

# Is There a Paradox of Adaptation in Immigrant Children and Youth Across Europe? A Literature Review

Radosveta Dimitrova, Sevgi Bayram Özdemir, Diana Farcas, Marianna Kotic, Stefanos Mastrotheodoros, Justyna Michałek, and Delia Stefanel

**Abstract** This review examines how well children of immigrants in Europe are doing in terms of educational, psychological, and behavioral outcomes. Based on theory and research in developmental, social and acculturation psychology fields, we explore the immigrant paradox (e.g., first-generation immigrant children show better adaptation in comparison to their native and second-generation counterparts) and migration morbidity (e.g., immigrants display less favorable outcomes than natives) in 102 studies conducted in 14 European countries. We conclude that theoretical assumptions of developmental (e.g., promoting context in families, schools, neighborhoods), social (e.g., intercultural behaviors and attitudes, lack of discrimination) and acculturation psychology (e.g., cultural maintenance and adoption, biculturalism) are powerful constituents for optimal adaptation of immigrant children and youth. Taken together, these constituents should guide policies and programs targeting optimal outcomes for

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R. Dimitrova (✉)

Stockholm University, Stockholm, Sweden

Hiroshima University, Higashihiroshima, Japan

e-mail: [dimitrova.radosveta@gmail.com](mailto:dimitrova.radosveta@gmail.com); <http://www.radosvetadimitrova.org/>

S.B. Özdemir

Örebro University, Örebro, Sweden

D. Farcas

Instituto Univesitário de Lisboa (ISCTE-IUL) & Centro de Investigação e Intervenção Social (CIS-IUL), Lisbon, Portugal

M. Kotic

University of Pannonia, Veszprém, Hungary

S. Mastrotheodoros

Utrecht University, Utrecht, The Netherlands

National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Athens, Greece

J. Michałek

University of Warmia and Mazury in Olsztyn, Olsztyn, Poland

D. Stefanel

Lucian Blaga University of Sibiu, Sibiu, Romania

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children of immigrants. A discussion within empirically based policy practices to promote positive outcomes of young immigrant populations in Europe is offered.

Immigrants and their children represent a sizable proportion of the population in many European countries of approximately 40 million immigrant people (Mladovsky, 2007). In 2010, there were 32.5 million immigrants in the European Union (EU), corresponding to 6.5% of the total population. A total of 3.4 million people immigrated to one of the EU Member States during 2013 and on average these immigrants are much younger than the population already resident in their country of destination (Eurostat, 2015). Despite such important numerical presence and the foregoing emphasis on immigration, studies in Europe are still emerging. The vast majority of research focuses on adults, and only in recent years, has there been an increasing interest in the study of immigrant children and youth (Strohmeier, Spiel, & Gradinger, 2008) with considerable efforts to document their adaptation across a range of developmental outcomes (Marks, Ejesi, & García Coll, 2014). These efforts are particularly relevant in light of the recent immigration crisis across many EU member states with thousands of immigrant families escaping from the war affected zones in the Middle East. A focus on immigrant populations is both relevant and timely, as there are currently many vulnerable children migrating and/or seeking refuge around the world, notably in Europe. Therefore, the current study explores immigrant children and youth adaptation outcomes in research across different European contexts.

## **Theoretical Frameworks of Immigrant Children and Youth**

Several disciplines and theoretical frameworks inform patterns and variations in adaptation of immigrant children and youth: developmental, social, and acculturation psychology. Developmental research emphasizes the role of proximal environment in which children's lives are embedded (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006), including interacting forces in families, neighborhoods, schools, and peers, which are also influenced by the policy structures and societal attitudes of the receiving country (García-Coll et al., 1996). Social psychology research builds upon social processes, such as discrimination, that shape societal and intergroup context and child outcomes (Motti-Stefanidi & Asendorpf, 2012; Verkuyten, 2005). Acculturation research focuses on the influence of culture in bicultural contexts and maintenance of both cultures (labeled integration) is deemed as conducive to better developmental outcomes (Berry, 2006).

All these frameworks assume that successful adaptation of immigrant children and youth involves integrating multiple influences and challenging developmental and acculturative tasks. Contexts that provide opportunities for exploration and development of abilities, goals and choices foster optimal outcomes. When receiving societies promote positive attitudes toward immigrants and effective support to their children in terms of educational and occupational choices, immigrant youth can achieve their potential by becoming successful members of society (Motti-Stefanidi, Berry, Chrysochoou, Sam, & Phinney, 2012). Integration policies and favorable context of socio-cultural acceptance of immigrants play an important role in their suc-

successful adaptation; therefore, policies that lead to language and cultural maintenance will also lead to much better developmental outcomes (García Coll et al., 2012).

Drawing on the above considerations, this paper explores patterns of adaptation among child and youth immigrants across varying European contexts present in current research. It is expected that successful adaptation of immigrant children and youth will be related to the way they deal with both developmental and acculturating challenges of living in two cultures. Facing the acculturative task of learning and maintaining language, values, beliefs, behaviors, and customs that are typical of the larger society, as well as those of their home culture will be related to better developmental outcomes (Berry, Phinney, Sam, & Vedder, 2006). Conversely, societies characterized by restrictive or assimilative immigrant policies, and situations that devalue immigrant youth identity will place them at risk for negative adaptation outcomes. Given these premises, we can consider the Migrant Integration Policy Index (MIPEX, 2015) a useful assessment of adaptation. MIPEX measures policies that promote integration into European societies and offers valuable data on the extent to which immigrants feel secure, confident and welcome in their new country of residence.

## The Paradox and Morbidity in Immigrant Populations

Research to date has identified two perspectives to explain differences in adaptation between immigrant and majority populations, referred-to as the immigrant paradox and migration morbidity. *The immigrant paradox* has received considerable attention in the literature on immigrant integration (Verkuyten, 2016) and refers to the counter-intuitive finding that, despite being socioeconomically disadvantaged, children of first-generation immigrants show better adaptation levels than their second-generation immigrant and/or non-immigrant peers (García Coll, Szalacha, & Palacios, 2005). Numerous studies suggest that, although socioeconomically disadvantaged, first-generation immigrants do not present emotional or behavioral problems (Fuligni, 1997) and perform better in school (García Coll et al., 2005; Georgiades, Boyle, & Duku, 2007) compared with their peers. Most of these studies have been conducted in the United States and Canada. Considering their early immigration and active receiving policies, it is not surprising that the paradox has been largely reported in these countries. Although the paradox has been investigated to a lesser extent in Europe, there are some findings consistent with this thesis (Sam, Vedder, Liebkind, Neto, & Virta, 2008).

*The migration morbidity* states that there is a strong relationship between immigrant status and vulnerability that leads to psychological and behavioral problems in immigrant populations (Derluyn & Broekaert, 2007; Klimidis, Stuart, Minas, & Ata, 1994). In fact, across a variety of contexts, immigrant children and youth have been reported to display higher levels of adaptation problems than non-immigrant groups from majority populations into which they migrate. For instance, available findings document that to a significant degree, immigrant children and youth report higher rates of psychological problems (Georgiades et al., 2007; Pantzer et al., 2006), school difficulties (Strohmeier et al., 2008) and disruptive behaviors (Motti-Stefanidi et al., 2008; Titzmann, Silbereisen, & Mesch, 2014).

In the present review, we aim to fill existing literature gaps by: (a) reviewing the scattered evidence on the immigrant paradox and migration-morbidity in Europe, (b) identifying relevant mechanisms affecting these outcomes, and (c) providing suggestions for policy and practice amongst forthcoming generations of immigrants in Europe. In doing so, we focus on three adaptation outcomes investigated in the immigration research field: educational (i.e., school achievement, school adaptation, GPA-Grade Point Average), behavioral (i.e., substance and alcohol abuse, delinquent and overall externalizing behaviors) and psychological outcomes (i.e., anxiety, depression, and overall internalizing behaviors). These three categories of outcomes represent significant developmental tasks in childhood and adolescence and serve as important markers of good functioning and successful adaptation of immigrant children and adolescents (McLoyd, 1998). In addition, they have been investigated as main outcomes in both the immigrant paradox and the migration-morbidity literature on immigrant children and youth (García Coll et al., 2005, 2012; Georgiades, Boyle, Duku, & Racine, 2006; Georgiades et al., 2007).

## Method

### *Literature Search and Study Inclusion Criteria*

We followed guidelines on the integrative review method (Lehman, Chiu, & Schaller, 2004; Hilton & von Hippel, 1996; Whitemore & Knafl, 2005) as to summarize available empirical literature and provide a more comprehensive understanding of a particular phenomenon (i.e., types of adaptation outcomes in immigrant children and youth in Europe) with the potential to build science, informing research, practice, and policy initiatives. Thus, we adopted the following stages in conducting our review: (1) problem identification (e.g., available theoretical and empirical work related to immigrant paradox and morbidity in child and adolescent populations in Europe); (2) literature search with specific selection criteria; (3) data evaluation and presentation (e.g., synthesis in the form of a table and main conclusions about the paradox and morbidity, as well as factors important to these phenomena were developed to describe adaptation among immigrant populations).

The target criteria were children and adolescents who are either foreign-born, first or second generation immigrants. Papers were selected for the presence of one or more of the outcomes of interest (i.e., psychological, behavioral, and/or educational). In order to select studies to review on available findings on immigrant children and youth in Europe, an extensive literature search was performed in PSYCINFO, PSYCHArticles, PubMed, Academic and Research Premier and Google scholar databases. Keywords used in the search were “immigrant children”, “adolescents”, “youth”, “immigrant paradox”, “adjustment”, “adaptation”, “education”, “behavior” “psychological” and “names of each European country”. The search was limited to studies on children and youth in published, peer-reviewed

journal articles in English since the 1990s. All studies that we were able to retrieve were published between 1991 and 2014. Scarce empirical work has been published in prior periods, possibly due to less intense immigration research across Europe. An additional search was also performed by examining the references of articles included as well as a systematic search of journals that commonly publish papers on child development and immigration (i.e., *European Journal of Developmental Psychology*, *Child Development*, *Developmental Psychology*, *International Journal of Behavioral Development*, *Journal of Adolescence*, *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, etc.).

As the primary purpose of this study was to shed light on the paradox and morbidity, only studies on first- and second-generation immigrants compared to the native population were included. Additionally, two studies comparing first vs. second-generation immigrants were not considered because the outcomes were gender specific, showing more positive outcomes for first-generation immigrant girls (e.g., Murad, Joung, Verhulst, Mackenbach, & Crijnen, 2004) compared to native boys (e.g., Murad, Joung, van Lenthe, Bengi-Arslan, & Crijnen, 2003a, b). We also excluded studies with no comparison sample of non-immigrants (e.g., Cristini, Scacchi, Perkins, Santilello, & Vieno, 2011; Oppedal, 2011; Sam, 2000; Oppedal, Røysamb, & Heyerdahl, 2005), no comparison within first and second immigrant generations in line with the paradox (e.g., Dimakos & Tasiopoulou, 2003) and those reporting literature reviews only (e.g., Motti-Stefanidi & Masten, 2013).

We considered studies that employed quantitative assessment methods in the main outcomes of interest by reviewing each study and determining whether it met all inclusion criteria: (1) the study reported empirical data; (2) the study examined the relation between migration experience and adaptation in educational, psychological, and behavioral outcomes through group comparisons in either (a) immigrant versus non-immigrant participants or (b) first- versus second-generation immigrant participants. All potentially important articles were assessed from the literature database search and 102 papers clearly met the selection criteria.

## Results

### *Descriptive Overview of Studies*

The studies included in this review represent 14 European countries (see Table 1 for overview). They are divided by ethnic comparison, age, immigrant generation, and adaptation outcomes. The selected papers represent a wide range of methodological diversity regarding sample composition, ethnic groups, and outcomes. Most of the studies included first-generation (foreign-born) and second-generation (host country-born) immigrants, whereas approximately 24 studies included generation comparisons within the immigrant groups (see Table 1). The remaining studies used data on both first- and second-generation immigrants compared to

**Table 1** Description of studies

Country/author	Group comparison ( <i>n</i> )	Age M (SD)	Outcome	Major findings
Austria				
Song (2011)	2nd generation Turkish (104)	15–16 years old	Educational	MM
	Austrians (4275)		School achievement	
Stefanek, Strohmeier, Fandrem, and Spiel (2012)	1st generation (120)	15.61 (NA)	Psychological	MM
	2nd generation (159)		Depressive symptoms	
	Austrians (330)			
Strohmeier and Dogan (2012)	1st generation Turkish (82)	12–15 years old	Behavioral	IP
	2nd generation Turkish (202)		Victimization	
Strohmeier and Spiel (2003)	Austrians (379)	12.71 (1.05)	Behavioral	IP
	Former Yugoslavian (126)		Bullying/victimization	
	Turkish/Kurdish (80)		Peer acceptance (Turkish/Kurdish < Austrians and Yugoslavians)	
Strohmeier, Fandrem, Stefanek and Spiel (2012)	Mixed (36)	12.89 (1.06)		MM
	Austrians (326)	12.70 (.97)	Loneliness (Turkish/Kurdish > Austrians and Yugoslavians)	
	1st generation (126)	16.03 (.98)	Behavioral	
Strohmeier et al. (2008)	2nd generation (175)	15.55 (.88)	Overt aggressive behaviour, reactive aggression	ND/MM
	Austrians (339)	15.49 (.89)	1st generation vs. non-immigrants/2nd generation vs. non-immigrants	
Strohmeier et al. (2008)	1st generation (126)	16.03 (.98)	Behavioral	MM
	2nd generation (175)	15.55 (.88)	Overt aggressive behaviour, reactive aggression	
	Austrians (339)	15.49 (.89)		

Belgium							
Derluyn et al. (2008)	Immigrants (1219)	15.4 (1.79)	Behavioral				
	Belgians (607)	16.5 (1.92)	Hyperactivity and externalizing problems			IP	
			Psychological				
			Anxiety			IP	
			Depression and emotional symptoms			ND	
			Peer problems, avoidance			MM	
Finland							
Jasinskaja-Lahti and Liebkind (2001)	Russians (170)	15.0 (1.50)	Psychological				
	Finnish (190)	14.5 (1.01)	Psychological adaptation, self esteem			IP	
	Soviet, Turkish, Somali, Vietnamese (588)	15.3 (2.0)	Behavioral				
				Behavioral problems			IP
	1st generation (529)		Psychological:				
	2nd generation (57)		Acculturative stress, self-esteem, life satisfaction, sense of mastery				
Liebkind et al. (2004)	Vietnamese (175)	15.40 (1.68)	Educational				
	Finnish (337)	14.99 (1.36)	School adaptation			IP	
Germany							
Hannover et al. (2013)	Immigrants (556)	15.5 (1.05)	Educational				
	Germans (200)		School tracks, performance in literacy test			MM	
Song (2011)	2nd generation Turkish (177)	15–16-year old	Educational				
	Germans (3946)		Test scores – academic performance, school resources			MM	

(continued)

Table 1 (continued)

Country/author	Group comparison ( <i>n</i> )	Age M (SD)	Outcome	Major findings
Titzmann et al. (2014)	German diaspora immigrants from the former Soviet Union (188)	15.2 (NA)	Behavioral	
	Jewish diaspora adolescents from the FSU in Israel (182)		Delinquency	MM
	Germans (237)			
Greece				
Motti-Stefanidi et al. (2008)	Albanians (263)	13.7 (.61)	Educational	
	Pontians (157)		Classroom behavior, GPA	MM
	Greeks (504)		Psychological	
			Emotional symptoms,	MM
			Strengths and difficulties,	N/D
			Self-esteem	
Anagnostopoulos et al. (2004)	Balkans (25), Eastern Europeans (4)	8.4 (3.92)	Psychological	
	Africans (3) Middle Easterns (3)	8.4 (3.95)	Diagnosis and therapeutic services	MM
	37% 2nd generation Greeks (70)			
Giavrimis, Konstantinou, and Hatzichristo (2003)	Immigrants (43)	11–12 years old	Behavioral	
	Greeks (203)		Copying strategies	ND
			Psychological	
			Self esteem	MM
			Educational	
			School performance	MM

Hatzichristou and Hopf (1995)	Greek students migrants from Germany (495)	11.4 (.65)	Educational		
	Elementary school (223)	14.3 (.91)	School adaptation and achievement, learning and language difficulties	MM	
	Secondary school (272)	10-13;13-16 years old			
Motti-Stefanidi (2014)	Greeks (925)	12-15 years old	Educational		
	Immigrants from different countries (1057)		Academic achievement	MM	
	(Three-wave longitudinal project)			(2nd generation <1st generation)	
				Behavioral	
				Conduct, developmental tasks, peer acceptance	MM
				Psychological	
		Self esteem	N/D		
Kolaitis et al. (2003)	1st generation immigrants from Soviet Union (276)	8-12 years old	Psychological		
	Greeks (251)		Adaptation, psychiatric disorders	ND/MM	
			Educational		
			School achievement, language	MM	
			Disobedience (migrant boys < native boys)	IP	
			Psychological		
Motti-Stefanidi, Pavlopoulos, and Tantaros (2011)	Albanians (130)	13.06 (N/A)	Parent-adolescent conflict,	MM	
	1st generation (101);	12.54 (N/A)	Self-esteem, psychological well-being,	ND	
	2nd generation (29)		Educational		
	Greeks (262)		School achievement and popularity	MM	

(continued)

Table 1 (continued)

Country/author	Group comparison ( <i>n</i> )	Age M (SD)	Outcome	Major findings
Motti-Stefanidi et al. (2015)	Mixed immigrants (Albanians, Pontic Greeks and other 6 countries) (1057)	13–15 years old	Educational	
	1st generation (361)		School engagement, GPA	MM
	2nd generation (216)		Behavioral	
	Greeks (525)		Absenteeism (teacher-rated), social adversity	MM
Motti-Stefanidi, Asendorpf, and Maaten (2012)	Mixed group (Albanians, Pontic Greeks and other ethnicities) (1057)	13–15 years old	Educational	
	1st generation (361)		Conduct,	MM
	2nd generation (216)		Peer popularity (teacher-rated) (2nd > 1st)	
	Greeks (525)		GPA (2nd < 1st)	
Sakka (2009)	Immigrants (123) Greeks (577)	4th grade-Lyceum (N/A)	Psychological	
			Well-being, adversity, self-efficacy	MM
			Educational	
			Cultural diversity in class	MM
Motti-Stefanidi et al. (2008)	1st sample Albanians (80) Greeks (245)	12–15 years old	Educational	
			GPA, school absence, peer popularity	MM
			Behavioral	
			Disruptive behavior	MM

Italy		15 years old (NA)	Educational	
Azzolini et al. (2012)	1st generation (1130)	15–19 years old (NA)	School performance in reading, mathematics, and science	IP
	2nd generation (340)			
	Mixed parentage immigrants (2114)			
Azzolini and Barone (2013)	Italians (25,989)	15–19 years old (NA)	Educational Drop out risks, school choice	IP
	1st generation (2389)			
	2nd generation (660)			
	Mixed parentage immigrants (2763)			
Barban and White (2011)	Italians (52904)	13–14 years old	Educational Educational outcome/performance: scholastic results from the middle school final exam and the choice of secondary school	MM
	Wave 1 wave 2			
	Foreigners (6368) immigrants' children (1389) Italians (10,537) Italians (1589)			
Dimitrova (2011)	Albanians (69)	9.03 (1.56)	Behavioral Prosocial and aggressive behavior – social adaptation	IP
	Serbians (61)			
	Italians (162)			
Dimitrova and Chasiotis (2012)	Albanians (152)	9.10 (NA)	Behavioral Prosocial and aggressive behavior	IP
	Serbians (124)			
	Italians (300)			
			Psychological Emotional instability	
			Psychological Depressive symptoms, emotional instability	

(continued)

Table 1 (continued)

Country/author	Group comparison (n)	Age M (SD)	Outcome	Major findings	
Margari et al. (2013)	90 immigrants (57% 1st gen. 43% 2nd gen.)	Immigrants 8 (2.96)	Behavioral		
	Italians (90)		Social competence and social interactions outside school, adaptive functioning, maladaptive behavior	MM	
Rania, Cardinali, Cifatte, and Migliorini (2012)	Reports from 51 teachers and 76 families	15 (NA)	Psychological		
			Somatic complaints		
			Educational		
Vieno et al. (2009)	Immigrants (64)	15 (NA)	Academic performance		
			Italians (248)	Psychological	IP
Vieno et al. (2009)	Italians and 1st gen. immigrants (6744) NA	11, 13 and 15-years-old age groups	Psychological	Psychological well-being, self-esteem, perceived social support, cultural self-efficacy	
				Psychological	
				Subjective well-being, health complaints, self-reported health, life satisfaction and happiness	MM
Netherlands Adriaanse et al. (2014)	Moroccans (407) Turkish (173) Dutch (703)	11.93 years (n = 2097) 13.98 years (n = 2067) 16.07 years (n = 2580)	Behavioral		
				Conduct problems (Moroccans and Turkish > Dutch)	MM
				Peer problems (Moroccans and Turkish > Dutch), Hyperactivity (Dutch > Moroccans and Turkish)	MM
				Psychological	IP
				Emotional symptoms (Dutch > Moroccans)	IP

Bengi-Arslan et al. (1997)	Turkish in Ankara (3127)	6–18 years old	Behavioral	
	Turkish immigrants (833)	4–18 years old	Delinquent behavior, aggressive behavior, social problems	MM
	Dutch (2081)	4–18 years old	Psychological Anxious/depressed, withdrawn, somatic problems, thought problems, attention problems	
Crijnen, Bengi-Arslan, and Verhulst (2000)	Turkish immigrants (524)	10.3 (3.4)	Educational School competence	
	Dutch (1625)	10.5 (4.0)	Behavioral Delinquent behavior, aggressive behavior, social problems	
			Psychological Anxious/depressed, withdrawn, somatic problems, thought problems, attention problems	ND
Murad et al. (2003 a, b)	Turkish immigrants (363)	4–18 years	Behavioral	
	Dutch (1098)	11–18 years	Delinquent behavior (Turkish boys < Dutch boys), Aggressive behavior, Social problems	IP ND MM
Eichelsheim et al. (2010)	Study 1	14.8 (1.03)	Psychological Anxious/depressed, withdrawn, somatic problems, Thought problems, attention problems	MM ND
	Moroccan (139)	14.9 (.93)	Behavioral	
	Dutch (149)	13.3 (.55)	Aggression, delinquency	ND
	Study 2	13.1 (.48)		
	Moroccan (151)			
	Dutch (155)			

(continued)

Table 1 (continued)

Country/author	Group comparison (n)	Age M (SD)	Outcome	Major findings	
Kalmijn and Kraaykamp (2003)	Total sample (19,524)	1st class of secondary school	Academic		
	Lahlah et al. (2013)	Student sample	15.8 (.90)	Downward mobility, school dropout	ND
		Moroccan boys (69)		Behavioral: violent offending	MM
		Dutch boys (295)			
		Delinquent sample			
		Moroccan boys (43)			
		Dutch boys (70)			
Student sample					
Lahlah, van der Knaap, Bogaerts, and Lens (2014)	Student sample	Total sample (students + offenders):	Behavioral: violent delinquency	MM	
	Dutch boys (295)	Dutch: 15.7 (.80)			
	Moroccan boys (69)	Moroccan: 16.1 (1.0)			
	Delinquent sample				
	Dutch boys (70)				
	Moroccan boys (43)				
	Student sample				
Stevens et al. (2003)	Moroccan (817)	11–18 years old	Behavioral <sup>a</sup>	IP	
	Turkish (382)		Delinquent behavior, aggressive behavior,	ND	
	Dutch (1124)		Social problems		
			Psychological <sup>b</sup>	ND	
			Anxious/depressed, withdrawn,		
	Somatic problems, thought problems, attention problems	IP			

	Moroccan (39)	12–18 years old	Psychological	
van Bergen, Smit, van Balkom, van Ameijden, and Saharso (2008)	Turkish (22)		Anxiety, suicidal ideation,	ND
	Dutch (142)		Depression (Dutch > Turkish > Moroccans), Self-image (Dutch and Moroccans > Turkish)	IP
			Loneliness (Turkish > Dutch and Moroccans)	MM
van Geel and Vedder (2010a)	1st generation (152)	14.32 (1.24)	Behavioral	
	2nd generation (285)	13.98 (1.20)	Behavioral problems	ND
	Dutch (406)	14.14 (1.05)	Psychological	
			Psychological problems and Self-esteem	IP
van Geel and Vedder (2010b)	Immigrants (175)	14.64 (1.20)	Academic	
	Dutch (277)	14.52 (.97)	School adaptation, GPA	IP
			Behavioral	
			Behavioral problems	ND
			Psychological	
van Oort et al. (2007a)			Self-esteem, psychological problems	ND
	Turkish (217)	4–18 years old	Behavioral	
	Dutch (723)	7–14 years old	Externalizing problems, aggressive behaviors, delinquent behavior, intrusive behavior	MM
			Psychological	
			Internalizing problems, anxious/depressed, withdrawn, somatic complaints	
van Oort et al. (2007b)	Turkish (217)	13.6 (NA)	Behavioral	
	Dutch (753)	14.5 (NA)	Externalizing problems	MM
			Psychological	
			Internalizing problems	

(continued)

Table 1 (continued)

Country/author	Group comparison (n)	Age M (SD)	Outcome	Major findings
van Ours and Veenman (2003)	1st generation (1702)	15–29 years old	Educational	ND
	2nd generation (1304)		Educational attainment	
van Tubergen and van Gaans (2013)	Dutch (422)	11–19 years old	Academic	ND
	Caribbean (983)		Values and behaviors regarding schooling (oppositional culture)	
	Turkish (668)			
	Moroccan (729)			
	Other (3043)			
	Dutch (5792)			
Vedder, Boekaerts, and Seegers (2005)	11,215	11.3 (.71)	Academic and psychological	ND
	Immigrants (172)	11.0 (.57)	Perceived need for support, perceived availability of social support, self-confidence, school adaptation	
Vollebergh and Huiberts (1997)	Dutch (245)	16 years old	School motivation	IP
	Immigrants (185)		Psychological	
Wissink, Deković, and Meijer (2006)	Dutch (405)	14.43 (.67)	Psychic stress and depression, psychological well-being	MM
	Turkish (106)		Behavioral	
	Moroccan (83)		Aggression (Turkish and Surinamese > Moroccan and Dutch)	
	Surinamese (33)		Delinquency	
Yaman, Mesma, van IJzendoorn, and Bakermans-Kranenburg (2010)	Dutch (319)	25.17 (1.64)	Psychological	ND
	Turkish mothers (175)		Self-esteem	
	Dutch mothers (175)		Behavioral	
		24.02 (1.06)	CBCL externalizing scale	ND

Zwirs et al. (2007)	Moroccan (662)	7.9 (6–11)	Behavioral	
	Turkish (415)	8.0 (5–10)	Externalizing disorders (ADHD*, ODD, CD)	ND/IP*
	Surinamese (349)	7.7 (6–11)	Psychological	
	Dutch (615)	7.6 (5–10)	Mood disorders, anxiety disorders	ND
	Moroccan (702)	7.9 (6–11)	Behavioral	
Zwirs et al. (2011)	Turkish (434)	8.0 (5–10)	Conduct problems (Moroccan > Surinamese > Dutch and Turkish)	MM
	Surinamese (365)	7.7 (6–11)	Hyperactivity (Moroccan > Dutch and Turkish)	MM
Norway	Dutch (684)	7.6 (5–10)	Prosocial behavior (Moroccan < Dutch, Turkish, and Surinamese)	MM
			Peer problems	ND
			Psychological	
			Emotional symptoms (Dutch > Moroccan and Turkish)	IP
Fandrem, Sam, and Roland (2009)	Immigrants (3117)	13–15 years old	Psychological	
	Norwegian (208)		Depressive symptoms	MM
Fandrem, Strohmeier, and Roland (2009)	Immigrants (189)	13–15 years old	Behavioral	
	Norwegian (2938)		Bullying, victimization, and aggressive behaviors	MM/ND
Fandrem, Strohmeier, and Jonsdottir (2012)		13–15 years old	Psychological and behavioral	
			Depressive symptoms and victimization	ND/MM
Noam et al. (2014)	Immigrants (1027)	10–13 years old	Psychological and behavioral	
	Norwegian (1151)		Emotional and conduct problems	MM/IP
Oppedal and Røysamb (2007)	1st generation Muslim immigrants (903)	15–16 years old	Psychological and educational	
	2nd generation Muslim immigrants (763)		Internalizing problems, self-efficacy and school problems	ND/MM
	Norwegian (4640)			

(continued)

Table 1 (continued)

Country/author	Group comparison (n)	Age M (SD)	Outcome	Major findings
Oppedal and Reysamb (2004)	Immigrants (225)	13 years old	Psychological	
	Norwegian (408)		Mental health problems/psychological stress, daily hassles including problems at school and with peers	MM/ND
Sagatun, Lien, Sogaard, Bjertness, and Heyerdahl (2008)	Immigrants (505)	15–16 years old	Psychological and behavioral	
	Norwegian (1092)		Emotional symptoms, conduct problems, hyperactivity-inattention problem, prosocial behaviors, and internalizing problems (combination of depression and anxiety)	ND/MM
Sam (1998)	1st generation (161)	15.34 (1.67)	Psychological	
	Norwegian (209)	15.13 (1.58)	Life satisfaction	MM
Strohmeier et al. (2012)	Immigrants (506)	14–16 years old	Behavioral	
	Norwegian (302)		Bullying and reactive aggression	MM/ND
Torgersen (2001)	Immigrants (2347)	14–16 years old	Behavioral	
	Norwegian (7497)		Different forms of delinquent behaviors	ND/MM
Virta et al. (2004)	Turkish immigrants (296)	12–19 years old	Psychological	
	Swedish (226)		Life satisfaction, self-esteem, and mental health (combination of depression, anxiety, and psychosomatic problems)	IP
Portugal	Turkish immigrants (11)	12–19 years old	Psychological	
	Norwegian (207)		Life satisfaction, self-esteem, and mental health (combination of depression, anxiety, and psychosomatic problems)	MM
Neto (2001)	Angolans (108)	14.8 (1.7)	Psychological	
	Cape Verdians (111)	14.9 (1.6)	Life satisfaction (Portuguese > Angolans)	MM
	Indians (94)	15.4 (2.3)		
	Portuguese (363)	14.5 (1.4)		

Neto (2002)	Angolans (108)	14.8 (1.7)	Psychological	
	Cape Verdians (111)	14.9 (1.6)	Loneliness	ND
	Indians (94)	15.4 (2.3)		
	Portuguese (363)	14.5 (1.4)		
Neto (2009)	Immigrants (755)	15.4 (2.06)	Psychological	
	Portuguese (320)	14.8 (1.30)	Mental health problems	IP
Neto (2010a)	Immigrants (755)	15.4 (2.06)	Behavioral	
	Portuguese	14.8 (1.30)	Social adaptation	ND
	(320)		Psychological	
			Psychological adaptation	
Neto (2010b)	Returned Portuguese immigrants (105)	16.4 (1.40)	Psychological	
	Portuguese who have never immigrated (217)	15.2 (1.19)	Mental health problems	IP
	1st generation (401)	15 year old	Educational	
Schnell and Azzolini (2014)	2nd generation (308)		Mathematical literacy (2nd > 1st and 2nd < Portuguese)	MM
	Portuguese (10,768)			
Seabra and Mateus (2011)	Immigrant origin (150)	11–12 years old	Educational	
	PALOP Portuguese Speaking African Countries (219)		School achievement (Immigrant > Portuguese)	IP
	Portuguese (468)			

(continued)

**Table 1** (continued)

Country/author	Group comparison (n)	Age M (SD)	Outcome	Major findings	
Slovenia					
Slodnjak, Kos, and Yule (2002)	1st generation Bosnian refugees (265)	14–15 years old	Psychological		
	Slovenians (195)		Daily life stress, life satisfaction, depression, traumatic experiences, loss, bereavement, self-esteem, suicidal thoughts	MM/IP	
Spain					
Aparicio (2007)	1.5 generation (528)	14–25 years old	Educational		
	2nd generation (65) Spanish (NA)		Educational and labor opportunities/achievements (2nd < Spanish)	MM	
Castro and Bermúdez (2011)	Latin American Immigrants (357)	17.28 (1.30)	Behavioral		
	Spanish (458)		Behavioral adaptation	MM	
			Perceived discrimination		
Marsiglia, Kulis, Luengo, Nieri, and Villar (2008)	Latin American immigrants (273)	12–15 years old	Risky behaviors for HIV infection		
	Spanish (544)		Behavioral		
	Immigrants (226)		Substance use (intentions and actual use)	IP	
Pantzer et al. (2006)	Spanish (1009)	12–18 years old	Psychological and behavioral	Health related quality of life; (energy; physical wellbeing; psychological wellbeing; self-esteem; relationships with friends; relationships with parents; relationships with teachers; school life; leisure; relationships with health workers, and satisfaction with romantic and sexual life)	MM

Vaquera and Kao (2012)	1st generation (214)	13–16 years old	Educational	MM
	2nd generation (280)		Educational achievement	
	3rd generation (2216)			
Sweden				
Dekeyser, Svedin, Agnafors, and Sydsjö (2011)	2nd generation (142)	12 years old	Psychological and behavioral	ND
	Swedish (1036)		Emotional symptoms, conduct problems, hyperactivity-inattention problem, peer problems, prosocial behaviors	
Holmberg and Hellberg (2008)	Turkish and Middle Eastern immigrants (101)	13–18 years old	Behavioral and psychological	MM/ND
	Swedish (2576)		Bullying, victimization, delinquent behaviors, depression	
	Immigrants (3810)		Behavioral	
Jablonska, Lindberg, Lindblad, and Hjerm (2009)	Swedish (9586)	18–20 years old	Self-harm	MM
	Immigrants (262)		Behavioral	
Rydell (2010)	Swedish (944)	10 years old	Oppositional defiant disorder behaviors and attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder symptoms	MM
Safipour, Higginbottom, Tessma, and Emami (2012)	1st generation (59)	15–19 years old	Psychological	MM
	2nd generation (109)		Emotional problems	
	Swedish (267)			
Safipour, Schopflocher, Higginbottom, and Emami (2013)	1st generation (61)	15–19 years old	Psychological	MM
	2nd generation (107)		A combination of emotional reaction, energy level, and sleep	
	Swedish (266)			
Sam and Virta (2003)	Turkish immigrants (137)	14.9 (1.50)	Psychological	IP/ND
	Vietnamese immigrants (84)	16.1 (1.80)	Life satisfaction, self-esteem, and mental health (combination of depression, anxiety, and psychosomatic problems)	
	Swedish (141)	16.0 (1.70)		

(continued)

Table 1 (continued)

Country/author	Group comparison (n)	Age M (SD)	Outcome	Major findings
Sam et al. (2008)	1st generation (144)	13–18 years old	Psychological and behavioral	MM/IP
	2nd generation (425)		Life satisfaction, self-esteem, psychological problems (combination of depression, anxiety, and psychosomatic problems), school satisfaction, behavior problems	
	Swedish (214)			
Sundelin-Wahlsten, Ahmad, and Knorrng (2001)	Kurdish refugees (118)	16–18 years old	Behavioral	ND
	Swedish (104)		Behavioral disorders (behavioral problem was measured through CBCL)	
Sundelin-Wahlsten, Ahmad, and Knorrng (2002)	Kurdish refugees (118)	16–18 years old	Behavioral and educational	ND/MM
	Swedish (104)		Behavior problems (CBCL), school competence, and social competence	
Svensson, Burk, Stattin, and Kerr (2012)	1st generation (150)	12–16 years old	Behavioral	ND
	2nd generation (173)		Delinquent behaviors	
	Swedish (846)			
Virta et al. (2004)	Turkish immigrants (296)	12–19 years old	Psychological	IP
	Swedish (226)		Life satisfaction, self-esteem, and mental health (combination of depression, anxiety, and psychosomatic problems)	
Switzerland				
Meunier (2011)	1st generation (831)	15 year old	Educational	MM
	2nd generation (720)		Test scores on reading, mathematics and science literacy	
	Swiss (6239)		Psychological	
Neto and Barros (2000)	Portuguese living in Switzerland (95)	16.1 (1.4)		ND
	Portuguese who have never immigrated (363)	14.5 (1.4)	Loneliness	

Song (2011)	Turkish immigrants (207) Swiss (9405)	15–16 years old	Educational Academic performance	MM
Vazsonyi and Killias (2001)	1st generation (277)	17.99 (1.2)	Behavior	IP
	2nd generation (521)	17.85 (1.1)	Deviant behavior (2nd generation >1st generation; 2nd > Swiss)	MM
Vazsonyi et al. (2006)	Swiss (2338)	17.84 (1.1)	Psychological	MM
	1st generation (323)	18.2 (NA)	Internalizing symptoms (1st and 2nd > Swiss)	MM
	2nd generation (597)	18.3 (NA)	Behavior	IP
von Grünigen, Kochenderfer-Ladd, Perren, and Alsaker (2012)	Swiss (2620)	18.4 (NA)	Externalizing behaviors (2nd generation >1st generation; 2nd > Swiss)	IP
	Immigrants (203) Swiss (338)	5.89 (.57)	Behavior Peer acceptance and peer victimization	MM
United Kingdom				
Atzaba-Poria and Pike (2007)	Indian (66)	8.51 (.62)	Psychological	MM
	British (59)		Internalizing behaviors (parental report)	MM
Deater-Deckard, Atzaba-Poria, and Pike (2004)	Indian (66)	8.51 (.62)	Behavioral	ND
	British (59)		Aggressive behavior and delinquency (parental report)	ND
Goodman and Richards (1995)	2nd generation Afro-Caribbean (292)	0–18 years old	Psychological	
	British (1311)		Emotional problems	IP
Hackett et al. (1991)	Gujarati (100)	4–7 years old	Behavioral	IP
	British (100)		Conduct disorder (mothers' report)	IP
			Psychological	
			Emotional disorder (mothers' report)	

(continued)

**Table 1** (continued)

Country/author	Group comparison ( <i>n</i> )	Age M (SD)	Outcome	Major findings
Leavey et al. (2004)	1st generation (206)	13.2 (1.45)	Behavioral	
	UK-born (123)		Smoking and alcohol use Psychological	IP
Molcho, Kelly, and Gabhainn (2011)	1st generation (840)	10–17 years old	Psychological distress	MM
	2nd generation (1127)		Psychological	
	Returning emigrants (350)		Self-reported health Life satisfaction (1st generation immigrants (but not returning emigrants) < 2nd generation)	ND MM

*Note:* *MM* Migration Morbidity, *IP* Immigrant Paradox, *ND* Non Difference immigrant vs. non-immigrants; a, b: these results refer only to self-report. This study also included parent-, and teacher-reported data, where parent-report revealed one difference (attention problems) in favor of the Immigrant Paradox, and the teacher-report revealed three differences (attention problems, delinquent behavior, aggressive behavior) in favor of Migration-Morbidity hypothesis

non-immigrants. All studies refer to ethnically mixed immigrant populations, assessing different adaptation outcomes of culturally diverse populations (e.g., Turkish, Moroccan, Surinamese, Vietnamese, Pakistani, Kurdish, Algerian, Tunisian, South-East Asian, Italian, Greek, Portuguese, Spanish, Former USSR, Bosnian, Middle Eastern, Finnish, Asian, Bangladeshi, Somali, Kosovan, Afro-Caribbean, Central, Latin and South American). The sample characteristics of the studies included in the analysis show that most used convenience samples, whereas a small number made use of national datasets as a research sampling design (e.g., Azzolini, Schnell, & Palmer, 2012; Barban & White, 2011; Song, 2011) or used a population-based local, large scale study (e.g., Azzolini & Barone, 2013; Bengi-Arslan, Verhulst, van der Ende, & Erol, 1997; Motti-Stefanidi, 2014; van Ours & Veenman, 2003; van Tubergen & van Gaans, 2013). Regarding the specific outcomes, studies focused primarily on the behavioral ( $n = 25$ ) and psychological ( $n = 24$ ) followed by educational adaptation outcomes ( $n = 20$ ) and the remaining studies representing a mixture of the three.

The articles included in this review cover many developed countries where immigration traffic is within Europe. They also share some common theoretical characteristics based on deficit models of development with a focus on how children of immigrants are worse off than their non-immigrant peers in a range of developmental outcomes. Common methodological characteristic of all papers regards their disproportionate geographic distribution, possibly due to a variety of intensive immigration experienced by certain European areas and higher concentration of empirical work conducted in Western Europe (e.g., Germany, Netherlands, Sweden, and the United Kingdom). Another methodological aspect is the direction of interest to adolescence, possibly because immigrant adolescents are the fastest growing and sizable proportion of the European school-aged population (Strohmeier & Schmitt-Rodermund, 2008).

In addition, the extent to which the paradox/morbidity was reported in developmental outcomes across studies can be seen in Table 1. A total of 33 studies report mixed evidence, both confirming and departing from the paradox. Alignment with the immigrant paradox required that first-generation immigrants show better adaptation than non-immigrants and that second-generation show worse adaptation than first-generation immigrants. Based on our inspection of reviewed papers, we can see that the paradox was reported mostly in behavioral outcomes followed by psychological and educational outcomes. Table 1 indicates that a total of thirty-seven studies contained results supporting the paradox in comparison to seventy-six supportive of the migration morbidity, most evidently for psychological followed by behavioral and educational outcomes. Finally, 38 studies reported lack of group differences between immigrants and non-immigrants across all developmental outcomes (see Table 1).

## ***The Paradox and Morbidity in Adaptation of Immigrant Children and Youth***

In addressing the main goals of this paper (e.g., review evidence and relevant mechanisms on the immigrant paradox and migration-morbidity in Europe), we follow theory and research in developmental, social, and acculturation psychology. In doing so, we structure the presentation of major conclusions of this review in three steps. First, we present findings from the reviewed papers based on major assumptions derived from these three disciplines and conceptual assumptions regarding adaptation of immigrant populations. Second, we devote special attention to country specific factors and policies toward the integration of immigrants in European societies based on the Migrant Integration Policy Index (MIPEX, 2015). In this way we can draw valuable conclusions on where to focus efforts for improvement of developmental outcomes for children and youth. Third, based on the evidence provided in the analysis of the current research, we provide a set of recommendations for policy and practice for the younger generation of immigrants in Europe.

### ***Findings from the Developmental Psychology Perspective***

In line with developmental psychology frameworks, we were able to confirm that proximal environments (e.g., families, peers, schools, and neighborhoods) relate to immigrant's psychological and behavioral functioning in the host country (Motti-Stefanidi et al., 2012; Motti-Stefanidi, 2014). With regards to the proximal family environment, we found evidence that parental support and higher educational aspirations are associated with higher school adaptation of immigrants compared to non-immigrant children. Strong educational aspirations of immigrant parents account for more favorable school trajectories of their children as compared to those of the non-immigrants (Liebkind, Jasinskaja-Lahti, & Solheim, 2004). This finding is in line with previous research stating that immigrant families perceive education as the main vehicle to improve their children's future. Immigrant parents invest and develop strong educational aspirations, which in turn account for better educational attainment of their children at school (Fuligni, 1997; Fuligni & Witkow, 2004). Similarly, parents' schooling qualifications (Azzolini et al., 2012; van Tubergen & van Gaans, 2013), family cohesion (Kolaitis, Tsiantis, Madianos, & Kotsopoulos, 2003) and family involvement in children's schooling relate to better educational and behavioral outcomes for children (Kalmijn & Kraaykamp, 2003; Lahlah, Lens, Bogaerts, & van der Knaap, 2013; Margari, et al. 2013; Seabra & Mateus, 2011; Song, 2011). Strict parenting styles, high expectations of obedience and encouragement, parental social support are also beneficial for better behavioral outcomes among immigrants (Atzaba-Poria & Pike, 2005; Hackett, Hackett, & Taylor, 1991).

With regard to the proximal school and peer environments, immigrant school composition (e.g., the percentage of immigrant versus non-immigrant adolescents

in a school) and classmate support (e.g., the perceived acceptance and assistance offered to adolescents by classmates) have been suggested as factors determining behavioral problems such as levels of peer violence among immigrant and non-immigrant adolescents (Kolaitis et al., 2003; Vervoort, Scholte, & Overbeek, 2010). Classmate support may buffer threats experienced by immigrants and non-immigrant adolescents in culturally heterogeneous classes, whereas schools with low classmate support further the relationship between immigrant school composition and peer violence. A recent study among 51,636 adolescents from ten European countries and the USA examined the moderator role of classmate support on the relationship between immigrant school composition and peer violence (Walsh et al., 2016). The results revealed that in schools with low classmate support, there was a stronger negative relationship between immigrant school composition and fighting and bullying victimization specifically for immigrant adolescents than in schools with high classmate support. Although the contribution of immigrant school composition was modest compared to the one of classmate support, the findings point out that it is not just the number of immigrants in a class per se, but rather the environment in the classroom which influences levels of behavioral problems and peer violence.

With regards to the proximal neighborhood and settlement environment, we found evidence that neighborhood composition relates to immigrant adolescents' satisfaction with life, since the more homogeneous the ethnic composition of the neighborhood was, the more satisfied the adolescents were (Neto, 2001). Settlement factors such as the duration of sojourn emerged as a significant predictor of loneliness, indicating that the longer residence relates to less loneliness for immigrant adolescents (Neto, 2002). Extended social environments in which immigrant children are raised have a powerful role in accounting for differences in adaptation between immigrant and native samples (Adriaanse, Veling, Doreleijers, & van Domburgh, 2014). Findings reveal a dose-response pattern of the relation between social disadvantage and adaptation problems among immigrant and non-immigrant samples. Specifically, having multiple social risk indicators (i.e., low family SES, neighborhood deprivation, perceived discrimination, and housing instability) leads to much higher probability of adaptation problems for youth. Regrettably, such cumulative social disadvantage is most pronounced for immigrant populations (Fandrem, Sam, & Roland, 2009; Motti-Stefanidi, Masten, & Asendorpf, 2015) but once controlled for, most differences between immigrant and native adolescents disappear (Adriaanse et al., 2014; Murad et al., 2003a, b).

### *Findings from the Social Psychology Perspective*

Our review revealed particularly rich findings in line with the social psychology theory and research emphasizing social processes and intergroup context (Verkuyten, 2005). Extant research findings indicate that various forms of perceived discrimination (e.g., personal, ethnic, group) were significantly and negatively affecting immigrant students' adaptation, such as psychological problems (Bayram Özdemir &

Stattin, 2014; Briones et al., 2012; Cristini et al., 2011; Liebkind & Jasinskaja-Lahti, 2000; Liebkind et al., 2004), mental health problems (Neto, 2010b; Virta, Sam, & Westin, 2004), loneliness (Neto, 2002, 2010a) and behavioral problems (Castro & Bermudez, 2011). Particularly interesting were findings from a large scale study reported by Motti-Stefanidi, Asendorpf, and Masten (2012), where group discrimination was empirically proven to work as a factor that influenced personal discrimination. In turn, personal discrimination was determined by perceived group discrimination as well as by immigrants' individual features related to the way youth experience group and personal discrimination (Motti-Stefanidi et al., 2012).

### ***Findings from the Acculturation Psychology Perspective***

Consistent with acculturation theory and research, we found evidence supporting the influence of culture on adaptation of youth (Berry, 2006). Traditionally, the acculturation strategy of integration (i.e., the adoption of both host and own ethnic cultures) has been indicated as most beneficial for youth adaptation (Virta et al., 2004). Similarly, strong cultural maintenance and strong ethnic identity are significant predictors of higher self-esteem, better life satisfaction, and less mental health problems among immigrant youth (Cristini et al., 2011; Virta, Sam, & Westin, 2004). Acculturation in terms of involvement in host culture proved to be a significant predictor for immigrants' school adaptation, whereas acculturation in terms of involvement in one's own ethnic culture was a significant predictor for psychological well-being (Motti-Stefanidi, Pavlopoulos, Obradovic, & Masten, 2008). We can conclude that contexts providing opportunities for immigrants to maintain and develop their cultural heritage while also combining elements of the new settlement culture are more beneficial for developmental outcomes of children and youth.

### ***Country Level Characteristics and Adaptation of Immigrant Children and Youth***

All three theoretical perspectives guiding our study presume that when receiving societies promote multiculturalism policies toward immigrants and create educational and occupational choices, there is a favorable context for successful adaptation of their children (Motti-Stefanidi et al., 2012). With these perspectives in mind, we found empirical evidence for the immigrant paradox in countries scoring among the top ten in the world on the Migrant Integration Policy Index (MIPEX, 2015): Belgium (Derluyn, Broekaert, & Scyuten, 2008), Finland (Jasinskaja-Lahti & Liebkind, 2001; Liebkind & Jasinskaja-Lahti, 2000; Liebkind et al., 2004), Netherlands (Stevens et al., 2003; van Geel & Vedder, 2010a, 2010b), Portugal

(Neto, 2009, 2010b; Seabra & Mateus, 2011) and Sweden (Sam & Virta, 2003; Virta et al., 2004). Arguably, in countries that promote active integration and biculturalism policy and offer a secure and welcoming context along with quality educational and occupational opportunities, children of immigrants do well compared to their non-immigrant peers. Regrettably, we can only presume the presence of such a relationship without sound empirical foundation testing nation effects on individual adaptation. To our knowledge, only one recent large-scale cross-national study (Stevens et al., 2015; total  $N = 53,218$ ) explored differences in emotional and behavioral problems between immigrant and native adolescents in Denmark, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, Spain, the United States, and Wales. The results of this study support the migration morbidity perspective (i.e., immigrant adolescents show more problem behaviors than their native peers), but no clear evidence on the country effects was found. The authors interpret this finding as remarkable given indications for differences in migration policies and attitudes against immigrants across all participating countries. They also suggest that country level differences in immigrant attitudes and policies may be associated with differences in prejudice and discrimination (García-Coll et al., 1996; Stevens et al., 2015).

### ***Policy Recommendations***

Several recommendations for policy and practice can be outlined. Based on the reviewed literature, we are able to conclude that theoretical assumptions of developmental (e.g., families, peers, schools, neighborhoods), social (e.g., intercultural behaviors and attitudes, discrimination) and acculturation psychology (e.g., cultural maintenance and adoption, biculturalism) are powerful constituents of adaptation for immigrant children and youth in Europe. Taken together, these constituents should be framed within policies and programs targeting optimal adaptation of immigrant children and youth.

From a developmental psychology view, families, schools and neighborhoods have a crucial role to play in setting up beneficial contexts for children and youth aimed at recognition and prevention of problems. Intervention programs should target immigrant families (e.g., fostering parental support, family cohesion and aspirations for their children), schools (e.g., promoting peer acceptance, a class atmosphere where immigrants feel accepted and liked by others because of common goals or common successes in achievement, while finding creative ways of accommodating the needs of immigrant students from disadvantaged families and allocating resources to schools) and neighborhoods (e.g., providing secure and multicultural environments where children can grow up).

From a social psychology view, the implementation of policy for immigrants must take into account socio-cultural background when planning any interventions (Neto, 2010a, 2010b). Preventive care programs should aim to diminish social inequalities (Pantzer et al., 2006), find successful strategies to promote educational support and positive attitudes towards immigrants (Motti-Stefanidi, 2014), while

promoting structural changes in the contexts where they live with value of diverse cultural heritages as enriching elements.

From an acculturation psychology view, efforts should focus on promoting bicultural strategies for immigrants as well as multicultural policies with awareness of cultural factors and variations in the behavior of children and youth depending on their culture of origin, as well as their efforts to sustain a multicultural identity (Strohmeier & Spiel, 2003). As official policies across countries vary, policy collaborations across countries may allow promoting immigrant children and youth's adaptation (Fandrem et al., 2009; Virta et al., 2004). All the aforementioned recommendations are also reflective of the recent mission statement on immigrant children and youth in a global perspective, aimed at successful incorporation of immigrants into new societies through well-informed policies and practices for positive development of these populations (Dimitrova, 2016).

### *Caveats and Future Outlook*

There are a number of shortcomings that may provide fertile ground for future research. First, there were heterogeneous measurements and designs in the papers reviewed here. Second, the literature reviewed most consistently used self-reports as a source of information, whereas only a few studies used a combination of self-, teacher-, and parent-reports (e.g., Kolaitis et al., 2003; Stevens et al., 2003). A combination of multiple informants is an important issue in the study of child and adolescent adaptation as significant others (e.g., teachers, parents, peers) provide unique information about children's behavior in different developmental contexts. Third, an important variable rarely considered in research designs is the timing of migration and the period when the data are collected. Such issues relate to the importance of considering both the length of stay in the host country but also the age when immigrant children move from their birth places. The literature on adaptation outcomes in immigrant populations has clearly demonstrated that positive forms of adaptation have different time courses related to the period of settlement in the host country. For instance, it has been suggested that psychological problems are higher at the initial contact with the host country and relatively lower over time, while academic and social interaction skills improve with time (Berry, 2006). Age group is another factor that needs to be considered. As stated earlier, most studies investigate outcomes within adolescent samples (e.g., Oppedal & Røysamb, 2007; Strohmeier et al., 2012; Virta et al., 2004), while others combine both child and adolescent samples (e.g., Noam, Oppedal, Idsoe, & Panjwani, 2014). Even without being an immigrant, adolescence is a period signed by significant changes in multiple developmental domains. A limited number of contributions have involved participants in early and middle childhood and thus, not distinguishing specific developmental stages in immigrant samples is a considerable flaw in previous research (Hackett et al., 1991; Vollebergh et al., 2005). Fourth, most of the current studies are primarily based on cross-sectional research designs. Adaptation

processes in immigrant populations need to be examined longitudinally to accurately trace the emergence and occurrence of children's successful adaptation in different developmental stages.

The above-mentioned methodological and contextual characteristics of the studies on children of immigrants in Europe posit two important demands for future research. First, complex research designs examining multilevel variables (e.g., age, ethnic groups, timing of migration, type of outcomes, ethnic community characteristics and migration history) in large scale immigrant samples that draw on multiple informants are needed. Second, a longitudinal approach on factors leading to positive adaptation among immigrants should translate in specific policy and intervention programs. These two design elements are vitally important to promote successful adaptation in immigrant populations across different European countries, offering an excellent tool for understanding their development and how to avoid maladaptive mechanisms.

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