Gendered Perspectives in Psychology: Immigrant Origin Youth

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In this article, we contend that the field of psychology has largely failed to foreground the role of gender in its study of immigration. Here, we review studies that address gender and migration focusing on the experience of children and adolescents. We provide developmental perspectives on family relations, well-being, identity formation, and educational outcomes, paying particular attention to the role of gender in these domains. We conclude with recommendations for future research, which include the need to consider whether, and if so, how, when, and why it makes a difference to be an immigrant, to be from a particular country, or to be female rather than male. We argue that it is important to consider socioeconomic characteristics; to consider resilience as well as pathology; and to work in interdisciplinary ways to deepen our understanding of the gendered migratory experience of immigrant origin youth.

The discipline of psychology has potentially much to offer the study of migration and gender. Psychology's focus on the individual as the unit of analysis and its consequential capacity to shed light on the personal lived experience is, of course, an obvious contribution. Beyond that, psychology's concern with mental health is a unique (albeit pathology focused) consideration generally not evaluated in other disciplines. Further, the branch of developmental psychology provides much needed conceptual and methodological tools critical to examining the often-neglected child and youth experience in migration. Gender studies in psychology have struggled to find theoretical frames and methodological approaches that are consistent with the discipline's leitmotif, however. Despite the field's potential to contribute to our understanding of immigrant life as a gendered phenomenon, there is a dearth of work at the intersection of these fields.

UNDERSTANDING THE NEGLECT OF GENDER AND MIGRATION WITHIN PSYCHOLOGY

For much of its history, the field of psychology was effectively gender-blind – theories and research developed with largely male subjects were automatically

presumed to be generalizable to women and girls. The important work of Maccoby (1988, 2000) persuasively demonstrated that most gender differences are neither innate nor cognitive in nature but, rather, are socialized early in development through a series of relationships with caretakers and peers. The groundbreaking and controversial work of Carol Gilligan (1982) demonstrated that women appear to place more emphasis on relationships in coming to their moral decisions than do men. This body of scholarship played a significant role in shifting the paradigm in the field from one of gender-blindness to one that recognized potential gendered differences in human experience. Since then, psychological research has regularly included gender as a control variable (much like race and age) in statistical analyses. Once it was acknowledged that women/girls and men/boys might indeed be dissimilar from one another on some psychological dimensions, researchers began to consider "whether and to what degree the sexes differ" (Maccoby, 1988; Eckes and Trautner, 2000a:8) on a variety of trait, behavior, and ability indicators. While controlling for gender has been an important step in our understanding of gendered experiences, we need to deepen our analyses by considering "how, when, and why it makes a difference to be male or female" (Eckes and Trautner, 2000a:10).

An exception to the general neglect of gender in the field of psychology occurs in the subdisciplines of social psychology and developmental psychology. There has been to date, however, relatively little overlap between the two subdisciplines, though the two domains provide complementary insights (Eckes and Trautner, 2000b). Given that gender is both a developmental phenomenon and one that is highly influenced by the social environment, it is critical to consider this complementarity, particularly when examining migration.

Specifically, developmental analyses of gender provide insights into the ways in which gendered patterns of understanding and behavior are formed by early experience. A developmental perspective also provides information in the ways in which these patterns may change over the developmental trajectory (Eckes and Trautner, 2000a; Fagot, Rodgers, and Leinbach, 2000). A variety of constructs have been examined by developmental psychologists including: gendered values, behaviors, attitudes, traits, activities, interests, and self-perceptions (Eckes and Trautner, 2000a). Within the field of gender and migration, the bulk of the work of developmentalists has tended to focus on adolescence while relatively neglecting other stages in life. For developmentalists – as with most psychological researchers and theorists – the individual rather than the situation is emphasized. As a result, psychologists have often viewed gender as a biological category rather than as "a construct that materializes in social encounters" (Eckes and Trautner, 2000a:11).

While social psychologists are by definition attuned to the social processes that structure gender dynamics, their research often tends to be somewhat naive about the myriad of cultural realities – such as linguistic and religious factors – that also play a significant role in the patterning of gender. Too few psychologists – whether in the subdisciplines of feminist psychology, developmental psychology, social psychology, or many of the myriad of other fields in psychology – have the cultural knowledge that allows them to contribute insightfully to the study of individuals of nonmainstream cultures. Encouragingly, there is a growing consensus in the field that cross-cultural sensitivity and focus are crucial (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, 1988; Sue and Sue, 1987; Landrine, 1995; Doucette-Gates *et al.*, 1998; Branch, 1999). Research that uses mixed method designs, linking emic and etic approaches, triangulating data, and embedding emerging findings into an ecological framework are essential to this kind of endeavor.

The disciplines of social as well as developmental psychology are highly influenced by the scientific method. In some ways this is the main strength of the field. Attempts are made to clearly delineate and define variables under consideration. Specific outcome variables are viewed to be of particular interest and attention is paid to sorting out cause and affect relationships. The resulting dependence on experimental designs can be quite limiting, however, as experimental social environments are ungeneralizable to real-life situations. Further, random selection of subjects is necessarily constrained by static group variables (such as gender or country of origin.) Cross-cultural research with immigrants in particular forces us to reexamine the traditional social science assumptions around validity and reliability. Questions and prompts that are valid for one group may simply not be valid for another (Suárez-Orozco and Suárez-Orozco, 1995; McLoyd and Steinberg, 1998). Hence, instruments that capture the experiences of individuals from a variety of backgrounds are a challenge to develop.

Replicable studies and piecemeal research focusing on very specific outcomes are the reigning approaches in published psychological research. As the "grand theories" of psychoanalysis and learning theory fell into disfavor, psychology became a largely atheoretical field. We would argue that this absence of theoretical frameworks is a major deficit in the field. Even when findings indicate differences, there is a tendency to shy away from proposing theories that might shed light onto *why* these differences may occur.[1]

Psychologists, for the most part, limit their reading of "out-group" disciplines both within the field and in the related social sciences such as sociology and anthropology. They particularly tend to privilege a journal

discourse, excluding books (where much sociology, anthropology, and history research is published) as a systematic source of information. Moreover, the work of researchers using *qualitative* approaches is frequently ignored by those who hold quantitative approaches in high regard. Hence, work emerging from the out-group is often overlooked, limiting the capacity to integrate new findings and approaches that could move forward the state of knowledge in the field.

Taken together then – the ambivalence and superficiality of much of gender research; the relative absence of research on migration; the dependence on experimental design; naiveté about culture; the atheoretical nature of the field; and the limited communication between related complementary and subdisciplines – these have resulted in psychology sadly lagging in its contribution to our understanding of migration and gender.

MIGRATION AND GENDER SCHOLARSHIP IN THE FIELD OF PSYCHOLOGY

Our broad review of the literature reveals that studies of migration and gender in the field of psychology (and mental health) largely fall into three broad domains – 1) acculturative stress and "migration morbidity"; 2) relational strains in family dynamics; and 3) immigrant youth development. In this article, we will focus on the psychological literature that pertains to the development of immigrant origin youth. If it is true that immigration has generally been understudied in the field of psychology, the immigrant child and youth experience has been even more neglected (Garcia-Coll and Magnuson, 1997; Suárez-Orozco, 2001). This is quite puzzling given that at the turn of the century, one in five children growing up in the U.S. was a child of immigrants, and that proportion is projected to increase to one in three by 2030 (Rong and Preissle, 1998). Migration certainly presents a variety of challenges to the development of immigrant youth (Tartar *et al.*, 1994; Tartar 1998; Suárez-Orozco, 2001; Ullmann and Tartar, 2001). Here, we review

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[1]Two noteworthy exceptions in the psychology of migration literature are the work of Leon and Rebecca Grinberg (1990) as well as Ricardo Ainslie (1998). The Grinbergs' provide a Kleinian perspective on the migratory process that emphasizes common pathological outcomes – depression, anxiety, and paranoia. That perspective can be off-putting. Nevertheless, they provide an interesting insight into ways, along the pathological spectrum, that individuals can respond to immigration. Ricardo Ainslie (1998) has written eloquently about how immigrants go through a process of what he terms "cultural mourning" as they enter a new society. His argument brings substantial insight to the acculturative stress line of reasoning.

psychological studies that address gender and migration with a focus on children and adolescents, considering how gendered constructs play out differently for immigrant origin youth. We will provide developmental perspectives on family relations, well-being, identity formation, and educational outcomes, paying particular attention to the research focusing on the role of gender in these domains.

Family Relations

Dion and Dion (2001) contend that "studying the contribution of gender to immigrants' experiences in the receiving society offers insights about the challenges confronting immigrant families" (p. 511). This lens is useful in considering the strains to the parental dyad as well as gendered patterns of parents' socialization of their children (Williams *et al.*, 2002).

Relational Strain. It has long been recognized that children who thrive are more likely to be raised in families with minimal family discord. Immigration, however, tends to bring about changes to expected family roles that can destabilize family relations (Shuval, 1980; Foner, 1997; Garcia-Coll and Magnuson, 1997; Suárez-Orozco and Suárez-Orozco, 2001). Family roles need to be renegotiated, and new scripts concerning gender relations, child-rearing values, parent-child relations, and social attitudes come to the fore. Sluzki (1979) was on the forefront of describing the stresses of the family triggered by migration, proposing an insightful stage model of migration and family conflict.

The change of power relations and the empowerment of women outside the household can contribute to higher levels of family conflicts (Pido, 1978; Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1992; Lim, 1997; Debiaggi, 1999; Hirsch, 1999; Mahdi, 1999; King and Zontini, 2000; Zhou, 2000; Min, 2001; Prieur, 2002). Men, perhaps in part because of their disempowerment in the world of work, may enforce their patriarchical rights and rigidify their traditional expectations of their spouse (Shaw, 1988; Kibria, 1990; Espin, 1999; Zamudio, 1999). In its most extreme form, marital discord can lead to domestic violence (Easteal, 1996; Bui and Morash, 1999; Darvishpour, 2002; Menjivar and Salcido, 2002).

Strained family relations may ultimately lead to the dissolution of the family. Relationships can come apart largely because of the tensions resulting from migration, but they may also come apart for reasons that have little to do with the migration. In some cases, however, relationships can be strengthened during the course of migration in a kind of "it's you and me against the world"

partnership.[2] Further study of the complexity of dyadic family relationships of immigrants is needed.[3]

Household Responsibilities. Migration can challenge expectations about gender-related roles requiring renegotiations. Processes of immigration and resettlement may increase the burden of children's involvement in household responsibilities due to the necessity for both parents to work, and as well as parents' lack of English proficiency. Among immigrants originating from a number of sending countries, research demonstrates fairly consistently that, compared with their brothers, immigrant girls tend to have many more responsibilities at home (*e.g.*, Waters, 1996; Olsen, 1997; Valenzuela, 1999; Espiritu, 2001; Ginorio and Huston, 2001; Lee, 2001; Sarroub, 2001; Williams *et al.*, 2002). Valenzuela (1999) found that, compared with boys, immigrant girls participate more in tasks that require "greater responsibility" and "detailed explanations." Their roles included translating; advocating in financial, medical, and legal transactions; and acting as surrogate parents. Based on two waves of data collection, we found that although boys and girls did not report different levels of responsibility for translating, girls were significantly more likely to report responsibilities for cooking and childcare (Suárez-Orozco and Qin-Hilliard, 2004).

Research findings on the impact of household responsibilities and educational outcomes are inconclusive. Excessive home responsibilities, some argue, put extra burden on immigrant girls and hinder their educational achievement (Morse, 2000; Stockwell, 2000; Canedy, 2001; Espiritu, 2001; Ginorio and Huston, 2001; Lee, 2001). There is also evidence, however, suggesting that household responsibilities may not have negative association with educational outcomes (Ginorio and Huston, 2001; Fuligni and Pederson, 2002). For example, a report from the San Diego Schools (1989) showed that

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[2]There seem to be significant differences in the *rates of partnership dissolution* in immigrants from different sending countries; in our sample from the Harvard Immigration Projects, immigrants of Chinese and Mexican origin stayed together at higher rates than did those of Dominican, Haitian, or Central American origin (*see* fn. 4 for details about the study.)

[3]For a more thorough understanding of these dynamics, it would be important to get a sense of the rates of dissolution within the country of origin in consideration. It is also important to trace the sources of tension as well as the periods in time in which the dyad is most vulnerable – prior to migration, during separations, or after the migration. A deep understanding of the phenomenon at work should draw on anthropological insights into cultural models originating in the country of origin, sociological perspectives into structural constraints that affect families, as well as psychological understandings of personality and relational dynamics.

high-achieving Latinas tended to have more responsibilities at home than low achievers. It is possible that developing a sense of responsibility at home may transfer to school settings. Jurkovic *et al.* (2004) found that while "filial responsibilities" sometimes competed with schooling pursuits, performing caretaking tasks also provided youth with "an increased sense of personal and interpersonal competence." Hence, these responsibilities may provide unanticipated benefits to girls who shoulder greater household responsibilities.

Parental Control. One of the most consistent findings across studies in immigrant families is the different socialization strategies that parents have for their daughters and their sons. Research done by psychologists as well as sociologists and other social scientists with diverse immigrant populations in a variety of countries has shown that immigrant parents place much stricter control over their daughter's activities outside the house than their sons'. Immigrant girls are often not allowed to go to parties, spend time with friends after school, or participate in after-school programs and other activities that immigrant boys can typically choose to do freely (Sung, 1987; Olsen, 1997). Espiritu (2001) terms this the "double standard" in parental monitoring.

This finding cuts across nearly every ethnic background as well as across different historical periods: stricter parental control of immigrant girls has been documented in second-generation Chinese women in San Francisco in the 1920s (Yung, 1995), Italian women in Harlem in the 1930s (Orsi, 1985), Mexican girls in the Southwest during the interwar years (Ruiz, 1992), daughters of Caribbean (Waters, 1996), Asian Indian (Dasgupta, 1998), Hispanic (Williams *et al.*, 2002), Yemeni (Sarroub, 2001), Chinese (Sung, 1987), and Hindu, Muslim, and Mexican (Olsen, 1997) immigrant girls in the last two decades (*also see* Espiritu, 2001 for a review). Similar findings are also shown among south Asian immigrant groups in Canada (Naidoo, 1984; Talbani and Hasanali, 2000) and among Muslim immigrants in France (*e.g.*, Keaton, 1999). Immigrant girls experience other forms of parental restrictions in clothing, makeup, and language use (*e.g.*, Olsen, 1997; Espin, 1999; Suárez-Orozco, 2001). However, in no other area is there more parental concern and control than in dating (Walki *et al.*, 1981; Ghosh, 1984; Wolf, 1997; Pettys and Balgopal, 1998; Espiritu, 2001).

Contributing to this strict monitoring of dating-related activities is the expectation that women be the designated "keepers of the culture" (Billson, 1995). Research has documented that in socialization of their children, immigrant parents have higher expectations for their daughters to embody traditional ideas than for their sons. Immigrant boys do not have to conform to the

"ideal" ethnic subject compared to their sisters, thus they often receive more day-to-day privileges denied to their sisters (Haddad and Smith, 1996; Waters, 1996; Espiritu, 2001).

Often immigrant parents equate becoming assimilated to the American culture to being "sexually promiscuous" (Espin, 1999) and "against the traditional . . . culture" (Dasgupta, 1998). Pressure for socialization of second-generation females is particularly strong when parents perceive that the receiving society poses a threat to the values of their native culture. Dion and Dion (2001) consider "threat to values" as "an important underlying factor contributing to gender-related socialization" (p. 517). Interestingly, this perceived threat often contributes to parental control being stricter than it had been in the country of origin.

The existing literature suggests that there may be both negative and positive implications of strict parental controls. The negative effects are the most obvious. In many traditional cultures, women were restricted within the household domain and could not go out to work, which limited their opportunities and perpetuated their subordinate status in the society. These restrictions are also found in contemporary immigrant communities as well. As a result of strict parental control, immigrant girls are often caught between school and home (Lee and Cochran, 1988; Talbani and Hasanali, 2000; Espiritu, 2001; Prieur, 2002). Interestingly, however, there may be a "silver lining" to the cloud of monitoring and oppression. Zhou and Bankston's (2001) research with Vietnamese girls showed that high level of parental control contributed to their educational success. Smith's (2002) work with Mexican origin women in New York showed a similar pattern in the world of work. Heavy monitoring may benefit girls by keeping them focused on activities that keep them away from the lure of the street and its accompanying potential to (in the best of cases) distract them and (in the worst of cases) draw them into illicit activities.

Intergenerational Tensions and Conflict. There is an ample body of literature showing that children usually acculturate to the new culture more rapidly than their immigrant parents (Uba, 1994; Fuligni, 1998; Ying, 1999; Portes and Rumbaut, 2001; Suárez-Orozco, 2001). This can have important implications on dynamics at home. Portes and Rumbaut (2001) point out the danger of what they define as "dissonant acculturation" occurring when "children's learning of English and American ways and simultaneously loss of the immigrant culture outstrip their parents'" (53–54). Dissonant acculturation between parents and children can lead to serious conflict within the family (Sluzki, 1979; Teachman, 1987; Berry, 1997; Foner, 1997; Garcia-Coll and

Magnuson, 1997; Portes and Rumbaut, 2001; Suárez-Orozco and Suárez-Orozco, 2001; Prieur, 2002; Sharir, 2002). Particularly for less acculturated youth, there is evidence that such conflicts are linked to suicidality for both girls and boys in a sample of youth who were receiving mental health services (Lau *et al.*, 2002).

As a cautionary note, it is important to recognize that much of the theorizing in this domain has arisen out of family therapy observations. Healthy families, however, do not present themselves for treatment. Hence, theorizing in this domain may be skewed towards pathological rather than healthy families. Indeed, several dissertations that explored the issue of family conflict found that immigrant families do not have higher levels of family conflict than non-immigrant families (*e.g.*, Yaralian, 2000; Buchanan, 2001). In our study of "normal youth" (drawn from a school rather than a clinic setting and comparing cohorts of adolescents in Mexico, Mexican-born immigrants, second-generation youth of Mexican origin, and white Americans), immigrant and second-generation youth displayed less family conflict than did their white American counterparts (Suárez-Orozco and Suárez-Orozco, 1995).[4]

Emerging findings also suggest there are gender differences in intergenerational conflict, particularly in relation to differences in parental control. Dion and Dion (2001) argue that since parents exert greater control on their daughters, girls may be more likely to resist or reject traditional beliefs or values. There is some evidence showing that adolescent girls are less likely to endorse traditional family values (Rosenthal *et al.*, 1996) and gender role ideology (Gabaccia, 1994; Dasgupta, 1998; Tang and Dion, 1999). Talbani and Hasanali (2000) found that South Asian girls in Canada disapprove of the strict parental control. They express their "suppressed frustrations" by not telling their parents, creating dissidence, alienation from parents, and sometimes open rebellion. These contradictions can create serious psychological stress in some girls. Research shows parallel findings in Hmong (Lee, 2001), Filipino

(Espiritu, 2001), Korean (Hauh, 1999), Latino (Calderon, 1998), and Indian families (Pettys and Balgopal, 1998) in the U.S. This pattern seems to hold up in international research as comparable findings are documented in immigrant families in Norway (Prieur, 2002), Turkish families in Germany (Popp, 1997), and South Asian families in Canada (Ghosh, 1984).[5]

Of course, immigrant parents have conflict with their sons as well. These conflicts, however, tend not to center around issues of dating or monitoring of their whereabouts, but rather around issues of delinquent or problem behaviors (Gabaccia, 1994). Much less is written about generational conflict with boys, however, indicating a fertile avenue for future research.

Immigrant Youth Well-Being

The literature on the psychopathology and well-being of immigrant youth (like that of adults) provides little evidence to support the contention that immigrants are significantly more likely than nonimmigrants to suffer from mental health challenges – in fact, there is a growing body of evidence to support the notion that first-generation immigrants do better than nonimmigrants (the second generation and beyond) in this regard (Hernández and Charney, 1998). In fact, there is considerable evidence that the second and third generations suffer from greater physical and mental health challenges than does the first generation. In general, however, the body of literature on the physical and emotional well-being of immigrant youth does not tease out gendered differences. When gendered differences are established, the literature tends to draw on gendered observations developed on nonimmigrant youth – boys tend to externalize while girls tend to internalize problems (Leadbeater *et al.*, 1999).

Family-Related Stress. Emerging findings on gender and mental health of immigrant children and adolescents suggest that girls seem more vulnerable

[5]When some girls do start dating, it often provokes intergenerational conflict in the family (*e.g.*, Sung, 1987; Rumbaut, 1997). In extreme cases, tragedies occur. For example, in the fall of 2000, the Chinese-American community was shocked when a Chinese immigrant adolescent girl strangled both her parents with the help of her boyfriend because they prohibited her to date the African-American young man. In another troubling incident that took place in France in 1994, a fifteen-year-old Turkish Muslim girl was strangled by her brother with the consent of her parents and cousin, who all witnessed the killing, because the girl was dating a boy and wanted to run away from home with him, which was considered to be a "dishonor" to her entire family (Keaton, 1999). Aswad and Bilge (1996) have also documented "honor killings" of adolescent girls from immigrant families by their fathers or brothers.

than boys to adjustment and family-related stress (*e.g.*, Aronowitz, 1984; Zambrana and Silva-Palacios, 1989; Rumbaut, 1996; Hernández and Charney, 1998; Suárez-Orozco, 2000; Portes and Rumbaut, 2001; Portes and Hao, 2002; Williams *et al.*, 2002). In their study of gender differences in stress among Mexican immigrant adolescents, Zambrana and Sliva-Palacios (1989) found that immigrant girls had statistically significant higher stress levels than boys. More specifically, the girls tended to report more stress about issues related to family loss (leaving family and friends back) and change (moving from one neighborhood to another). There is evidence, however, that there is some cultural variation on this dimension.

Sociologists Rumbaut and Portes's (1996) study of 5,000 second-generation adolescents from various ethnic groups found that girls from immigrant families had significantly lower levels of psychological well-being as measured by depression and self-esteem compared to their male counterparts. Hence, there appears to be some evidence supporting the hypothesis that immigrant girls tend to internalize difficulties more than boys.

Risk Behaviors and Delinquency. There is an emerging pattern of gender difference in the literature indicating that immigrant boys are more likely than immigrant girls to engage in risk behaviors and delinquency. Khoury *et al.* (1999) examined gender and ethnic differences in the prevalence of alcohol, cigarette, and illicit drug use over time in a cohort of young Hispanic adolescents in South Florida and found that girls were less likely than boys to have risk behaviors. Ma's (2002) analysis also showed that gender was the most important child-level variable linked to behavioral problems of immigrant children (boys showing more behavioral problems). Males also seem to participate more in sexual behaviors than female immigrants. Pedersen's (2002) study of immigrant adolescents in Oslo revealed that female Muslims with an immigrant background (from countries such as Pakistan, Turkey, and Morocco) rarely had taken part in sexual intercourse during their mid-teens while Muslim males from the same countries reported much higher level of sexual experience. Youth violence is also highly gendered with boys far more likely to commit violence than girls do in the general population (Messerschmidt, 1993; Courtenay, 1999).

Taking a historical perspective, and drawing on data from 100 years of U.S. immigration records, particularly in California, Tony Waters (1999) examined immigrant groups such as Laotians, Koreans, and Mexicans in the late twentieth century, as well as Mexicans and Molokan Russians in the early twentieth century. He concluded that when an immigrant group had a large

population of young males, it created a potential pattern for misunderstandings within the host society. Using rich case studies, Waters demonstrated that these cultural tensions and the social disparagement and exclusion that male immigrant origin youth tended to experience led to predictable outbreaks of crime within deviant subcultures (such as gangs.)

Participation in delinquent acts is highly linked to poverty and sustained exposure to inequality (not vectors closely examined in the field of psychology). Cross-cultural evidence (largely emerging from the field of anthropology) from a variety of different regions suggests that the social context and ethos of reception play an important role in immigrant adaptation. In cases where racial and ethnic inequalities are highly structured, such as for Algerians in France, Koreans in Japan, or Mexicans in California, "psychological disparagement" and "symbolic violence" may permeate the experience of many minority youth. Members of these groups are not only effectively locked out of the opportunity structure (through segregated and inferior schools, and work opportunities in the least desirable sectors of the economy) but also commonly become the objects of cultural violence. The stereotypes of inferiority, sloth, and violence justify the sense that they are less deserving of partaking in the dominant society's opportunity structure. Such charged attitudes assault and undermine the sense of self among minority children, who may then come to experience the institutions of the dominant society as alien terrain reproducing an order of inequality (DeVos and Suárez-Orozco 1990). As a consequence, boys growing up in conditions of discrimination often deviate from acceptable social norms (Chesney-Lind *et al.*, 1998). They are less likely to fully engage in school, are more likely to "act out," and are more likely to engage in illicit behaviors.

Engaging in delinquent behaviors is often a way to demonstrate status when other outlets or paths for social recognition are lacking. Prieur (2002) documented the gang and criminal fantasy of immigrant adolescent boys in Norway as a "subcultural form" of masculinity. These boys, who lacked positive role models in other domains, were strongly influenced by African American urban culture, which emphasizes respect and honor, and competence in such activities as dancing and sports. Mayeda *et al.*'s (2001) study of ethnically diverse group in Hawaii, including immigrant Filipino youth, also found that while both girls and boys engaged in violent and delinquent behaviors, for girls, it was a reaction against the abuse in the society, both physical and sexual; however, for boys, it was a means for gaining popularity and street-elite status.[6]

There is significant historical and cross-cultural evidence that delinquency and gang involvement is found among second-generation immigrant origin groups (Vigil, 2002). It remains to be determined whether these problem

behaviors are a result of immigrant and disparaged minority status (DeVos, 1980) or whether immigrant youth tend to live in neighborhood contexts that are simply more conducive to acting out and deviant behaviors. It may be that immigrant boys are simply acculturating to their inner-city milieus. Further research is needed in this area.

Clearly, externalization and delinquency is found among girls as well as boys, though there tends to be an overrepresentation among boys. This is a domain of scholarship that is socially highly relevant. It is sufficiently multiply determined, however, to require the perspectives of all of the social sciences. A lens entirely focused on the individual or even the family will leave much out of the equation of understanding.

Challenges to Identity Formation

For adolescents, the quintessential task of development is forming a coherent identity during adolescence (Erikson, 1963; Marcia, 1980). For immigrant youth, this task can be particularly challenging considering the multiple worlds they traverse and live in and the contradictions between the host culture and their native culture and discrimination from the host society (*e.g.*, Aronowitz, 1984; Vigil, 1988; Grinberg and Grinberg, 1990; Kohatsu, Suzuki, and Bennett, 1991; Goodenow and Espin, 1993; Phelan, Davidson, and Yu, 1993; Florsheim, 1997; Phinney and Landin, 1998; De Las Fuentes and Vasquez, 1999; Suárez-Orozco, 2000, 2001; Talbani and Hasanali, 2000). When there is too much cultural dissonance, when cultural guides are inadequate, and when the social mirror reflects negative images, adolescents may find it difficult to develop a flexible and adaptive sense of self.

It should be noted that while identity was a concept coined by a psychologist (Erik Erickson), much of the most interesting work about immigrant

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[6]They also found that boys from the Philippines and other backgrounds demonstrated a tendency to derive their self-worth or identity by engaging in delinquent or violent behaviors – Messerschmidt (1993) termed the boys' using delinquent behaviors to gain status on the street as "masculine posturing" – "the persona power struggle with other young, marginalized, racial minority men is a resource for constructing a specific type of masculinity – not masculinity in the context of a job or organizational dominance but in the context of 'street elites' and, therefore, in the context of street group dominance" (p. 116). More comfortably fitting within the domain of psychological scholarship, family variables such as lack of family anomie and lack of family cohesion have been considered as a contributing factor to substance abuse (Kim *et al.*, 2002; Pantin *et al.*, 2003), gang membership (Vigil 1988), and delinquency. Not surprisingly, social support plays an important buffering function (Short 1996).

youth has been done by sociologists. Here we will briefly outline the research in this domain, recognizing that while it largely did not emerge from the field of psychology, it is an area of scholarship that could benefit from the psychological perspective (a point we will return to later).

The Social Mirror. The general social climate or ethos of reception plays a critical role in the adaptation of immigrants and their children (Suárez-Orozco, 2001). Unfortunately, intolerance for newcomers is an all too common response all over the world. Discrimination against immigrants of color is particularly widespread and intense in many settings receiving large numbers of new immigrants – this is true in Europe (Suárez-Orozco, 2004), the U.S. (Espenshade, 1998), and in Japan (Tsuda, 2003). As today's immigrants are more diverse than ever in terms of ethnicity, skin color, and religion, they are particularly subject to the pervasive social trauma of prejudice and social exclusion (Tatum, 1997).

Immigrant youth are challenged to navigate between achieved identities and assigned or imposed identities. Assigned identities, in the form of stereotypes and negative social mirroring, can be particularly damaging for youths' identity formation. A variety of sources within the host society – including school authorities, police officers, and the media, among others – reflect images within the social mirror to immigrant youth about their group of ethnic origin. When the reflected image is generally positive, the individual (adult or child) will be able to feel that she is worthwhile and competent. When the distortions in the "negative social mirror" are consistently reflected from a number of sources, it is extremely difficult to maintain an unblemished sense of self-worth (Suárez-Orozco, 2000).[7]

Research across ethnic group and country of origin has shown that the negative "social mirroring" immigrant youth face is deeply gendered. For example, Nancy López's (2003) research with Caribbean second-generation youth in New York showed that men are usually racialized into "hoodlums" and tend to have more negative interactions with police due to racial profiling.

[7]Research from the Harvard Immigration Project (see fn. 4 for more details) suggests that immigrant children are keenly aware of the prevailing ethos of hostility of the dominant culture (Suárez-Orozco 2000). The children were asked to complete a modified sentence completion task – "Most Americans think that [Chinese, Dominicans, Central Americans, Haitians, Mexicans – depending on the child's country of origin] are . . ." Disturbingly, fully 65 percent of the respondents provided a negative response to the sentence completion task. The modal response was the word "bad"; others – even more disconcerting – included: "stupid," "useless," "garbage," "gang members," "lazy," and "we don't exist." This is likely to have serious developmental implications.

Mayeda *et al.*'s (2001) study of Filipino youth in Hawaii found that boys were often stereotyped as violent and gang-involved in the media and general public, as well as in the school context (*also see* Okamura, 1982). Filipino girls, on the other hand, were often stereotyped as "hoochie mammas" and labeled as "loose and promiscuous" or submissive "mail-order brides" (also *see* Egan, 1996; Halualani, 1995).

Interestingly, there are differences in stereotypes about males and females from different backgrounds. For, example, while Latino and African immigrant boys are often stereotyped by popular media to be gang members and dangerous and delinquent youth (López, 2003), Asian male adolescents have often been stereotyped to be unmasculine (Chua and Fujino, 1999). Their physical attributes such as being small and short contribute to their being perceived as weak (Sung, 1987; Ling, 1997; Eng, 2001; Lei, 2003) and thus make them more likely targets for verbal or physical racist attacks. Importantly, in the process of negotiating identity, immigrant youth, girls and boys, often challenge and resist the negative social mirroring and stereotypes. Williams *et al.*'s (2002) study found that Latina girls, though facing low expectations at home and at school, resisted the "domesticated Latina" image and showed others that they had dreams for a professional career.

Conflicting Messages. Another challenge immigrant youth face is the conflicting messages they receive from school and home. This is particularly the case for immigrant girls. For many girls, bridging the different cultures can be very challenging during adolescence, because of the inherent cultural clashes and conflicts between the American culture and their home culture (*e.g.*, Sue and Sue, 1973; Kim, 1981; Sung, 1987, 1985; Rosenthal and Feldman, 1992; Goodenow and Espin, 1993; Uba, 1994; Waters, 1996; Florsheim, 1997; De Las Fuentes, 1999). Ginorio and Huston (2001) in their AAUW report of Latinas in education found that many Latina girls experienced a "bifurcated self" due to the centrality of family and religion in their lives and the varied expectations of school and peer groups. Williams *et al.* (2002) argued that the nexus between school and family represented intersecting mechanisms of social control for Latina girls (568). The differing messages immigrant girls received from home and from school can be particularly confusing.

Ethnic Identity. The majority of research on identity formation for immigrant adolescents has focused on ethnic identity (*e.g.*, Phinney, 1989, 1990; Rosenthal and Feldman, 1992; Lay and Verkuyten, 1999; Suárez-Orozco, 2004). Indeed, forging a positive identity that incorporates elements of both the parental and

host cultures is one of the single most important developmental tasks immigrant origin youth face. There is mounting evidence that the individual who can move comfortably across cultural contexts and who is able to incorporate affective and instrumental dimensions of the cultures (s)he traverses will have better outcomes. Nearly all researchers agree that fast assimilation into the American society and losing one's ethnic identity is associated with higher levels of psychosocial risks and lower educational achievement in minority youth (Phinney, 1990; Rosenthal and Feldman, 1992; Portes and Zhou, 1993). Indeed, a transcultural identity appears to be most adaptive to immigrant children's development (Suárez-Orozco and Suárez-Orozco, 2001).

Measuring identity is a methodological challenge, however. Identity is far more complex than a simple self-selected ethnic identity label. It involves fairly easily established performance of identity (assessed by observing the participation in a series of ethnic activities and the dominant culture's activities) as well as the much more nebulous internal state of feeling of belonging. Feelings of belongingness, however, are far more difficult to assess and the concept is more complex than a simple binary choice. Whether or not one feels affiliation to and acceptance by the groups under consideration may be related to the ability to incorporate elements of the culture into one's sense of self. Does the individual value her culture of origin? Does she feel accepted by others of that culture? Is she drawn to the new culture (or cultures)? Does she feel welcome and incorporated into the new culture (or cultures)? Does she wish to be incorporated into the new culture or does she find it alienating? These attitudes will have much to do with the fusion of culture that is internalized (Maestes, 2000). Psychological methodologies are best suited to determining these phenomenological emotional and cognitive dimensions of experience.

Researchers have documented important gender differences in immigrant youth's ethnic identity development (Waters, 1996; Lee, 2002; Schwartz and Montgomery, 2002; Qin-Hilliard, 2003). Yip and Fuligni's (2002) study found that Chinese immigrant girls were more likely to have a strong sense of ethnic identity than their male counterparts. Qin-Hilliard's (2003) study drawing on the Longitudinal Immigrant Student Adaptation (LISA)[8] study demonstrated that although in the first year, there was no gender difference in ethnic identity among the recent immigrant students interviewed, by the fifth year, boys were significantly less likely than girls to keep their country of origin identity. The trend held true for all given ethnic groups, but particularly for

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[8] *See* fn. 4 for more details of the LISA study.

Dominican, Central American, and Haitian boys. Similarly, in their research with immigrant adolescents in Canada, Dion and Dion (1999, 2001) found that stricter parental control and socialization of daughters to carry on the parental values may also have positive effects in girls' sense of ethnic identity development.

Immigrant girls also appear to have more flexibility in choosing an ethnic identity compared to boys (Rumbaut, 1996; Olsen, 1997; M. Waters, 1999). Waters (1997) found that Caribbean girls seemed to face fewer pressures to take on racialized identities, allowing them more leeway in identity formation. Similarly, both Rumbaut (1996) and Olsen (1997) found that girls were more likely than boys to choose "additive" or "hyphenated identities," indicating attempts to bridge the two cultures.

In summary, there seems to be some consensus that the boundaries between the identities appear to be less fluid and less permeable for boys than it is for girls. Boys appear to have more difficulty in assuming bicultural competencies and making successful bicultural adjustments (Waters, 1996; Portes and Rumbaut, 2001). This challenge seems to be at least in part a result of the highly racialized identities and negative expectations strongly imposed upon immigrants by the dominant society. Immigrant boys of color, in particular, are more likely to perceive that they are unwelcome by mainstream society. Further, they face more pressure by their peers to take on a racial identity. Perhaps as a result, immigrant girls tend to perceive more future opportunities than do immigrant boys of color.

Educational Adaptations

Much of the work on gendered patterns of educational outcomes is inter-disciplinary in nature, drawing from the fields of psychology, anthropology, sociology, and education. In many ways, it is the best-developed work in gendered experiences of immigrant youth and may well serve as a model of research.[9]

Academic Outcomes. Emerging findings on the educational adaptation of immigrant youth confirm the national trend that immigrant boys lag behind immigrant girls in academic settings across ethnic groups (*e.g.*, Gibson, 1988;

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[9]Reading across disciplines, working in interdisciplinary teams, and examining both individual motivational issues as well as school context influences allow for deeper and more nuanced understanding than is found in many areas of immigration.

Brandon, 1991; Waters, 1996; Lee, 2001; Portes and Rumbaut, 2001; Qin-Hilliard, 2001, 2003; Suárez-Orozco, 2001; Suárez-Orozco and Qin-Hilliard, 2004). Brandon's (1991) study of Asian American high school seniors showed that females reached higher levels of educational attainment faster than males. Rong and Brown (2001) found that African and Caribbean immigrant black females outperformed their male counterparts in schooling attainment. In their recent report on second-generation youth with various Latino and Asian origins, sociologists Portes and Rumbaut (2001) found that boys were less engaged; had significantly lower grades, level of interest, and work effort, as well as lower career and educational goals; and were less likely to adhere to their parents' language compared to girls. Consistent with this literature, data from the Longitudinal Immigrant Student Adaptation (LISA) study[10] show that over time girls received higher grades and expressed higher future expectations than did boys (Qin-Hilliard, 2003). Researchers have also documented similar gender patterns in educational outcomes among North African immigrant students in Europe (Raissiguier, 1994; Hassini, 1997; Haw, 1998).

While a similar gender gap exists in the educational outcomes of native students in the U.S. (Connell, 2000; Spring, 1994; U.S. Department of Education, 1995; Kleinfeld, 1998; Grant and Rong, 1999) as well as in many other countries around the world, it is important to study the gender gap in immigrant minority communities, because research findings suggest that the gender gap favoring girls in immigrant origin and minority populations is bigger than in the native population (Dunn, 1988; López, 2003). For example, the AAUW Educational Foundation's (1998) report found that the gender gap in NAEP (National Assessment of Educational Progress) test scores was larger for Hispanics than for white students, favoring Latinas in several subject areas.[11]

Educational Aspirations. Gender differences in educational aspirations favoring girls has also been documented but "undertheorized" (Kao and Tienda, 1998:357). Immigrant girls are found to have higher academic expectations and future aspirations than boys in most of the studies conducted

[10] *See* fn. 4.
[11] In the fourth grade, Latinas outperformed their male counterparts in reading and history; by the eighth grade, they scored higher in math and reading; and by the twelfth grade, they scored higher in science as well as reading. The gap between white girls and boys was smaller at each of these assessment points, with girls outperforming boys only on reading in the fourth and twelfth grades. Brandon's (1991) study of gender differences of educational attainment among Asian Americans found similar results.

so far (Hao and Bonstead-Bruns, 1998; Plunkett and Bamaca-Gomez, 2003). López's (2003) study found that women maintained optimistic outlooks, while men expressed worries about their prospects for social mobility. Female immigrant students also appear to have higher future career ambitions than males according to a study conducted in Canada (Maxwell, 1996).

Potential Explanations. So why do immigrant girls outperform boys in educational settings and have higher educational and future aspirations? Our review shows that a number of factors may help to account for the observed gender differences in immigrant youth's educational adaptation. First, a critical difference between boys and girls is in the realm of social relationships. In a series of elegant studies of Mexican-American adolescent social networks within schools, Stanton-Salazar (2001) found that boys' school-based relationships were less supportive. Drawing on data from the LISA study, Qin-Hilliard (2003) also found that compared with boys, immigrant girls were more likely to have friends who were serious about schoolwork and supportive of academics. Girls also had better relationships with their teachers and perceived more support at school than did boys. Second, for immigrant students, school is a highly "gendered" institution (Williams *et al.*, 2002; López, 2003). Girls and boys frequently have very different experiences in school. Boys were often more rambunctious, and teachers were less understanding of young men and were more likely to discipline them harshly for the same infractions committed by women (Gillock and Midgley, 2000; Ginorio and Huston, 2001; López, 2003). Third, peer pressure for boys to engage in deviant behaviors was also stronger than for girls (Gibson, 1988; Adams, 1994; Fordham, 1996; Waters, 1996; Gillock and Midgley, 2000; Smith, 2002; Qin-Hilliard, 2001). Behaviors that gain respect with their peers often bring them into conflict with their teachers. Some researchers point out that immigrant boys from certain ethnic backgrounds are more likely to perceive racism from the mainstream society and thus are more pressured to reject school when compared to immigrant girls (Gibson, 1993; Waters, 1996; Suárez-Orozco, 1998). Immigrant boys in general are more likely than their sisters to develop an "oppositional relationship" with the educational system or to see schooling as a threat to their identity (Gibson, 1993). Expressions of "protest masculinity," coupled with structural obstacles, seem to place boys of low socioeconomic status who belong to disparaged minorities most at risk of low educational achievement and delinquency (Connell, 2000). This line of reasoning should be considered in future research focused on immigrant youth in particular. Teacher interviews as well as field notes from the LISA study

reflect that immigrant boys are more quickly recruited into the mores of their new social environments (which are often in deeply impoverished inner-city schools that do not foster cultures of high-achievement orientation).

FUTURE RESEARCH

Although much of the research on gender tends to focus on differences between girls and boys, it is important to note that there is much overlap as well (Connell, 2000). Though there are certainly differences between immigrant males and females, there are also many similarities. Interestingly, many of the dimensions we have examined over the years have revealed no gender differences, such as attitudes toward teachers, perceptions of school safety, attitudes toward Americans, and self-reports of somatization and hostility (Suárez-Orozco and Suárez-Orozco, 1995; Suárez-Orozco and Qin-Hilliard, 2004). We suspect that in many studies, when gender emerges as non-predictive, the "non-findings" may go unreported or subsumed and are lost among other findings.[12] It is important to recognize that "non-findings" of overlap in attitudes, behaviors, and experiences between males and females are in some ways as interesting as findings of difference.

Gender is an extremely important dimension to consider in conducting research on migration. There is ample evidence to suggest that there are many dimensions of experience that are indeed different for males and females. Future research should always consider *whether*, and if so, *how*, *when*, and *why* it makes a difference being an immigrant or being from a particular country or being female rather than male.

It is also important that psychologists working in the field not lose sight of the significance of socioeconomic background. While immigrants come from a range of socioeconomic backgrounds, a majority of new immigrants are poor. Further, much of the research in the field has been done on these poorer populations, who may make themselves more available to researchers than the more privileged. Yet, economic factors in both the sending and receiving contexts along with educational social capital contribute vastly different migratory experiences. Gender, no doubt, interacts with class and migration, which is likely to result in quite different outcomes (Suárez-Orozco, 1998). Future research should be conducted to tease out these different scenarios of gender dynamics and migration adaptation.

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[12]When gender is used as a control variable, it is often embedded in studies on other topics.

In our estimation, psychologists have focused excessively on pathology. Much of the research emanating from the mental health field has searched for links between the migratory experience and expected negative psychological fallout resulting from that experience. The data that have emerged from this line of research have often shown little relationship between migration and psychopathology (when comparisons have been made between migrant and non-migrant populations either in the host country or in the sending country). We need to be careful to draw samples from nonclinical settings. Researchers 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? Are men and boys or are women and girls more able to deploy these coping strategies and under what circumstances? This shift to a positive psychology framework has the potential to deepen our understanding considerably.

The oft-studied but often oversimplified domain of immigrant identity is an issue in which the field of psychology has much to contribute. Identity and belonging are deeply gendered in ways that matter fundamentally to the project of social science. Half a century of basic research suggests that gendered dynamics are critical for understanding a whole array of processes relevant to the study of identity and belonging. Whether it is how moral judgments are constructed and the moral community constituted (Gilligan, 1982) or how schooling processes and outcomes vary, gender has proven to be an important factor in shaping the human experience. Anthropologists and sociologists have provided persuasive insight into the ways in which negative identities are more powerfully ascribed to males of "disparaged" (DeVos, 1980) minority backgrounds (Waters, 1996; Smith, 2002; López, 2003). Psychologists have been helpful in providing insight into how, for African-American students, these imposed negative "identity threats" shape cognitive and emotional states that are then manifested in substandard performance on a variety of experimental tasks (Steele, 1997). This line of inquiry should be extended to immigrant origin populations. The complex confluence of identity, gender, and migration is a domain of inquiry that would benefit greatly from the incorporation of perspectives and methodologies provided from the intertwining of these various social science traditions.

Clearly, gendered experiences of migration are complex and outcomes are multiply determined. Sociologists and anthropologists have provided a great deal of insight into the gendered experience of migration for adult women. Psychologists have much to offer in providing nuanced cognitive and emotional perspectives. In particular, developmental studies on children and adolescents complement the focus on adults in other disciplines. Further,

psychology's longitudinal methodologies that consider the process of migration and how it evolves over time can also contribute to the field of migration and gender. We must recognize that this domain of immigration and gender requires interdisciplinary, mixed method strategies to achieve any depth. Psychologists need the perspective of the sociological understanding of social forces (such as power inequities or poverty), as well as the cultural insights that anthropologists can provide. Researchers in human development should also consider the historical and political forces at work, not simply within the host context but also that of the sending countries. How the confluence of these forces is internalized and carried into the migratory experience is intimately linked to the adaptations of immigrant origin youth.[13]

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[13]For example, September 11 and the wars in Iraq have created a heated climate that has consequences for immigrants from the Middle East and South East Asia in Europe and in the United States; the political upheavals and traumatic experiences incurred by Haitians immigrating in the early 1990s has deeply felt consequences for youth adjusting to schools; the attitudes about race Dominican's bring with them from the island, influence identity formation of immigrant youth in the U.S. (Bailey, 2001).

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