>
<td>8.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guinea Bissau</td>
<td>24,513</td>
<td>6.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moldova</td>
<td>12,673</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>São Tomé e Príncipe</td>
<td>10,761</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romania</td>
<td>10,299</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>9,695</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mozambique</td>
<td>5,854</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russian Federation</td>
<td>4,945</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Partial Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>280,754</strong></td>
<td><strong>68.6</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>European Union</td>
<td>79,774</td>
<td>19.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>48,657</td>
<td>11.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>National Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>409,185</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Foreigners and Borders Office (SEF).
The findings appear to warrant that Portugal is an atypical country. It is a country that has an immigrant population whose cultural distance to the new cultural contexts in Portugal is relatively small, and the national population is characterized by a positive and protective attitude toward immigrants.

**Acculturation and Mental Health**

Immigration is changing the cultural and ethnic composition of many countries (U.N. Population Report, 2002). As a result, many psychologists have focused their efforts to better understand the role of culture and acculturation (a form of cultural change) on immigrant mental health (e.g., Draguns and Tanaka-Matsumi, 2002; Schmitz, 2001). Schmitz indicated that mental health among cultural groups is often altered because of the stress inherent in the acculturation process. Some have identified depression, anxiety, and psychosomatic problems as the most common mental health consequences of acculturating individuals (see Berry, 1997). Thus, the concept of acculturation has become increasingly important and contributes to the explanation of how people react to exposure in the new sociocultural environments.

The major interest in mental health in migrant groups lies in the supposed higher prevalence of mental health problems in these groups. It is often assumed that migration is a stress-inducing process, leading to heightened risk for the development of both children and their parents (Koneru, Mamami, Flynn, and Betancourt, 2007). Migration to a new country may be accompanied by acculturation stress, leading to increased levels of anxiety, depression, feelings of alienation, psychosomatic symptomatology, and identity confusion (Berry, 1997). Much research has examined factors on promoting the mental health of immigrants during acculturation (Oppdal and Roysamb, 2004). However, empirical findings have been mixed as some studies linked greater acculturation to poorer mental health, whereas others demonstrated a favorable relationship or no association at all (Koneru et al., 2007). Researchers have pointed out that the inconsistency in how, and what aspects of, acculturation were measured may be a primary reason for the disparate findings within the mental health literature. Koneru et al. have argued that future studies focusing on acculturation and mental health would benefit from using multidimensional measures.

**Mental Health and the “Marginal Man”**

A key factor framing our understanding of the relation between immigrant mental health and acculturation is that of the “marginal man.” This notion
poses the question: As immigrants negotiate the culture of the host society, do they become special bicultural individuals with cultural competencies in multiple cultures, or are they culturally confused outsiders (Phinney and Alipuria, 1996)? These competing conceptualizations of the “marginal man” guide our thinking in how we attempt to understand mental health in immigrant individuals (Park, 1950; Stonequist, 1961).

Park’s (1950) view was that, with migration and the loosening of bonds to his original culture, the marginal man—a person at the edge of two cultures—becomes “the individual with the keener intelligence, the wider horizon, the more detached and rational viewpoint” (Park, 1950, pp. 375–376). In contrast, Stonequist (1961) viewed the marginal man as a person caught between two cultures, never fitting in either culture. Until recently, the dominant Western view of the multiethnic person was consistent with that of Stonequist. Consequently, a more deficit view of multiethnic peoples have been portrayed, that of the troubled and anxious outsider who lacks a clear identity.

More recent research, however, has indicated that multiethnic individuals are at no more of a psychological disadvantage than their monoethnic counterparts. Contrary to the negative marginal man perspective, U.S. researchers have reported that a number of studies have painted a surprising portrait of the children from immigrant families who exhibited positive adjustment (Fuligni, 2004; Phinney and Alipuria, 1996). Similarly, European researchers have demonstrated that young Portuguese immigrants living in France showed no difference regarding loneliness and life satisfaction when compared to young Portuguese who had never migrated (Neto, 1995, 1999). Comparable results were found among Portuguese migrants living in Switzerland (Neto and Barros, 2007).

**Intercultural Contact and Mental Health**

The relation between the immigrant experience and mental health is a complex and multifaceted phenomenon (Pernice and Brook, 1996). However, various reviews (e.g., Aronowitz, 1984; Berry, 1997; Rogler et al., 1991; Ward, Bochner, and Furnham, 2001) have identified some intercultural contact factors that arguably are important for well-being outcomes. We will turn our attention to four of these factors: acculturation attitudes, social interaction, perceived discrimination, and family-related values.

Acculturation attitudes are those held by immigrants regarding the perceived importance of maintaining their home culture or that of the host culture. Berry’s classification of acculturation attitudes (Berry, 1997) distinguishes integration, marginalization, separation, and assimilation.
Integration refers to a combination of a strong link with the ethnic culture and a strong link with the culture of the society of settlement (the national culture). Marginalization refers to a weak link with both the ethnic and the national cultures. Separation is a preference of the ethnic culture combined with a depreciation of the national culture, and assimilation is a preference for the national culture combined with a loss of links with the ethnic culture.

As individuals adjust and settle into their new lives, they come into contact with their own and other ethnocultural groups. Lacking a social network might be detrimental to one’s well-being and increase the likelihood of experiencing higher depressive moods (Turjeman, Mesh, and Fishman, 2008). Also, cultural differences between groups may create conditions for discrimination. Consequently, experiences may play a major role in the adaptation of immigrants, such as experiences of diminished physical and emotional health outcomes of immigrants. Specifically, some studies have shown that perceived discrimination has a strong negative effect on various aspects of immigrants’ mental health (Finch, Kolody, and Vega, 2000; Neto, 1995).

Adaptation, varying from well-adapted to maladapted, is the long-term outcome of psychological acculturation (Berry, 1997). Sociocultural adaptation relates to learning new social skills to interact with the new culture, dealing with daily problems of living, and effectively carrying out of tasks. The amount of difficulty experienced in a variety of social situations can lead to mental health problems. For instance, Pernice and Brook (1996) found that post-migration factors such as unemployment, poor accommodation, and social isolation were all significantly associated with levels of anxiety and depression in a sample of Southeast Asian refugees in New Zealand. Social adaptation difficulty has been consistently associated with psychological maladjustment (Neto, 2002; Ward et al., 2001). With respect to behavioral problems, our interest was in deviant overt behaviors such as antisocial behavior and conduct disorders. These have been commonly reported mental health problems among immigrant adolescents in Western societies (Aronowitz, 1984). For most immigrant children and adolescents, school and other education settings were the major arenas for intergroup contact and acculturation. Poor school adjustment of immigrant adolescents contributed to psychological problems among immigrant youth (Berry, Phinney, Sam, and Vedder, 2006).

Age, Gender, Migration, and Mental Health

Research findings pertaining to age and adaptation have been somewhat ambiguous. Some studies have reported that younger persons cope better
with transitions, whereas others have concluded that older people have fewer problems (Church, 1982). However, studies on adolescents showed a positive and significant relation between age and depression. For example, Turjeman, Mesh, and Fishman (2008) found that among former Soviet Union immigrants to Israel, age was positively related to depressive moods. Similarly, Wade, Cairney, and Pevalin’s (2002) longitudinal comparative study on early and late adolescents from three countries revealed that self-reported depression, regardless of sex, increased with age. It appears that older adolescents, in their transition from school to adult life, faced adult-like challenges that younger adolescents attending high school were spared (e.g., see Brage and Meredith, 1994).

A similar lack of clarity exists regarding the relation for migrant women’s mental health problems. For example, it is often reported that migrant women showed a greater risk of psychological symptomatology (Beiser et al., 1988); however, the research on gender differences in stress has produced mixed results (Ward et al., 2001). Nevertheless, most findings indicated a higher prevalence of depressive disorders among girls than with boys (Oppedal and Roysamb, 2004).

In the following discussion, we attempt to shed some light on the interplay of immigration and mental health. We focus our attention on the mental health of adolescents living in Portugal with an immigrant background. More specifically, we will examine adolescents who immigrated to Portugal, those from returned immigrant families, as well as those without migratory experience. Here we will illustrate how adolescents who experience the migration show no more mental health problems than peers that have never migrated. We also discuss the role of demographic, intercultural contact, and adaptation factors associated with mental health problems among immigrant adolescents (Neto, in press; Neto, 2009a). Finally, we examine Portuguese’s attitudes regarding immigration and immigrants.

Predictors of Mental Health among Adolescents from Immigrant Families in Portugal

The first study was drawn from the International Comparative Study of Ethnocultural Youth (ICSEY; Berry, et al., 2006). The purpose of the study was to examine whether immigrant background had an affect on mental health problems and whether mental health problems can be understood on the basis of intercultural contact, social cultural variables, as well as demographic indicators.

Participants consisted of 755 immigrant adolescents (455 girls and 300 boys) enrolled in basic and secondary public schools in the Lisbon
area. The mean age of the participants was 15.54 years ($SD = 2.06$). The participating ethnic groups included Cape Verdeans ($n = 128$), Angolans ($n = 116$), Indians ($n = 94$), Mozambicans ($n = 103$), East Timorese ($n = 118$), Sao Tomese ($n = 77$), and the Guineans ($n = 119$). Three hundred and forty-seven of the participants were born in Portugal, 404 participants were foreign-born, and four did not report their place of birth. The majority of adolescents with immigrant background were born in Portugal or had immigrated before the age of 7 years (67.4%). The mean duration of residence in Portugal for both the foreign born and host born participants was 11.08 years ($SD = 5.29$). Almost all of the sample (98.4%) came from low SES families, with 12% of the sample having both parents unemployed and 65.1% of the parents performing unskilled labor. The majority (82.2%) lived in communities where the population was ethnically balanced or predominantly from another group. For purposes of comparison, 320 native Portuguese adolescents (158 girls; $M = 14.80$ years of age, $SD = 1.30$) were recruited for the study.

Measures used in the study were assembled for the ICSEY by an international group of scholars (Berry et al., 2006). The overall focus of the study was to examine the adaptation of immigrants and ethnocultural youths across cultures. The Portuguese version of the items were developed following the guidelines proposed in the literature on cross-cultural methodology (Brislin, 2000): independent/blind/back-translation, educated translation, and small scale pre-tests. The following scales were used: acculturation attitudes (assimilation, integration, separation, and marginalization), perceived discrimination (direct experience of discrimination and the sources of the negative treatment), family relationship values (family obligations, adolescents’ rights), stressful experience adaptation (difficulty experienced in a variety of social situations, e.g., making friends, racism), behavior problems (stealing, destroying property, bullying, and misbehaving in school), and mental health (depression, anxiety, and psychosomatic symptoms; for details see Neto, 2009a).

There were several important findings from this study. First, although the analysis indicated a significant difference in mental health problems as a function of immigrant status, immigrant adolescents reported lower mental health problems. Second, analyses examining differences in mental health problems among immigrant groups showed no significant group differences. Thus, the findings demonstrated that immigration per se was not an indicator of mental health problems. Although immigrant adolescents were at no more risk than their native counterparts for mental health problems, the question remains, are there factors regarding the immigration process that are predictive of mental health problems?
The findings pointed to the multiple origins of mental health problems, namely socio-demographic, intercultural contact, and sociocultural adjustment variables. Among socio-demographic factors, gender, age, and length of residence emerged as significant predictors of mental health problems.

Consistent with previous research, girls reported higher levels of mental health problems regardless of their immigrant status when compared to boys (Berry, 1997; Jasinskaja-Lahati, 2001). One reason according Wilson (1987) is that adolescent girls were more likely to internalize problems than were boys. Boys, on the other hand, were more likely to externalize difficulties, resulting in higher levels of self-reported delinquency. However, similar to other international studies (e.g., Oppedal and Roysamb, 2004; Ritsner, Ponzovsky, and Nechamkin, 2001), it is unclear as to whether women’s reports of higher psychological problems is a reflection of their higher levels of vulnerability or their greater willingness to acknowledge their psychological problems and to seek help.

Age was also an important factor. Younger adolescents reported having lower levels of mental health problems than did older adolescents. There are at least two possible explanations. One is that the younger the acculturating individual, the more “flexible” the person is in relation to cultural conflicts between one’s original cultural heritage and that of the new society. Another explanation is that older adolescents are faced with more different challenges that are more complex in nature than those encountered by their young peers as youth go through the transition from adolescence to adulthood. Furthermore, mental health problems decreased as length of residence increased, a finding in line with previous research (Chun et al., 2003).

Despite the importance of demographic factors, intercultural contact and sociocultural adaptation predictors accounted for a larger proportion of the explained variance in mental health problems (Neto, 2009a). Negative acculturation experiences had a major detrimental impact on the mental health of the adolescents. Among acculturation attitudes, separation and marginalization emerged as significant predictors of mental health problems. Specifically, those individuals who placed a value on holding onto their original culture and wished to avoid interactions with others were less likely to reveal mental health problems, whereas those reporting marginalization were somewhat more likely to report them. Several previous studies have also confirmed the relationship between marginalization attitudes and more distress symptoms (Berry, 1997; Neto, 2002). However, these results showed no association between integration and mental health problems. Although it is often hypothesized that migrants who identify highly with both the culture of origin and the host are best equipped for developing
without problems, earlier studies revealed mixed findings regarding this relation (Berry; Sam, 2000). Moreover, in the present study, youth’s adherence to traditional family values (i.e., more endorsement of family obligations and less emphasis on adolescents’ rights) were beneficial to their psychological well-being, which is consistent with past studies (e.g., Berry et al., 2006; Liebkind and Jasinskaja-Lahati, 2000). It seems, therefore, that adolescents with immigrant backgrounds who were traditional in terms of parental authority and also accepted parental limitations on children’s rights to some degree had a better chance to achieve successful psychological adaptation.

Mental Health among Adolescents from Returned Portuguese Immigrant Families

We now turn our attention to the issue of return migration of adolescents from Portuguese immigrant families. Despite the demographic importance of return migration (theoretically, methodology, and substantively), social scientists know relatively little about this phenomenon (SOPEMI, 2008). Here we discuss recent findings that deepen our understanding of migration and its relation to poor mental health.

Participants consisted of 360 adolescents of returned Portuguese immigrant families from France. All students were attending Portuguese public high schools in the north of Portugal. The mean age was 16.8 years ($SD = 1.9$) and ranged from 14 to 19 years. There were 61.1% girls and 38.9% boys. The mean duration of sojourn in Portugal was 8.2 years ($SD = 4.5$). A comparative group of 217 Portuguese youths was also included.

The study included the measures: demographics (age, gender, place of birth, occupation of both parents), acculturation attitudes (assimilation, integration, separation, and marginalization), perceived discrimination (direct experience of discrimination and the sources of the negative treatment), ingroup social interaction (frequency of interaction with peers who have lived some time in France), outgroup social interaction (frequency of interaction with peers who have never left the country), stressful experience adaptation (difficulty experienced in a variety of social situations, e.g., making friends, racism) behavior problems (stealing, destroying property, bullying, and misbehaving in school), school adaptation (positive attitude regarding school), and mental health problems (depression, anxiety, and psychosomatic symptoms; for details see Neto, 2010).

These current findings provided further support that migration, in and of itself, was not an indicator of mental health problems. Adolescents from returned immigrant families did not report more mental health problems than
peers that had never migrated. Rather, the relation between migration and mental health is a complex phenomenon, one that is experienced differently by people under varying conditions. Like all complex phenomena, it is caused by an interaction of personal dispositions and situational forces.

As with the previous study, significant predictors of mental health were found across the three sets of variables (socio-demographic, intercultural contact, and psychosocial adjustment variables). Among socio-demographic factors, gender and age emerged as significant predictors of mental health problems. Girls reported higher levels of mental health problems than did boys, and younger adolescents (14 to 16 years of age) reported less mental health problems than did older adolescents (17 to 19 years of age). Controlling for demographic variables, further analyses revealed a complex relationship between the acculturation process and the adaptation outcomes among returned adolescents. For example, perceived discrimination was associated with mental health symptoms, as consistent with previous findings, indicating the adverse influence of negative acculturation experiences on adolescents’ psychological well-being (Gil, Vega, and Dimas, 1994; Rogler, Cortes, and Malgady, 1991). With respect to adolescents’ acculturation attitudes marginalization, once again, it emerged as a significant predictor of mental health problems.

Collectively, our findings argue against the notion that geographic mobility of parents is a primary cause of mental health problems in their children. Rather, the majority of immigrants adapt very well to their new societies, despite difficulties in meeting the demands of cultural changes and of living in two cultures (Berry, 1997).

Adolescent Attitudes toward Immigration

These two studies have illustrated the detrimental aspects of negative adaptation outcomes for both new arrivals as well as returning Portuguese immigrant adolescents. The studies also point to the significant role of perceived discrimination and its contribution to poor psychological outcomes for immigrant adolescents. Thus, it is important for us to keep in mind that perceived discrimination is, in part, a function of the broader context. Immigration occurs within a myriad of social circumstances. For example, in order to facilitate immigration, governmental measures must be implemented in areas such as employment, housing, social security, and the like. However, in addition to the “official” governmental policies, it is necessary to take into account the state of mind of the local population toward the immigrants. More specifically, we must consider the Portuguese’s attitudes regarding immigration and immigrants.
Attitudes toward other ethnic groups have been studied as early as Bogardus (1928). In particular, Bogardus found that stereotypes of ethnic groups and immigrants were the source of negative attitudes. Clark (1998) reported that, since 1965, attitudes toward immigrants have turned increasingly negative. For example, O’Rourke (2002) stated that attitudes have been ‘hardening’ even in traditional liberal societies like Scandinavia, the Netherlands, and Great Britain. Is such a hardening of attitudes evident in Portugal, too?

In order to better understand the views of young Portuguese on immigrants (as people), immigration (as a process), and membership of various ethnocultural groups, Neto conducted a pilot study (2009b) that examined whether background factors, especially cultural and economic security, predicted attitudes (Berry, 2006). The study was predicated on the view that the adaptation of immigrants and their descendants to their adoptive society was affected by numerous factors in the receiving society. One of the most important of such factors was the set of attitudes held by members of the receiving society towards them.

There were three research questions. The first question involved the evaluation of attitudes toward immigration and immigrants. Would participants have positive attitudes toward immigration and immigrants? The second question focused on possible differences by gender. Would girls have more positive attitudes toward immigration and immigrants than boys? Finally, the third question focused on the possible differences over a lapse of time. Would participants have more positive attitudes in one point of time than another (1999 versus 2006)?

The participants consisted of 477 Portuguese adolescents attending high school (two cohorts). The participants were interviewed in 1999 (n = 234) and 2006 (n = 243). Ninety-four percent were born in Portugal, and all were of Portuguese origin. The age of the participants ranged from between 16 to 20 years, with a mean age of 16.8 years (58% female). All were residents of north Portugal.

The measures were drawn from the International Study of Attitudes Towards Immigration and Settlement (Berry and Kalin, 1995; Berry, Kalin, and Bourhis, 2000) and included four categories: security (cultural, economic, personal), attitudes toward social diversity and participation (multicultural ideology, acculturation expectations), attitudes toward social equality (tolerance, social dominance orientation), and immigration climate (perceived consequences of immigration, attitudes toward immigrant numbers, attitudes toward kinds of immigrants, attitudes toward ethnocultural groups). The survey was conducted in 1999 and in 2006.

This study revealed that, in general, girls had more positive attitudes toward immigration and immigrants than did boys. Specifically, the effect of gender was significant on security, multicultural ideology, social equality attitude,
perceived consequences of diversity and immigration, immigration prohibition, and attitudes toward ethnocultural groups. These effects indicated that boys felt more security and advocated more immigration prohibition than did girls, and that girls revealed more favorable attitudes toward multicultural ideology, social equality, perceived consequences of diversity and immigration climate, and toward ethnocultural groups. Girls, compared with boys, reported more positive attitudes toward integration. Conversely, boys reported greater endorsement of exclusion attitudes. These results were in agreement with previous research showing that men may have higher explicit ethnic prejudice than women (e.g., Ekhammar, Akrami, and Araya, 2003).

Next, the results indicated that time was an important consideration regarding attitudes toward immigration. A significant main effect was found for time on security, multicultural ideology, perceived consequences of diversity and immigration, and immigration climate level. The effects reflected that in 1999, security, multicultural ideology, perceived consequences of diversity, and immigration climate were higher and immigration level was lower than in 2006. The effect of time was also significant on two acculturation expectations: integration and exclusion. The integration score was weaker and the exclusion score was stronger in 2006 than in 1999. However, the effect sizes of these two acculturation expectations were small ($\eta^2 = .02$).

Thus, the data showed that from 1999 to 2006, those positive attitudes were not as prevalent as before. This change can be explained by at least two factors. On the one hand, the total number of foreigners almost doubled between 1999 and 2006, creating significant changes in the country’s ethno-profile in recent years. On the other hand, the unemployment rate had also increased, 4.4% in 1999 and 7.6% in 2006. Nevertheless, in 2006, the attitudes toward immigration and immigrants were still positive, but further exploration to follow the evolution of these attitudes over coming years is needed.

When attitudes toward ethnocultural groups were assessed, a preference hierarchy was found. The ethnocultural group viewed most positively were Brazilians, and the ethnocultural group viewed least positively were Gypsies. African countries with Portuguese as the official language (PALP) emerged in the middle range of the hierarchy. Even if some comfort ratings have changed for the worse over time, the evaluations of Indians and Germans have improved during the same period. Similar social hierarchies have been found in Europe (e.g., Hagendoorn, Drogendijk, Tumanov, and Hraba, 1998; Van Oudenhoven, Groenewoud, and Hewstone, 1996) and in Canada (Berry and Kalin, 1995; Berry, Kalin, and Taylor, 1977). In Portugal, ethnocultural groups of Western and Northern European backgrounds are usually viewed more positively than those of other origins: Eastern and Southern Europeans were lower in the hierarchy, followed by those of non-European backgrounds.
In general, this study provides support for the multiculturalism hypothesis: when adolescents feel that their place is secure in their own plural society, they are both tolerant of and more welcoming to immigrants. It is acknowledged that a range of factors affect attitudes toward immigrants, including the salience of group categories during contact, national identity, stereotypes, and political ideology, and these should be investigated in future.

**DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION**

Using the pluralistic society of Portugal as a setting, the three studies that we have presented illustrate a pattern of findings that, we believe, add important insight into the interrelation between immigration, acculturation, and mental health among adolescents. Specifically, we challenge an oversimplified and deficit view of migrant groups, one that suggests that migrants have a higher prevalence of mental health problems that lead to a heightened risk for the development of both children and their parents (Koneru et al., 2007). Despite the stressor inherent to the migrant process, we have demonstrated that immigrants are not at higher risk for mental health difficulties. Rather, the relation between immigration and mental health is a complex phenomenon, an interplay of personal and contextual conditions. As with nonimmigrants, gender and age are indicators of adolescent mental health. However, factors such as length of residence, intercultural contact, and social cultural adaptation were more significant in predicting mental health outcomes among immigrants. Taken together, recent immigrants within a high-discrimination setting who develop attitudes of separation and marginalization are most likely to be at risk for developing mental health problems. Conversely, more positive outcomes are more likely to be found among longer term residents, in low-discrimination settings, who adhere to traditional cultural values. Again, these findings are consistent for newly incoming immigrants as well as returning Portuguese immigrants.

Further complexity is added when considering adolescents’ attitudes. In the case of Portugal, there is an overall positive social climate toward immigration and immigrants among adolescents, with girls having more positive attitudes toward immigration and immigrants and boys endorsing exclusion attitudes to a greater degree than girls. The findings also suggest a dynamic nature of these attitudes, one that varies as there are changes in immigrant populations and economic conditions. Moreover, with differing attitudes with respect to ethnocultural groups, the “immigrant experience” may be quite different for various groups depending on their place in the attitudinal hierarchy, even under the same socioeconomic conditions.
This chapter has attempted to show how psychological concepts, analysis, and empirical research can contribute to understanding of intercultural relations in a plural society as Portugal. The research summarized here was guided by the two research traditions of acculturation and ethnic relations. Research with both sides of the broad domain of intercultural relations reveals important interactions between them (Berry, 2005). When only one side or the other has been studied, we have come to know about how immigrants seek to acculturate and how those already settled in a society view immigrants. In this paper, we have reviewed research about acculturation among ethnocultural groups, including their own willingness to engage in acculturative change. It was also possible to understand the explorations about acculturation of others and the attitudes toward immigration, immigrants, and the ethnocultural groups that result from the immigration flows.

Several factors may limit the generalizability of the findings. First, we placed an emphasis on psychology, that is, on individuals and on individual differences. Researchers using other approaches might reach different conclusions. For example, anthropologists might have found a larger role for culture; sociologists, a larger role for institutions; or political scientists, greater importance for national policies. However, the findings reviewed emphasize that acculturation is a complex web of relationships among contextual, intercultural, and adaptation factors. Research based on young immigrants showed that adolescents with immigrant backgrounds adapt equally well as their national peers and in some cases are better adapted. Research based on youth of larger society showed that the acceptance of a multicultural ideology may contribute to the successful management of the intercultural relations in the Portuguese society.

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School Readiness in Latino Immigrant Children in the United States

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The United States continues to experience unprecedented growth in the Latino population, which has created challenges for schools and communities that are typically ill-equipped to meet the needs of children from ethnically diverse backgrounds. As of 2005, Latinos comprised over 14% of the nation’s population (U.S. Census Bureau, 2006). Latino children comprise 22% of children under 18, most of whom are United States citizens (Fry and Passel, 2009). By 2030, young Latino children are expected to account for 26% of the U.S. child population, or over half of the new American majority (Hernandez, Denton, and Macartney, 2007). These numbers may actually underestimate future growth in Latino children, since 25% of U.S. births are to Latino parents (Hamilton, Martin, and Ventura, 2007).

In light of these statistics, there is urgent need for researchers, practitioners, and policy makers to identify both barriers and supports to the positive developmental outcomes of Latino children. A national priority is to ensure that Latino children enter school “ready to learn” so that they can ultimately become successful students and achieve parity in higher education and the future labor market. At present, however, these goals are far from the reality. Substantial educational gaps persist between Latinos and European American children from kindergarten through 12th grade in most subject areas. For example, the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) found that 10% of European American and 32% of Latino fourth graders scored below the basic level in math; 47% of European American but only 13% of Latino children were deemed proficient or higher (Perie, Grigg, and Dion, 2005). In many ways, by the time national
fourth grade assessments roll around, ethnic and racial disparities among children in the United States are solidified. In fact, extant studies indicated that Latino children lagged behind European American children in literacy and numeracy skills by preschool (Reardon and Galindo, 2006). Thus, the successful integration of Latinos into the U.S. school system requires an expanded focus on the experiences that come to shape children’s development, and in turn readiness for school, in the first years of life.

The early years (birth through age 4) are a time of paramount importance, as children are acquiring foundational competencies that will prepare them for later school experiences. Young children who enter school with the requisite developmental skills are at a learning advantage for reading, writing, and solving mathematical problems for two main reasons. First, “skills build on skills” such that the mastery of skills follows “hierarchical rules” in which later achievements rest on foundations that were laid down earlier (e.g., oral language supports later storytelling; Heckman, 2006). Second, young children “co-construct” their social experiences, such that their growing abilities shape others’ interactions with them (Sameroff and Fiese, 2000). For example, self-regulated children may receive more positive reinforcement from both parents and teachers, which in turn will facilitate their acquisition of new skills.

Given the importance of early development and the need to support the success of diverse children in the United States, which factors promote school readiness and which present obstacles to young Latino children? In this chapter, we highlight six interconnected factors that directly and indirectly influence children’s school readiness: (1) generational status; (2) economic status; (3) parents’ education and English proficiency; (4) parenting style; (5) literacy practices; and (6) nursery and preschool experiences. We begin with a brief overview of the construct of “school readiness” and end with next steps for future research and practice.

COMPONENTS OF SCHOOL READINESS

What is meant by “school readiness”? Despite thousands of studies on the topic, controversy persists regarding the precise skills that children need for school success and how best to support the development of those skills. For the most part, debates around school readiness reflect the tension between emphasizing skills that directly map onto measures of academic achievement (e.g., numeracy and literacy) versus those that span an array of developmental areas (e.g., executive functioning, self regulation). For example, the National Research Council’s Committee on the Prevention of Reading
Difficulties in Young Children, together with The National Association of Teachers of Mathematics, issued a statement that recommended providing environments that promote both pre-literacy and pre-mathematics skills for all preschool children. The National Research Council and Institute on Medicine in association with school teachers, on the other hand, noted that interventions that aim to support social and emotional development are just as important as those that support linguistic and cognitive competence (Duncan et al., 2007).

Current thinking in the area of developmental psychology aligns with the perspective that school readiness is a multidimensional construct that spans to cognitive, regulatory, and social areas of development (Shonkoff and Phillips, 2000). First, in terms of “cognitive skills,” school readiness includes language and literacy skills (e.g., print concepts, letter recognition), and math skills (e.g., number recognition and ability to count). Early proficiency in math, reading, and language strongly predicts academic success (Duncan et al., 2007). With each passing year, the academic achievement gap widens for children with and without these foundations (Shonkoff and Phillips).

Second, preschoolers’ readiness is supported by a range of skills classified as “self-regulation” (Smith-Donald, Raver, Hayes, and Richardson, 2007), including abilities to manage emotions (e.g., anger, frustration, sadness, excitement), regulate behaviors (e.g., compliance, impulse control, follow rules, follow directions), and organize attention in the approach and processing of new information (Smith-Donald et al.). Self-regulatory skills affect children’s learning as well as how children relate to family members, teachers, and peers (Shonkoff and Phillips, 2000).

Finally, as children move into the preschool years, their social skills develop, and forming relationships with peers becomes a central task. During interactions with others, children learn intimacy, how to resolve conflicts, and how to place trust in others, all of which predict later social and academic competence. Parents and high-quality child care can provide preschool children with structured and positive peer experiences that are related to competence during early childhood and later school years (Shonkoff and Phillips, 2000).

BARRIERS AND SUPPORTS TO LATINO CHILDREN’S SCHOOL READINESS

Unfortunately, despite widespread recognition of the importance of foundational skills for children’s school readiness and later academic achievement, many children in the United States enter school lacking the skills necessary
for success. In one survey, 3,595 kindergarten teachers reported on the prevalence and types of problems their students presented upon entering kindergarten. Nearly one-third (30%) of the teachers reported that at least half the children in their classrooms entered kindergarten with problems in following directions, lacked academic skills, and had difficulty working independently (Rimm-Kaufman, Pianta, and Cox, 2000).

For the most part, developmental delays at school entry are more prevalent in children from immigrant and minority backgrounds, Latinos included. For example, the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study-Birth Cohort (ECLS-B) data showed that preschool Latino children lagged behind European American children in receptive and expressive vocabulary, knowledge of letters of alphabet and their sounds, print concepts, competency in numbers and knowledge of shapes, and identification of colors (Chernoff, Flanagan, McPhee, and Park, 2007). Moreover, delays continued from kindergarten through later schooling (Garcia and Miller, 2008), as demonstrated in the educational gaps between Latinos and European Americans in reading and math identified in the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study-Kindergarten data set (ECLS-K) (Reardon and Galindo, 2006).

Nonetheless, many comparative statistics on the school readiness of Latino children are based on group averages that are largely rooted in flawed pan-ethnic classification of “Latinos” that mask the enormous heterogeneity of the Latino population. Latino children differ in their ethnic backgrounds, generational and legal status, socioeconomic strata, years in the United States, acculturation levels, exposure to English and Spanish language and culture, early home and school experiences, and so forth, all of which fundamentally shape the settings and everyday experiences of these children.

Clearly the “school readiness” of different groups of Latino children will depend on a multitude of factors. For example, the aforementioned analyses of the ECLS-K data (Reardon and Galindo, 2006) indicated that school readiness gaps were greatest for Latino children from low-income backgrounds. Although high-to-to-middle-income Latino children also fell behind European American children in reading and math achievement, gaps were greatest at kindergarten and narrowed by fifth grade for these more economically resourced Latinos. Thus, both researchers and practitioners must exert enormous caution when using the global term “Latino” to refer to children and families from different backgrounds. Ideally, research should focus on specific ethnic groups, and even then, within-group variation should be highlighted as should the factors that contribute to such heterogeneity (e.g., parental education). At minimum, studies of Latinos from different ethnic backgrounds must attend to whether and how the
different groups vary on generational status, parental education, language proficiency, and the like.

Generational Status

School readiness of Latino children will clearly vary with generational status and years in the United States. Specifically, the two-thirds of Latino children from immigrant families encounter dramatically different experiences than the one-third of children whose parents were born in the United States (Hernandez, 2006). For example, Puerto Ricans are citizens, they are able to move freely between Puerto Rico and mainland United States; Mexicans (the largest Latino group) and Dominicans (the fourth largest Latino group) have largely migrated to the United States because of depressed economic conditions in their home countries (Rivera et al., 2008), with Mexicans being the most recent, first-generation immigrants. Cubans have more stable migration patterns because they are considered political refugees and have strong family ties in the United States. They tend to be a high SES group and by the second and third generation, speak less Spanish in the home as compared to Mexicans (Alba, Logan, Lutz, and Stults, 2002).

However, patterns of association between generational status and Latino children’s school readiness and subsequent academic achievement are not straightforward. In some studies, later generations of children were found to fare better than new immigrants, as for example in a study of Mexican American children aged 0 to 8 years (Reardon and Galindo, 2006). The researchers found that third-generation children achieved higher levels in reading and math from kindergarten to fifth grade when compared to their first- (defined as being born outside United States) and second-generation Mexican American counterparts. The authors attributed these differences to changes in social class and English proficiency. In many ways, new immigrants are at a disadvantage compared to immigrants who have been in the United States for longer periods of time, perhaps due to the legal status of their parents, as well as their access to support networks and resources (Yoshikawa, in progress).

Others find that later generational status is associated with declining academic performance (and health) of some children (Suárez-Orozco and Suárez-Orozco, 2001). This finding has been referred to as the “immigrant paradox,” in that first-generation immigrant children are healthier and are more successful educationally than those of later generations, even when considering similar socioeconomic status (Fuligni, 1997; Portes, 1995; Suárez-Orozco and Suárez-Orozco). For example, one study of the ECLS-K actually identified an achievement advantage for first-generation Latino children after controlling for
Chapter 11

poverty level, mother education, family structure, early child care attendance, and so on (Palacios, Guttmannova, and Chase-Lansdale, 2008).

However, because generational status is a “categorical” variable, it is suitable for analysis of group differences but is less useful as an explanatory variable. Therefore, it is important to identify the underlying processes that might account for generational status differences in children’s school achievements. Regarding the “immigration paradox,” one possibility is that first-generation immigrant parents have very high aspirations for their children’s success (Berry, 2007); their resilience and motivation, characteristics that helped them come to the United States, are qualities that also help their children become more successful in school (Card, 2005). Over time, risk factors such as low socioeconomic status, lack of English proficiency, lack of enrollment in early childhood programs or low-achieving schools, increased discrimination toward immigrants, and loss of protective traditions might pose obstacles to native children’s successful educational achievement (Palacios et al., 2008), which come to be reflected in generational status differences. Additionally, the chances of being raised in a single-parent family increases for third-generation Latino children (Fry and Passel, 2009). In contrast, Latino children from later generational families who succeed in overcoming various social and economic risks fare better (as described in work by Reardon and Galindo, 2006, above). Thus, generational status serves as a proxy for a set of protective or risk factors, depending on how it manifests itself in the cultural and economic experiences of families and children.

Economic Status

Although findings on Latino’s generational status are mixed in terms of children’s school success, poverty is uniformly detrimental to the development of Latino children. Among foreign born, Latin American immigrants had the highest rate of poverty with 25% of families with children under age 18 living in poverty (U.S. Census Bureau, 2007). However, this statistic obscures differences in the cost of living in different geographic areas as well as generational differences in poverty rates. Relative to earlier immigrants, recent immigrants have lower earnings in inferior jobs with few benefits (DeAnda and Bachmeier, 2008). A recent Pew Hispanic Center report revealed that 34% of first-generation Latino children, 26% of second-generation children, and 24% of third-generation children were living in poverty (Fry and Passel, 2009).

Notably, there is enormous heterogeneity in the economic status of different Latino groups. For example, rates of poverty are highest for Mexican American immigrants, and Mexican American immigrant children attend inferior and more segregated schools than their European American or
School Readiness in Latino Families

African American peers (Suárez-Orozco and Suárez-Orozco, 2001). Findings from our hospital-recruited sample of families followed longitudinally at New York University’s Center for Research on Culture, Development, and Education (CRCDE) indicated that Mexican immigrant parents tend to be younger, had lower levels of human capital (i.e., education, English proficiency), and lived in more overcrowded housing than parents from Chinese, African American, and Dominican families (Tamis-LeMonda, Niwa, Kahana-Kalman, and Yoshikawa, 2008). Interviews with these families revealed that the higher number of adults in Mexican households was largely due to co-residence among many families. Sharing residence with other families may be an effective strategy to pool resources to cover household expenses (Yoshikawa, in progress). As a result, overall household income is higher (Park, 2009). Nonetheless, Mexican families have lower per capita incomes, and with proficiency in English and acculturation, their per capita income increases (Parke et al., 2004).

Although other Latino populations might be financially better off than newer immigrants, such as those from Mexico, Latinos in general have lower household incomes than both European Americans and African Americans. For example, in 1999, Dominicans in the United States had an average annual per capita household income that was only 50% of the per capita income of the average European American family, and significantly lower than that of average African American (Hernandez and Denton, 2005).

The relatively high poverty rates of Latinos persist despite their strong work ethic (Lopez, 2001). Overall, 93% of young Latino children have fathers who worked during the year, and three in five young Latino children, or 59%, have mothers who are also employed (Hernandez et al., 2007). By showing children the value of hard work and perseverance, parents are involved in children’s educational success in a nonconventional way. A strong work ethic teaches children that work is a facet of life, achieving in school is an alternative to working with one’s “hands,” and through any type of work, life lessons are learned (Lopez, 2001).

In our research, Dominican and Mexican immigrant fathers were more likely to be working full time than African American fathers despite Latino men’s lower levels of education. Again, however, this high rate of work did not compensate for the low household incomes of families, as most men worked long hours for low pay and few benefits (DaAnda and Bacheier, 2008; Tamis-LeMonda, Niwa, Kahana-Kalman, and Yoshikawa, 2005).

Although poverty certainly affects the well-being of families and children in many ways, one pathway that is particularly problematic for children’s early school readiness is the finding that many Latinos lack the economic means to purchase books and provide learning materials for their children,
even though they are involved in their children’s lives in other culturally relevant ways (Lopez, 2001). In addition, families from limited English-speaking households are unlikely to find books at libraries and bookstores that are in their home language. Based on the Early Head Start Research and Evaluation Project (Raikes et al., 2006), we found that low-income Latino families who spoke Spanish had substantially fewer books than low-income European American, African American, and English-speaking Latino families. About half (59%) of Spanish-speaking Latino children had five or more books at 14 months compared to 78% of African American children, 91% of English-speaking Latinos, and 91% of European American children. These findings again highlight the heterogeneity within the Latino population, as Latino children from English-speaking backgrounds (who again were more likely to be later generation) were as likely to have access to books as their European American peers.

More recently, we identified limited learning materials in Spanish-speaking households already in infancy. As one example, in work at the CRCDE we found that when infants were 6 months old, African American children had an average of nine books, whereas Dominican children had seven books, and Mexican children had only four books. These statistics are not surprising given that Mexican families were most likely to be living in poverty, and Mexican mothers were the most likely to be monolingual Spanish speakers. These differences in children’s access to books continued through children’s second year and were in turn associated with children’s vocabulary size (Ficarra-Messina, Tamis-LeMonda, Lucchese, and Kahana-Kalman, 2009).

Notably, the lower levels of literacy materials and practices documented in various studies of Latinos are not explained by Latino parents having lower educational aspirations for children than parents from other backgrounds. Latino parents in the United States have high hopes that their children will do well in school, master English, and excel in the future labor market. Our research shows that this emphasis on children’s educational achievements is already evident from the first weeks of infancy. In one study, we interviewed approximately 120 Mexican and Dominican mothers when their infants were 1 month of age and asked them to describe the qualities they most wished to see in their children by the time children were 3 years of age. Based on common stereotypes of Latino family values, we expected mothers to predominantly talk about the importance of children being respectful, obedient, and maintaining connection to the family (relatedness). However, counter to these expectations, Dominican and Mexican mothers alike spoke most about the importance of children’s learning and achievement, and rarely mentioned respect, obedience, or connection to the family as qualities they hoped to see in their children. When mothers were again interviewed when their...
children were 14, 24, and 36 months, they consistently underscored learning and achievement as the goals they wished for most, and the most prevalent developmental pattern was movement toward greater emphasis on achievement (Hunter, Tamis-LeMonda, Ng, Kuchirko, and Raufman, 2009; Ng et al., 2009). Others have also found that Mexican-American families value education for their children as a means for economic mobility. Many Mexican immigrant parents faced extreme hardships in order to migrate to the United States, and given that most families have a low socioeconomic status, and that the parents’ themselves attained low levels of formal education, educating their children is viewed as a path to children’s successful future.

**Parent Education and English Proficiency**

Across studies, parental education consistently relates to children’s school readiness and academic achievement, and parent years of education is typically much lower in Latino immigrant families (Hernandez et al., 2007). The highest percentage of high school graduates among foreign born were from Asia and Europe, with only 52% graduated from Latin America (U.S. Census Bureau, 2007), largely due to different rules regarding mandated schooling in Latin American countries. Children from immigrant families originating in Mexico, Central America, and the Dominican Republic were likely to have parents who have completed the fewest years of school (Hernandez, Denton, and Macartney, 2008).

As with economic status, there exist notable generational differences in the educational levels of Latino parents. For example, among Mexican immigrant children, 4% of parents had a college degree, 64% had a mother who had not graduated high school, and 36% had a mother who had not gone beyond the eighth grade. In contrast, among Mexican children with U.S. born parents, 11% had a mother who had graduated college and only 25% had a mother who did not graduate high school (Hernandez, 2006). These lower rates of education by generation status are also seen in Latinos from other ethnic backgrounds. For example, 47% of first-generation Latino children, 40% of second-generation children, and 16% of children third-generation and beyond had parents with less than a high school education (Fry and Passel, 2009). Because poverty and low parental education are prevalent in many Latino immigrant populations, children from these backgrounds are more likely to display poorer academic outcomes and drop out of school than the population at large. In one study, when effects of poverty on children’s academic achievement were examined, they were largely explained by parents’ educational and occupational status (e.g., Caldas and Bankston III, 1997).
The lower level of education in some Latino families is also associated with lower English proficiency. Nearly three-fourths (71%) of young Latino children had at least one parent with limited English proficiency (Hernandez et al., 2007). Mexican American, Dominican, and Central American children were less likely to have parents who are proficient in English relative to other Latino children (Hernandez, 2006), as are first- or second-generation immigrants. Children whose home language differs from the mainstream language score lower in early school readiness skills than children whose home language matches the mainstream (Chandler, Nord, Lennon, and Liu, 1999).

In our research, first-generation Mexican and Dominican immigrant mothers hardly spoke any English to their young toddlers (unsurprisingly), whereas English was more prevalent in second-generation households and was introduced to children through multiple avenues (e.g., parents’ and siblings’ talk with children, TV viewing habits, book reading, songs, and music). Consequently, toddlers in first-generation immigrant households predominantly spoke Spanish, whereas those of second-generation households already began to express some English words by 14 months (Senie, 2009). By 24 months and beyond, children who were mixing English and Spanish had larger overall vocabularies, a pattern that was not explained by these children having “duplicates” of the same word in both languages, but rather by children having more conceptually unique words. We are currently examining these early differences in vocabulary to measures of school readiness at prekindergarten. The unique language profiles of different Latino families are critical to consider in studies of children’s language development and school readiness.

Although the development of solid bilingual skills has been found to be an asset to children (Garcia and Miller, 2008), not all Latino children develop proficiency in both English and Spanish. Some children develop English at the expense of competence in Spanish (termed “subtractive bilingualism”) and therefore do not reap the benefits of bilingualism (Garcia and Jensen, 2009). Others do not develop adequate English skills; limited English-speaking skills means many young Latino children will not be able to attain academic success, especially if the school or program they are enrolled in is not equipped to work effectively with Spanish speakers (Hernandez et al., 2007). For many young Latino children, school is also the first setting that introduces them to English as a second language, which places many Latino young children at a considerable disadvantage (Magnuson, Lahaie, and Waldfogel, 2006).

Parenting Practices

Parenting sensitivity (primarily expressed through cognitive stimulation and contingent responsiveness to children’s initiatives) is strongly associated with
children’s cognitive and language development across income and ethnic groups. Toddlers and preschoolers who had more sensitive mothers have larger receptive and productive vocabularies, attained language milestones such as combinatorial speech sooner in development, and scored higher on standardized tests of cognition and language in the first three years (Pungello, Iruka, Dotterer, Mills-Koonce, and Reznick, 2009; Rodriguez et al., 2009; Tamis-LeMonda, Bornstein, and Baumwell, 2001; Tamis-LeMonda, Shannon, Cabrera, and Lamb, 2004). In contrast, parent directive, controlling, and intrusive behaviors have been linked to negative child outcomes in both cognitive and behavioral domains (e.g., Culp, Hubbs-Tait, Culp, and Starost, 2001; Ispa et al., 2004).

Few studies, however, have examined parenting in Latino populations, and those that have yield inconsistent findings, depending on ethnic group, context, or study. Some studies suggest that Latino parents are authoritarian and strong disciplinarians. For example, Latino mothers of 6 year olds have been described as exhibiting one-sided decision making and strict expectations regarding their children’s conformity to rules (Hill, Bush, and Roosa, 2003) and using modeling (rather than explanation) as a teaching technique (Halgunseth, Ispa, and Rudy, 2006). Heightened authoritarian parenting was also found in Mexican immigrant fathers’ engagements with their infants due to an emphasis on authority and compliance (Varela et al., 2004).

However, several challenges have been raised regarding the characterization of Latino parents as “controlling or authoritarian.” First, research suggests that the meaning of control in Latino cultures might differ from that in European American families due to the greater emphasis on respect for the family hierarchy. For example, one investigation based on the national Early Head Start National Evaluation consortium examined whether mothers’ “intrusiveness” during mother-toddler play had different meanings for children from different backgrounds (i.e., African American, less acculturated Mexican Americans, more acculturated Mexican Americans, and European Americans; Ispa et al., 2004). In European American families, intrusiveness was linked to increased toddler negativity toward mother, decreased child engagement with mother, and decreased dyadic mutuality. In contrast, less acculturated Mexican American mothers’ intrusiveness with toddlers did not predict engagement with mother and dyadic mutuality (although it did predict child negativity). More acculturated mothers’ intrusiveness was associated with less dyadic mutuality and negativity but did not predict engagement with mother. In contrast, control in immigrant Latino mothers related to secure attachment in Dominican and Puerto Rican infants and toddlers (Carlson and Harwood, 2003; Fracasso, Busch-Rossnagel, and Fisher, 1994). Thus, whether intrusiveness is necessarily detrimental to children in certain cultural contexts remains open to further inquiry.
Second, greater “directiveness” in Latino parents might partly be explained by socioeconomic or minority status of the specific subgroup being studied. For example, in one study, although Mexican American mothers were found to be more directive and used more negative feedback with their children than European American mothers, parenting differences attenuated after accounting for SES (Hurtado, Marchman, and Fernald, 2007). Others have also found that differences in parenting behaviors between Latinos and other groups attenuate when family resources are covaried (Barrueco, Lopez, and Miles, 2007). For example, European American mothers were actually found to use more controlling teaching behaviors with their preschoolers than Mexican American mothers when economic status did not differ (Moreno, 1997). Moreover, research that examined parent-child interactions during culturally relevant tasks (e.g., shoelace tying) showed lower levels of control in Latino mothers. These tasks may yield a more authentic portrayal of parental instruction than toy-type tasks and contexts typical in developmental research (Moreno, 1991).

Additionally, it has been suggested that “authoritarian” parenting practices are, in part, the result of immigrating to the United States (Varela et al., 2004). The investigators found no difference in authoritarian parenting between European American families in the United States and Mexican families residing in Mexico, whereas Mexican parents in the United States used more authoritarian behaviors to control their children than Mexican parents residing in Mexico. This led the authors to conclude that ethnic minority status, as opposed to Mexican culture, may lead to greater authoritarian parenting in Mexican families in the United States.

Finally, the classification of Latino parenting as authoritarian is an oversimplification given the enormous variation that exists within the group as well as across studies. Researchers have reported on the warmth and encouragement of Latino parents (e.g., Guilamo-Ramos et al., 2007) and their greater physical guidance during interactions with their infants and young children as compared to European American mothers (Ispa et al., 2004), and find that sensitivity in Latino mothers predicted children’s cognitive test scores after controlling for SES, English proficiency, country of origin, mental health, and partner relationship (Cabrera, Shannon, West, and Brooks-Gunn, 2006). Similarly, the characterization of Latino fathers as authoritarian has been challenged by qualitative research (e.g., Fitzpatrick, Caldera, Pursley, and Wampler, 1999). In their study, fathers fulfilled roles that contradicted rigid stereotypes by being teachers of social skills, affectionate playmates, and a source of emotional support for their children.

We have also found high involvement of Mexican fathers in the care and play of their infants. When infants were only 1 and 6 months, Mexican fathers
engaged in greater amounts of social play (tickling and cuddling babies; play with toys) than Chinese, Dominican, and African American fathers, and they were subsequently found to be more likely to eat dinner with their 14-month-olds on a daily basis than fathers from African American and Dominican backgrounds (Tamis-LeMonda, Kahana-Kalman, and Yoshikawa, 2009).

Literacy Practices

Children’s early and consistent participation in routine literacy activities, such as shared book reading, storytelling, and learning about letters and numbers, provide a critical foundation for language growth and emergent literacy (Raikes et al., 2006; Rodriguez et al., 2009). Shared book reading in particular provides a developmentally appropriate setting for children to learn vocabulary, develop phonemic awareness, be exposed to print and other literacy concepts (Rodriguez et al.; Senechal and LeFevre, 2001), and develop positive attitudes toward literacy (Dickinson and Tabor, 1991; Raikes et al.; Senechal, LeFevre, Hudson, and Lawson, 1996). We have shown that associations between book reading experiences and children’s language development already emerge in infancy and are evident for both mothers’ and fathers’ book reading with children. For example, in the work of the CRCDE with families of Mexican and Dominican backgrounds, daily book reading by mothers to their infants as young as 6 months related to children’s communicative language at 14 months, as did book reading at 14 months (Ficarra-Messina et al., 2009). Moreover, fathers’ frequency of book reading, storytelling, and singing nursery rhymes with their 14-month-olds related to children’s expressive language scores on the MacArthur at 24 months (Tamis-LeMonda, 2009). Finally, families who spent more money on books were those who were more likely to engage in daily book reading, a finding that again speaks to the close links between economic hardship and lower rates of learning activities (Ficarra-Messina et al.).

However, we have also shown that rates of book reading are lower in certain low-income Latino groups (e.g., monolingual, Spanish-speaking Latinos) when compared to low-income European Americans and African Americans. For example, in the study described earlier on over 1,000 mothers and children in the Early Head Start national consortium, both English- and Spanish-speaking Latino mothers read significantly less to their 14-month-olds than did European American and African American mothers, with the lowest rates in Spanish-speaking only households (Raikes et al., 2006). A more recent analysis of the literacy environments of these same children at 14, 24, and 36 months showed that European American mothers scored highest on literacy environment measures (composite scores of children’s engagement in
learning activities, access to learning materials, and quality of mother-child interactions at 14, 24, and 36 months), followed by English-speaking Latinos, African American mothers, and finally, Spanish-speaking Latinos (Rodriguez et al., 2009).

Nursery and Preschool Experiences

Another factor that might play a central role in the school readiness of Latino children is attendance in nursery and preschool. Immigrant Latino children in immigrant families from Mexico (18%), Central America (26%), and the Dominican Republic (32%) are least likely to be enrolled in pre-kindergarten or nursery school at the age of 3 years. Of those native U.S. children of Latino heritage, only 29% from Mexican families and 31% of Puerto Rican families were enrolled in pre-kindergarten or nursery school at the age of 3 years (Hernandez et al., 2007). Hence, Latino preschoolers are less likely than European American and African American children to know the letters of the alphabet, engage in book-reading activities, count up to 20, and write or draw instead of scribbling (U.S. Department of Education, 2000).

Some researchers suggest that the relatively low nursery school enrollment of Latino preschoolers may be explained by cultural values. Latinos are said to highly value the family, and parents may prefer that their children be cared for at home or by relatives rather than in a formal, U.S. educational setting (Brooks-Gunn and Markman, 2005). However, lower pre-kindergarten or nursery school enrollment may also be due to Latino families’ financial barriers, preschool accessibility, or lack of information regarding pre-k/nursery programs (Hernandez et al., 2007). In Mexico, where preschool is free, 81% of 4-year-olds were enrolled in preschool in 2005 as compared to 71% of European American children and 55% of children from Mexican immigrant families in 2004 (Hernandez et al., 2008).

Preschool entry 1 or 2 years prior to kindergarten has been associated with improved reading and math skills compared with parental or informal childcare (Bierman, Nix, Greenberg, Blair, and Domitrovich, 2008). Although there is little research on the benefits of preschool attendance for young Latino children, findings suggest that preschool should be at least as effective for them as for children from non-Latino backgrounds. For instance, all racial/ethnic and SES groups benefited from a public prekindergarten program in Tulsa, Oklahoma, but gains were greatest in early literacy and problem solving in Latino children (Gormley, Gayer, Phillips, and Dawson, 2005).

However, it is also important that preschool experiences support Latino children’s gains in English without compromising their Spanish skills. Latino children’s Spanish language skills are foundational to English skills; a lack
of proficiency in Spanish means low likelihood of transfer to English (Paez, Tabors, and Lopez, 2007). In the Early Childhood Study of Language and Literacy Development of Spanish-speaking children (ECS), oral language (e.g., vocabulary) and literacy (e.g., letter and word recognition) of low-income Latino children were assessed at age 4 and then at the end of pre-kindergarten (Paez et al.). The ECS children were enrolled in mostly English language Head Start programs and public pre-kindergarten programs and were compared to a low-income monolingual Spanish group from Puerto Rico. At the end of pre-kindergarten, the ECS sample did not make gains in English and fell further behind in Spanish literacy. From the onset, the ECS children had lower oral language and early literacy scores as compared to the Puerto Rican children and monolingual norms, which again highlights the centrality of early language skills for children’s later success.

**NEXT STEPS**

School readiness entails children developing the skills needed to succeed in the social and academic world of the classroom. Moreover, school readiness is one of the best predictors of academic achievement and school completion (Forget-Dubois et al., 2009), making it a topic of central policy concern. Unfortunately, many Latino families, especially newer immigrants, experience barriers to their children’s school readiness, including low family income, low levels of parental education, limited English proficiency, fewer learning resources such as books, and lower attendance in nursery and/or pre-kindergarten programs. Thus, there continue to be enormous challenges to researchers and practitioners who seek to identify effective ways to support the early experiences of young Latino children so that they are ready for school. In this closing section, we review future directions for research and practice.

**Practice Directions**

Family-level practice should emphasize the ways that Latino parents can promote their children’s development of early foundational skills. From a strengths-based perspective, Latino parents provide their children with emotional support, place high value on children’s academic achievement, and also put much effort into preparing their children for school by showing them the value of hard work through parents’ own dedication to work, as well as their expressed goals for children’s achievements. Thus, Latino parents’ goals for children can serve as a springboard for developing family-level
strategies that will support children’s academic development. These strategies might include highlighting practices that foster the development of language and literacy skills in both English and Spanish, such as book reading, storytelling, and nursery rhymes (Raikes et al., 2006; Saracho, 2002; Snow and Dickinson, 1990; Watson, 2002). Additionally, practitioners should work with parents to identify family routines that present meaningful opportunities for children’s everyday learning. For example, as shown in our research, most Mexican children ate meals with both their mothers and fathers on a daily basis. Conversations during mealtime provide children with different social partners who help scaffold children’s vocabulary and oral narrative skills (Beals, 1997).

Practitioners must also attend to the broader circumstances of families’ lives, which vary substantially among subgroups of Latinos from different backgrounds. Family resources, including household income, parents’ education, and parents’ proficiency with English, are major influences on children’s school readiness and achievement. As discussed above, low parental education, low English proficiency, and poverty are associated with fewer learning materials in the home and less frequent engagement in learning activities such as book reading. However, because these various risks tend to co-occur in families, it is also important to carefully disentangle the relative contributions of each risk factor.

Although shared book reading does not represent the totality of young children’s language interactions, it is one venue for parents to promote children’s literacy. Whether or not books are in English or Spanish, children benefit from shared book reading by gaining skills around print concepts, letter-word identification, vocabulary, narrative constructions, and world knowledge, all of which are foundational to school success. Practitioners and educators should assist families who may not have the resources to provide literacy materials for their young children and recognize that a lack of parental English proficiency is associated with less frequent shared book reading between parents and young children. Again, practitioners should underscore the importance of children’s engagement in literacy activities more generally, whether in Spanish or English, thereby supporting parents’ interactions with children even if they lack English skills. For support of English skills more specifically, two-generation literacy programs enable children and their parents to learn English together without losing their home language (Hernandez et al., 2008).

Efforts are also needed to ensure that young Latino children participate in early childhood programs. This is particularly important for those who are less likely to be enrolled in nursery or preschool due to limited family resources (Hernandez et al., 2008). Latino children are underrepresented
in Head Start and child care programs compared to other ethnic and racial groups, which means they might not receive assistance with the skills that are foundational to school readiness (Garcia and Jensen, 2009). However, attendance in preschool is only a starting point. There exists enormous variability in the approaches taken by early childhood education programs in the instruction of English and the integration of Spanish language. Recent meta-analyses indicated the benefits of bilingual early childhood programs over English-only programs, but few of these programs have included preschool Latino children (Garcia and Jensen, 2009). To address this gap, the National Institute of Child Health and Development (NICHD) and the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) are currently funding a large-scale research consortium on prekindergarten programs for 3 to 5 year old English Language Learners (ELL) (Griffin, 2009).

There is also need for practitioners to be informed regarding evidence-based research on effective ways to foster children’s gains in English without compromising their Spanish skills. For example, a recent randomized experiment of Spanish-speaking preschoolers contrasted the effects of English-only literacy interventions, transitional literacy interventions (at which children began with Spanish-based instruction around literacy and transitioned to English-based literacy instruction after 9 weeks), and “business as usual” (i.e., High Scope Curriculum; Farver, Lonigan, and Eppe, 2009). Both English-only and transitional literacy programs enhanced children’s English outcomes (oral language and phonological awareness), but only the transitional model was effective in supporting children’s Spanish-speaking preliteracy skills.

The challenges of preschool education for Latinos extend into later schooling. Of the over 5 million English Language Learners in K-12 schools in 2004, 2.5 million were native speakers of Spanish, and this number has risen (National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition, 2004, 2008). In light of the changing demographics in the United States over the past several decades, it is likely that a majority of teachers will have at least one ELL in their classroom (Carrier and Cohen, 2005). However, only 29% of teachers with ELLs in their classes had the training to effectively work with these students (National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition, 2008).

**Research Directions**

Although there are numerous gaps in the research of Latino children and families, the most urgent next step is for researchers to both attend to and highlight the heterogeneity of the Latino population in studies. These efforts are central to reversing stereotypes that are often rooted in overgeneralizations...
and confounds between ethnicity and other social and economic factors. The Latino population in the United States is a heterogeneous group that varies on income, education, language preference, English proficiency, literacy practices, generational status, cultural views and practices, and acculturation. Unfortunately, research has yet to reflect the depth of this within- and between-group diversity. We propose three key ways in which future researcher might address this limitation.

First, research is needed on Latinos from ethnic backgrounds that span the full socioeconomic and cultural spectra. For example, Latinos of Cuban, South American, Mexican, Central American, and Puerto Rican heritage differ in terms of school trajectories (Reardon and Galindo, 2006). Yet, Latino groups of relatively higher economic status are rarely targeted in recent studies. Indeed, one example of a group of Latinos with economic and political power are Miami Cubans (Stepick and Stepick, 2002), and the developmental trajectories of children from these families are largely neglected. Moreover, studies of ethnic groups who are less resourced on average, such as Mexicans, must highlight within-group variance and take necessary efforts to also include middle-income families in future research. Without including Latino families from the full span of economic strata, descriptions of Latino children’s school readiness will continue to be based on families at risk; this in turn fuels the mono-characterization of Latino children as “lagging behind their peers.”

Second, research is needed on Latino children and families from different regions of the United States. For the most part, Latinos are highly concentrated geographically, with 79% living in just nine states (Hernandez et al., 2007). California and Texas account for the largest concentration of young Latino children. However, since the 1990s, Latino families, especially from Mexico, have branched out to states like Arkansas, Georgia, and North Carolina because of shifts in industry (Park, 2009). As new economic opportunities open up in states that have never seen Latino immigrants before, the public schools in which these young Latino children will enroll have little experience with the Latino culture. Many of these states lack the infrastructure for culturally appropriate educational programs, have no or few English as Second Language teachers, and lack educational policies to meet the needs of Latino children (Brown and Souto-Manning, 2008). Whether and how these limitations will ultimately affect children’s school readiness is an area of needed research.

Finally, studies that compare Latino families living in the United States with those from their home countries are needed. Although generational status and English proficiency have been used as proxies for acculturation, these factors alone do not capture the changing cultural values associated
with “learning a new land” (Suárez-Orozco, Suárez-Orozco, and Todorova, 2008) and the acculturative stressors that are experienced by different Latino families living in the United States. Cross-national studies can help distinguish beliefs and practices that are cultural from those that are the outgrowth of immigrating to the United States. When children Latino immigrant children enter an early childhood classroom, they bring with them a home language and ways of learning that may be different from the school culture.

In closing, it is important for researchers (and practitioners) to recognize and highlight the heterogeneity of Latinos in the United States; attend to connections between cultural views and practices and the early learning experiences of young children in infancy and the preschool years; and to advance programs and educational techniques that are consistent with family beliefs and expectations (Moreno, 1991). These directions will advance knowledge on effective ways to prepare Latino children for the cognitive, emotional, and social demands of schooling.

REFERENCES


Chapter 11


Chapter 11


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Within the United States, schools play a crucial role in the immigrant story. Education is often the major motivating factor for the migration of many families. Parents want a better life for their children. Education in a new country provides that pathway for opportunity. For immigrant children, schools are the primary institution that facilitates acculturation, socialization, and second language acquisition. As such, the role of schooling encompasses more than academics. However, the role of school in the immigrant experience is not limited to the child. Immigrant parents play an important role in schooling and the education of their children.

The current view holds that the more parents are “involved” in their child’s schooling, the better the child will perform. Thus, it often assumed that parents who are not involved do not care about their child’s education. In this chapter, we will outline some of the problems with this line of thinking as it pertains to immigrant families. Immigrant parents bring their own cultural values, beliefs, and behaviors regarding their role with respect to their children’s education and schooling. These preexisting values and practices may align or conflict with those of the schools. Thus, the mainstream meaning of “parent involvement” in the United States may not easily translate for immigrant families. Therefore, we will provide an overview of parent involvement and highlight the challenges that exist for immigrant families and their schools. We will argue that incorporating immigrant parents into the schooling of their children is a complex process, and one that is not well captured by many of the current parent involvement models.

This chapter is organized into four sections: (a) first we will provide a brief demographic overview; (b) next, we describe our current understanding of parent involvement; (c) drawing from the literature, we discuss the complexities of
the parent-school relationship for immigrants and their children, and point to the discontinuities between home and school; and (d) finally, we will discuss some strategies for building better relations between diverse families and their schools.

DEMOGRAPHICS OF IMMIGRANT FAMILIES IN THE UNITED STATES

The diversity of immigrants coming to the United States is vast. According to the census, in 2007, approximately 12% of the U.S. population (37.2 million) was foreign born (American Community Survey, 2007), of which 80% was from Latin America (53.3%) or Asia (26.8%), with only 15% coming from North America or Europe (American Community Survey, 2007). Of the immigrants from Latin America, Mexico comprised the majority (64.4%), with Cuba and El Salvador each contributing 5.4% (U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2010). Among Asians, the Chinese are the largest single immigrant group. China ranks third in immigrants from a single country, third only to Mexico and the Philippines (Terrazas and Devani, 2008). Moreover, the ethnoprofiles of immigrants vary by state, with recent influxes of immigrants throughout the United States. Although it is not surprising that states like California, New York, and Texas possess the highest level of foreign born (respectively), many are unaware that the states with the largest percentage change are North Carolina (274%), Georgia (233%), and Nevada (202%; U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000).

The educational and economic differences between various immigrant groups are also substantial. For example, 50% of Asian immigrants hold a bachelor’s degree or higher. This contrast with immigrants from Latin America, where 34% possesses less than a ninth grade education (Current Population Survey, Annual Social and Economic Supplement, 2003). Regarding employment and poverty, Latin America immigrants have higher levels of unemployment (9%) when compared to their Asian counterparts (7%). In addition, Latin America immigrants have a higher percentage of individuals living below the poverty line (22%).

PARENT INVOLVEMENT: AN OVERVIEW

Although parents have been involved in their children’s education in various ways since the inception of public schooling, the 1960s sparked a particular interest in parent involvement. Social and developmental scientists began to demonstrate that parents’ attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors were
important predictors of children’s intellectual and educational achievement (Bloom, 1981) and played a role in the existing educational inequality among Whites and certain racial/ethnic minority groups (Coleman, Campbell, Hobson, McPartland, Mood, Weinfeld, and York, 1966). In addition, early childhood education programs such as Head Start began to incorporate parent involvement in their programming (Berger, 1981; Rich, 1987; Zigler and Styfco, 2004).

Through programs such as Head Start, parent involvement was viewed as a way to educate parents on appropriate child-rearing practices. Those who held the parent education perspective believed that low-socioeconomic status (SES) parents were lacking parenting skills and a basic understanding of their role as their child’s first teacher. It was these skills, or the lack thereof, that was at the root of various educational and social problems encountered by low-income families. The theories that framed this orientation were based on cultural and environmental deficit models, particularly the inadequate socialization of children by their parents (for a discussion, see Pearl, 1997). Parent involvement was therefore based on providing parents with the “correct” values and skills to interact with their children (Valentine and Stark, 1979). Although not originally developed specifically for immigrants, low-income immigrants qualified for and participate in the program. However, immigrant children were less likely than their native peers to be enrolled in Head Start (Neidell, and Waldfogel, 2009).

Over the years, the role of parent involvement has extended beyond early childhood education and has been viewed as a key element in facilitating educational success (Pomerantz and Moorman, 2010). More recently, the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act requires schools to involve parents as a way to facilitate students’ academic achievement. As a result of the act, schools must have specific parent involvement policies and programs to develop family school partnerships (Jeynes, 2005; National Coalition for Parent Involvement in Education, 2004). Unfortunately, despite the increased focus on parent involvement, the amount of research focused specifically on immigrants families is sparse. This is problematic given the demographic shifts in our school population.

**PARENT INVOLVEMENT MODELS**

One of the most prominent and influential models was developed by Joyce Epstein and her colleagues. Epstein’s model focuses on the family’s involvement in the school as well as the school’s involvement with the family, and both being involved with the community. This triangular partnership between family, school, and community is complex and relies on involvement between
all three sectors to better support academic success. According to the model, the degree of overlap between these three institutions enriches student learning (Sheldon and Epstein, 2002).

At the core of Epstein’s model are six types of involvement: Type I refers to parents addressing children’s basic needs. This includes the parent monitoring and disciplining of their children as well as establishing an overall positive home environment. Type II addresses home-school communication. That is, the degree to which parents, teachers, and the school share information regarding the children’s progress and school activities. Type III refers to the more commonplace understanding of involvement such as parents’ assistance of teachers in classrooms or volunteering for school activities. Type IV refers to parents maintaining a learning environment at home. This includes providing a work area and helping children with homework and school-related activities. Type V refers to parents’ participation in school decisions through parent–teacher association/parent–teacher organization (PTA/PTO), parent organizations, advisory committees, and the like. Type VI refers to parent-community collaboration. This involves parents working with community agencies and organizations to access services to strengthen school programs and student learning (Epstein, 1995).

According to Epstein (1990), a comprehensive partnership program will include elements of, and provide opportunities for, each of the six types of involvement. Each school’s partnership program will be uniquely based upon the goals and specific needs of the families, school, and community. In general, research has shown that this paradigm of involvement is significant in decreasing truancy issues, reducing behavioral and discipline problems, increasing academic scores, as well as family and community involvement (Epstein, 2005; Epstein and Jansorn, 2004; Sheldon and Epstein, 2002, 2005).

Although widely used, the utility of Epstein’s model may be limited as it pertains to immigrant families, as well as other ethnic and racial groups (Moreno, Menchaca, and Rodríguez, in press). For example, utilizing Epstein’s model Ingram, Wolfe, and Lieberman (2007) attempted to uncover the specific parent involvement constructs that resulted in improved academic achievement. The researchers identified three Chicago public schools that were effective at serving at-risk populations. The schools served largely poor immigrant and ethnic/racial minority students. However, the students scored well on standardized achievement exams. Moreover all three schools scored in the top third of the state on the Illinois Standards Achievement Test (ISAT).

Based on their findings, Ingram et al. (2007) argued that Epstein’s model was unable to clarify the characteristics and impact of parent involvement for high-risk and high-achieving populations. Only two of Epstein’s six types of involvement (parenting and learning at home) were deemed
applicable. Epstein’s Parenting typology states that parents provide an environment at home that encourages their children’s learning. The participants’ responses indicated specific parenting practices that promoted learning and acceptable behavior while at school. Epstein’s Learning at Home typology includes parents involvement in learning activities such as homework or outings that promote learning. The participants’ responses demonstrated that parents were consistently involved in learning activities with their child. Ingram et al. suggested that improving academic achievement for high risk populations was a result of effective parenting strategies and learning-at-home activities. The remaining four types of involvement, Communicating, Volunteering, Decision Making, and Collaborating with the Community, were not relevant aspects of parent involvement with respect to academic achievement.

Interestingly, although parents indicated that they rarely communicated with their children’s teachers, this was not due to negative perceptions of the school. On the contrary, parents stated that teachers and administrators were encouraging and welcoming of their participation and volunteerism in their children’s classroom. Nonetheless, parents were rarely able to help with classroom activities or collaborate in community activities. According to the open-ended questions, parents’ identified three roles as important, but which are not captured by Epstein’s six types of involvement. The participants’ responses indicated that having high expectations, providing the best education possible, and teaching the importance of a good education were important parental roles. Finally, the majority of parents were aware of and able to define the impact of their involvement in their child’s educational experience (Ingram et al., 2007).

Comparable results were found in research involving a number of immigrant groups such as Chinese, Dominican, Korean, Mexican, and Portuguese (García Coll, Akiba, Palacios Bailey, Silver, DiMartino, and Chin, 2002; Ji and Koblinsky, 2009; Moreno, 2004; Sohn and Wang, 2006). For example, in their study exploring Chinese immigrant involvement within the District of Columbia, Ji and Koblinsky found that overall levels of parent involvement among Chinese immigrant parents were considerably below those of parents in a nationally representative U.S. sample (Vaden-Kiernan and McManus, 2005). Only 35% of parents attended a parent-teacher conference, 24% had attended a school event, and 10% volunteered at school. This compares to 77%, 70%, and 42% (respectively) of the national sample. Moreover, consistent with other research, parents reported that they did not participate in the decision making nor community collaboration. Similarly, in a study of 158 Latina mothers, Moreno (2004) found that although mothers reported some activity across all types of involvement, mothers were highly engaged in
home-based activities (i.e., “basic obligations,” “communication,” “learning at home”), with significantly less participation in school site activities (i.e., involvement at school, school governance).

Although Epstein’s model has been the foundation for much research, it may be ill suited to capture the unique situations of immigrants and culturally diverse families. The broad involvement categories may not recognize the non-standard, but situationally and culturally relevant, ways that these parents participate in their child’s education. As a result, the invisible strategies employed by immigrant parents go unnoticed or are ignored as they are not displayed within the mainstream typologies (involvement on the school site).

CULTURAL DISCONTINUITIES BETWEEN HOME AND SCHOOL

As stated earlier, the diversity of immigrant families within the United States is vast. Although we realize that it is inherently problematic to discuss “the immigrant culture,” as this implies an unwarranted degree of homogeneity, nonetheless there are similarities in the discontinuities or disconnects experienced across immigrant groups. These similarities can help us navigate our way through the immigrant family-school landscape, providing culturally relevant information to develop more insight into the ways we can facilitate parent involvement.

Before we proceed, however, it is important to acknowledge that immigrant parents from all regions have demonstrated high aspirations for their children. They view formal education as the primary vehicle for social and economic mobility (García Coll et al., 2002; Ji and Koblinsky, 2009; Moreno, 2004; Sohn, and Wang, 2006). With that said, immigrant groups differ with respect to particular views of child-rearing values, which in turn, influenced the parent-school relation. For many groups the most basic notion of a “well-educated child” differs from that of the mainstream. For instance, among many Asian immigrants groups, values and practices regarding parenting, child care, and education are rooted in Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism (Chao and Tseng, 2002; García Coll et al., 2002; Shek, 2006). Concepts such as filial piety outline the parent-child relationship where children are expected to demonstrate respect and obedience. Correspondingly, parents are responsible for making their children competent individuals (Kim and Wong, 2002; Shek, 2006). The cultural values and expectations form different template on which the parent, child, school relationship is based. For example, although the parent-child relationship may be viewed
as “controlling” from a Western perspective, the relationship is rooted in cultural notions of *guan* (a positive notion expressing parental concern, caring, or involvement) and *chiao shun* (training children in appropriate behavior or morals) (Chao 1995; Gorman 1998). As a result, parents differ with regard to the parent-child-school relationship, and concentrate their efforts on the direct instruction, supervision, and monitoring of their children. In their comparison of immigrant Chinese and European Americans parents, Huntsinger and Jose (2009) found that Chinese parents concentrated their efforts on systematic teaching of their children in home. This contrasts with European American parents who were more active in the school setting such as volunteering at schools.

A second similar cultural disconnect that exists among many immigrants groups and their nonimmigrant counterparts is a strict division of labor between the home and school. For some groups, their deep respect for schooling and teachers lead parents not to overstep their bounds by infringing on the teacher’s expertise. For example, in their comparison of parent involvement among three immigrant groups, García Coll et al. (2002) explain the low levels of traditional parent involvement among Cambodians parents as follows:

Cultural difference in terms of school system and parent involvement in schooling were particularly sharp for Cambodians. . . . Cambodians parents “give” their children to teachers, who are highly respected and granted greater authority over pupils. It is assumed that teachers are the best equipped to guide the children’s academic and moral development. Parent involvement in school would be seen as inappropriate (p. 317).

Similarly, immigrants from Mexico and other Latin American countries bring with them the experience of a highly centralized school system, one in which parents have little input. Moreover, as with the Cambodian parents, teachers are held in high regard and there is clear demarcators between parents’ and teachers’ role. Parents are to devote considerable attention to how well their children behave. A well-mannered child is one who is ready for instruction. The focus on behavior and manners is an expression of the cultural value of *educación*, which extends beyond our typical notions of schooling and grades. Rather, *educación* encompass the social interpersonal realm. “Well-educated” (*bien educado*) children conduct themselves in a socially appropriate manner, one that shows the appropriate respect and deference to authority figures, in this case teachers. Children who do not comport themselves appropriately (*mal educado*) reflect poorly on the family in general, and parents specifically (Delgado Gaitan, 2004). Unfortunately, within the United States the focus on child behavior can be misunderstood by educators as a lack of concern for academics.
PARENT INVOLVEMENT WITHIN THE HOME

Disconnects between home and school are not only reflected in broad cultural values, but are evident in the specific practices that parents engage in with their children. For example, according to Epstein, the emphasis on “learning at home” refers to supporting, monitoring, encouraging, and so on, and not on teaching school subjects (Epstein, 1995). However, among Chinese families, education is viewed as a collective endeavor. It is not the sole responsibility of the individual child. Thus, parents are more directly involved in school work and provide supplemental instruction (it may even run counter to the school’s approach). Thus, although many Asian parents are limited in their “on-site” involvement, they go far beyond the motivation and encouragement style put forward by Epstein. This approach is also consistent with Asian parents’ more critical outlook on the school system, where they perceive U.S. schools as lacking academic rigor (Ji and Koblinsky, 2009).

Similar home-school discontinuities appear among Latino immigrants; however, they play out in a somewhat different fashion. Based on their own schooling experiences from their countries of origin, many Latino immigrant parents view repeated practice as a key element to learning. As a result, when they help their children, many parents tend to teach in a directive or “drill and kill” method. Although this type of instruction has some merit (Goldenberg, Reese and Gallimore, 1992; Moreno, 2000; Reese and Gallimore, 2000), when teachers ask parents to “read to your child” the interactions that occur can be very different from what is intended by the teacher. For example, in a study examining parents’ use of literacy materials, Goldenberg et al. (1992) sent home two types of teaching materials designed to assist parents in helping their child in reading. The first type was Libros (books). The Libros were designed to prompt reading. The second type was worksheets. These were designed to stimulate rote literacy activities. Despite the distinction, parents would routinely use the Libros for correction and repetition. This is illustrated below:

Fernando’s mother calls him over, “Ven a estudiar este libro” (Come and study this book). He stands beside her as she sits on the bed with the baby on her lap. She reads a page and has Fernando repeat it. She’s reading upside down, so when she reads “miles de melones” as “melones de melones,” that is how he repeats it (p. 517).

Even in more fundamental learning activities, home-school conflicts may arise. In an observational study, Moreno (2002) observed a number of challenges faced by Mexican immigrant mothers when teaching their children the alphabet. For example, it was not uncommon for Mexican immigrant
mothers to teach primarily through a repetitive identification and matching of letters. For example, in one case the mother sits down with a pile of plastic letters and she asks her child a series of questions:

Mother: *Buscarme la ‘A’* (Look for the letter ‘A’ for me. The ‘A’ is pronounced in English)
Child: *¿Esta?* [This one?]
Mother: *No.* [No.]
Ernesto: *Aquí está.* [Here it is.]
Mother: *¡Bravo!* [Bravo!]

This basic letter identification strategy was commonly used for the duration of the instruction, as the mother worked through the alphabet. Instruction was further complicated when there was differential Spanish/English proficiency between the mother and child. In the following exchange one mother, using a labeling strategy, decided to teach her son the alphabet in Spanish; however, the mother’s English proficiency was low:

Mother: *Julio, ¿qué letra es?* [Julio, what letter is this? ‘A’ is the correct response]
Child: *‘A’* ['A']
Mother: *Muy bien.* [Good.]

After a few trials, the child becomes non-responsive. By the time they reach the letter “E” (proceeding in order), it becomes apparent that her son does not know the correct Spanish response.

Mother: *¿Qué letra es?* [What letter is this? The Spanish ‘E’ is the correct response.]
Child: *‘E’* [in English]
Mother: [long pause] *¿Qué letra es?* [What letter is this? the Spanish ‘F’ is the correct response]

Although the mother asked her son to identify letters in Spanish, he responds in English. At which point the mother looks confused and simply moves on to the next letter in the alphabet.

These examples illustrate two points. First, immigrant parents may have very different views about their teaching responsibilities, ones that vary greatly from the traditional mainstream. Parents’ views may range from viewing their involvement responsibilities as supplemental home instruction to very minimal involvement as a result of cultural views on the secondary role that parents have in formal schooling. Second, even when immigrant parents help their children learn, discontinuities may arise. Parents may engage in instructional
styles and practices that are at odds with the more “child-centered” approaches of schools. Finally, dual language proficiencies (i.e., native and host languages such as English and Spanish language proficiencies) can mitigate the effectiveness of parental instruction. In the example above, a mother is in the position of teaching a language in which she has limited expertise.

**BARRIERS TO PARENT INVOLVEMENT**

There are additional challenges that face immigrant families and their ability to engage in their child’s school. For low-income immigrants, limited financial resources, long work hours, and inflexible work schedules can be formidable barriers (Carreón, Drake, Barton, 2005; García Coll et al., 2002; Turney and Kao, 2009). In a qualitative study conducted by Ji and Koblinsky (2009), an immigrant Chinese mother commented:

> Usually, I get home, it is already 8 or 9 o’clock. I need to prepare food for tomorrow, and I have no time to talk to my daughter. And she is wanting to play games on the Internet. I am always busy and she doesn’t want to listen (p. 698).

The lack of time and nature of parents’ employment limits parents’ ability to engage the school except in the most pressing circumstance. Delgado Gaitan (2004) quoted a Mexican immigrant mother who illustrated this point:

> Most of us work all day, and we’re docked pay if we leave work to go talk to the teachers. That’s why we do it only in emergencies. But what happens too often is that the school calls me to tell me that my son has been in a fight or he has misbehave and that I need to come and pick him up. I go to school, and I’m forced to sit in the office and wait for longer than an hour before a secretary comes and tells that they made a mistake. It wasn’t my son after all. This has happened more than once, and I’m still trying to get to see the principal or someone to tell me why it’s happening. Meanwhile I keep losing pay and leave my job to deal with my son’s problems that aren’t his (pp. 5–6).

In these cases, limited resources impact not only the parents’ ability to interact with teachers and school administrators, but with their children as well. Low-income immigrant parents are left struggling to balance time to deal with their children’s schooling while, at the same time, maintaining their families’ overall financial well-being.

Even for immigrant parents who engage in traditional parent involvement activities, the language barrier can lead to a sense of alienation. In Carreón et al.’s (2005) account of immigrant parents’ school engagement experiences, a
Salvadorian mother (who attended teacher conferences, school festivals, and the like) described her frustration and her sense of disrespect for and by the school. Despite a 60% enrollment of Latino students neither the principal, assistant principal, nor office staff spoke Spanish. Similar frustrations were expressed when she attempted to participate in the PTA. At these meetings, she reported that she felt like a “second-class” citizen because often no one was available to translate. As a result, the attendance of Spanish speakers decreased with every meeting.

These feelings are echoed in Sohn and Wang’s (2006) study where mothers spoke of their alienation when they participated in school activities or PTA meetings. One mother expressed, “I think the relationship between American and Korean mothers is like oil and water, which cannot ever be mixed. Whenever I participate in PTA I feel left out” (p. 129).

Even those immigrants who have some English proficiency may struggle. “I don’t know educational terms in English. For example, I don’t know these English words like ‘curriculum,’ ‘substitute teacher,’ ‘time-out,’ and so on. So when I have to use these kinds of educational terms, I feel stuck” (p. 128). Another mother stated, “although I really wanted to communicate with my child’s teacher, I felt frustrated when the teacher did not understand my English” (p. 128). Moreover, these interactions with teachers led a Korean mother to characterize teachers as impatient and concluded, “teachers tend to regard non-English speakers as unintelligent people” (Sohn and Wang, 2006).

As a result of these language barriers, immigrant parents are often limited in their knowledge regarding school activities and even their children’s academic standings. As indicated earlier, immigrant parents’ own schooling experience are often very different from those of the U.S. schooling practices that non-immigrants take for granted and may be confusing to newcomers. According to Ji and Koblinsky’s (2009), approximately half of the urban Chinese immigrant mothers had no knowledge of their children’s academic standing.

My child brought a report card by the end of semester, but I don’t understand it. China’s grade system is different from here. I remember when I was at school, it was 100 points total . . . then I know the higher the score, the better you do. I don’t understand the system here. I saw there were lots of letters, but I don’t know what it means (pp. 697–698).

BRIDGING HOME AND SCHOOL

Schools are far from neutral institutions. By their selective use of particular linguistic structures, curriculum, organization structures, and assumptions about parents, children, and home environments, schools “invite” certain
segments of the community and discourage others. In the case of immigrant families, we believe this selectivity and lack of responsiveness and effectiveness explains, at least in part, the school and home gap. If we are going to successfully utilize parent involvement as a vehicle to increase academic achievement across a diversity of families, it is imperative that we view parent involvement with a wider culturally and socially sensitive lens. Many newcomers possess an “immigrant optimism” that can serve as a resource and feed into their feelings self-efficacy and competence regarding school. However, this optimism can be attenuated by a less than active approach by the schools to incorporate immigrant parents.

Some of the issues are fairly straightforward. For example, the combination of limited English proficiency among immigrants and an absence of second-language proficiency among school personnel (even when a high percentage on families speak a language other than English) results in minimal communication and more troubling feelings of alienation and disrespect. The remedy? Hiring of more teachers and administrators who “speak the language” of the parents (literally and figuratively). The more school personnel who can communicate with parents, the greater likelihood of attracting parents to be actively involved (López and Sánchez, 2000).

Admittedly, other issues are more difficult. Beyond translation, schools must negotiate various levels of linguistic and socio-cultural complexity for the immigrant groups they serve. Unfortunately, general classifications of parent involvement behaviors and practices, although useful at a broad level, are not well positioned to give insight into interpersonal processes that are fundamental to how parents interact with their children in the context of schooling. Thus, they offer us little instrumental guidance on how to understand and facilitate involvement in non-mainstream populations. If we are to be more inclusive and developed strong family-school relationships, teachers, schools, and districts must have a more intimate understanding of the populations they serve. In doing so, schools are in a position to understand and capitalize on the high value of education and leverage the immigrant enthusiasm in productive ways. The alternative is to leave compromised ability of immigrant parents to transfer their high regard for the education into effective support for their children’s learning. Elsewhere my colleagues and I (Moreno, Menchaca, and Rodriguez, in press) have proposed an alternative perspective to the schools perception of families, in their discussion of Latino families. A brief discussion is relevant here.

One strategy that schools and educators have attempted to increase parent involvement and bridge the gap between home and school was by promoting the notion of “parents as teachers.” This perspective emphasizes that parents are their child’s “first teacher.” This view highlights the importance of parents
in their child’s schooling and extends the school framework into the home. When the values and culture of the school are shared and intersect with the home, this perspective can be facilitative. However, when the home and school culture is disparate, the “parents as teachers” perspective may be problematic as it suggests that the teacher-child model is the appropriate template for parents, at least with regard to education. Parents should behave more like teachers in the way they orient themselves to the theirs child’s schooling. However, this blind extension of the school culture into the home obscures potential home-school cultural incongruities that manifest themselves in various beliefs and practices. If these incongruities are not acknowledged they cannot reconciled.

We argue that if we are to increase parent involvement among diverse populations, we must move beyond the “teachers as parents” model to a more balanced collaborative approach. We propose that a complementary model of “teachers as compadres,” or teachers as co-parents. If schools embrace the notion of teachers as compadres, then the care giving role of teachers becomes explicit. Just as the notion of “parents as teachers” implies a particular teaching role for parents, teachers as compadres implies a specific investment in the well-being of the child.

This, we believe, would facilitate and foster a more reciprocal process between the home and school, with the overall well-being of the child as the focus. Thus, the overall well-being of the child becomes a shared goal, which is more likely to foster a mutually respectful, inclusive community, rather than a shuttling of children between different worlds where there is a stark division of labor between home and school. Increased reciprocity combined with the shared goal of the child’s overall well-being would promote the recognition and understanding of the home culture leading to increased responsiveness and effectiveness.

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Chapter 13

Acculturation-Related Conflict across Generations in Immigrant Families

Understanding Theory and the School Context

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Most, if not all, family relationships experience some type of conflict at some point. In the majority of circumstances, conflict may be considered not only a normal part of the family relationship, but also involving both parents’ and children’s negative and positive interactions and reactions with one another (Eisenberg et al., 2008). Further, a situation that one person or family might consider a conflict may not be seen as such by another (Steinberg, 2001). With these complexities in mind, the current chapter is dedicated to exploring the theoretical understanding of parent-child conflict that may arise specifically due to acculturation and/or migration in immigrant families. Although most families experience daily stresses that may lead to parent-child conflict, the social processes of acculturation and migration can add additional sources of stress to the family system, posing additional interpersonal challenges in families. As such, immigrant families, regardless of culture of origin or culture of settlement, may experience social and cultural challenges that are uniquely demanding of the parent-child relationship. This is not to imply that all immigrant families will experience parent-child conflict as part of the acculturation process. Rather, we believe it is important to acknowledge and understand the acculturation-related sources of family stress that may contribute to some immigrant families’ interpersonal struggles. Ignoring such processes could lead to placing the sole responsibility for managing family conflict completely within the family system without consideration of how social contexts such as the school or characteristics of the receiving community might play a role in facilitating interpersonal family well-being.
Although overall frequencies of parent-child conflict tend to be cross-culturally similar, the specific characteristics of parent-child conflict (e.g., how conflict is expressed and resolved, which goals and values may be most challenging to resolve differences around) vary widely both within and between cultures (Dixon, Brooks-Gunn, and Graber, 2008; Fuligni, 1998). The interpersonal differences in conflict types, styles, and management also can vary within families themselves. Given this large inter- and intra-family variability, a systematic review of literature characterizing the interpersonal processes of all the various types of immigrant family conflict by culture-of-origin and culture-of-settlement groups is well beyond the scope of this paper. Therefore, we focus our attention to theoretical and empirical research to examine some of the cross-cultural experiences of acculturation and migration that may be important to consider when understanding parent-child conflict in U.S. immigrant families.

When families immigrate to a new country, many parents and children learn a new host language(s), practice new social customs, and adopt new values (Portes and Rumbaut, 2001). Focusing on the family system, the ways and pace with which parents and their children acculturate oftentimes vary widely from each other (Zhou, 1997). Specifically, children tended to acculturate faster than did their parents. Parents were less likely to spend time in the U.S. education system even though their children will spend many years attending U.S. schools. Other influencing factors have been linked to different exposures to peer groups, attending different community activities, and preferring to engage in different leisure activities, with children engaging in more “American” activities and parents maintaining ethnic traditions (García Coll and Marks, 2009; Suárez-Orozco and Suárez-Orozco, 2001).

Another important cross-cultural consideration for understanding acculturation-related family conflict is the observation of age of arrival into the new country and how quickly family members acculturate. This, too, has implications for harmony and disharmony in the family system, as parents and their children are entering the United States at different ages and developmental stages and encountering different acculturation-related challenges at different times. The types of ethnic self-labels adopted, the behavioral and academic child outcomes, and the parenting practices within families were also influenced by age of arrival (Rumbaut, 2004; Portes and Rumbaut, 2001). For instance, some researchers have found that individuals who arrive during early or middle childhood were more likely to adopt behaviors, language preferences, and ethnic labels that were more congruent with the native U.S. population. In contrast, immigrants who arrived during adolescence or adulthood were more likely to retain preferences and behaviors from their native countries. In particular, for children born in the United States to immigrant parents (second
Acculturation-Related Conflict in Immigrant Families

Acculturation-Related Conflict in Immigrant Families

These cross-cultural acculturation processes and age-related differences in family acculturation have strong implications for parent-child communication and can play an important part in parent-child conflict. For some families, distances between parents and children’s acculturation processes can translate into distances experienced in the parent-child relationship; the fewer shared acculturation experiences among parents and children, the greater the opportunity for misunderstanding and barriers to family cohesion. Moreover, the stress of migration followed by stressors inherent in acculturation can produce obstacles to family cohesion (Suárez-Orozco, Suárez-Orozco, and Todorova, 2008). Indeed, some research has shown that the frequency of conflict experienced by foreign-born adolescents and foreign-born parents is far less than the conflict experienced between U.S.-born adolescents and their foreign-born parents, who may have never visited their parents’ native country or may lack fluency in their parents’ native language (Bui, 2008; Harker, 2001). These studies have documented that, without a shared and common primary language and cultural orientation, some immigrant parents and U.S.-born adolescents may experience increased relationship conflict. However, there are distinct areas of risk in the family processes of first-generation youth as well.

In sum, this chapter provides an in-depth consideration of current theoretical perspectives that may inform our understanding of how acculturation-related intergenerational conflicts in families may arise. We present a brief review of the types of acculturation-related intergenerational conflicts that have been documented cross-culturally in immigrant families, as well as potential developmental difficulties that may accompany such conflict for immigrant children and adolescents. Next, we consider how the school context, in particular, may play a role in shaping acculturation-related immigrant parent-child relationship challenges. Finally, we discuss recommendations for identifying areas of immigrant family functioning that appear promising for future research and intervention strategies aimed at preventing acculturation-related parent-child conflict.

ACCULTURATION-RELATED FAMILY CONFLICTS: SOURCES OF STRESS AND CONSEQUENCES FOR DEVELOPMENT

How can we conceptualize interpersonal family conflict—specifically between parents and their children—due to acculturation? The research findings in this area are mixed. On the one hand, the differences between parents
and children’s acculturation experiences, sometimes referred to as differential acculturation, can yield interpersonal parent-child challenges. For example, one study of Vietnamese and Cambodian immigrant adolescents in the United States demonstrated that intergenerational cultural dissonance (i.e., disagreement between parents and children over cultural values) directly increased adolescent-reported parent-child conflict, and in turn predicted greater adolescent problem behaviors (Choi, He, and Harachi, 2008). High levels of intergenerational cultural dissonance also led to lower reports of positive bonding with parents. Similarly, Lau and colleagues found that differential acculturation between parents and children can yield parent and child conflict. Fung and Lau’s study of Chinese American families revealed that parental acculturative stress and parent-child acculturation dissonance predicted disagreements between adolescents and their parents’ on understanding of adolescent behavior problems (Fung and Lau, 2010).

However, in contrast, these findings were not supported in a study of Mexican American families. Rather, increased levels of parent-child conflict were observed among families in which adolescents were more highly aligned with the family’s traditional culture than the parents were (Lau et al., 2005). In another study of Chinese immigrant families living in Canada, when parents’ acculturation styles were strongly oriented to Chinese culture (vs. Canadian), children with a weak orientation toward Chinese culture were more likely to have adjustment problems (Costigan and Dokis, 2006). These contradictory and nuanced findings highlight the complexities of the many associations among family acculturation processes, parent-child relationships, and child outcomes across various ethnic groups. Nevertheless, taken together, each of these studies supports the notion that acculturation-related stress in the family—and potentially differential acculturation gaps between parents and children—can impact parent-child relationships and child functioning.

At the base of most parent-child interpersonal conflicts—regardless of immigration status—is stress. Stress in the lives of both immigrant parents and children place parent-child dyads at increased risk for relationship problems such as decreased warmth and relationship satisfaction, increased interpersonal distance, and conflict (Dihn and Nguyen, 2006). The migration process itself is a significant and lasting source of stress for both parents and their children and can introduce higher levels of strain into the family dynamic. Migration often requires family members to separate from one another and adjust to reconfigurations of the family and new ways of operating, which in turn can cause stress for parents and children. Family separations—for months, and oftentimes years—are a common reality of the contemporary migration process (see Suárez-Orozco, Carhill, and Chuang, this volume). Whereas past patterns of migration were marked by fathers’ earlier migration before their
Acculturation-Related Conflict in Immigrant Families

families’, current migration waves have seen mothers migrating often to fill the role of caretakers in the new country (Suárez-Orozco, Todorova, and Louie, 2002). Some country-of-origin groups have high rates of families migrating together (e.g., Chinese), but for other groups separation of parents and children (often for an extended time) is an overwhelming reality. In one study, 90% of Haitian and Central American immigrant adolescents reported some period of separation from one or more parents (Suárez-Orozco, Suárez-Orozco, and Todorova, 2008). These separations can lead to complications in the parent-child relationship, including feelings of abandonment during the separation and feelings of distance and mistrust once children and parents are reunited (Bacallao and Smokowski, 2007).

Another important source of stress in family-child relationships stems from parents’ altering and modifying their parenting practices. Post-migration parents may need to adjust parenting practices and pedagogies to adapt to the demands of the receiving community; practices that worked in the native country may not necessarily be effective in the new context (Bacallao and Smokowski, 2007; Xiong and Detzner, 2005). Research has shown that immigrant parents often adopt practices that incorporate high levels of strictness and monitoring, as parents’ primary concerns are promoting their children’s safety (Bui, 2008; Lim and Lim, 2004). Although this type of parenting has shown to contribute to positive behaviors and academic success among some immigrant adolescents, it can also be contentious for adolescents (Bacallao and Smokowski; Qin, 2008). For instance, as immigrant adolescents seek greater autonomy, they may view these parental restrictions as unfair, “out of touch,” and old fashioned when compared to the parenting practices of their friends or those shown in the media (e.g., Qin, 2006). In a qualitative study of Chinese immigrant families in the United States, Qin asked parents and early adolescents to describe how their parent-child relationships changed over time. Interviews revealed that the majority of parent-child relationships suffered increased emotional distance, increased conflicts, and less communication as acculturation proceeded. Explanations for the decline in quality and stress of parent-child relationships included developmental processes (e.g., less involvement of parents in the lives of adolescents as they age), immigration stressors (e.g., parent’s long hours of work to support the family, language barriers within the family), parental expectations (e.g., parents have high expectations for children’s academic achievement), and cultural value orientations (e.g., parenting perspectives aligned with traditional Chinese views) (Qin, 2006). In their qualitative work with recently arrived immigrants in New York city, Suárez-Orozco, Suárez-Orozco, and Todorova (2008) find similar trends. They reported that although immigrant children overwhelmingly stated that they “felt loved by” and “respected by” parents, the longer
they lived in the United States, communication declined and parents and children struggled to relate to each other.

One area of increased research on immigrant families has focused specifically on the intergenerational discrepancies in cultural values between parents and their adolescents as a source of stress. Researchers found that the differing cultural values and expectations between parents and adolescents had strong consequences for the quality of interpersonal family relationships (see Hwang, 2006). Rosenthal (1984) demonstrated that parent-adolescent conflict in immigrant families was related to intergenerational differences in cultural norms. In this report, “Anglo” (i.e., English) immigrant families had less conflict in their intergenerational relationships than did Italian and Greek families. These findings were attributed primarily to childrearing practices on the part of parents, rather than identity processes of adolescents (Rosenthal, 1984). In a more recent, large study of immigrant and non-immigrant families, Phinney and colleagues (2000) identified several cross-cultural value discrepancy patterns specific to the immigrant context (Phinney, Ong, and Madden, 2000). In particular, the researchers asked parents and adolescents to report on their perceptions of family obligations. Results indicated that, regardless of ethnicity, adolescents from U.S.-born immigrant families had a higher discrepancy in their perceived levels of family obligation values with their parents than did their foreign-born peers. There is also evidence that the discrepancies in values and growing distance with parents are robust in the United States, regardless of ethnic background, immigrant generation, or variations in culture-specific expectations about the parent-child relationship (Fuligni, 1998).

Parents’ own acculturation styles also may influence their children’s psychological well-being, leading to family stress. Researchers have shown that parents who were more “assimilated” (complete adoption of host culture characteristics and abandonment of native culture) in their acculturation styles had children with fewer internalizing and externalizing behavioral problems (Pawliuk et al., 1996). In a study of Asian Indian American families, parents with assimilated or integrated (maintenance of native culture and selective adoption of host culture characteristics) acculturation styles had adolescents with better psychological adjustment (e.g., less anxiety and higher self esteem), as well as less parent-adolescent relationship conflict, than parents who reported marginalized or separated (rejection of both cultures or identification with only native culture, respectively) acculturation styles. These findings suggest that as parents align their customs and values with their host country’s customs and values, some of the family conflict may be lessened.

Parents’ acculturation styles and processes are also influenced by additional stressors such as the economic and social stratification system of the
Acculturation-Related Conflict in Immigrant Families

host country. If parents and children are acculturating at different points in their own development, at different rates, and in different social settings (García Coll and Marks, 2009; Portes and Zhou, 1993; Rumbaut and Portes, 2001; Suárez-Orozco and Suárez-Orozco, 2001), it is very likely that parents and their children may acculturate differently to some of the institutional social stratification systems and barriers in place. Such stratification systems include racial, social, and economic mechanisms (Ogbu, 1982; García Coll, Lamberty, Jenkins, McAdoo, Crnic, Wasik and García, 1996). Importantly, recent economic analyses indicated that the social stratification systems of today’s U.S. immigrant ethnic groups are large enough that the potential for social mobility across immigrant generations is declining from previous decades (Borjas, 2006). These social barriers for economic advancement among American-born children of immigrants are structural aspects of the U.S. immigration context that are rarely studied with respect to child and adolescent developmental outcomes. Researchers have, however, noted that some immigrant youth had internalized these low societal expectations and predictions for their occupational and educational success (Portes and Zhou, 1993). Their parents’ optimism and high educational expectations promoted additional relationship distance with their children, as children felt that their parents did not understand their social situations (Suárez-Orozco, 2000). Beyond its effect on parent-child relationships, internalizing these social stratification barriers has other negative consequences for children including lowered self-esteem and academic aspirations and increases in a variety of psychological adjustment problems in childhood and adolescence (see García Coll et al., 1996; McLoyd, 1998).

Regardless of the reasons for relationship challenges, a common thread in these narratives is a decrease in the ability to communicate between adolescents and parents. Such communication struggles can stem from a lack of shared experience or perspective (Buki, Ma, Strom, and Strom, 2003; Suárez-Orozco, Suárez-Orozco, and Todorova, 2008), or at the most basic level a loss of a shared language (Tseng and Fuligni, 2000; Qin, 2006). Many studies have documented the importance of a child having fluency in a parents native language. For instance, in a study of academic outcomes, bilingualism was found to be the most protective factor for academic success, but this was only relevant when parents were not fluent in English (Hao and Bonstead-Burns, 1998). Lack of a shared language in which both parents and children are fluent may diffuse parental authority and can lessen feelings of closeness. A longitudinal study of second-generation adolescents in California and Miami found that the same groups who reported the lowest levels of native language retention—Cambodian, Hmong, and Haitian—reported the lowest levels of family cohesion (Portes and Rumbaut, 2001). Low levels of communication
between parents and children have been linked to a host of negative developmental outcomes, including higher rates of delinquency and substance use (Clark and Shields, 1997; Litrownik, Elder, Campbell, Ayala, Slymen, Parra-Medina, Zavala and Lovato, 2000) as well as lowered self esteem (Rhee, Chang and Rhee, 2003).

In sum, the sources of stress contributing to parent-child relationships and conflict among immigrant families stem from migration itself, as well as characteristics of the receiving societies’ opportunity and social structures regarding immigrants. Interpersonal family communication stresses also arise from differential language usage and skill across family generations, as well as differing acculturation-related social practices and views. Finally, diverging cultural values between parents and their children can create significant relationship stress, leading to increased parent-child conflict and distance, as well as poor social and academic child developmental outcomes.

**CONCEPTUALIZING ACCULURATION-RELATED CONFLICT: THEORY AND THE SCHOOL CONTEXT**

At the core of immigrant family adaptation to life in the United States is the notion of acculturation. The psychological experiences that occur during acculturation are typically thought to stem from changes in practice with both the culture of origin (e.g., the “home” culture or original culture of immigrant children’s parents) and the new host culture (e.g., the receiving culture, including the cultures of schools, neighborhoods, and larger communities) (Berry, 1997). These cultural adaptations between family life and larger community contexts can be very challenging for immigrant families. Studies from the last two decades in particular have demonstrated that children adapt to life in the United States differently than their parents (Zhou, 1997). Importantly, today’s immigrant children are ethnically, racially, and linguistically more diverse than ever. In 2000, 84% of immigrant children were from Latin American or Asian countries, and the census identified over 90 languages spoken to children in U.S. homes (Hernandez, 2004; in press). The historically held notion that immigrants can and should “assimilate” to the United States upon arrival is not only misaligned with current research on the social benefits of developing in multicultural communities (Verkuyten, 2005), but is also unrealistic. Indeed, numerous studies have shown that adolescents who were born in the United States to foreign-born parents had more inter-cultural social contacts and were less socially segregated than their parents (e.g., García Coll and Marks, 2009; Nauck, 2001).
What types of contexts might immigrant children’s families find particularly challenging to navigate as they acculturate? U.S. schools are a context that is particularly salient to consider in understanding acculturation-related parent-child conflict. Some of the earliest research on parent-child acculturation conflicts pinpointed the school context as one of the most important areas for family acculturation (e.g., Sung, 1985). Many immigrant parents make their way to the United States in part to pursue a better education and future for their children. Immigrant families place high values on their children’s education, having high aspirations and expectations for their children’s academic achievement (Glick and White, 2003; Goyette and Xie, 1999; Hao and Bonstead-Bruns, 1998). As immigrant children’s first transitions to school oftentimes occur in a school context that differs culturally from their parents, some parents and children may grapple with how best to socially and academically adjust to the new school.

Immigrant parents’ own ideas of the psychological and social skills that make children “ready” for school, or how children should behave in school, can differ from the perspectives of their children’s teachers and schools (Marks, Patton, and Garcia Coll, 2009). Furthermore, parental involvement in education can vary dramatically by parents’ culture of origin. For example, in a longitudinal study of U.S. children of Dominican, Cambodian, and Portuguese immigrant families, we observed striking differences between ethnic groups on parental involvement in their children’s education (García Coll et al., 2002; García Coll and Marks, 2009). Many Cambodian parents reported low levels of contact time with their children’s schools and teachers, while reporting strong respect for teachers and trust in teachers’ authority as providers of their children’s educations. Many of the Dominican parents, on the other hand, reported higher levels of contact time with teachers, reporting a belief in the importance of direct involvement with teachers in their children’s education. Dominican parents also described using relatively higher amounts of home-based rules to support their children’s schooling (e.g., setting curfews and rules regarding friendship choices). Portuguese parents were most likely to report providing material supports to their children (e.g., a designated area for homework, computer resources).

In addition to the differing types of parental involvement noted above, all parents reported immigration-related obstacles in relation to their children’s educations. These challenges included language barriers with teachers and schools as well as lack of parental education and unfamiliarity with the U.S. education system. Further, community members in the Dominican group described the high rates of family mobility (between the Dominican Republic and the United States and between U.S. cities) as an additional migration-related barrier. For the Cambodian community, a lack of community media,
the cultural and linguistic distance from the United States, and trauma related to the Khmer Rouge period were described as immigration-related barriers to their children’s education.

Acculturation-related challenges in the school context can add significant stress to the family system and may strain parent-child relationships. Although recent immigrant youth often share the educational values and attitudes of their parents, as families acculturate to the United States, children’s attitudes toward school become less aligned with their parents. The greater the time children spend in schools, the more positive, academic-oriented, home-based behaviors appear to weaken (e.g., time spent on homework) and children report less positive feelings toward school and teachers (Fuligni, 1997; Goyette and Xie, 1999; Rosenbaum and Rochford, 2008; Suárez-Orozco and Suárez-Orozco, 2001). The specific mechanisms behind these trends are not fully documented, though it appears that adolescents’ changes in attitudes may reflect, in part, their increasing time spent with friends (and therefore the adoption of friends’ attitudes toward school) (Suárez-Orozco and Suárez-Orozco, 2001).

The cross-cultural challenges faced by immigrant youth as they encounter the American education system include making special adaptations to the new cultural context of school, thereby overcoming cultural discontinuities between home and school. Discussing the influence of culture on school adjustment, Ogbu proposed three types of cultural discontinuities to capture these processes (Ogbu, 1982). In the “universal” type of cultural discontinuity, all children must learn to adjust to the unique environment of the school, adapting to classroom organization, new social norms, and novel daily routines. In the “primary” discontinuity, immigrant children must adapt to new cultural concepts (e.g., American conceptualizations of “liberty” and “rights”), learning styles, language use, and even basic mathematical principles such as length and time.

Finally, in secondary discontinuity, populations who are stratified to low social statuses must learn to adapt psychologically to a host of caste-based “collective struggles” related to religious, political, and legal rights and related racial and ethnic discrimination. Researchers have noted that many immigrant children encountered the secondary type of discontinuity in the hallways and classrooms of urban, high-minority schools that they most often attended. Confronted with these discontinuities, the academic attitudes of immigrant children may begin to resemble less the optimism of their parents (Zhou, 1997). In sum, for many of today’s immigrant children, both primary and secondary adjustments must be made upon entry to school. Applied to the notion of acculturation-related parent-child conflict, these discontinuity theories highlight the importance of understanding the larger social structures
and stratification systems in place during the acculturation process that parents and children alike must learn to navigate.

**ACCULTURATION-RELATED PARENT-CHILD CONFLICT:**
**IDEAS FOR INTERVENTIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS**

Understanding how individual family members acculturate alongside one another is of critical importance when understanding risk for parent-child acculturation-related conflict. Given the strong benefits for children of forming positive ethnic identities rooted in their parents’ culture(s) of origin (Phinney, Berry, Vedder, and Liebkind, 2006), it is important that educators and practitioners appreciate the importance of promoting and supporting family biculturalism and bilingualism, while at the same time appreciating that individual family members can (and may likely) acculturate at different paces and with different styles. Family members can vary considerably from one another in how they acculturate, each individual continuously developing his or her ethnic identities throughout the acculturation process at different ages. Sensitivity from educators and practitioners regarding families’ cultural practices, values, and routines may assist parents and their children in maintaining strong cultural identities as a family, thereby reducing discrepancies in value orientations between parents and children. Building strong cultural identities, however they may be aligned among culture-of-origin and receiving country ethnicities, is an essential consideration for professionals working with immigrant families and addressing parent-child conflict.

Another important consideration for future work on immigrant parent-child relationship conflict is the notion of intergenerational family structure. Immigrant families in the United States are, on average, more “multigenerational” than traditional American families, with grandparents, parents, aunts, uncles, cousins, and children living in households together. Recent analyses of U.S. census data showed that immigrant children were two to four times more likely than native-born Whites to live with a grandparent, as well as aunts, uncles, or other relatives (Hernandez, Denton, and Macartney, 2008). Importantly, these multigenerational family structures may support positive child developmental outcomes. For example, non-parental adult caregivers in the home can help with child rearing and contribute to household finances and duties. Extended family members including aunts, uncles, and cousins may also provide instrumental family support for parents and their children. Applying such findings to intervention work, Coyne and colleagues have begun developing parenting interventions for use in multiethnic, urban, low-income, immigrant families, which emphasize the supporting roles of
grandparents in household parenting strategies (Coyne, in preparation). It may be that extended family members involved in child-rearing activities may provide numerous ways of maintaining harmony in the family, in turn supporting parent-child relationships. For example, a recent study demonstrated that among U.S. Latino family parent-parent-child triads, support from the opposite parent can serve as a protective factor against parent-child relationship conflict (Crean, 2008). Such protective processes may not be limited only to the parent-parent-child triad in the family, but may also include extended family members. Thus, parent-child relationships need to be understood within a larger family structure when studying family acculturation. To date, however, researchers have overlooked the roles that extended family members—and grandparents, in particular—may play in ameliorating or understanding acculturation-related parent-child relational conflict. More research examining the potential benefits of extended family network relationships in immigrant families is needed.

Focusing on the school context, it is also important to consider how schools and teachers can facilitate positive intergenerational communication and value alignment between immigrant parents and their children. As previously noted, immigrant parents can experience many specific obstacles to developing a direct relationship with teachers and schools. Further, parents bring with them a wide range of styles for involvement with their children’s education, some of which may differ from the types of parental involvement expected by or typically experienced by schools and teachers. Given these considerations, there is a risk that schools and teachers can misinterpret parents’ differing levels of involvement and practices as disinterest in their children’s education. Schools and teachers may therefore not take the necessary steps to develop and maintain strong relationships with the parents that could further facilitate parent-child communication regarding their children’s education. It is of critical importance, therefore, that schools and educators be aware of the specific immigration and migration-related challenges facing immigrant families in their community.

In summary, this chapter highlights several important cross-cultural themes regarding acculturation-related stress among families from a variety of immigrant cultural orientations. Acculturation style differences, varying paces of acculturation, and differing ages at migration can all introduce areas of strain in parent-child relationships. Further, the many types of stresses involved with immigration, migration, and acculturation (such as value misalignment and acculturation gaps) can add additional layers of stress to the family system. These stressors can be seen in particular as families interact with the school context. Educators and practitioners working with immigrant families therefore have a responsibility to educate themselves about both the
cross-cultural and family-specific acculturation-related sources of conflict that can affect many immigrant families. Finally, it is important to note that future research is needed to better understand how extended family members, parent/child bilingualism and biculturalism, and the development of strong ethnic identities for both parents and children may all support positive and harmonious parent-child relationships.

REFERENCES


Chapter 14

New Arrivals

Past Advances and Future Directions in Research and Policy

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As the chapters in this volume illustrate, the field of children as immigrants and refugees has progressed in terms of theoretical and methodological sophistication. Researchers are in a much better position today in terms of understanding the immigration process and the implications of the immigration process for children and youth than even a decade ago. We are out of infancy and well into preschool in terms of our development as the field. This progress is evident in the myriad of advances noted in the preceding contributions. Our goals in this chapter are to highlight recent conceptual, methodological, and sampling advances as well to offer suggestions for future research and policy initiatives that could meaningfully guide the field of immigration.

CONCEPTUAL ADVANCEMENTS

Advancement 1: Expanding the Range of Immigrant Groups

For the last several decades, researchers have focused on a narrow range of immigrant groups, especially Asian immigrant families. In contrast to the recent past, the focus of various immigrant groups under examination has widened, including populations from various countries of origin, ethnicities, and socioeconomic contexts. As the chapters in this volume illustrate, along with special issues (e.g., Chuang and Gielen, 2009; Chuang and Tamis-LeMonda, 2009, for example), children from many countries were the focus of recent research efforts: Cambodia, Central America, Dominican Republic, The Dutch Antilles, Haiti, India, Jamaica, Japan, Korea,
Laos, Morocco, Puerto Rico, Republic of Suriname, Russia, Somalia, South America, Sudan, Turkey, Vietnam, and of course China and Mexico, to name a few. There has been work on numerous host countries beyond Canada and the United States, including the Netherlands, Germany, Portugal, and Israel, to name a few. The advantage of investigating a wider range of ethnicities from varying countries and SES is clear: it allows the evaluation of the generalizability of our conceptual insights about the nature of the immigration process and the impact of immigration on children and family adaptation. This sampling strategy provides information about the boundaries and limits of our generalizations by highlighting the uniqueness as well as the similarities of the immigrant experience for different groups. These findings on the uniqueness of different groups provides valuable data that can be used to guide the development of social policy and to design programs and services that can be tailored to suit the particular needs of different immigrant populations.

Advancement 2: Multiple Portraits of Immigrant and Refugee Children

Researchers are recognizing that there is no single image of immigrant children but many portraits. Progress will only be possible if we recognize the heterogeneity of immigrant children. A variety of factors has been considered that will influence immigrant children’s attitudes and behaviors. For example, immigrant children and their families come to a new country for very different reasons. As Este (this volume) reveals, some are asylum seekers or refugees who wish to avoid religious, political, or ethnic prosecution. Others seek new economic opportunities. Combining immigrants who arrive for vastly different reasons will make our task of unraveling the puzzle of immigrant children more difficult. Rather, we need to know how motivations and circumstances that surround immigration influence children’s experiences and adaptation.

Reasons for immigration are not independent of legal/illegal status, and children are directly and indirectly affected by their own and their parents’ legal status. Although families who are asylum seekers and/or refugees may often be legal immigrants, children of many economic opportunity-oriented immigrants may be illegal residents.

Undocumented parents are likely influenced by their perceived need for secrecy and by a lack of trust in official institutions. In turn, children of illegal parents may develop similar attitudes of secrecy and distrust. Although this lack of trust is to be expected given fears of deportation, does this mistrust lead to more social isolation from others in the community and from the...
resources that are available to aid families, such as social service, educational, and health agencies? To what extent do these parents and their children forge alternative relationships with “non-official, non-reporting” kinship groups or faith-based organizations and how do these networks influenced parental practices and, in turn, children’s development?

These dilemmas raise new questions for researchers studying immigrant children. For example, are economically motivated families more likely to return to their home country after establishing a degree of economic resources than refugee families who are less able to safely travel between the United States and /or Canada and their country of origin? Are they more or less likely to transplant their family from one country to other strictly based on earnings that are easily transferred across borders? Variations in long-term commitment to the host country will have profound implications for attitudes toward new customs, norms, and language. Rates of assimilation, for example, will vary depending on the prospect of residing permanently or returning to a home country as a long-term goal. It is possible that religious and political refugees are more likely to focus on these opportunities and instill these interests in their children. As such, are economic refugees more likely to involve their children in family economic work? Although early involvement in work outside the home has been associated with problematic development for native-born children (Greenberger and Steinberg, 1986), considerably less attention has focused on the effects of employment for foreign-born children.

How do the family structures of different types of immigrants vary and how do these variations affect the development of immigrant children? Several patterns of family structure need to be distinguished, based on whether it is the parents or children who are the active immigrants. Unfortunately, and as illustrated in Suárez-Orozco, Carhill, and Chuang’s chapter (this volume), experiences of family separation are fairly common among immigrant families. First, in some cases, children are placed under the care of grandparents in the native country while their parent(s) migrate to a new country as refugees. The effects of parents as refugees and sojourners on children’s adaptation and psychological well-being needs to be addressed separately. Second, a less well recognized but important group of children are unaccompanied refugee children and youth who migrate without their parents to a new adopted country. Children of sojourner fathers (or mothers) who immigrate for relatively brief periods of time in order to take advantage of seasonal or periodic job opportunities may have very different family experiences than either children of permanent immigrants or children of permanently relocated adult refugees (Glenn, 1992; Hondagneu-Sotelo and Avila, 1997). Sojourners may move temporarily without their families who stay in the country of
origin in contrast to permanent immigrants who may come as a family unit (see Luster, Johnson, and Bates, 2008). Do the children of sojourner parents develop different patterns of attachment to their biological but often absent parent(s)? Perhaps there is a higher rate of insecure attachment patterns in these sojourner families where children are separated from their parents for long periods of time, as has been found in studies of the effects of parental incarceration on children’s socio-emotional development (Parke and Clarke-Stewart, 2003). In turn, our understanding of the impact of these alternative contact patterns on family interaction patterns remains limited. Do fathers or mothers who are absent experience more difficulty in asserting their authority relative to mothers or extended kin who are stable figures in children’s lives? Do marital problems increase as a result of the patterns of inter-country mobility? Do these outcomes shift with duration of absence and/or the degree of contact between parents and their children? How do these possible increases in disrupted attachment patterns, reduced authority, and marital conflict alter children’s development? Studies of these issues in non-immigrant children underscore the risks to children’s well-being (Cummings et al., 2008; Thompson, 2006).

Although sojourner parents and refugee parents share some overlapping experiences such as separation from their offspring and, in turn, may have similar effects on their children, differences need to be recognized as well. For example, the effects of parent-child separation in sojourner families is mitigated by periodic reunification associated with the often seasonal nature of work in the host country. In contrast, refugee parents are generally unable to visit their spouses and/or children due to fear of persecution as well as the prohibitive cost of travel to their home country. This often results in long periods of separation due to legal and administrative barriers that slow the process of family reunification for refugee families. The impact of separation on children (and their parent) is challenging and poorly documented but probably has a negative impact on all family members involved, especially children. Some community reports from the Canadian Council for Refugees are bringing this issue to wider academic as well as social policy audiences.

Unaccompanied child refugees face different sets of problems and challenges than do adult immigrant refugees. Not only are they dependent on the assistance of government agencies or possibly distant relatives for their economic well being, these children have often experienced major trauma associated with separation from their parents or the death of their parents, as well as the possible the effects of famine, war, and political turmoil. These traumatic experiences associated with their refugee status compound the challenges that these children face such as cultural adaptation to a new culture, the need to
master a new language, the development of new social bonds and social support networks and the navigation of an unfamiliar educational system.

Finally, different types of immigrants tend to reside in different types of communities that lead to varying experiences. Sojourners, for example, often live in highly homogeneous work-based community facilities oriented toward unmarried or unaccompanied workers with few family-centered housing opportunities. Are patterns of parental monitoring different? Are opportunities that children have for contact with other children different? In contrast, permanent immigrants tend to cluster—at least initially—in ethnically homogeneous communities that are often more family-oriented. Others, especially adult refugees due to economic constraints, may reside in ethnically mixed communities and high-risk neighborhoods (Coltrane, Melzer, Vega, and Parke, 2005). Tracking how these community characteristics alter children’s behaviors is a major challenge. On the other hand, immigrant and refugee children have little choice in relation to their residential location, which is often selected by government agencies and may contribute to their sense of powerlessness. Most importantly, the extent to which refugee children are geographically clustered with other refugee children who have shared similar experiences in culture and language and/or come from the same country will be a major determinant of their adaptation. The classic study of children in wartime by Freud and Dann (1951) of children reared together after war-induced separation from their parents was instructive. They found that children developed close emotional bonds with their peers, which, in turn, helped them cope with the separation experience. Do refugee children who are clustered in a community and have access to each other for social interaction, social support, and aid in understanding their shared past as well as their new culture show better adjustment than those who reside in communities where their contact with other refugee children is minimal? The work of Luster, Johnson, and Bates (2008) on Sudanese refugee youth who were relocated to a East Lansing, Michigan, in the United States provides a glance at the potential value of clustering of refugee children. Comparisons of these youth with geographically isolated refugee children in relation to the adaptation process would be worthwhile.

Finally, we need to recognize the dynamic character of the immigration process for both children and families and move beyond the metaphor of snapshots that are cross-sectional and time-bound to a more contemporary “video” metaphor (Pomerantz, Ruble, and Bolger, 2003). The video metaphor suggests the longitudinal quality of the immigration experience and is better able to represent changes over time. Documenting the changes over time for the diverse types of immigrant children is critical for progress in this area. For example, a host of immigrant challenges may arise after several years of residency due to the developmental needs of the newcomer (e.g., employment).
Chapter 14

Advancement 3: Children Are Active Agents in the Immigration Process

Children are active agents in socially constructing and making meaning of their immigrant experiences for themselves as well as having an influence on the acculturation process for their parents. Moreover, we need to recognize that some aspects of children’s immigration experiences can be positive and competence enhancing. This recognition of the potential positive effects of immigration would serve as a corrective to the usual focus on the negative effects of immigration on children’s adjustment. Recent work on children who serve as cultural and language brokers for parents in the wider culture illustrates the richness of this cultural variation for understanding not only family dynamics in immigrant groups but also the dynamic and bi-directional nature of the parent-child relationship. Therefore, children often act as cultural brokers on behalf of the family, in part, due to the linguistic limitations of the parents:

With responsibility as interpreters of the new culture and language, immigrant parents are often in a position with no one to translate or interpret for them. Traditional intergenerational authority relationships change and the child also becomes involved in the worries and concerns of the family, such as hassles with landlords, arranging for medical care, and dealing with the legal system” (Olsen and Chen, 1988, p. 31).

As Buriel, Chao, and their colleagues (Buriel, Perez, DeMent, Chavez, and Moran, 1998; Chao, 2001) have discovered, these natural experiments of migration (cultural brokering) produce parent-child role reversal, shifts in generational power, and increases in responsibility taking. Although these experiences may be helpful to parents who are navigating in a new linguistically unfamiliar terrain, child brokering may be threatening to parent’s authority in the family and a potential source of conflict between parents and children. As such, they provide unique opportunities to test our assumptions about the capabilities of children to manage developmentally off-time challenges and about how families cope and adapt to the obstacles of entering a new culture.

The unique situation of cultural brokering has important implications for children’s socio-emotional and academic development as well as giving us insight into how parental roles shift under these changes in family power dynamics. For example, brokering experience was linked with several positive developmental outcomes for children: increased self efficacy for managing social interactions (McQuillan and Tse, 1995), improved “theory of mind” (awareness of the mental states of others and the links between mental states and social behavior) (Love and Buriel, 2008), and
higher grades among Latino adolescents (Buriel et al., 1998). However, other researchers reported outcomes such as frustration, resentment, feeling overwhelmed and stressed, and feeling heavy time demands (Buriel, Love, and DeMent, 2006). Some youth reported shame and embarrassment due to their parents’ inability to speak English (Tse, 1999). Ways in which we can better understand the limits of “positive brokering” and how to enhance these positive experiences while minimizing negative effects would be an important intervention goal.

With the tendency to focus on parents’ limited language, few studies have explored language brokering for siblings, even though cross-cultural evidence suggests that siblings play both caregiving and teaching roles routinely in cultures such as Africa, Polynesia, and Central America (Rogoff, 2003). Although some researchers have explored brokering within various sociocultural contexts, there has been a failure to take into consideration the potential historical context. Could the meaning, consequences, and utility of child cultural brokering be the same within different historical periods? Within the past twenty years, opportunities to interact with the U.S. culture have emerged independent of the school context, including the availability and accessibility of personal computers, the Internet, cell phones, and other technological devices that are commonly used by children (and their parents). To fully appreciate how the changing historical context modifies this phenomenon, it requires a detailed historical examination of form, frequency, and consequences of brokering in different points in our history.

**Advancement 4: Immigration Is a Context-Bound Process**

To fully appreciate how immigrant children adapt to their new geographic and cultural milieus, the historical time period in which these groups migrate is more often being recognized. For example, the pattern of acculturation that characterized immigrant groups in the United States at the turn of the twentieth century or Canada after the Second World War was one of relatively rapid assimilation into the mainstream culture and where ethnic orientations were bounded by homogenous ethnic enclaves. In contrast, the current wave of immigration that is occurring a century later is less likely to promote an abandonment or bounded expression of the cultural heritage of one’s country of origin and more likely to encourage biculturalism and mutual accommodation. Many contributors to this volume frame their work in historical contextual terms (e.g., Suárez-Orozco, Carhill, and Chuang; Este, in volume).

Second, a new appreciation of the need to consider demographic context of immigration in North America as a factor that shapes the immigrant children’s experience. In the United States, immigration patterns have
shifted radically over the last century. Around the 1930s, the percentage of the minority population was 9.7% African American and 1.7% other racial minorities (U.S. Census Bureau, 1933). In contrast, according to recent census figures (U.S. Census Bureau, 2003), the demographic picture has changed radically. In 2003, 31% of the population belonged to a racial or ethnic minority group—a three-fold increase in the minority population since the 1930s. Trends suggest that in parts of the United States some ethnic groups, such as Latinos, will be a majority by the year 2030. Canada faced similar increases in the diversity of the ethnic profile; however, the dramatic shift in the ethnic composition transformed in a shorter time span. Specifically, prior to 1971, the vast majority of newcomers were from Europe (81%). With new immigration policies that were more open to source countries, the visible minority population significantly increased. For example, 57% of immigrants who arrived in Canada between 1991 to 1995 were of Asian descent (Statistics Canada, 2003).

This shift in demographic proportional representation will have profound implications for economic opportunities, political influence, and social policy decisions that will impact children’s socio-emotional adjustment. If immigrant families are part of the majority in some regions, for example, then economic status may increase and the quality of social services and schools may be better; in turn, parents may have more time for children, their children may suffer less discrimination and prejudice, and, in turn, children may be better adjusted. Recent efforts (Hernandez, 2004) to track rates and changes in cohorts of immigrant children and to describe and evaluate the changing demographic context of immigration in North America are welcome advances.

In view of these demographic shifts in North America, there is both an opportunity to evaluate the generalizability of our assumptions about developmental processes and a moral obligation to culturally understand a large segment of our population.

Third, legal and political policies provide a central context that are recognized as critical for our understanding of children’s immigration. In the United States, for example, the lack of a coherent national policy toward immigration results in highly variable and unpredictable treatment of immigrants, especially illegal immigrants, that clearly leads to conditions of instability, suspicion, and anxiety among many immigrant families. The impact of limited clear guidelines for the delivery of health and social services, paths toward legal status, and access to higher education on families in general and children, in particular, are poorly understood. Cross-national comparisons are also warranted and illustrate the ways in which country-level variations can be used to assess the impact of different types of social policies on the
adjustment of immigrant children. Canada, in contrast to the United States, has federally mandated settlement programs involving over 450 settlement agencies across the nation that provide services and programs for newcomers. Are Canadian children better adjusted or do they adapt and assimilate more quickly and or more fully than children in countries lacking national level policies?

**Advancement 5: Not Your Ancestor's Acculturation**

Acculturation is another factor that needs to be considered if we are to increase our understanding of immigrant children. Acculturation is now conceptualized as moving beyond the individual acculturation process toward a dyadic and familial-level movement. As the chapters in this volume illustrate (e.g., Berry and Sebatier, in volume; Luther, Coltrane, Parke, Cookston, and Adams, in volume) there is a new recognition that acculturation is a multi-component, multi-level process. Different individuals in the family (children, siblings, mothers, and fathers) acculturate at different rates, and therefore we need to move toward a more differentiated model of acculturation in which acculturation trajectories of different family members are recognized. Moreover, the effects of acculturation on different domains (e.g., public versus private domains) may differ between generations as well as within generations such as mother versus father and between siblings. For example, mothers, fathers, and children acculturate at different rates due to varied educational and work experiences. Children learn English and acculturate at a faster rate than adults. The empowerment from children’s superior linguistic and cultural competences may result in an increase in child-parent conflict due to children’s push for autonomy and greater decision making within the family. Similarly, conflict between parents and children may increase as a result of children’s adoption of norms and beliefs based on their experience in the host culture. Issues of dress codes, curfew, and activities with peers are likely to produce conflict with parents (Raffaeli and Ontai, 2004). Recent studies have supported the hypothesized increase in parent-child conflict in families with acculturation gaps. In a study of Indian adolescents and parents Farver, Narang, and Bhadha’s (2002) found lower levels of parent-child conflict when parents and children were similar in their acculturation style (also see Birman, 2006), while Schofield, Parke, Kim, and Coltrane (2008) reported that when the acculturation gap was greater between Latino fathers and adolescents, higher conflicts were associated with higher levels of internalizing and externalizing problems.

In past studies, little attention had been given to the possible differences in acculturation that can occur between siblings and how immigrant fathers
might respond. It is expected that differential acculturation styles may affect family dynamics and in particular the father-child relationships. This is important because the siblings’ levels of acculturation has been related to how comfortable and connected each child feels with their parents and extended family members. It is likely that siblings of different ages will acculturate at different rates due to the age at which they are exposed to a new language and culture and the family’s differential treatment of each child (Pyke, 2005) when they entered into the mainstream school systems. All these varied experiences affect children. For example, Newport (1990) has shown that children who are exposed to a new language before puberty will acquire the new language faster and speak with a less pronounced accent than those who have these experiences after the onset of puberty. Siblings who arrive before and after adolescence may have differential language proficiencies, which, in turn, may result in different patterns of sibling relationships. Thus, the individuals’ comfort levels with the English language will influence their levels of social engagements, which, in turn, create varying levels of enculturation opportunities.

Another aspect of the sibling relationship is birth order. Older siblings have a stronger grasp of the native culture as they have had more experience in the native country and have more direct contact with their parents (Pyke, 2005). Also, as more children enter into the family, the family’s time and resources may be further strained, and the younger child may be raised with fewer opportunities to be enculturated by the family (Cheng and Kuo, 2000). The less time children have with their parent, or family members with a strong connection to the native culture, the less they are able to establish a strong cultural foundation.

**ADVANCES IN DESIGNS AND METHODS**

**Advancement 1: Description Is an Important First Step**

One of the important but often unheralded advances is our recognition that description of the circumstances and adaptation of new immigrant children is needed and a vital phase of the process of understanding immigrant and refugee children and families. Sometimes in our eagerness to move to a process-oriented phase of the research enterprise, we provide little effort to this more mundane but still critical phase of the discovery mission. Detailed descriptive profiles are needed as new groups of immigrant and refugee children are identified for analysis. Many contributors demonstrate the utility of a commitment to this phase of the research process (Chen and Tse, in volume; Qin and Han, in volume).
Advancement 2: Beyond Main Effects: Toward Process Models of Immigrant Children’s Adaptation

Although description is important, this volume provides many examples of new process models that help us explain variations in outcomes for immigrant children. At the On New Shores conference in 2008, several investigators found support for multivariate process models that demonstrate links between acculturation, parenting, marital relationships, and immigrant children’s outcomes (Updegraff, in press; Luthar et al., in volume). Others test complex causal models relating to work or educational outcomes (Sy and Moran, 2007). In our own work with Mexican American families, we have shown that economic stress altered parental depression, which, in turn, was then related to harsh parenting and subsequently poorer immigrant youth adjustment (Parke et al., 2004a). Mediators and moderators are now a common component in these sophisticated SEM and PATH analyses models. For example, Chao (2006) reviewed the effects of cultural brokering among Korean and Chinese immigrant children. Similarly acculturative status and child gender are often found to moderate the impact of parenting on children’s adaptation (Luthar et al., in volume; Updegraff et al., 2009). Clearly we have moved beyond main effect models and now toward process models that enhance our explanatory power of the complexities and dynamics of immigration and child outcomes.

Advancement 3: Toward More Representative Sampling Strategies

Sampling strategies have expanded beyond small-scale non-representative samples to nationally representative samples based on secondary datasets. Several researchers use public datasets based on nationally representative samples. For example, Cabrera and her colleagues used the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study (ECLS) to explore issues of Latino child cognitive outcomes as a function of parental nativity and English proficiency. Other examples include Misty’s use of the National Head Start Evaluation Research Project for an investigation of how SES affects immigrant children’s adjustment, Bronte-Tinker and colleagues’ use of the National Longitudinal Study of youth to explore the effects of father involvement on the risky behavior of immigrant and native-born youth and De Ande and Bachmier’s probing of the Integrated Public Use Microdata Series (IPUMS) addressed issues of labor force participation in different generations of immigrant youth and young adults. Similar large-scale samples are available in Canada as well. In 1994 the National longitudinal Survey of Children and youth (NLSCY) was launched in Canada and has been a valuable resource for tracking the development of Canadian immigrant children (Beiser, Hou, Hyman, and Tousignant, 1998). The advantage of the using
these large and more representative samples is the opportunity to evaluate the
generalizability of our findings that is not possible with smaller scale, locally
recruited samples (Brooks-Gunn, Berlin, Leventhal, and Fuligni, 2000). Thus,
the various approaches are necessary to capture the processes and pathways of
settlement and adjustment for immigrant and refugee children and youth.

Advancement 4: Multiple Questions, Multiple Methods
Recently, researchers are recognizing the limitations of employing one meth-
odological approach, qualitative or quantitative. The integration of both meth-
ods, is now more common among researchers. Qualitative approaches such as
focus groups and ethnographies are commonly used in other disciplines such
as anthropology but have less often been used by child developmentalists
(Burton and Price-Spratlen, 1999; García-Coll and Magnuson, 1999, Chuang
and CISSA-ACSEI, 2010). Focus groups are excellent forums in which to
explore as well as to examine similarities and differences across gender,
socioeconomic classes, and ethnic groups. This technique is of particular
value in the early stages of research with understudied populations and is of
particular value in the study of immigrant children (see Parke et al., 2004b for
examples of this approach for the study of Latino children). This approach is
also useful at the data interpretation stage, as well (Cooper, 1999); follow-up
focus groups can aid in interpretation of paradoxical findings. Ethnographic
studies have also been shown to provide important insights about children’s
lives such as how they use neighborhood space and resources (Burton and
Price-Spatlen, 1999; Parke et al., 2010). However, qualitative studies are not
without limitations. For example, many qualitative studies do not generalize to
larger populations, and most qualitative studies lack the analytic ability to test
complex theories of family processes. As a result, qualitative studies should be
viewed as an essential first step, but subsequent studies need to employ large
samples using a combination of quantitative and qualitative approaches. The
range of methods of current studies represents the full array of methodological
approaches that characterize more traditional domains of inquiry. The study
of immigrant children has reached a new stage of methodological pluralism
where methods are carefully matched to the questions being addressed.

Advancement 5: Multiple Disciplines Are Needed to Understand
Immigrant Children
Immigrant children are too important to be left to a single discipline. As the
On New Shores conference clearly demonstrates, multiple disciplines are rep-
resented in the scholarly, community, and policy arenas that share a common
interest in immigrant children. Psychologists, sociologists, social workers, demographers, educators, economists, legal scholars, historians, anthropologists, and physicians each make unique contributions to understanding immigrant children. Historians document for us prior immigration experiences and show how historical shifts shape different waves of immigrant children’s experiences. Did the immigrant children of the late 1800s experience the same issues as immigrant children of this century? Demographers such as Hernandez (2004) remind us that demographic trends are important contexts for our understanding and interpretation of immigrant children’s opportunities and behaviors. Anthropologists remind us that concepts of inter-cultural contact are derived from classic anthropological studies (Redfield, Linton, and Herskovitz, 1936) and that ethnographic methods are critical tools to employ in this process (Burton and Price-Spaten, 1999; Weisner, 2005). Sociologists remind us that societal organization in terms of class and race/ethnicity shape attitudes, opportunities, and access to societal resources and services and are, thus, critical considerations in terms of understanding immigrant children (Luthar et al., in volume). Economists remind us that economic opportunity is a critical determinant of children’s social and academic success (Duncan and Brooks-Gunn, 2000; Mistry, 2007). Political scientists remind us that the political power and influence acquired by different immigrant groups will have major effects on social policies that will directly impact the level and cultural appropriateness of social services as well as economic opportunities available to immigrant children and families. Psychologists remind us that a variety of psychological processes merit examination at various phases of the immigration experience including coping strategies (Chuang and CISSA, 2010), social support availability and utilization (Remy and Lero, 2007), as well as interpersonal relationships among family members (Updegraff et al., 2009).

FUTURE DIRECTIONS: REMAINING ISSUES AND UNSOLVED PROBLEMS

Looking Back to Country of Origin to Better Understand the Immigration Process

Researchers need to move backward if the field is to move forward. As already noted, immigration comes in a variety of forms: some immigration is involuntary, such as refugee immigrants, but most immigration is voluntary. Although we recognize the self-selective nature of the process by which some choose to migrate to a new country as others elect to stay in their native land, most studies focus on the postimmigration period while ignoring or
paying only scant attention to the pre-immigration period. This poses several problems. First are those who choose to leave and stay different? Are the economically and educationally upwardly ambitious more likely to migrate? Or do the economically impoverished choose to leave in hopes of better economic opportunities?

Or if we accept the “hourglass” metaphor (Suárez-Orozco and Suárez-Orozco, 2001) in which there are two groups of immigrants—the highly skilled professionals and the low-skilled immigrant workers—then both groups may be part of the immigration story. Both groups may be motivated by economic concerns, but the differences in their prior history, education, and occupational experience suggest that we need to recognize these as distinctive groups with very different likely postimmigration trajectories.

In our efforts to understand postimmigration adaptation, we need to assess not just the economic circumstances in the country of origin but the individual, marital, and family characteristics that prevailed in the pre-immigration context. The measurement of these issues is important for understanding children in immigrant families at both ends of the “hourglass” in light of evidence that affluent as well as poor children are prone to social and emotional problems. This means a reconceptualization of the baseline that we use in studies of immigrant children; instead of starting our assessment efforts at a postimmigration baseline we need to move the assessment process back to the pre-immigration period. This appropriately recasts immigration as a multiphase cross-time process that recognizes pre-immigration, migration transition, and post-immigration phases. Moreover, by viewing immigration as a cross-time and cross-boundary issue, it underscores that immigration like all transitions is a process and not an event.

**Capturing the Nonlinearity of the Immigration Process: Microgenetic Analyses of Immigration**

We need to recognize and embrace nonlinearity in the immigration process and develop better models to capture the uneven pace of immigration-related adaptation. In recent years, we have recognized in the field of developmental psychology that development is a nonlinear process and that progress proceeds in an uneven manner. Studies using microgenetic analyses (Siegler, 2006) revealed that progress in children’s cognitive development, for example, is uneven involving use of more mature strategies followed closely by less mature ones until eventually the more effective approaches predominate.

Similarly, we suggest that adaptation to being a new immigrant is not a linear process either and involves progress, setbacks, and finally movement
toward a point of adaptive equilibrium. By more detailed and more frequent assessments of children as they engage in this adaptation process, we will move closer to describing and capturing the nonlinear nature of the process. In turn, we will better understand how this process unfolds and be positioned to select transition points that may allow us to devise effective interventions to aid children in their adaptation struggle.

**Universal Versus Culture Bound Aspects of Children’s Immigration Experience**

As we expand the range of countries of origin and countries of settlement in our immigration work, we need to discover which aspects of children’s immigration experiences are universal and which are culture and country specific. Some theorists (Berry and Sabatier, this volume) have suggested that both viewpoints are valuable, while others emphasize the cultural uniqueness of children’s experience (García Coll and Magnuson, 1999). On the one hand, universal models that capture these processes for all immigrants regardless of particular local country contexts are useful theoretical tools. For example, some universal processes govern adaptation to the immigrant experience such as identifiable sources of stress (i.e., discrimination, family separation, language barriers, economic hardship) and stress buffers such as social and personal resources (i.e., individual coping strategies, social support systems, immigrant-friendly legal and social government policies). On the other hand, there are unique, culture-specific stressors and buffering strategies that need to be specified as well. Failure to appreciate these culturally based differences would lead to serious misunderstandings and inadequate guides for preventative and intervention efforts aimed at easing the burdens of the immigration experience. Clearly we need to operate at both levels of analyses if we are to succeed in articulating the shared universal aspects of children’s immigration and still identify those cultural nuances with various ethnic groups.

**Toward a Bidirectional Model of Influence between Immigrants and the Host Culture.**

We need to recognize that the immigration process is a bi-cultural process since both immigrant children and the children in the host country are players in the immigration process. To paraphrase the late U.S. President John F. Kennedy “Ask not what we can teach immigrant children, but what can immigrant children teach us.”

Too little is known about the impact—positive or negative—on children in a host country of experiencing children who migrate from other lands (Parke,
Coltrane, and Schofield, 2007). To illustrate consider the current status of many of the strengths that we typically extol in North American society such as family closeness, stable marriages, well-monitored children, commitment to educational attainment, and respect for older generations. Some of these values are being imported from Latin America and Asia. Latino and Asian immigrant families provide models whose best features can be profitably emulated by non-immigrant North American children and families. Even though many Latino American and recent Asian immigrants such as Vietnamese and Hmong have unstable jobs with low pay, limited benefits, and few opportunities for advancement—and despite the fact that many families live below the poverty line—research has found that most of these immigrant families are thriving. Divorce rates are lower for Latino and Asian than Anglo families with similar income and education levels. Latino fathers are highly involved with their children, exhibiting more child care responsibilities than did Anglo fathers, although showing less monitoring behaviors (Hofferth, 2003). Asian parents support their children’s education as much as if not more than Euro American parents (Chao and Tseng, 2002). Perhaps most importantly, Asian as well as Latino children and their parents form tightly knit family units that serve as protective contexts for developing children (Cauce and Domenech-Rodriguez, 2002; Chao and Tseng). Moreover, children benefit from a supportive family environment that emphasizes closeness and support for one another (Thompson, 2006; Parke and Buriel, 2006). For example, a commitment to familism in Latino families, which emphasizes the importance of family closeness and getting along with, and contributing to, the well-being of the family, is a major factor in promoting the adaptation of immigrant children.

The organization and values of the extended Latino and Asian American families means that there is a social safety net for immigrant children. It is a quality that is not unique to Asians or Latinos: In her classic book, All our Kin, sociologist Carol Stack (1974) reminds us that a similar pattern of cross-household support—with kin and close friends or “fictive kin” serving as alternative and supplementary caregivers—has been a long-recognized strength of poor African American families. Although European American families value their ties to extended family too, their contacts are not only less frequent but also require travel across longer distances due to the greater mobility of their families. Asian and Latino families, in contrast, are more likely to value living near family and do, in fact, choose to live in closer physical proximity to their relatives. As a Mexican American father, Manuel, illustrated,

“I don’t know how people throw their parents into places where they die,” he says. “We kept our parents with the household until they died. And they are never too old for you to listen to . . . you take care of your parents. You are going
New Arrivals: Past Advances and Future Directions

to support them because they raised you when you were a kid, and we never forget that” (Parke et al., 2007).

Another value that is characteristic of both Asian and Latino immigrant families is respect for older generations. Both Asian and Latino American families deliberately socialize their children to respect adults, be polite, and show deference to their elders. Filial piety, in fact, has been suggested as “a guiding principle governing general Chinese patterns of socialization, as well as specific rules of intergenerational conduct” (Ho, 1996, p.155). In Mexican American families, children are encouraged to become “bien educado,” which refers to the ability to function successfully in interpersonal exchanges without being disrespectful in their relations with adults. These family values contrast with the common belief that White North American children’s respect for their parents has eroded in recent years.

“U.S. children don’t have any respect toward older people like it was taught to us,” says Luis, a Latino father. “You talk to a [non-Latino] American kid and he tells you bad words. I see this as wrong, even though it is a normal thing with young people. For me it may not be just a bad word but it’s also about being disrespectful to their parents” (Parke et al., 2007).

We often assume that immigration is a one-way process by which people from other countries come to the host country to settle and work and that they routinely adopt the values, customs, and practices of the host country. This is an oversimplified view that ignores the reality of the mutual influence between cultural groups. Many immigrant children and families embrace a bi-cultural orientation, picking and choosing traits and practices of the dominant culture that help them to survive and thrive, while still retaining distinctive aspects of their culture of origin. Rather than a liability, a bi-cultural orientation comes with clear benefits. Both Asian and Latino children and adults who straddled the cultural fence, in fact, had better physical and psychological health, including higher expectations and feelings of positive self-worth (Buriel and Saenz, 1980; Chun and Akutsu, 2003).

We are not advocating a return to a nostalgic vision of family life and recognize that some of the hierarchical aspects of traditional Latino and Asian family life are not desirable for many Anglo families or Asian and Latino families. At the same time, in fairness, the stereotype of the patriarchal Mexican and/or Asian American family is outdated (Chao and Tseng, 2002; Parke and Buriel, 2006). Most research shows that many immigrant couples have moved toward a more equal balance of power and rights between spouses (e.g., see Chuang and Su, 2009).
Our point is not to give up the positive gains toward more equal family roles for men and women that have been achieved in the last 30 years in North America, but to graft onto this newly emerging model some of the passionate commitment to family and community that characterizes the immigrant family. A new family form could emerge that is a fusion of our current egalitarian family model with one that is anchored to extended kin and neighbors in communities that are committed to the common good of our children. Such a synthesis may be possible and is certainly desirable (Parke et al., 2007).

**Beyond the Focus on New Immigrants: Toward Recognition of “First Residents”**

To date, most work on immigration has focused on newly arriving children and families. However, greater attention to the acculturation struggles of non-immigrant “first residents” such as aboriginals in Australia, the Maori in New Zealand, the Inuit in Northern Canada, or the first nations in Canada and the United States is warranted. This work could allow comparisons between the acculturation processes that transpire for “conquered” native groups and the processes for new immigrants. Are these “reverse immigration” processes similar or different from “forward immigration” processes? While such issues such as native reservations, land rights, ancestral burial grounds, and residential schools for native children have received scholarly and policy attention, the impact of these policies on children are less well understood. Although this body of work has been cast in acculturation and enculturation terms (Zimmerman, Ramirez, Washienko, Walter, and Dyer, 1998), little effort has been made to describe conceptual similarities and differences across these two forms of “immigration.” However, the Zimmerman et al. (1998) finding that involvement with American Indian culture (enculturation) buffered children from the negative effects of acculturation such as alcohol and substance abuse was reminiscent of the benefits of a bi-cultural orientation for recent immigrant children. Finally, the work of Chandler and his colleagues (2003) on the role of ethnic and self-identity as a buffer against depression and suicide among Canadian first nation youth is a further example of the kind of work that is needed.

**Toward a Mutual Interplay between Research and Policy**

One of the goals of this volume is to highlight the policy implications of research on immigrant children in order to improve the lives of these children and their families. To realize this goal, policy and research concerning children’s immigration need to be viewed as an integral part of the same
intellectual enterprise rather than as separate domains. Too often researchers treat policy implications of their work as an afterthought. Often these implications are buried deep in the discussion section of empirical reports or in the application/relevance section of a grant application. Policy practitioners, on the other hand, often view the research results as either too specific or too heavily qualified to be of value as a guide to policy development on behalf of immigrant children. To correct this situation of separate but equal spheres of inquiry, we need to take several steps to achieve an integration of research and policy. First, new training models that expose students to policy issues and research puzzles at the same time need to be developed and become normative in graduate education. As part of this process we need to change the “culture” of graduate training to undermine the implicit hierarchy that provides greater prestige and status to basic research than to applied policy-oriented efforts. One way to achieve this leveling of the intellectual playing field is to remind ourselves of the valuable interplay between basic and applied policy relevant research. For example, basic theory and research on infant-parent attachment has led to productive examination of a policy-related issue namely the impact of child care on infant and child development (NICHD Early Child Care Research Network, 2005). At the same time, this work has led to revisions in our theoretical thinking about the centrality and/or necessity of the mother-child bond and informed policy makers about issues such as the importance of quality of nonparental care for children’s development.

Finally, it is worth highlighting some of the policy issues noted from an On New Shores Conference in 2007 as well as those that merit the joint attention of researchers and policy makers in the future. For example, several contributors focus on educational policies for immigrant children (e.g., Colbert, 2007; Rodriguez and Moreno, 2007), others (e.g., Suarez-Orozco, 2007) bring attention to the policy issues surrounding family separation, and Weisz and Zeigler (2007) reflect on legal issues of guardianship of orphaned immigrant children. A wide range of policy puzzles remain including the economic, educational, legal and medical rights of immigrant children and/or rights of native-born children with undocumented parents. Over half of the children in immigrant families live in mixed-status households (where at least one household member is not a U.S. citizen), and this poses new challenges for service providers (Hernandez, 2004). Should all immigrant children have access to health insurance or health care? Who should be the policy-making party—states/provinces or the national/federal government? How successful are specialized services targeted to immigrants such as the settlement services in Canada or should these services be incorporated into existing general service delivery systems such as typically occurs in the
United States? Should linguistic brokering services be available to immigrant families to relieve children of this burden? What family re-unification policies are in the best interests of children? How do we define family boundaries in cases of other cultural groups who have a wider ranging definition of who is part of the family? Or should we be guided by the North American model that restricts the definition of family to the nuclear family rather than the extended family? Only by close collaboration between researchers and policy designers will we be able to answer these questions in a way that is data-based and at the same time accommodates to the realities of the policy decision-making process. This collaborative effort will produce the best results for immigrant children.

CONCLUSIONS

Today’s immigrant children represent the future workers and citizens for many countries. It is in our best interests as well as theirs to better understand these children and to develop programs and policies to help them cope effectively as they undergo this transition process. Our shared future depends on how successful we are at accepting and meeting those challenges.

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About the Editors

Dr. Susan S. Chuang is currently an Associate Professor in the Department of Family Relations and Applied Nutrition at the University of Guelph, Ontario, Canada. She received her baccalaureate in Criminology and Sociology at the University of Toronto, Ontario. At the University of Rochester, New York, United States, she received a Masters of Science in Elementary Education and a Masters of Science and Ph.D. in Human Development. She then received post-doctoral training under Dr. Michael E. Lamb at the Institute of Child Health and Human Development, Maryland, United States. She has several lines of research, including cross-cultural research on young children and families (parenting, fathering, family dynamics, school readiness), immigration and settlement issues for children, youth, and families, and adolescent mental health among various socio-cultural contexts. She co-edited On New Shores: Understanding Immigrant Fathers in North America (with Robert P. Moreno) and two special issues in Sex Roles (with Catherine Tamis-LeMonda, New York University) and Journal of Family Psychology (with Uwe Gielen, St. Francis College, NY) that focused on immigration and families. She is a Series Editor on Advances in Immigrant Family Research for Springer Science + Business Media and an Associate Editor for the Journal of Family Psychology. She has organized four international conferences on immigration, with the fifth scheduled for 2012.

Dr. Robert P. Moreno is currently an Associate Professor in the Department of Child and Family Studies at Syracuse University, New York, United States. He received his baccalaureate in psychology at UCLA and his Ph.D. in Child and Adolescent Development from Stanford University. He is also a National Academy of Education/Spencer Postdoctoral Fellowship recipient. His