

## Chapter 2

# Immigrant Youth Resilience: Integrating Developmental and Cultural Perspectives



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Millions of young people reside in countries different from those where they or their parents were born. Their families may have migrated voluntarily to seek a better future or they may have been forcibly displaced by war and atrocities. Increasing, often unprecedented, rates of immigration are changing the face of receiving societies, with ethnic diversity becoming the rule rather than the exception in most Western countries. Public opinion has not always been positive in light of these changes, which can be accompanied by economic and political conflicts. In Europe, additionally, recent terrorist attacks have fueled heated public debates over immigration and diversity (Motti-Stefanidi & Salmela-Aro, 2018).

According to the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, a key barometer of how well immigrants are integrated in receiving societies is the adaptive success of their children (OECD, 2012). This observation is particularly important because positive adaptation in childhood and adolescence is a harbinger of future adaptation, and failure to adapt early in life may have negative and possibly cascading consequences for the future (Huebner et al., 2016; Masten, 2014b). Thus, positive adaptation of young immigrants is consequential for the future success and well-being of both immigrants and receiving societies (Motti-Stefanidi & Salmela-Aro, 2018).

Substantial diversity in immigrant youth adaptation has been observed, with many young immigrants following positive developmental pathways, whereas others fare less well (García Coll & Marks, 2012; Motti-Stefanidi & Masten, 2017;

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Suárez-Orozco, Abo-Zena, & Marks, 2015; Suárez-Orozco, Motti-Stefanidi, Marks, & Katsiaficas, 2018). To explain individual and group differences in the quality of adaptation among immigrant youth, it is important to acknowledge that immigrant children, like all children, are developing organisms, and that development always emerges from interactions of individuals with their contexts. Cognitive, affective, and social developmental processes, as well as normative developmental contexts, such as family, school, and peer group, all play a role in their adaptation and development (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006). Furthermore, immigrant youth live and grow in the context of at least two cultures. The encounter of different ethnic groups in the course of migration brings cultural change in both immigrant and nonimmigrant individuals, even though these acculturation changes may be greater for immigrants (Berry & Sam, 2016). Consequently, acculturation is a significant influence on the quality of adaptation of immigrant youth. In addition, immigrant youth face unique contextual influences not faced by their nonimmigrant peers, including discrimination and prejudice. As a result, explaining variation in immigrant youth adaptation requires integration of developmental, acculturative, and social psychological perspectives (Motti-Stefanidi, Berry, Chryssochoou, Sam, & Phinney, 2012).

In this chapter, we address the question, “Who among immigrant youth do well and why?” Immigrant youth in this chapter refer to individuals who migrated themselves (first generation) or who were born in the receiving country to immigrant parents (second generation). Our approach is grounded in a developmental resilience framework that integrates acculturation and social psychological perspectives (Motti-Stefanidi, 2018; Motti-Stefanidi, Berry, et al., 2012; Motti-Stefanidi & Masten, 2017; Suárez-Orozco et al., 2018).

The chapter includes four sections. First, we discuss core concepts and principles of a developmental resilience framework to set the stage for organizing extant scientific evidence examining immigrant youth adaptation. Second, we examine the role of culture in resilience. The third section examines the role of acculturation in the conceptualization of immigrant youth resilience. The fourth section presents an integrative conceptual framework for describing and understanding group and individual differences in immigrant youth adaptation, integrating acculturation and social psychological perspectives into the developmental resilience framework.

## **Developmental Resilience Framework**

Resilience science is a close “cousin” of developmental psychopathology, with many intertwined roots and common perspectives (Masten & Kalstabakken, 2018). Both perspectives study normative adaptation as well as deviations from the norm, viewing divergent pathways as mutually informative (Cicchetti & Rogosch, 1996). The full range of functioning among individuals exposed to adversity are studied, aiming to understand processes leading to positive adaptation and mental health, as well as problematic pathways.

Resilience is manifested in observable pathways and patterns of positive adaptation during or following significant risk or adversity (Masten, 2014b). In contemporary resilience science, from a developmental systems perspective, resilience refers to the capacity for adapting effectively to significant challenges (Masten, 2018a). Individuals draw on complex internal, relational, and external resources and adaptive tools to counter adversity and adapt in response to disturbances, yielding resistance, recovery, or transformation. Resilience is a dynamic process because individuals, their relationships, and their environments are always changing. It is not a trait, although there are characteristics of individuals that support positive adaptation under many circumstances, such as good problem-solving skills and self-regulation. The capacity of an individual to respond effectively to a challenge will depend on the nature of the challenge, its developmental timing, and protective processes embedded in the organism, relationships with other people, and external systems.

Two basic judgments are required to identify manifested resilience or infer resilience capacity in an individual: (a) whether the individual is functioning or adapting adequately well, by some explicit criteria and, (b) whether there is currently or has been a serious threat to the adaptive function or development of the individual (i.e., adversity, risks, stress; Masten, 2014b). If a young person clearly has experienced adversity and subsequently shows what is judged to be positive adaptation, then it is reasonable to infer that resilience (i.e., capacity for adaptation to this adversity) was present and made this possible, even if the processes are not well understood. In the absence of a challenge, when many resources and established protections are clearly available (and measurable), then it would be reasonable to expect the individual to manifest resilience when challenged, but that is not a certainty until it actually happens. Resilience refers to available capacity for responding well to challenges, whereas manifested resilience refers to the adaptive outcomes (e.g., well-being, school success) that resilience makes possible. Typically, we infer resilience from its manifestations in successful adaptation during or following adversity.

Successful human adaptation can be judged on the basis of different criteria, ranging from happiness or health to academic or work achievement. A key index of positive adaptation in children and youth is how well they are doing with respect to age-salient developmental tasks (Masten, 2014b). These tasks reflect the expectations and standards for behavior and achievement that parents, teachers, and society set for them, and that they themselves usually come to share. Developmental tasks can be organized in broad domains, such as individual development, relationships with parents, teachers, and peers, and functioning in the proximal environment and in the broader social world (Sroufe, Egeland, Carlson, & Collins, 2005). Positive adaptation with respect to developmental tasks may be judged based on external behavior, such as success in school, having close friends/being accepted (and not rejected) by peers, exhibiting positive conduct, civic engagement, or on internal adaptation, such as development of self-control, of a cohesive and integrated sense of identity, and an increasing individuation and independence from parents (e.g., Motti-Stefanidi & Masten, 2017). Success in meeting these developmental expectations and standards for behavior and achievement does not require that children

exhibit “ideal” effectiveness, but rather that they are doing “adequately well” (OK) with respect to developmental tasks (Masten, Narayan, Silverman, & Osofsky, 2015).

The second criterion for inferring resilience is that the individual has experienced threat, trauma, or negative life events which predict higher rates of problematic and undesirable outcomes (Masten, 2014b). Without the presence of risk, positive adaptation is not necessarily a manifestation of resilience, although it is a sign of competence. In resilience science, a wide range of risks and threats to adaptation and development have been studied, including sociodemographic risk indices (e.g., low SES, immigrant status, single parent family), exposure to traumatic and stressful experiences (e.g., maltreatment, discrimination, community violence, war, natural disasters), or biological markers of risk (e.g., low birth weight, physical illness). It was noted early in the literature on risk in development that adverse conditions and events often pile up in the lives of children, with evidence of a dose–response relationships between level of cumulative risk and indicators of worse outcomes in multiple domains of function or achievement (Obradović, Shaffer, & Masten, 2012).

An important goal of resilience research is to explain why some individuals do well while others falter in the context of high cumulative risk or exposure to a specific adversity. Two major categories of resilience factors have been described: promotive factors and protective factors (Masten, 2014b). *Promotive factors*, directly associated with better outcomes regardless of risk level (Sameroff, 2000), are also referred to as assets, resources, compensatory factors, or social and human capital. They promote positive adaptation both in high- and low-risk conditions. *Protective factors*, on the other hand, show greater importance when risk or adversity is high, reflecting interaction effects; they appear to moderate or buffer against risk (Rutter, 1987). The expected positive link between the protective factor and adaptation is either more pronounced or only present when risk is high. Some factors fit both categories. Good parenting, for example, promotes positive development at any risk level but also has particularly important roles among high-risk children (Masten, 2014b; Masten & Palmer, 2019).

Resilience factors reflect processes that can be studied at multiple levels of context and analysis (Luthar, Crossman, & Small, 2015; Masten & Cicchetti, 2016; Ungar, 2012). Research is underway to identify resilience processes within and across different levels of analysis and function, including neurobiology (e.g., epigenetic, stress regulation, brain plasticity), behavior (e.g., self-control, problem-solving skills), social systems (e.g., caregiving, perceived social support), and other key systems important to the lives of young people and their families, such as education, health care, religion, public safety, and both governmental and nongovernmental systems (Masten, 2018b; Masten & Cicchetti, 2015; Ungar, 2018). For example, interventions to improve the quality of caregiving by parents or foster caregivers (social level) has effects on the stress regulation system of young children (biological level); results are congruent with biological embedding of protection and cascade effects across levels (see Masten & Palmer, 2019).

Core principles of developmental systems theory guide the study of resilience as well as developmental psychopathology (Cicchetti & Rogosch, 1996; Masten & Cicchetti, 2016). Three principles are of particular relevance to this chapter. First,

individual development is coherent, and adaptive functioning shows continuity over time (Sroufe et al., 2005). The coherence of individual development is reflected in the observation that the way developmental tasks of an earlier stage are negotiated prepared individuals for the developmental tasks of the future. Accomplishing earlier developmental tasks increases the probability of subsequent successful adaptation, and, as a result, promotes continuity in adaptive functioning. Indeed, one of the reasons that parents and communities take note of developmental task achievements is because they know that competence in these tasks are a harbinger of future competence and success (Obradović et al., 2012).

The argument that adaptive functioning shows continuity over time, however, does not preclude the possibility for change. According to a second principle, called multifinality, individuals with similar levels or quality of adaptation at an earlier point may follow different developmental trajectories over time (Cicchetti & Rogosch, 1996). Both risks and resources for positive adaptation and development stem from interactions of the individuals (genetic and hormonal systems, personality, and cognition) with the proximal environment (e.g., family and school systems) and distal ecology (e.g., governmental or societal systems) in which their life is embedded (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006).

A third principle emphasizes the role of children themselves in this process. Children are active agents and processors in their own experiences and thus shape their own development (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006). They are expected to exert their human agency, influencing the course of their own development, within the opportunities and constraints of historical and social circumstances.

## The Role of Culture in Resilience

Early research on resilience in children was studied primarily in North America and Great Britain, with limited attention to cultural issues (Luthar et al., 2015; Masten & Cicchetti, 2016). Culture is a socially interactive process of construction including shared activity between its members in the form of cultural practices and shared meaning expressed as cultural interpretation (Greenfield, Keller, Fuligni, & Maynard, 2003). In multiple ways, however, culture was always present, implicitly, in every aspect of a resilience framework, from the criteria of adaptation identified as developmental tasks or desirable adjustment to the conceptualizations of assets and protective processes. It is, thus, an integral part of defining and understanding the phenomenon of resilience (Motti-Stefanidi, 2018).

The criteria for evaluating positive adaptation are always grounded in cultural and historical, as well as developmental, contexts (Masten, 2014b; McCormick, Kuo, & Masten, 2011; Theron, Liebenberg, & Ungar, 2015). What is considered desirable behavior and accomplishments varies over the course of development, historical time, and culture. For example, the salience of these developmental tasks has varied across historical and developmental time, as well as cultures: learning to hunt or to weave; going to school; learning to read; or working outside the home.

Similarly, cultural perspectives influence what is viewed as a risk factor and also the interpretation of adversity. For example, some kinds of trauma may be viewed as worse for one gender than another, because of cultural perspectives on the experience. Thus, research on child soldiers and other victims of war has found that young girls in multiple cultures experience more stigma from rape trauma than young boys (Masten et al., 2015).

Culture also profoundly shapes the form and practices of fundamental protective influences, including parenting, faith, or social support. Diverse studies from around the world have implicated a broad set of such protective factors in human resilience (Masten, 2001) and these continue to be corroborated (Masten & Cicchetti, 2016). These include close relationships, problem-solving skills, self-regulation, self-efficacy, hope, and belief that life has meaning. Masten (2001) suggested that these represent powerful human adaptive systems and capabilities that evolved in biological and cultural evolution because they promote adaptation and survival under diverse circumstances. Yet the actual behaviors practiced by loving and effective parents or recognized as good self-regulation and thus encouraged by families and communities in their socialization practices can vary widely. Similarly, different religions embody protective influences in their spiritual beliefs and practices, social supports, and rituals for coping with the challenges of life (Crawford, Wright, & Masten, 2006).

Additionally, cultures can provide unique protective practices and beliefs that convey resilience (Masten, 2014a, 2014b). The unique traditions of diverse human cultures undoubtedly encompass a wealth of strategies and practices passed down from generation to generation intended implicitly or explicitly to support the resilience of individuals and families over the life course (Greenfield, Suzuki, & Rothstein-Fisch, 2006). Until recently, however, the rich array of such protective beliefs and traditions have been the province of cultural anthropologists rather than resilience scientists.

Over the past two decades, research on the role of culture in resilience has surged. Ungar (2012) proposed a social ecological model of resilience that stresses the role of culture and context. Ungar and colleagues founded the Resilience Research Centre in Halifax which has played a leading role in facilitating international research and conferences on the role of culture in resilience (Theron et al., 2015). This group has generated a considerable body of quantitative and qualitative data, both expanding and challenging traditional resilience models.

Other evidence of this shift to consider the cultural aspect more deeply in resilience science can be found in recent theory, research, reviews, and conferences (Masten, 2014a, 2018b). The World Bank sponsored a book that reviewed, through the lens of a resilience developmental framework, international evidence on the effect of global economic recessions on youth's adaptation, development, and mental health (Lundberg & Wuermli, 2012). Similarly, cross-cultural studies, conducted primarily in North America and Europe and focusing on immigrant youth acculturation and development, also contributed to our understanding of resilience in cultural context (García Coll & Marks, 2012; Motti-Stefanidi, Berry, et al., 2012; Motti-Stefanidi & Masten, 2017; Suárez-Orozco et al., 2015; Suárez-Orozco et al., 2018).

Culture also guided interventions based on resilience models. Interventions to improve parenting have had success across cultures, particularly when the programs are adapted to the cultural context. For example, the Oregon Model of Parent Management Training has shown efficacy in multiple studies and diverse cultures (Forgatch & Gewirtz, 2017). The Incredible Years program developed by Webster-Stratton (1987) and colleagues has been adapted for other cultures, with growing evidence of efficacy (Leijten, Raaijmakers, Orobio de Castro, van den Ban, & Matthys, 2017). Similarly, humanitarian agencies that intervene in diverse cultures and countries have increasingly adopted a resilience framework with a cultural lens (Masten, 2014a). Some agencies aim to stimulate child survival and thriving (Black et al., 2017; Britto, Engle, & Super, 2013) while others promote recovery from war or aim to support refugees of war and other disasters (e.g., Panter-Brick et al., 2017). There is growing recognition that humanitarian interventions must be culturally sensitive and grounded.

## **The Role of Acculturation in Immigrant Youth Resilience**

Migration brings individuals of different cultures into contact. The concept of acculturation refers to cultural changes that result from this contact (Berry & Sam, 2016). However, often migrants move to cultures that prioritize different values and promote different behavioral repertoires in their children, compared to their culture of origin (Bornstein, 2017; Greenfield et al., 2003; Kağitçibaşı, 2012). Immigrants' cultures of origin in recent decades often have a more collectivistic orientation, emphasizing the well-being of a collective, such as connection to the family, orientation toward the larger group, respect, and obedience (Greenfield et al., 2003; Kağitçibaşı, 2012). The needs of the individual in such cultural models are less important. The boundaries of the self in these cultures tend to overlap with those of close others and the development of a heteronomous-related self is the key developmental goal (Kağitçibaşı, 2012). The preferred endpoint of development in the collectivistic model is a mature, non-questioning, respectful, obedient, caring, polite adult who is embedded in a network of relationships and responsibilities to others (Greenfield et al., 2006).

In contrast, the cultures of receiving societies often have a more individualistic orientation. They tend to prioritize values promoting self-enhancement, such as personal choice (vs. obligation) in social relationships, intrinsic motivation (being internally driven to achieve one's goals), self-esteem (feeling good about oneself as key to positive outcomes), and reaching one's full potential (Greenfield et al., 2003; Kağitçibaşı, 2012). The self in these cultures is clearly bounded and separate from others, and the development of an autonomous-separate self is an important developmental goal (Kağitçibaşı, 2012). The preferred endpoint of development in the individualistic model is an independent, autonomous, self-fulfilled, self-reliant adult, who is assertive, competitive, and decisive.



Ideal endpoints of development, which are culturally defined, serve as developmental goals for socialization agents. Parents, teachers, and society set for children and youth, and promote, the achievement of developmental goals which will lead the latter to these culturally defined preferred endpoints of development (Greenfield et al., 2003). However, immigrant families and their children may have to deal with the conflicting values of the ethnic and receiving cultures. Parents, who represent a particular ethnic culture, may consider a sign of positive adaptation that their adolescent children be close to the family, respectful, and obedient, whereas teachers, who represent the receiving culture, may expect them to become independent, self-reliant, assertive, and competitive (Kağıtçıbaşı, 2012). This challenge for immigrant families and their children becomes greater with the larger cultural distance between ethnic and receiving cultures (Sam & Berry, 2016; Bornstein, 2017).

Similarly, parenting practices that are considered normal and expected in some cultures may seem problematic and even abusive in others. For example, controlling and at times punitive parenting is widely implemented in collectivistic cultures, although it takes place in a family context of relatedness and warmth (Kağıtçıbaşı, 2012). Such parenting is labeled as “authoritarian” and viewed as a risk factor for youth’s positive adaptation in many individualistic cultures. However, its effects on child development and well-being depend to a large extent on how children perceive these parenting practices in their cultural context. For example, Lansford et al. (2010) reported that even though corporal punishment predicted anxiety among children across countries in their study, the adverse effect of corporal punishment was more pronounced in countries in which it was less normative.

In an immigration context, the question arises whether and how parents’ and teachers’ ideas about positive adaptation in youth, who may represent different cultural models, can be reconciled. How can young immigrants make sense of these contradicting values and find an acculturative strategy that works for navigating multiple cultures?

## **Immigrant Youth Resilience: An Integrative Conceptual Framework**

A culturally grounded, developmental model of resilience can provide the structure for asking research questions related to risk (is being an immigrant a risk factor for adaptation and why?) and promotive or protective influences (why do some immigrant youth do well while others do less well?) for immigrant youth adaptation. Furthermore, the integration of acculturation and social psychological perspectives into the resilience model can guide the formulation of specific research questions and hypotheses acknowledging the fact that immigrant youth are developing and acculturating at the same time, in the context of at least two cultures and of challenging social conditions.



To understand the diversity in immigrant youth adaptation, Motti-Stefanidi and colleagues (Motti-Stefanidi, Berry, et al., 2012; Motti-Stefanidi & Masten, 2017; Suárez-Orozco et al., 2018) developed a multilevel integrative framework. This framework was influenced by theory from multiple fields, but especially the following conceptual approaches: Masten's (2014b) developmental resilience framework; Bronfenbrenner's bioecological model of human development (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006); Berry's cultural transmission model (Berry, Phinney, Sam, & Vedder, 2006); and the three-level model of immigrant adaptation proposed by Verkuyten (2005), a social psychologist studying issues of ethnicity and migration.

The framework has three levels. The individual level refers to youth's personal attributes, such as their personality, cognition, and motivation. The level of interaction is focused on youth's proximal contexts, such as the school, the family, and neighborhoods, which constitute their lived space and where they are in direct contact with close others (parents, teachers, peers). These contexts constitute important influences both for immigrant youth's development and acculturation. Some represent the home culture (family, ethnic peers, ethnic group) and others the receiving culture (school, native peers). Finally, the societal level refers to cultural beliefs, social representations, and ideologies, as well as to social position variables (e.g., social class, immigrant status, ethnicity) that have an impact on immigrants' adaptation.

The three levels of the model are interconnected and nested within each other. Influences from each of these levels of context may promote, or may instead present challenges or obstacles for immigrant youth adaptation. Thus, they may function either as risk, or as promotive and/or protective factors.

### *Criteria for Positive Adaptation*

The integrative model has implications for the criteria for evaluating the quality of immigrant youth adaptation (Motti-Stefanidi, Berry, et al., 2012; Motti-Stefanidi & Masten, 2017; Suárez-Orozco et al., 2018). For young immigrants, it is important to consider not only how well they deal with age-appropriate developmental tasks but also how well they negotiate acculturative tasks and manage the challenges of acculturation. An additional index of immigrant youth resilience to consider is their psychological well-being and mental health.

Immigrant youth, like all youth, face the developmental tasks of their historical time and developmental age (Motti-Stefanidi & Masten, 2017). However, they live and grow in the context of at least two cultures, i.e. the culture of origin, mainly represented by their family, and the receiving culture, mainly represented by their school. Some of the developmental goals that parents and teachers hold for young immigrants may agree but other goals may be seriously at odds. For example, immigrant parents and teachers usually share in the goals and expectations for immigrant youth to be engaged, do well, and exhibit positive conduct in school (García Coll & Marks, 2012). They also agree that a young person should form an identity and

commit to key life goals. However, they may well differ on how they expect the young person to achieve these goals (Côté, 2009; Motti-Stefanidi, 2015).

Young immigrants also are faced with acculturative challenges as they address developmental tasks (Motti-Stefanidi & Masten, 2017). An important acculturative challenge that they confront is the development of cultural competence in two or more cultures (Oppedal & Toppelberg, 2016). Multiculturally competent immigrant youth are able to communicate effectively in ethnic and national languages, have friends from both their ethnic and the national group, know the values and practices of both groups, and are able to “code-switch” between languages and cultures as necessary. A related criterion is the development of strong and secure ethnic and national identities, which is another aspect of acculturation (Phinney, Horenczyk, Liebkind, & Vedder, 2001; Umaña-Taylor et al., 2014).

Thus, an important criterion of positive adaptation with respect to acculturative tasks is that immigrant youth learn and maintain both ethnic cultures and receiving cultures (Oppedal & Toppelberg, 2016). In a meta-analysis, Nguyen and Benet-Martinez (2013) found an overall positive association between biculturalism and adjustment. They also found that bicultural individuals tended to be as psychologically adjusted (e.g., higher self-esteem) as they were adjusted with respect to developmental tasks (e.g., better academic achievement and conduct); all three being key indices of positive adaptation for immigrant youth.

Another key goal is that immigrant youth make sense of, navigate between, and bridge their different worlds (Motti-Stefanidi, Berry, et al., 2012; Motti-Stefanidi & Masten, 2017; Motti-Stefanidi, 2018). To achieve this goal, they need to select, interpret, resist, or manage competing messages stemming from their families, schools, peers, as well as from the media, and actively construct their own unique working models of culture (Kuczynski & Knafo, 2013). These models of culture will help them accommodate the often-contradictory messages emanating from parents, peers, and teachers. The degree to which they achieve this goal is another sign of positive adaptation.

Finally, psychological well-being is often viewed as a key criterion of immigrant youth adaptation. The presence of self-esteem and life satisfaction and the absence of anxiety and/or emotional symptoms are common indices of psychological well-being used by both developmental and acculturative researchers (e.g., Berry et al., 2006; Masten, 2014a).

In multiple ways, developmental and acculturative tasks are closely linked. Performance with respect to these tasks may reflect both how development and acculturation are proceeding (Motti-Stefanidi, Berry, et al., 2012; Motti-Stefanidi & Masten, 2017). For example, to maintain positive relations with parents, which is an important developmental task during adolescence, presupposes that immigrant youth are able to strike a balance, through the processes of accommodation and negotiation with parents, between demands for autonomy and willingness to adhere to family values, which is an acculturative task (Kuczynski & Knafo, 2013; Kwak, 2003).

Moreover, immigrant adolescents, like all adolescents, need to have friends, and be accepted by their peers (regardless of the ethnicity of these peers), which is an

important developmental task. At the same time, they also need to learn to navigate successfully between intra- and inter-ethnic peers, which is an important acculturative task (Motti-Stefanidi, Berry, et al., 2012; Motti-Stefanidi & Masten, 2017; Titzmann, 2014). Evaluations about the adaptation of immigrant youth with respect to peer relations rests on both these criteria (Motti-Stefanidi, Asendorpf, & Masten, 2012; Suárez-Orozco et al., 2018).

Developmental and acculturative tasks are also intricately linked over time. The acquisition of acculturative tasks is in some cases expected to precede the acquisition of developmental tasks. For example, immigrant youth's competence in the language of the receiving country, a key acculturative task, is crucial for doing well academically in school, which is a developmental task (e.g. Suárez-Orozco, Suárez-Orozco, & Todorova, 2008).

## ***Risks***

A key step for testing a resilience model of immigrant youth adaptation is to establish risk: Is immigrant status a risk factor for youth's adaptation? Studies conducted particularly in North America reveal a mixture of vulnerability and resilience. An immigrant paradox has been described, whereby immigrant youth adaptation is more positive than expected and, in some cases, better than the adaptation of their nonimmigrant peers (Berry et al., 2006), or first-generation immigrants are found to be better adapted than later-generation immigrants (García Coll & Marks, 2012), whose adaptation converges with that of their nonimmigrant peers (Sam, Vedder, Liebkind, Neto, & Virta, 2008). Studies conducted mainly in the USA and Canada show that first-generation immigrant children exhibit fewer risky behaviors, such as substance use and abuse, unprotected sex, and delinquency, have more positive attitudes toward school, and present fewer internalizing problems than their second-generation counterparts. However, the immigrant paradox has not been observed consistently. It seems to depend to a large extent on the domain of adaptation and the ethnic group (García Coll & Marks, 2012), an observation congruent with Bornstein's (2017) specificity principle, asserting that one needs to focus on variations as well as commonalities to understand among contemporary migrants and their circumstances.

In Europe one finds less evidence of an immigrant paradox. In a comparative study including five European countries, Sam et al. (2008) found some support for the immigrant paradox in two of these countries (Sweden and Finland), particularly for adaptation with respect to developmental tasks, such as school adjustment and conduct, but not with respect to psychological well-being. In contrast to expectations, second-generation immigrant youth reported better psychological well-being compared both to their first-generation counterparts and to national peers. Furthermore, a meta-analysis based on 51 studies conducted across the European continent revealed that immigrant status was a risk factor for academic adjustment and externalizing and internalizing problems (Dimitrova, Chasiotis, & van de Vijver,

2016). Nonetheless, although immigrant status has been linked to worse academic achievement, school engagement, and conduct in some studies, it has not been linked consistently to worse psychological well-being (e.g., Motti-Stefanidi, Asendorpf, & Masten, 2012).

To consider whether immigrant status is a risk factor for adaptation problems, it is important to identify an informative and appropriate comparison group. Studies often compare immigrant youth to their nonimmigrant peers. However, such comparisons may lead to the conclusion that immigrant youth are inferior in some way. This “deficit” approach to the study of immigrant youth adaptation has been denounced in favor of studying immigrant youth adaptation in its own right (e.g., Garcia Coll, Akerman, & Cicchetti, 2000).

Another related issue concerns the values by which to evaluate immigrant youth adaptation. Should the point of reference be the values of the receiving country or those of immigrants’ home country?

Motti-Stefanidi and Masten (2017) argued that there is no uniform answer to these questions. Instead, it depends on the domain of adaptation. Behaviors and achievements that belong to the public (functional, utilitarian) domain (Arends-Tóth & van de Vijver, 2006) and have consequences for immigrant youth’s future adaptation in the receiving society should be compared to those of their nonimmigrant peers. For example, two widely used criteria for doing adequately well in school are receiving grades comparable to the normative performance of nonimmigrant students and staying in school rather than leaving school early. These criteria indicate that immigrant youth development and acculturation are proceeding well, and they are important harbingers of future adaptation in the receiving society. However, a different approach may need to be adopted when the focus is on private values related to linguistic and cultural activities, to religious expression, and to the domestic and interpersonal domains of the family. We cannot compare immigrant youth and their families with their nonimmigrant counterparts to evaluate risks or success in these areas (Motti-Stefanidi, 2018). It is more informative in these cultural and private spheres to judge adaptation from the perspective of cultural informants or through comparisons to peers in communities of origin.

Complications also can arise when values of immigrating cultures and receiving host cultures collide in areas of legal standards and human rights. Receiving societies often prohibit child marriage, for example, regardless of traditions in an immigrating culture. Similarly, conflicts and prohibitions arise over cultural practices that violate children’s basic human rights under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. For example, punitive child-rearing, trafficking of children, or female genital mutilation violate international standards of children’s rights and also have adverse effects on youth’s development and mental health (Petersen, Koller, Motti-Stefanidi, & Verma, 2016).

Being an immigrant is linked to a host of social challenges. Thus, immigrants often face normative developmental and immigration-specific challenges in a societal context replete with prejudice and discrimination. Perceived discrimination has been shown to have deleterious consequences on immigrant youth’s adaptation with respect to developmental tasks, psychological well-being, and mental health (Marks,

Ejesi, McCullough, & García Coll, 2015; Vedder & Motti-Stefanidi, 2016). It is a risk factor for academic outcomes, for conduct, as well as for mental health and psychological well-being. Furthermore, longitudinal studies show that the negative consequences of perceived discrimination tend to persist (Marks et al., 2015).

Perceived discrimination is also linked to the way immigrant youth handle acculturative tasks. Whether they feel accepted or, in contrast, discriminated against in the receiving country is related to the attitudes they will develop toward cultural adaptation in their new home and toward ethnic culture maintenance. In this line, Berry et al. (2006) in a 13-country cross-sectional study found that adolescents higher in orientation toward the receiving culture, compared to adolescents higher in cultural maintenance, reported lower discrimination.

A question arises as to the direction of effects between perceived discrimination and acculturation. A cross-lagged study conducted in Greece found that immigrant youth reporting higher involvement with the receiving culture also reported over time decreases in perceived discrimination. However, against expectations, the reverse path from higher perceived discrimination to decreases over time in involvement with the Greek culture was not significant (Motti-Stefanidi, Pavlopoulos, & Asendorpf, 2018). This is a question that needs to be further examined to identify when perceived discrimination is a risk, since findings may have significant policy implications.

## ***Resources***

While studies indicate risk among immigrant youth, there is also substantial variation in their adaptation. Social and personal resources may account for differences in adjustment in the context of risk. Resources for immigrant youth's positive adaptation may stem from any of the three levels of context in the integrative, multilevel conceptual model (Motti-Stefanidi, Berry, et al., 2012). According to this model, both the individual and society (i.e., both sociocultural circumstances and structures), and human agency contribute to the diversity in their adaptation.

Why do some immigrant youth adapt well whereas others falter? This question will be addressed from multiple system levels, starting from a societal level of context and ending with the individual level. At the societal level, the acculturation ideology and acculturation preferences of receiving societies significantly contribute to the quality of immigrants' adaptation (Sam & Berry, 2016; van de Vijver, 2017). Societies that value cultural diversity and adopt a multicultural ideology support the maintenance of immigrants' ethnic culture and promote the adoption of the new culture (Sam & Berry, 2016). Receiving societies whose immigrant laws are more liberal and grant more rights to immigrants support them in learning the mainstream language and culture, help them develop a sense of belonging to the larger society, and, thus, promote immigrants' (and their children's) well-being, as well as that of society (van de Vijver, 2017).

Societal-level variables often have an impact on youth indirectly, by filtering through the contexts of youth's proximal context (Motti-Stefanidi, Berry, et al., 2012). Two key proximal contexts that contribute to individual differences in immigrant youth adaptation are schools and families, which are key acculturative and developmental arenas for them (Vedder & Motti-Stefanidi, 2016).

Schools are an important social context for immigrant youth. They represent the receiving society and contribute both to their development and acculturation (Vedder & Motti-Stefanidi, 2016). The educational programs that foster equality and inclusion and/or value cultural pluralism reflect an acknowledgement that schools are culturally diverse (Schachner, Noack, van de Vijver, & Eckstein, 2016). Such educational programs create a classroom climate that has beneficial effects on both immigrant and nonimmigrant youth development, acculturation, and psychological well-being (Schachner et al., 2016).

Families exert significant influence on immigrant youth adaptation and, just as schools, contribute both to their acculturation and development (Vedder & Motti-Stefanidi, 2016). Parents' own acculturation (i.e., the degree to which they maintained the ethnic, and learned the receiving, culture) has an effect on their children's adaptation (Bornstein, 2017). However, immigrant parents and their children may work through acculturation issues at different rates. Children adopt characteristics of the new culture at a faster rate compared to their parents. Such differences in the rate of acculturation between parents and their children may intensify normative challenges of adolescence. The acculturation gap between them that may result in a parent-adolescent conflict are significant risk factors for immigrant adolescents' adaptation and psychological well-being (e.g. Bornstein, 2017).

In spite of a potential acculturation gap, immigrant parents often seek to find a balance between their wish that their children, on the one hand, succeed in the new culture and, on the other, adopt values rooted in the beliefs of their culture of origin. How does a potential acculturation gap affect the achievement of these parental goals? Costigan and Dokis (2006) found, in a study of Chinese-American families living in Canada, that youth's higher engagement in Canadian culture did not lead to more parent-adolescent conflict or worse adaptation, even when parents did not share their children's orientation toward the receiving culture. However, children's low orientation toward the Chinese culture was linked with adaptation difficulties when parents were themselves highly oriented toward the Chinese culture. Thus, the negative effect of an acculturation gap between immigrant parents and their children on youth's adaptation was limited to differences in the extent to which they support the ethnic culture and is unrelated to the extent to which they adopt the receiving culture.

The challenge for immigrant parents is that their internal working models of culture, specifically, their beliefs, attitudes, values, and practices, were formed in their culture of origin (Kuczynski & Knafo, 2013). They bring from their home culture internalized conceptual models of the attributes and achievements that a successful adult should have, which may be at odds with the criteria for positive adaptation set by teachers and the majority culture. Thus, immigrant parents need to reevaluate and reconstruct their internal working models of culture and to adapt



their parental ethnotheories (i.e., the values and beliefs that parents consider important for their children's positive adaptation in their culture) (Harkness & Super, 1996), to their new reality (Kuczynski & Knafo, 2013). Adaptive ethnotheories allow parents to transmit to their children core elements from their ethnic culture, thus "choosing their battles" (Kuczynski & Knafo, 2013), and to support them in getting along and succeeding in the culture of the receiving society (Phinney & Chavira, 1995).

How can parents transmit their ethnic values to their children when the wider society is unsupportive of their efforts? Some immigrant parents use strategies which are designed to shield immigrant youth from the potentially negative influence of the receiving culture. Hughes and colleagues (Hughes et al., 2006) proposed two such strategies: (a) cultural socialization which refers to teaching children about their ethnic heritage and history, promoting cultural customs and traditions, as well as their ethnic pride, and (b) preparation for bias, whereby parents prepare their children to recognize discrimination and to be able to cope with it. Cultural socialization, in particular, has been generally linked with positive outcomes in minority youth, including higher self-esteem and ethnic identity, better academic achievement, and fewer externalizing and internalizing symptoms. However, findings regarding the effect of preparation for bias on youth's adaptation are mixed (Hughes et al., 2006).

Some immigrant families choose to reside in ethnic enclaves and enroll their children in schools of their neighborhood with high ethnic composition. Thus, they receive support from their ethnic group in their efforts to inculcate their children with the ethnic culture (Kuczynski & Knafo, 2013). However, ethnic enclaves and classrooms with high ethnic composition often present a double-edge sword for immigrant youth's development and acculturation (Asendorpf & Motti-Stefanidi, 2017; Bornstein, 2017; White et al., 2017). For example, Asendorpf and Motti-Stefanidi (2017) found that at first contact in the classroom immigrant youth were less liked and had fewer friends compared to their nonimmigrant classmates. However, the classroom context differentiated these results. When immigrants were the majority in the classroom, they were more liked and had more friends than the students who were the minority. Over time, immigrant students who were the minority in their classrooms became increasingly more liked by their nonimmigrant classmates. These results suggest that classrooms with high immigrant composition may promote positive youth development. First, they promote immigrant students' positive peer relationships (to have a friend and to be liked by peers) and second, they protect them from experiences of discrimination and prejudice (Thijs & Verkuyten, 2013). However, they may at the same time contribute negatively to immigrant youth acculturation. The best outcome regarding acculturation is that immigrant youth be liked and accepted by both intra- and interethnic friends. In contrast, classrooms with low immigrant composition promote positive acculturation but present a risk for immigrants' development since they place them at risk for low peer acceptance as well as for discrimination. Overall, segregation of immigrants in classrooms with a high proportion of immigrants may not conducive to positive outcomes.



Even though the societal and proximal contexts play a significant role for immigrant youth adaptation, they are clearly not its sole determinant. Young immigrants are active agents and contribute to the diversity in their adaptation (Motti-Stefanidi, Berry, et al., 2012; Motti-Stefanidi & Masten, 2017). As mentioned earlier, immigrant adolescents need to make sense of, navigate between, and bridge their different worlds. Toward this goal, they need to exert their personal agency and develop their own working models of culture by selecting, interpreting, resisting, or managing contradictory messages stemming from their immediate environment (Kuczynski & Knafo, 2013). As Kağıtçıbaşı (2012) argued, they need to learn how to act willfully, particularly, in the public domain, but that they also need to keep and nurture their closely knit human ties with their family and significant others, which is important in the private domain. Thus, they will develop an autonomous-related self which will allow them to integrate the requirements of the receiving and ethnic cultures and, thus, to better adapt to both. Achieving these goals signals that both development and acculturation are on track.

## Conclusions

This chapter addressed the question of “Who does well?” among immigrant youth from an integrative developmental perspective, drawing on theory and evidence from studies of resilience, acculturation, and social psychology. This question is complex because the influences of culture, development, and acculturation are highly intertwined and difficult to disentangle. The role of culture is central in understanding, first, how developmental tasks are defined and promoted by socialization agents and, second, what acculturation challenges immigrant youth face in the receiving society. Culture also sheds light on the way immigrant youth, and their families, address the acculturative challenge of living between at least two cultures. Adapting to this complex reality demands that parents and immigrant youth exert their personal agency. However, acting as an active agent may not be prominent in the behavioral repertoire of immigrant people from more collectivistic societies (Greenfield et al., 2003). One could argue that due to self-selection of who migrates, migrants are better suited compared to their compatriots to actively engage their challenges (García Coll & Marks, 2012). However, these questions remain open for investigation.

Evidence to date suggests that a number of resilience promoting influences, situated at different levels of context, play a role in immigrant youth’s adaptation. An accepting and welcoming receiving society with a multicultural ideology is a key resource for immigrant youth positive adaptation. Its effect will filter mainly through schools and neighborhoods to reach immigrant youth. Evidence indicates that the societies, communities, and schools that provide supports to bolster the school and work success of immigrant youth play key positive roles, as do positive attitudes of the receiving contexts toward immigrants. Efforts to provide positive intergroup contact among students and mitigate discrimination appear to be important for the

adaptation of immigrant youth. Strategies that afford immigrant youth opportunities for positive identities as a member of the host society while also allowing youth to retain traditions and values of their home culture are associated with psychological well-being as well as success in the developmental tasks of the host context. Parents' ability to support their children in learning and maintaining their ethnic culture and in adapting to the new culture, as well as in dealing with discrimination, is another key resource. Last but not least, immigrant youth's own ability to integrate and manage competing messages and expectations stemming from their family and school will also contribute to their positive adaptation.

While there is a growing body of knowledge, nonetheless, many questions remain to be addressed on the best ways for societies, schools, and families to promote resilience of immigrant and native youth in these times of mass migration. Research has yielded important but broad clues about realizing the potential of immigrant youth for themselves and receiving societies. Much remains to be learned about the interplay of individual and cultural differences, developmental timing, and adaptive processes to inform efforts to mitigate risk and promote resilience of societies, families, and youth in the context of migration.

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