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# Contextual Conditions for Acculturation and Adjustment of Adolescent Immigrants – Integrating Theory and Findings

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# Contextual Conditions for Acculturation and Adjustment of Adolescent Immigrants – Integrating Theory and Findings

## Abstract

In this paper we review the literature on contextual conditions related to the school, the family, and ethnic or immigrant-group membership, and their association with adjustment outcomes of adolescent immigrants in Europe. Drawing on theories in the areas of acculturation and development, the first aim was to develop a conceptual framework, which integrates acculturative and developmental processes in early adolescence and can guide the literature review in this area. The second aim was to identify the most important conditions for adolescent immigrants' acculturation and adjustment outcomes in school and the family, and related to immigrant-group membership.

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## Introduction

Adolescents of immigrant background have to accomplish both developmental and acculturative tasks. These tasks include establishing an integrated sense of identity and positive interethnic relations and doing well in school. The accomplishment of both types of tasks contributes to adjustment (Motti-Stefanidi, Berry, Chrysochoou, Sam, & Phinney, 2012). School-related outcomes are a particularly important part of a successful acculturation process for immigrant children and adolescents, and they facilitate long-term integration in a society (Vedder & Horenczyk, 2006). In this review, we therefore specifically focus on adjustment outcomes that are relevant for “doing well” (sociocultural outcomes) and “feeling well” (psychological outcomes; Ward, 2001) at school. Even second- and third-generation immigrant youth score lower on various outcomes than their mainstream peers. These include psychological outcomes, such as well-being and mental health, but also sociocultural outcomes, such as educational attainment (e.g., Frankenberg, Kupper, Wagner, & Bongard, 2013). In addition to individual differences in adjustment, there appear to be differences between ethnic groups and receiving societies, with some ethnic groups and immigrants in some receiving societies being better adjusted than others (Berry, Phinney, Sam, & Vedder, 2006).

Research in the area of acculturation (Arends-Tóth & Van de Vijver, 2006; Berry, 1997; Bourhis, Moise, Perrault, & Senecal, 1997; Ward & Geeraert, 2016) and development (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; García Coll et al., 1996) suggests that individual and group differences in adjustment can be understood by looking at contextual conditions and how they shape the acculturation and adjustment of immigrant students. Contexts vary in the proximity to the individual and include the family, the school, ethnic-group membership and also the wider societal context in the receiving country (Motti-Stefanidi, Berry, et al., 2012).

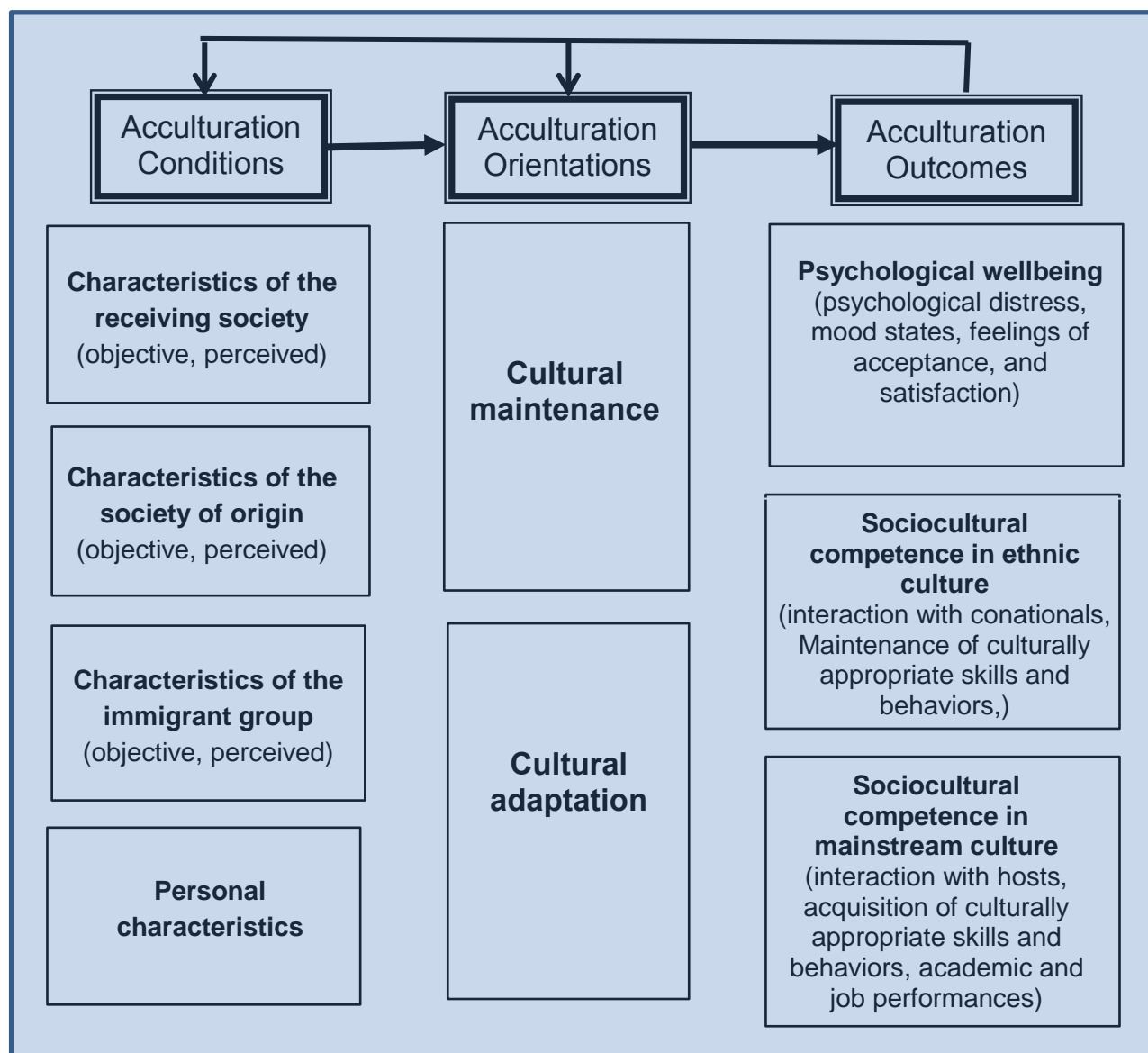
We propose a conceptual framework to guide our literature review, which integrates acculturation and developmental processes. Our framework links some of the most important conditions in school and in the family, as well as conditions related to ethnic or immigrant-group membership, with adjustment. These conditions, in turn, are nested in the context of the mainstream society. We define adjustment in terms of the accomplishment of normative developmental and acculturative tasks (Motti-Stefanidi, Berry, et al., 2012). Focussing on adolescent immigrants, this includes positive interethnic relations, as well as socio-emotional and academic outcomes. Based on this framework, we then provide an overview of relevant research findings. Much of the research in this area has been carried out in traditional immigrant-receiving countries such as the United States (e.g., Frisby & Reynolds, 2005; Fuligni, Witkow, & Garcia, 2005; García Coll et al., 1996; Garcia Coll & Marks, 2012). In this review, our main focus is on research in the European context, which differs from a North American context in many respects, such as migration history, immigration and integration policies, the societal climate, and ethnic groups concerned. Yet, we also include other international research, especially where there was no European research available.

## Building a Conceptual Framework

Adolescence is an important developmental period and is characterised by changes on various levels, including school transitions, redefining social roles, and physiological changes due to puberty. Gaining greater independence from parents, dealing with extended peer relationships, and developing a sense of one's identity are important developmental tasks in this period (Eccles, Lord, & Roeser, 1996). For adolescent immigrants, age-related changes and developmental tasks can interact with acculturation and adjustment processes (e.g., Fuligni, 2001; Michel, Titzmann, & Silbereisen, 2012b; Titzmann & Silbereisen, 2012). It is therefore a critical period to study the acculturation process and specifically the role of different contextual conditions in shaping acculturation orientations and adjustment. Some scholars have argued that acculturative processes amongst immigrant children and adolescents should be regarded as part of regular development (Oppedal, 2006; Sam, 2006). Other scholars argued that acculturative and developmental processes both make unique contributions to explaining psychological outcomes of adolescent immigrants and should be regarded as separate and potentially interacting processes (Fuligni, 2001; Michel et al., 2012b; Titzmann & Silbereisen, 2012). We support the second position, although we acknowledge that these processes may be hard to disentangle. In order to disentangle developmental and acculturative processes, Fuligni (2001) recommends that immigrant youth should be studied longitudinally, compared to non-immigrant youth, and subgroups (such as different age groups) should be investigated within each group. However, very few studies apply such rigorous methods.

The framework we propose to guide our review integrates contextual theories of acculturation (Berry, 1997; Bourhis et al., 1997) and development (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Both types of theories suggest that individual acculturative and developmental processes are influenced by context varying in proximity to the individual, from micro- (e.g., the family) to macro-level (e.g., society). Our conceptual framework is suited specifically to study contextual conditions for acculturation orientations and adjustment of adolescent immigrants against the backdrop of developmental processes. We therefore start from two recently developed frameworks, namely the acculturation framework by Arends-Tóth and Van de Vijver (2006) and the framework for immigrant youth adaptation by Motti-Stefanidi and colleagues (2012).

In the acculturation framework it is proposed that the acculturation process can be divided into acculturation conditions, orientations, and outcomes (Arends-Tóth & Van de Vijver, 2006). Acculturation conditions can be personal characteristics (e.g., personality traits, coping styles) as well as attitudes and opportunity structures in particular contexts (receiving society, society of origin, and immigrant group), and are seen as antecedents in the acculturation process. Acculturation contexts can be differentiated into public and private life domains (Arends-Tóth & Van de Vijver, 2004). The public life domain refers to contexts outside the family home, such as the school or workplace, which are mainly characterised by the mainstream culture, and the ethnic or immigrant group as a context mainly



**Figure 1.** Acculturation framework by Arends-Tóth and Van de Vijver (2006).

characterised by the ethnic culture. The private life domain includes the home and the immediate family environment.

The effect of the acculturation conditions on acculturation outcomes is mediated by an individual's acculturation orientations, which refer to an individual's attitudes towards maintaining one's ethnic culture and towards adopting the mainstream culture and the respective components of their identity (Berry, 1997). The two orientations are expected to be largely independent, allowing different combinations or acculturation profiles (both high -

integration, both low – marginalisation, higher mainstream orientation – assimilation, and higher ethnic orientation – separation).

Psychological and sociocultural outcomes are usually viewed as distinct outcomes of the acculturation process. Psychological outcomes can be well-being, life satisfaction, and mental health, whereas sociocultural outcomes refer to an individual's competence in mastering everyday life in a particular cultural context (e.g., Ward, 2001). Both types of outcomes are related and can influence each other concurrently and over time, but they often differ in terms of their antecedent processes (effects of specific acculturation conditions and orientations).

Acculturation orientations and outcomes are often tapping into similar constructs. Yet, acculturation orientations are conceptualised as attitudes towards certain behaviour, whereas acculturation outcomes refer to the actual performance of behaviour. For example, the motivation to learn the mainstream language would be reflecting an orientation towards the mainstream culture whereas actual language skills would be considered an acculturation outcome (Arends-Tóth & Van de Vijver, 2006; Celenk & Van de Vijver, 2011).

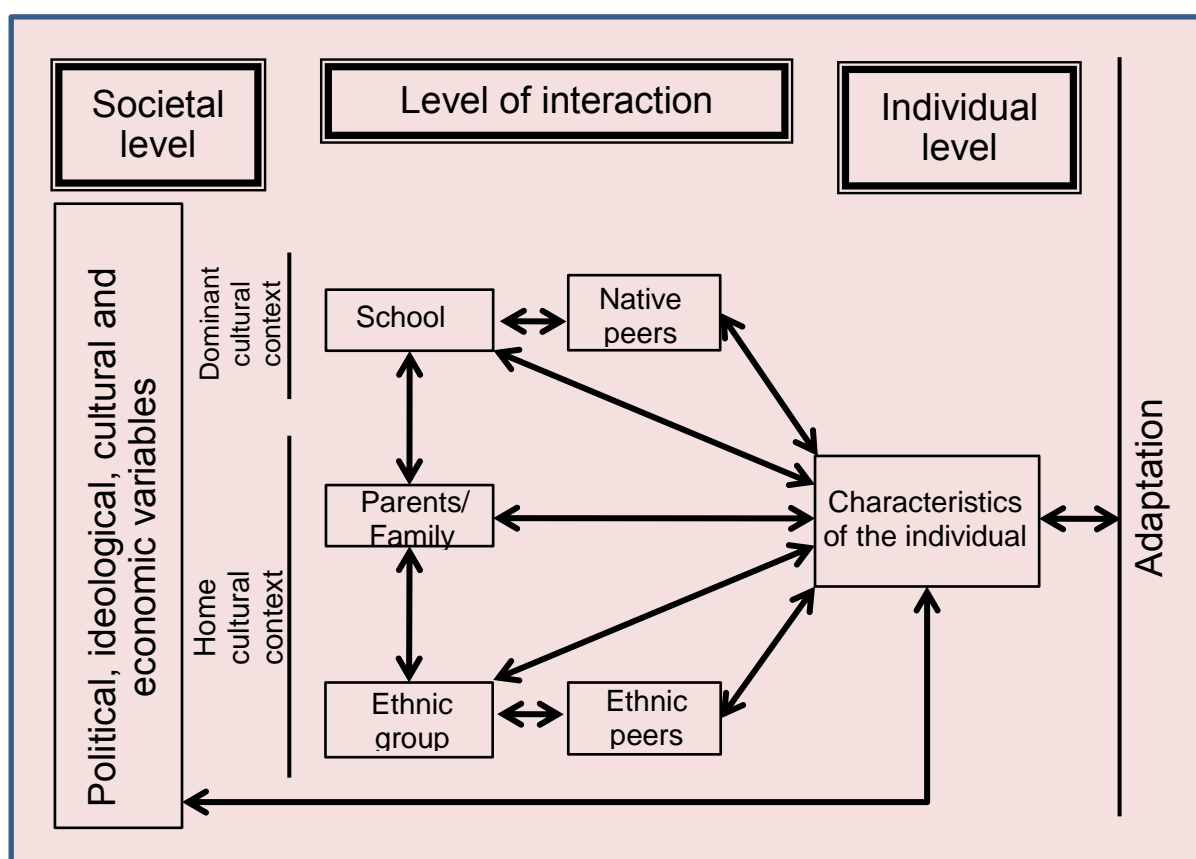
Although the acculturation framework by Arends-Tóth and Van de Vijver (2006) proposes that the main direction of effects goes from conditions to orientations to outcomes, there are also feedback loops (going from right to left), suggesting that changes in dependent variables can also affect what are presumably mostly independent variables in the process (Figure 1).

In their integrative framework for immigrant youth adaptation (Figure 2), Motti-Stefanidi and colleagues (2012) highlight the importance of three specific contexts for the adaptation of adolescent immigrants, namely the school, the family, and the ethnic group. All three form part of what they call the level of interaction and are nested in the mainstream society. Distinguishing between different (nested) contexts with varying proximity to the individual, the authors draw on Bronfenbrenner's (1979) bio-ecological model of human development. The theory suggests that individual development is influenced by microsystems, such as the family or the school (Bronfenbrenner, 1986), which are nested in a macrosystem, such as a particular society. The macrosystem is expected to affect individual development mainly indirectly through the microsystems. Microsystems can interact and influence each other and developmental outcomes in a so-called mesosystem. They are also influenced by external systems not immediately experienced by the child or adolescent, which are called exosystems. These can be the parents' work – or for second or third generation adolescent immigrants – their country of origin, which affects them via their family or ethnic group. Finally, there is the chronosystem, referring to temporal and developmental changes as an additional context that should be taken into account.

Motti-Stefanidi and colleagues (2012) distinguish between the school context as a predominantly mainstream context and the family and ethnic group as predominantly ethnic contexts. Contextual antecedents are expected to affect adaptation via characteristics of the individual.

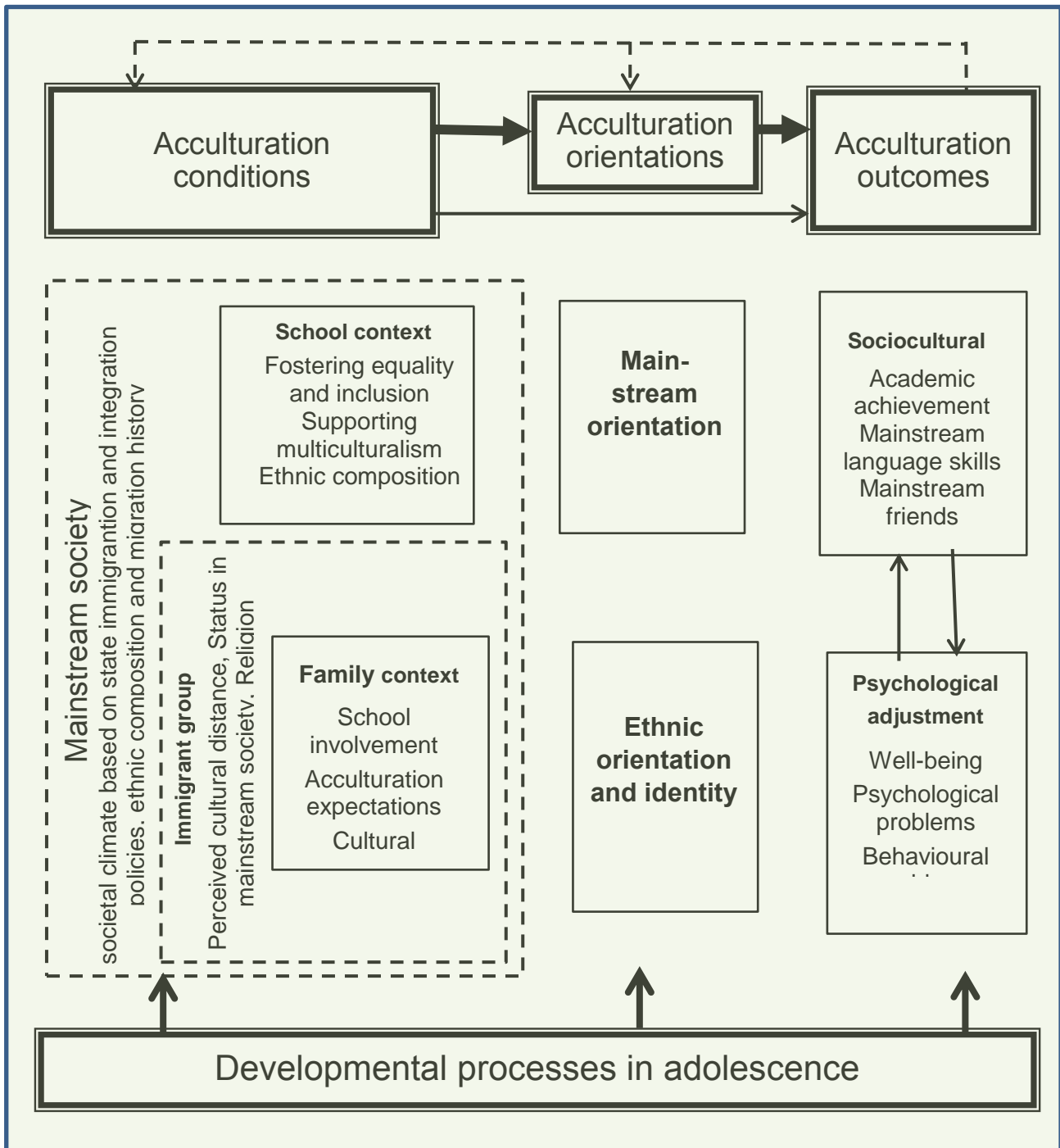
To adequately reflect acculturation and adjustment processes amongst adolescent immigrants, we propose a combination of both frameworks to guide this review on contextual conditions for acculturation and adjustment, which integrates acculturation and

developmental processes (Figure 3). The original acculturation framework (Arends-Tóth & Van de Vijver, 2006) provides a good overview of different components of the acculturation process and how they work together more generally. The framework by Motti-Stefanidi et al. (2012) is more specific for the study of adolescent immigrants (focusing on the most relevant contextual conditions for this group), but is less clear with regard to the processes that link contextual conditions to adjustment. The two frameworks therefore complement each other and both shed light on important aspects that are relevant for studying the acculturation and adjustment of immigrant youth in context. Yet, neither framework explicitly addresses developmental processes. For the purpose of this review, we therefore decided to merge the two original frameworks so as to be able to consider both developmental and acculturation processes.



**Figure 2.** Integrative framework for immigrant youth adaptation by Motti-Stefanidi, Berry, Chrysochoou, Sam and Phinney (2012).





**Figure 3.** Conceptual framework of contextual conditions for adolescent immigrants' acculturation and adjustment.

In this framework, school and family form the most important proximal acculturation conditions for adolescent immigrants. As conceptualised by Motti-Stefanidi and colleagues (2012), these contexts are nested in the mainstream society. The immigrant group is also a broader and more abstract context compared to family and school. We have therefore conceptualised it as between mainstream society and the more proximal context of the family. In the model by Motti-Stefanidi et al. (2012), the ethnic group is predominantly treated as a social context (interactions with co-ethnics). In our model, however, we treat it as a more abstract concept related to psychological group membership and its consequences. Adopting a risk and resilience perspective as advocated by Motti-Stefanidi and colleagues (2012), each context may provide resources (such as parental school involvement) and risks (such as ethnic discrimination or conflicting acculturation preferences).

Borrowing from the acculturation framework (Arends-Tóth & Van de Vijver, 2006), these conditions are expected to affect psychological and sociocultural outcomes partly indirectly via adolescents' acculturation orientations and ethnic and mainstream identity. The relative strength of direct and indirect effects may vary for different contexts, different aspects of each context, and different outcomes. There are also feedback loops as in the original framework by Arends-Tóth and Van de Vijver (2006). For example, adolescents doing well at school and having more mainstream friends may also become more oriented towards the mainstream culture. However, as the main direction of effects is expected to go from acculturation conditions to orientations to outcomes, the feedback loops are drawn as thinner, dotted lines. In order to accommodate empirical findings of direct effects of conditions on outcomes, which may be moderated by acculturation orientations, we have also included (thinner) arrows to allow for these possibilities.

Motti-Stefanidi et al. (2012) further suggest that, specifically for adolescents, peer groups within predominantly ethnic and mainstream contexts play an important role and can work as a filter for each context. Our intention in this review is to give an overview of associations between contextual acculturation conditions, acculturation orientations, and outcomes along the lines of our conceptual framework. As peers within each context are broad enough as a topic to warrant a separate review, we will not dedicate a separate section to peer effects in the present review. The specific role of same- and cross-ethnic peers at school is considered in the section of the school context.

Developmental processes and transitions can interact with different components of the acculturation process. For example, the effect of contextual conditions can be affected by changes in the relative importance of different contexts (such as the family becoming less important in adolescence), acculturation orientations can be affected by processes of ethnic identity development (such as increased identity exploration in adolescence), and psychological outcomes may be affected by physiological processes in puberty (such as a heightened sensitivity to stress in adolescence). We consider the main components of the framework and the role of developmental processes in each of them in more detail below.

School forms the most important mainstream context for adolescent immigrants, where they interact with mainstream teachers and peers (Horenczyk & Tatar, 2012). The school climate and approach to dealing with diversity may reflect integration policies and attitudes of the wider society. The school also reflects the ethnic composition of the

neighbourhood and may be influenced by the most prominent ethnic groups. In the family, parental school involvement and the parents' attitudes towards the mainstream culture and use of the national language may affect the socialisation of their children in the mainstream culture. The family is also an important micro-context transmitting values, norms, and traditions of the ethnic culture (Schönpflug, 2009). Experiences in the family and as a member of one's ethnic group may be influenced by the relative status of the ethnic group in the mainstream society and by the degree of perceived differences from the mainstream culture (Hagendoorn, 1995; Ward & Searle, 1991). The size of their ethnic group in the mainstream society also determines the opportunities for immigrants to engage with their ethnic culture and community (Suanet & Van de Vijver, 2008). In the present review, we are mainly interested in explaining why the acculturation process may look different for members of some groups than for others. We therefore mainly focus on conditions that are related to being a member of a particular group (compared to others) as opposed to interactions within the ethnic community.

These three main contexts can change in importance in adolescence which marks a period of ecological transitions (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). With increasing independence, the role of parents and family in shaping children's development decreases and contexts outside of the family home, such as the school, become more important. Negotiating their ethnic identity may be particularly salient for adolescent immigrants (García Coll et al., 1996; Phinney, 1989). A misfit between the developmental needs in adolescence and a particular context can have negative consequences for adjustment (stage-environment fit hypothesis; Eccles et al., 1996). For adolescent immigrants, a misfit could arise between a secondary school context which does not pay much tribute to students' ethnic background and their needs in relation to ethnic identity development, or between a high expectation for ethnic maintenance at home and the need to become independent from parents.

Acculturation orientations, including ethnic and mainstream identity (Liebkind, 2006) as one of several indicators, form the core of the acculturation process (Berry, 1997) and of our framework. They mediate effects of acculturation conditions on psychological and sociocultural outcomes but are also important outcomes in themselves. Ethnic and mainstream orientations are usually relatively independent concerning their relationship with both, conditions and outcomes (Arends-Tóth & Van de Vijver, 2004; Ward, 2001). Often, conditions in the public domain, such as the school, are more relevant for the mainstream orientation which in turn is more important for sociocultural outcomes. Conditions in the private domain, such as the family, are more relevant for the ethnic orientation which in turn is more predictive of psychological outcomes.

Identity development, including ethnic identity development (Phinney, 1989), is an important task in adolescence (Erikson, 1968). Ethnic identity development can be described as a sequence of several stages, from diffusion or foreclosure through a period of exploration to an achieved identity (Phinney, 1989). Notably during exploration, adolescents may be more sensitive towards relevant contextual cues, such as showing stronger reactions to perceived ethnic discrimination. During exploration they may also seek contexts that are relevant for their ethnic identity, such as their ethnic or religious group. An achieved ethnic identity has been linked to a better psychological adjustment, whereas an

ethnic identity crisis, where adolescents are unsure about their ethnic identity and unable to commit to any group, has been linked with externalising and internalising problems (Oppedal, Røysamb, & Heyerdahl, 2005).

The distinction between psychological and sociocultural outcomes in acculturation research (Ward, 2001) can also be applied to acculturation outcomes related to feeling well and doing well at school, often referred to as school adjustment (Vedder & Horenczyk, 2006). Relevant sociocultural outcomes include competence in the mainstream language, academic achievement and friendships with mainstream peers in the classroom. Mainstream language competence is particularly important as the key to all areas of life in the mainstream society (e.g., Michel, Titzmann, & Silbereisen, 2012a). Access to the labour market depends on academic achievement, which is therefore an important step to long-term adaptation. Adolescent immigrants can learn about mainstream cultural norms and values and practice their mainstream language skills through friendships with mainstream peers (Horenczyk & Tatar, 1998). Although mainstream language skills, achievement and mainstream friends are conceptualised as separate domains of sociocultural adjustment, better adjustment in one domain is usually associated with better adjustment in other domains (Sam, Vedder, Ward, & Horenczyk, 2006).

School-relevant psychological outcomes include school engagement and well-being, but also mental health issues and behavioural problems as negative outcomes (Berry et al., 2006; Liebkind, Jasinskaja-Lahti, & Solheim, 2004; Titzmann, Raabe, & Silbereisen, 2008). We treat behavioural problems as a psychological outcome as it is often an expression of underlying psychological issues, particularly amongst boys (Schachner, Van de Vijver, & Noack, in press).

Psychological and sociocultural outcomes seem to be more connected in the school context than what is usually found for more generic outcomes in adult samples. For example, academic self-concept is considered a psychological outcome which reflects and evolves from more general self-views and self-esteem (Marsh & Ayotte, 2003). Yet, it has also been strongly linked to achievement (e.g., Denissen, Zarrett, & Eccles, 2007; Marsh, Trautwein, Lüdtke, Köller, & Baumert, 2005), which is a manifestation of sociocultural adjustment.

In adolescence, psychological outcomes can also be affected by physiological and emotional changes marking puberty. Everyday hassles may induce higher stress levels than before (Stroud et al., 2009), and the number of potentially stressful life events increases (Garber, Keiley, & Martin, 2002). Consequently, negative psychological outcomes, such as depression, increase (Angold, Costello, & Worthman, 1998), whereas positive psychological outcomes, such as life satisfaction (Goldbeck, Schmitz, Besier, Herschbach, & Henrich, 2007) and self-esteem (Robins & Trzesniewski, 2005), decrease over the course of adolescence. The school transition from primary to secondary school is also often accompanied by a temporary decline in general and school-related self-esteem (e.g., Watt, 2004; Zimmerman, Copeland, Shope, & Dielman, 1997). For immigrant students it may be particularly difficult to integrate in the new context, as they may experience discrimination and language issues, and their parents may be less able to assist them in finding their way at the new school (Turney & Kao, 2009). Indeed, immigrant students are more likely to have adjustment problems after the school transition, which may negatively affect achievement

(Gutman & Midgley, 2000). Immigrant students are also more at risk of moving to a lower track school following the transition (e.g., Bellenberg & Forell, 2012).

The negative developmental trend outlined above contradicts the positive trajectory with increasing adjustment over time which is expected amongst first-generation immigrants in the acculturation process. Even when starting out lower than their native peers, such as in educational achievement, adolescent immigrants should catch up with more time spent in the country of settlement and/or exposure to the mainstream culture. As a result of this contradiction, false conclusions may be reached when studying trajectories in psychological adjustment amongst adolescent immigrants (Fulgini, 2001; Michel et al., 2012b; Titzmann & Silbereisen, 2012). For example, when disregarding age-typical decreases in psychological adjustment, one might conclude that newly arrived adolescent immigrants do not adapt. In reality, age-typical decreases may attenuate acculturation-related increases in adjustment (Michel et al., 2012b). In adolescent immigrants who arrived earlier or belong to the second or third generation, on the other hand, changes in psychological outcomes may be better explained by age-related than acculturation-related trajectories and might not necessarily be a sign of increasing maladjustment to the new society. Taken together, developmental processes can interact with the acculturation process at different stages (by affecting acculturation conditions, orientations, and outcomes as well as their associations), as our model in Figure 3 suggests, and have to be taken into account when explaining contextual effects on acculturation and adjustment amongst adolescent immigrants.

The study by Michel and colleagues (2012b) also suggests that the strength of this link can vary as a function of length of residence and immigrant generation. Whereas acculturative processes were more predictive of psychological outcomes among newly arrived immigrants, with an increasing number of years spent in the country of settlement the trajectory more closely resembled that of mainstream adolescents in the course of normal development. Acculturation-related increases in positive psychological outcomes are strongest in the first five years after migration (Birman & Trickett, 2001). Besides age and developmental stage, length of residence in the country of settlement and generational status are important additional moderators. In the International Comparative Study of Ethnocultural Youth (ICSEY; Berry et al., 2006), which investigated adolescent immigrants and adolescent children of immigrants in 13 countries, a longer period of residence was mainly associated with an increasing mainstream orientation, whereas the ethnic orientation remained stable. Overall, adjustment in the second generation was better than in the first generation, but there seem to be differences between ethnic groups, which are discussed later on.

In the next sections, we review empirical research on (1) the link between adolescent immigrants' acculturation orientations and adjustment, and on (2) how both acculturation orientations and adjustment can be affected by conditions in the school, the family, ethnic-group membership, and the mainstream society.

## **Acculturation Orientations and Adjustment amongst Adolescent Immigrants**

The relative strength of ethnic and mainstream orientation and how these orientations mediate the associations of acculturation conditions and relate to outcomes has attracted considerable attention in acculturation research (e.g., Berry, 1997). Ethnic and mainstream orientations complement each other in their importance for psychological and sociocultural outcomes (Ward, 2001) and can therefore be expected to be equally important for overall adjustment. A large research base confirms that an integrated orientation towards both cultures is most beneficial for adjustment (see Nguyen & Benet-Martínez, 2013, for a meta-analysis). However, in particular circumstances and for particular groups, integration may not be possible and the preference of one culture over the other may be more beneficial (Ward, 2013). In the face of discrimination, a heightened ethnic orientation can alleviate the negative effects on psychological outcomes (rejection-identification model; Branscombe, Schmitt, & Harvey, 1999), whereas integration is not adaptive (Baysu, Phalet, & Brown, 2011)

In the ICSEY study, an orientation towards both cultures was most prevalent and associated with the most positive outcomes (Berry et al., 2006). This was followed by adolescents who were mainly oriented towards their ethnic culture (sometimes referred to as separation or ethnic profile), with equally positive psychological outcomes. Fewer adolescents were mainly oriented towards the mainstream culture (sometimes referred to as assimilation or national profile), with relatively poor psychological and sociocultural outcomes. Adolescents who did not show a strong orientation towards either culture (sometimes referred to as marginalisation or diffuse profile) were the smallest group and showed the poorest adjustment. These associations with outcomes resemble what has been found for different stages of ethnic identity development mentioned in the previous section (Phinney, 1989), notably concerning the positive associations with a high ethnic orientation (in the integration and separation profile) and the overall negative associations with the diffuse profile.

Immigrant students' educational aspirations are often higher than those of their mainstream peers (e.g., Jonsson & Rudolphi, 2011). In the ICSEY study, immigrant students generally scored as high as their national peers, and in some countries even higher, on school commitment and engagement. This complements findings from the U.S., suggesting that some first-generation immigrant students outperform mainstream students – a phenomenon known as the immigrant paradox (Garcia Coll & Marks, 2012). In subsequent generations, achievement decreases until it has reached the level of mainstream students. Yet, a recent meta-analysis confirmed that this pattern is not very common in Europe (Dimitrova, Chasiotis, & Van de Vijver, 2016). School grades and other test measures of achievement show that immigrant students perform below the national average in most countries (OECD, 2010, 2012). These mixed findings suggest that the link between psychological variables related to achievement, such as school engagement and motivation, and grades may vary across ethnic groups and countries.

Especially when they experience discrimination at school, adolescent immigrants can experience psychological problems related to school life, such as low levels of academic or social self-concept, and school-related mental health or psychosomatic issues. They may also show behavioural problems and school-related deviant behaviours, which are more salient for boys (Titzmann et al., 2008; Titzmann, Silbereisen, & Mesch, 2014) and in older adolescents (Dimitrova et al., 2016). There is some evidence that adolescent immigrants are as well-adjusted in psychological terms as their mainstream peers or even better (Berry et al., 2006). However, the meta-analysis by Dimitrova and colleagues (2016) found that the immigrant paradox in psychological adjustment is not very common in Europe, that immigrant groups often show lower levels of well-being than dominant groups, and that second-generation immigrants often show higher levels of well-being than first-generation immigrants. Both studies suggest that there is considerable variation in psychological outcomes between countries of settlement.

Taken together, many adolescent immigrant students are doing relatively well, finding ways of acculturating that allow them to integrate ethnic and mainstream culture. Where this is not possible, most of them still seem to manage to draw on their ethnic culture as an important resource for adjustment, at least in psychological terms (Berry et al., 2006).

## **Context Effects on Acculturation Orientations and Adjustment**

### **School-Related Conditions for Acculturation and Adjustment**

For adolescent immigrants, the school forms an important acculturative context since, for many, it is the place where they are most exposed to mainstream culture (Horenczyk & Tatar, 2012). Structural characteristics, such as the ethnic composition of a school, have been shown to affect different adjustment outcomes amongst immigrant students (for a review, see Thijs & Verkuyten, 2013). At the same time, the school or classroom climate, defined as the experience of norms, goals, values, interpersonal relationships, teaching and learning practices, and organizational structures in everyday school life, has been associated with a wide range of (school) adjustment outcomes (for a review, see Thapa, Cohen, Guffey, & Higgins-D'Alessandro, 2013). Yet, the number of studies specifically focussing on school diversity climate is still limited (for exceptions, see Brand, Felner, Shim, Seitsinger, & Dumas, 2003; Brown & Chu, 2012; Haenni Hoti, Heinzmann Agten, Müller, Buholzer, & Künzle, 2013; Schachner, Noack, Van de Vijver, & Eckstein, 2016; Verkuyten & Thijs, 2001).

A higher share of immigrant students implies fewer opportunities for contact with mainstream students. Adolescent immigrants in such schools were therefore found to have a lower mainstream orientation (Schachner, Noack, et al., 2016), which may also impair their adjustment. Indeed, a higher share of immigrant students was associated negatively with the acquisition of the mainstream language (Rumberger & Palardy, 2005) and with achievement of immigrant students (Hanushek, Kain, & Rivkin, 2009; Van Ewijk & Slegers, 2010). Yet, controlling for their overall proportion, a higher level of heterogeneity within the

immigrant students in a classroom was associated with a higher mainstream orientation amongst immigrant students (Schachner, Noack, et al., 2016). In this case, the mainstream culture may provide a common ground for students from many different ethnic groups.

A school's ethnic composition was also studied in relation to interethnic relations amongst students, with better interethnic relations and more interethnic friendships observed in ethnically heterogeneous schools (Schachner, Brenick, Noack, Van de Vijver, & Heizmann, 2015; Thijs & Verkuyten, 2013). On the other hand, teachers may have lower expectations in schools in which there are more immigrant students and in which students perceive more stereotypes and discrimination (Brenick, Titzmann, Michel, & Silbereisen, 2012). This can further reduce their mainstream orientation and lead to a decrease in school belonging and engagement, eventually resulting in lower levels of achievement (Wong, Eccles, & Sameroff, 2003). Friendships with mainstream peers were found to mediate the relationship between a lower proportion of immigrants in class and better academic outcomes and buffered the negative effects of perceived discrimination (Baysu, Phalet, & Brown, 2014).

In countries with a tracked school system such as in Germany, Austria, or Belgium, the proportion of immigrant students is usually highest in schools representing the lower tracks (i.e., vocational as opposed to academic tracks). Such a system may exacerbate the negative effects of school segregation mentioned above. Large-scale educational surveys have repeatedly shown that a tracked school system disadvantages immigrant students (OECD, 2006, 2012).

Concerning effects of the school climate, most of the literature investigated direct effects on adjustment. Effects on acculturation orientations were only investigated for specific aspects of the climate concerned with cultural diversity. A review on general school climate effects confirmed that a positive school or classroom climate, which promotes safety and positive relationships amongst students and between students and teachers, fosters school adjustment of all students (Thapa et al., 2013). A positive general climate was found beneficial for a wide range of outcomes, such as promoting students' well-being and reducing psychological and behavioural problems. Such a climate seems to be particularly important for immigrant students, who have to cross cultural and linguistic boundaries and often have to face stereotypes, prejudices, and discrimination (Haenni Hoti et al., 2013; Thapa et al., 2013). A school climate characterized by fairness and justice can buffer effects of perceived discrimination and victimization on school adjustment of immigrant students (Bayram Özdemir & Stattin, 2013; Morin, Maïano, Marsh, Nagengast, & Janosz, 2013). Perceived inequality and exclusion at school can have very negative consequences for school adjustment of immigrant or ethnic minority students (Eccles & Roeser, 2011; Horenczyk & Tatar, 2012) such as a decline in academic self-concept, an increase of psychological problems (Bayram Özdemir & Stattin, 2013; Wong et al., 2003), and an increase in delinquent behaviour (Park, Schwartz, Lee, Kim, & Rodriguez, 2013).

Some studies specifically investigated aspects of the school climate that reflect how issues of cultural diversity are dealt with (for a review, see Schachner, 2017). Some of this research focused on norms for interethnic contact as specified by Allport (1954), namely to what extent the climate is characterised by principles of equality, non-discrimination, and



inclusion of all ethnic groups. Other studies also looked at how the cultural background of students is valued and actively incorporated as a resource in curricular and extracurricular activities as well as general school life. This latter approach is characterised by principles of pluralism or multiculturalism.

Perceived norms of equality and inclusion were associated with a higher mainstream orientation and thereby better adjustment amongst immigrant students (Schachner, Noack, et al., 2016). However, at the classroom level, equality and inclusion appears to promote assimilation by suppressing students' ethnic orientation. This resembles a so-called colour-blind approach to diversity, which neglects cultural differences in order to create homogeneity. A colour-blind approach is very common in educational settings, notably in the U.S. (Schofield, 2001), and has been linked with assimilationist attitudes (Plaut, Thomas, & Goren, 2009). Besides the risk of promoting assimilation, a climate of equality and inclusion was found to be associated with better interethnic relations amongst students by reducing prejudices or promoting friendships between immigrant and non-immigrant students, for example (Jugert, Noack, & Rutland, 2011; Schachner et al., 2015; Verkuyten & Thijs, 2013).

Valuing multiculturalism and promoting cultural pluralism and diversity as an asset and something that can enrich the learning experience at school is still relatively new in some non-traditional immigrant-receiving countries such as Germany, where there is a strong preference for assimilation (Dietz, 2007). A climate characterised by cultural pluralism was found to be beneficial for students' ethnic orientation, thereby promoting psychological adjustment (Schachner, Noack, et al., 2016). Concerning direct effects on adjustment, research from North America shows that a curriculum that is meaningful to students' cultural background and involves under-represented groups can promote academic motivation and interest, and it can support school belonging amongst ethnic minority students (Graham & Taylor, 2002; Roeser, Eccles, & Sameroff, 2000). Perceived support for multiculturalism at school was also associated with lower levels of perceived discrimination and delinquency, higher academic aspirations and achievement, and better socio-emotional adjustment amongst immigrant and ethnic minority students (Brand et al., 2003; Brown & Chu, 2012; Byrd, 2015). European studies showed that intercultural education can reduce racial bias (Verkuyten & Thijs, 2001) and promote the psychological adjustment (general life satisfaction and self-efficacy) of adolescent immigrants (Haenni Hoti et al., 2013).

### **Family-Related Conditions for Acculturation and Adjustment**

The family is the most proximal context for adolescent immigrants which affects many developmental and psychological outcomes including school adjustment (e.g., García Coll & Szalacha, 2004). Specific to immigrant families, cultural transmission processes may affect their children's acculturation process (Schönpflug, 2009). Parental acculturation orientations and ethnic identity as well as cultural practices in the family have been associated with their children's acculturation orientations and cultural behaviours (e.g., Hughes et al., 2006; Schachner, Van de Vijver, & Noack, 2014a; Schönpflug, 2009). Parental school involvement, which to some extent also symbolises the bridge between the

predominantly ethnic context of the family and the predominantly mainstream context of the school, has been associated with better achievement-related outcomes (Hill & Tyson, 2009; Seginer, 2006).

Perceived acculturation expectations are a strong predictor of individual acculturation orientations and outcomes (Ouarasse & Van de Vijver, 2004). Parents' acculturation expectations and ethnic identity, in particular, have been found to be closely linked with their children's acculturation orientations and ethnic identity in a variety of settings, age, and ethnic groups (Dimitrova, Ferrer-Wreder, & Trost, 2015; Nauck, 2001a; Sabatier, 2008; Schachner et al., 2014a). Further, a higher parental mainstream orientation predicted better language and cultural skills amongst Turkish immigrant children (Becker, Klein, & Biedinger, 2013) and better psychological and sociocultural (school) adjustment amongst early adolescent immigrants (Schachner et al., 2014a) in Germany. The perceived expectation for ethnic maintenance and a higher ethnic identity of the parents were associated primarily with better psychological outcomes of adolescents (Dimitrova, Chasiotis, Bender, & Van de Vijver, 2014; Dimitrova et al., 2015; Schachner, Van de Vijver, & Noack, 2014a). These effects were mediated by adolescents' own ethnic identity and acculturation orientations. Immigrant parents also tended to have higher ethnic and lower mainstream orientations than their adolescent children. Such discrepancies are known as the acculturation gap in immigrant families (Ward, Bochner, & Furnham, 2001). A larger gap between parents and their adolescent children is often associated with lower levels of adolescent well-being (e.g., Pfafferott & Brown, 2006). Yet, a recent review suggests that effects may differ between different types of gaps (Telzer, 2010).

Socialization with (heritage) cultural practices in the family is associated with children's ethnic identity, sociocultural, and psychological (school) adjustment (for a review, see Hughes et al., 2006). Religious practices, in particular, are one of the most important ways of maintaining one's culture of origin (thereby fostering an ethnic orientation). These practices can facilitate psychological adjustment, especially when facing ethnic discrimination (Güngör, Fleischmann, Phalet, & Maliepaard, 2013; Ward, 2013). A higher importance of religion in the family of origin was linked with a stronger ethnic orientation and better psychological adjustment amongst adolescent immigrants (Schachner et al., 2014a). Similarly, a higher retention of the ethnic language in the family is associated with a stronger ethnic identity amongst adolescent immigrants. Mainstream and ethnic language use in the family of origin are often inversely related. A higher retention of the ethnic language is therefore associated with lower levels of national language acquisition (Nauck, 2001a) and overall academic achievement amongst immigrant children and adolescents (OECD, 2010, 2012). However, the negative effects of ethnic language retention in the family on mainstream language and achievement can be reduced by pre-school education in the mainstream language (Magnuson, Lahaie, & Waldfogel, 2006).

Finally, parental school involvement can compensate for disadvantages that children and adolescents may experience in their educational trajectories (Dearing, Kreider, Simpkins, & Weiss, 2006). By showing interest in their children's well-being at school, immigrant parents also show an interest in and appreciation of their children's adjustment in school as a predominantly mainstream context. This can increase their children's

mainstream orientation and sociocultural outcomes such as achievement. Due to its affective nature, parents' personal school involvement can also be seen as a form of social support, which has been associated with a higher ethnic orientation and better psychological well-being (Schachner et al., 2014a; Ward, 2001). Yet, immigrant parents often face barriers to school involvement, such as language issues and status differences (Turney & Kao, 2009). As a consequence, they are not involved in their children's education in the same way as mainstream parents; for example, they seek less contact with teachers (Kao, 2004; Seginer, 2006). Immigrant parents' personal involvement (i.e., showing interest in their child's activities and experiences at school) is therefore even more important for their children's school adjustment (Fuligni, 1997; Lazarides & Ittel, 2013). However, when immigrant parents are actively seeking contact with the school and teachers, this has a beneficial effect on achievement both cross-sectionally and over time, which is comparable in strength to the effect that is found in non-immigrant families (Motti-Stefanidi, Asendorpf, & Masten, 2012).

### **Conditions for Acculturation and Adjustment Related to Ethnic or Immigrant Group Membership**

Acculturation orientations and adjustment outcomes often differ across ethnic groups (e.g., Berry et al., 2006). The acculturation literature suggests that these differences may be associated with differences in cultural distance between the country of origin and the receiving society (Ward & Searle, 1991). Although adolescent immigrants of the second and third generation may have had little exposure to their country of origin, they may have experienced it indirectly, as a so-called exo-context (Bronfenbrenner, 1979), through their parents or other members of their ethnic group in the receiving society. The magnitude of cultural differences also seems to be reflected in status differences between ethnic groups in the receiving society (Hagendoorn, 1995). In addition, differences in acculturation orientation and adjustment outcomes may reflect differences in group size and vitality of the ethnic community (e.g., Suanet & Van de Vijver, 2008). Increasing attention has been paid to Muslim immigrant groups, which are amongst the largest in many countries across Europe, but are often not well integrated into the mainstream society, for example showing a preference for separation and less optimal socio-cultural outcomes (Güngör et al., 2013; Ward, 2013).

From the perspective of immigrants, it is more difficult to identify with and adjust to a country that is perceived to be more different from one's country of origin (e.g., Galchenko & Van de Vijver, 2007; Ward & Searle, 1991). From the perspective of members of the mainstream society, immigrants with a cultural background that is more different from the mainstream culture are likely to be perceived as more "strange" and therefore evaluated more negatively and excluded more. Hagendoorn (1995) proposed that different ethnic groups can be ranked in terms of their status in a particular society. Usually the national group has the top rank and groups that are considered to be more similar to the national group rank higher in terms of status. This is called the "ethnic hierarchy" in a particular society. The ethnic hierarchy in a country also seems to be perceived by members of

minority groups, and groups at the bottom are typically also rejected by other, higher ranking minority groups (Verkuyten, Hagendoorn, & Masson, 1996).

Even second- and third-generation immigrants in early adolescence have a fairly good idea of cultural differences, which correlate with core country-level characteristics, such as cultural norms and values and the level of economic and political development (Schachner, Van de Vijver, & Noack, 2014b). A higher perceived cultural distance has been associated with a higher ethnic and lower mainstream orientation (Schachner et al., in press). Cultural distance and ethnic hierarchy were also found to already underlie intergroup relations amongst minority and majority early adolescents (Schachner et al., 2015; Verkuyten et al., 1996) and even children, with those from lower ranking groups reporting higher levels of peer discrimination (Verkuyten, 2002). In their integrative model of child development, García Coll and colleagues (1996; García Coll & Szalacha, 2004) suggest that the social status of a child's ethnic group in a society is one of the most important factors in predicting psychological and developmental outcomes. Children and adolescents from lower status groups experience more ethnic segregation, prejudices, and discrimination, which may negatively affect adjustment outcomes.

The size and vitality of a particular ethnic group also plays a role in the acculturation and adjustment of group members (e.g., Suanet & Van de Vijver, 2008). A larger ethnic community makes it easier to maintain one's orientation towards the ethnic culture and - depending on the degree of segregation of the community - may hinder a mainstream orientation. Amongst adolescent Muslim immigrants, a more vital ethnic community was associated with more religious socialization, ethnic maintenance, and a stronger ethnic network (Güngör et al., 2013). The ICSEY study (Berry et al., 2006) revealed similar findings with a broader sample of adolescent immigrants. A more vital ethnic community in the neighbourhood was also associated with lower competence in the national language and fewer national friends. In an ethnically heterogeneous classroom setting, larger ethnic groups displayed higher levels of friendship homophily (Schachner, Van de Vijver, Brenick, & Noack, 2016), which refers to the tendency to seek friends within their own circles and separate themselves from other ethnic groups (McPherson, Smith-Lovin, & Cook, 2001). Yet, a larger ethnic community can provide social support and promote psychological adjustment. Especially when opportunities to engage with the mainstream society are restricted and there is a high level of prejudice, a larger immigrant community can be a valuable alternative (Nauck, 2001b). For adolescent immigrants with a Turkish background – one of the largest groups in the countries included in the ICSEY study – a high ethnic in combination with a low mainstream orientation was the most common pattern and associated with the most favourable (psychological) outcomes (Berry et al., 2006).

At almost 8% of the overall population, Muslims are a relatively large group within Europe (Central Intelligence Agency, 2012). However, Muslim immigrants rank at the bottom of the ethnic hierarchy in many countries (Hagendoorn, 1995) and Islamophobia has become an increasing problem in Western Europe (Güngör et al., 2013; Zick & Küpper, 2009). Particularly, Turkish immigrants are a visible and easily targeted minority, which is often stigmatized and generally has a low status in mainstream society. Religious maintenance is usually connected to high ethnic maintenance in Muslim immigrant groups

(e.g., Schachner et al., 2014a). When confronted with Islamophobia in the mainstream society, a higher ethnic and religious identity is sometimes accompanied by a weaker orientation towards or even a disenfranchisement from the mainstream culture (Fleischmann & Phalet, 2011; Verkuyten & Yildiz, 2007). This contributes to the separation of Muslim immigrant adolescents that takes place in many Western societies. Contrary to the overall trend observed across ethnic groups, second-generation adolescents with a Muslim immigrant background have been found to follow a pattern of ethnic and religious re-affirmation (Güngör et al., 2013; Maliepaard, Lubbers, & Gijsberts, 2009). Adolescents with a Muslim background have also been found to be most isolated from other groups in multi-ethnic classrooms (Schachner, Van de Vijver, et al., 2016). Being the most segregated group, Muslim immigrant students are also most at risk of academic underachievement in many countries (OECD, 2010).

### **Conditions for Acculturation and Adjustment Related to the Receiving Society**

Internationally comparative studies, such as the ICSEY study (Berry et al., 2006), revealed that there are host-country specific differences in the acculturation orientations and adjustment of adolescent immigrants. These differences have been associated with the societal and political climate concerning acculturation and cultural pluralism, but also with the migration history and ethnic composition of immigrant-receiving countries.

Several typologies for the societal climate in receiving societies have been proffered, which mainly differentiate between countries on the basis of how much it is acceptable or even supported for immigrants to maintain elements of their ethnic culture and if it is possible to combine ethnic maintenance with the adoption of the mainstream culture (Berry, 1997; Bourhis et al., 1997). If cultural maintenance is accepted or even supported, and immigrants are at the same time invited to participate in the mainstream culture, this can be described as supporting cultural pluralism, with a typical example being Canada. If, however, the adoption of the mainstream culture is expected in combination with dropping one's ethnic culture, the climate can be described as assimilative. The US used to be a classic example of this kind of policy, recently also the Netherlands (Yağmur & Van de Vijver, 2012). Assimilationist policies put immigrants into the situation where they should choose one culture over the other – if they are not willing to assimilate, they become segregated (Zick, Wagner, Van Dick, & Petzel, 2001).

In the typology by Bourhis and colleagues (1997), some societies are also described as ethnist, typical examples being Germany and Israel. In an ethnist society, it is difficult to become a full member of society without national ancestors, no matter how much immigrants assimilate. This increases the risk of separation in these countries, and immigrants may be excluded from the mainstream society altogether and become marginalised (Berry, 1997). Bourhis and colleagues (1997) also identified a civic ideology, which emphasizes citizenship as opposed to ethnicity or culture. A typical example of a civic nation is France. Ethnist and civic societies are also characterised by an overall preference for assimilation.

The societal climate around acculturation and cultural pluralism is also manifested in immigration and integration policies in a particular country. The Migrant Integration Policy

Index (MIPEX; Huddleston, Niessen, Chaoimh, & White, 2011) was a recent attempt to classify these policies. The aim was to rate a country's immigration and integration policies in how immigrant friendly they are, allowing meaningful links to acculturation and adjustment of immigrants in that country. The main policy areas covered included labour market mobility, access to citizenship, long-term residency and education, as well as family reunion. Countries scoring high in one area usually also score high in others.

The MIPEX study includes countries in Europe and North America. Most countries were rated just halfway favourable in terms of the immigration and integration policies. This means that policies create as many obstacles as opportunities for immigrants to become equal members of society. Access to education is amongst the three biggest obstacles immigrants experience when settling in another country. Scandinavian and North-American countries were rated highest, meaning access was most possible, together with Belgium, the Netherlands, and some southern European countries. Countries in central Europe were rated medium, followed by Switzerland and Austria and countries in Eastern Europe. Baltic countries were rated lowest.

Interactive models of acculturation, such as the one by Bourhis and colleagues (1997), suggest that a country's immigration and integration policies affect acculturation attitudes of immigrants and mainstream society and their interaction in a particular country. These attitudes and relational outcomes feed back into government decision-making and policy-making processes. There is indeed evidence for such interactions. A study with adult Turkish immigrants in Australia, France, Germany, and the Netherlands revealed a stronger mainstream orientation and better adjustment in countries with a climate paying more tribute to cultural pluralism and exerting less assimilation pressure (Yağmur & Van de Vijver, 2012). Similar findings were obtained in adolescent samples: In their comparative study of Muslim adolescents in Western Europe, Güngör and colleagues (2013) found that religious and ethnic maintenance was higher in countries with a less welcoming intergroup climate. The ICSEY study (Berry et al., 2006) obtained similar findings. Associations with characteristics of the country of settlement were largest for national orientation, explaining 7% of the variance, followed by ethnic orientation. Direct associations with adjustment outcomes were weaker.

Overall, a higher orientation towards both cultures, which is considered the most adaptive, was found more often in more diverse countries with a longer immigration history and more pluralistic immigration policies. However, if the national context was less attuned to accommodating cultural diversity and the simultaneous orientation towards national and ethnic cultures, separation (i.e., an orientation only towards the ethnic culture) was found to be the next best choice for adolescent immigrants (Berry et al., 2006). The immigrant paradox, where immigrant students outperform native students, is also more likely to be found in countries with more immigrant-friendly climate and policies as rated on the MIPEX (Dimitrova et al., 2016).

## Conclusion

Individual psychological processes do not take place in an empty space, but in a particular sociocultural context. Processes and outcomes are affected by the attitudes and opportunity structures within that context. By integrating an acculturation framework (Arends-Tóth & Van de Vijver, 2006) and a framework for immigrant youth adaptation (Motti-Stefanidi, Berry, et al., 2012), we proposed a conceptual framework for the study of contextual conditions for acculturation and adjustment of adolescent immigrants that also takes into account developmental processes. Based on this framework, we reviewed conditions for adolescent immigrants' acculturation and adjustment in three of the most important contexts, namely school, family, and ethnic or immigrant-group membership, which are nested in the mainstream society. Most of the studies reviewed are based on data from a European context, which differs from the North American context in many ways, such as migration history, immigration and integration policies, the societal climate, and the ethnic groups concerned. The most important findings were:

1. Adolescents' acculturation orientations and adjustment are associated with the acculturation expectations and multicultural climate in family, school, ethnic group, and mainstream society. Associations are stronger with contexts that are more proximal to the individual (notably family and school). The transmission from parents to children is of particular importance. Predominantly mainstream contexts such as the school or mainstream society are more strongly associated with adolescents' mainstream orientation, whereas predominantly ethnic contexts like the family or the immigrant group are more strongly associated with their ethnic orientation.
2. Rejection and exclusion in the mainstream context are met with a heightened orientation towards the ethnic culture and sometimes separation tendencies amongst adolescent immigrants. In Europe, a case in point is the situation of Muslim immigrants, where the rise of Islamophobia among the mainstream population is associated with a movement of ethnic and religious re-affirmation amongst adolescent immigrants.
3. Although assimilation is promoted in many immigrant-receiving societies and schools, it does not always lead to the best outcomes amongst adolescent immigrants – in fact, separation can be a better option, especially for psychological adjustment and if there is a large and vital ethnic community.
4. Opportunity structures in different contexts can have immediate effects on outcomes. For example, restricted opportunities for contact with mainstream peers in the school context are associated with a range of undesirable outcomes, such as lower mainstream language skills, fewer mainstream friends, lower grades, and higher levels of perceived discrimination. This can contribute to the feeling of being excluded from the mainstream society.

## Suggestions for Future Research

Despite the wealth of findings, there are many open questions remaining, which would require further research. First and foremost, our assumption which is also laid out in the

conceptual model was that effects of contextual conditions on adjustment outcomes would be mediated by adolescents' acculturation orientations (including ethnic identity). This assumption was grounded in previous theoretical models of the acculturation process (Arends-Tóth & Van de Vijver, 2006; Berry, 1997; Motti-Stefanidi, Berry, et al., 2012). In the review of the empirical literature, we found some support for this assumption. Yet, there are still only few studies which explicitly test a mediation hypothesis (e.g., Berry et al., 2006; Dimitrova et al., 2015; Schachner et al., 2014a; Suanet & Van de Vijver, 2008), whereas in most studies acculturation orientations and adjustment are just considered as alternative outcomes or effects on just one of the two are investigated.

Second, we suggested in our conceptual framework that developmental processes should be considered when studying contextual effects on the acculturation and adjustment of adolescent immigrants. However, this is done only in very few studies and there is still a remarkable shortage of longitudinal studies (for exceptions, see Motti-Stefanidi, Asendorpf, et al., 2012; Schachner, Noack, et al., 2016) and of studies explicitly including different age groups or looking at age effects (for exceptions, see Berry et al., 2006; Sabatier, 2008). Out of these examples listed, hardly any includes a non-immigrant control group (Motti-Stefanidi, Asendorpf, et al., 2012), which – according to Fuligni (2001) and Titzmann and Silbereisen (2012) – is a prerequisite of disentangling acculturative and developmental processes. There is therefore a need for more longitudinal studies including a non-immigrant control group in order to draw solid conclusions about the unique role of acculturative and developmental processes in explaining the adjustment of immigrant youth.

Finally, different contexts may interact with each other. For example, the school climate to some extent reflects the wider societal climate around acculturation and cultural pluralism, and the family may put more emphasis on ethnic maintenance when there is a larger ethnic community. It is therefore difficult to predict relationships between a particular context and outcomes without at least considering the potential role of other relevant proximal and distal contexts. These can also be contexts in addition to those covered in the review, such as the peer group. Although we did tap into peer relations in the classroom, out-of-school peers may also be important for acculturation and adjustment.

Potential interactions of one context with other contexts should therefore be taken into account when interpreting findings. Ideally, effects of these contexts should be studied simultaneously. Yet, such studies are rare and require large resources. One exception is a study by Sabatier (2008), who looked at family and school related antecedents of acculturation and adjustment amongst second-generation adolescent immigrants from five different ethnic groups in France. Schachner, Van de Vijver, and Noack (in press) also studied family and school-related conditions of acculturation and adjustment in a diverse sample of early adolescents in Germany. The ICSEY study (Berry et al., 2006) is probably to date the most comprehensive study in this area. The authors looked at antecedents of acculturation, psychological and sociocultural adjustment (including school adjustment) in the context of family and country of settlement, also comparing specific ethnic groups.



## Practical and Policy Implications

There are also some practical and policy implications of the findings gathered in this review. We would like to highlight three important points:

1. There is the argument that secondary school tracking into ability groups, which still takes place in different forms in many European countries, can enhance the academic self-concept and motivation of low-achieving students (Trautwein, Lüdtke, Marsh, Köller, & Baumert, 2006). However, there are risks that come with tracking, which are inflated amongst students with an immigrant background. Recent evidence from PISA shows that between-school tracking is linked with a greater achievement gap between immigrant and non-immigrant students (Teltemann & Schunck, 2016). At the time of assigning students to different ability tracks, they often have only had a few years of schooling and a limited time to compensate for any disadvantages they may experience due to coming from an immigrant family, such as language issues. This puts them particularly at risk of being placed in a low-achievement track, together with many other immigrant children. The lack of opportunities to interact and make friends with mainstream peers and the feeling of being excluded from mainstream society may by far outweigh the benefits that such a system may have, especially in terms of long-term integration into the mainstream society. Indeed, the PISA study has repeatedly picked this up as a major risk factor for poor educational outcomes amongst immigrant students (OECD, 2006, 2010).
5. Schools are important micro-contexts within the mainstream society, which to some extent transmit the overall societal climate around acculturation and multiculturalism. In addition, mainstream language education is clearly a core task when teaching immigrant students, and there is a strong motivation to promote equality in schools. This makes them prone to favour inclusive but assimilative policies, which encourage adoption of the mainstream culture but may not be overly supportive of ethnic maintenance. It is time for educators and policy makers to acknowledge students' ethnic culture as an important additional resource for immigrant students' adjustment and well-being, rather than seeing it as a risk of disintegration from mainstream society. The empirical findings in this review suggest that if mainstream society allows ethnic maintenance, adolescents and their families do not have to choose separation but can opt for integration instead.
6. Compared to other immigrant groups, adolescents with a Muslim immigrant background seem to be particularly at risk, both in terms of societal disintegration and educational outcomes. This is also a reflection of strong anti-Islamic sentiments in many countries. With almost one in ten European residents being Muslim, Islam has long become part of European societies. Initiatives to better integrate Islam in Europe are therefore needed. Such initiatives can include establishing a more European form of Islam, perhaps by educating Muslim immigrants to become religious teachers and leaders instead of recruiting them from abroad, but also teaching (more) about Islam in schools in order to reduce prejudices in the mainstream society in the long run.

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## Further Reading

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## Discussion Questions

1. Think about your own highschool classroom. Were there many people from your own ethnic group or just a few? How diverse was it? How did you deal with this diversity? Did the diversity of your classroom affect who your friends were? Did you have friends from different ethnic groups?
2. What are the implications when developmental processes are not considered when studying acculturation in immigrant youth?
3. How is the macro-system of the mainstream society reflected in more proximal contexts like family, school and immigrant group?
4. What are the most important contextual conditions for the school achievement of immigrant youth?
5. What would be an interaction between immigrant families and schools in what Bronfenbrenner would call the meso-system? How could you test effects of such an interaction on acculturation and adjustment of immigrant students in a psychological study?

6. What are the three key messages for teachers in diverse schools that you would derive from this paper? What could be barriers for teachers to engage more strongly with diversity issues?
7. If you were the minister of education in your country, what would you change to improve the situation of immigrant students and why?
8. What could be successful measures to increase parental involvement in schools and why?

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