

Fathers in Diverse Contexts: Immigrant Fathers in the US

Fathers and Fathering in Contemporary Contexts
May 24, 2012

Kimberly A. Updegraff
School of Social & Family Dynamics, Arizona State University
NICHD R01 HD39666



Immigrant Fathers in the US: *Opportunities and Challenges*



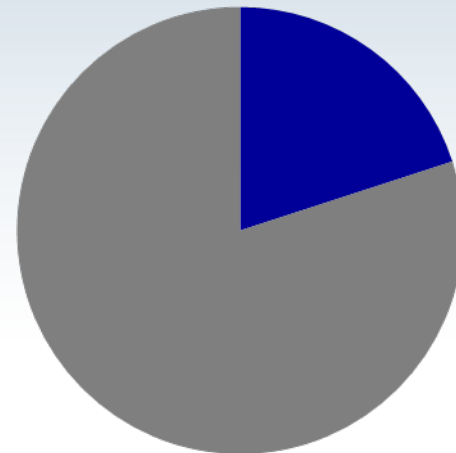
Shifting US Demographics



- The foreign-born population includes nearly **40 million** people or **13%** of the **US population** (US Census Bureau, 2012).
- By 2050, the foreign-born population is projected to reach **81 million** or **19%** of the population (Pew Research Center, 2008).

Presence of Families and Children

- **77%** of foreign-born households were **family** households (US Census Bureau, 2012).
- **20%** of children in the **US** have immigrant parents.



Research on Immigrant Fathers



Decade	Father or Father-Child Relations	+ Immigrant or Foreign-born or Latino or Asian	% of citations
1990-1999	10,563	117	< 1%
2000-2011	21,164	768	4%

Immigrant Fathers in Families



- **95%** of immigrant fathers live in 2-parent households (Hernandez et al., 2008).
- Immigrant fathers are twice as likely as native-born fathers to live in **3-generation** households (Hernandez).
- Opportunities to study fathers as they are embedded in the **family system** (Minuchin, 1974; Cox & Paley, 2003).

Immigrant Fathers in Families



- **Family Systems Perspective**

Interdependence among individual family members, subsystems within the family, and properties of the family as a whole (Minuchin, 1974).

Immigrant Fathers in Families



- **Exploration of similarities and differences in Chinese mothers' and fathers' parenting styles and values (Chuang & Su, 2009)**
- **Investigation of the mother-father relationship as a mediator of father involvement between prenatal period and toddlerhood (Tamis-LeMonda et al., 2009)**

Immigrant Fathers in Families



Coparenting in Mexican American Families

- **What are the predictors of coparenting? (Cabrera, Shannon, & La Taillade, 2009)**
- **Do mothers and fathers coordinate their differential treatment of sons and daughters? (Solmeyer et al., 2009)**
- **Are there different patterns of mother-father involvement in adolescents' peer relationships? (Updegraff et al., in press)**

Role of Cultural Adaptation



- **Cultural adaptation as a process that occurs differentially among family members**
- **Parent-Child Discrepancies**
- **Youth acculturate at faster rates than parents, leading to problematic family relationships, and in turn, youth maladjustment (Portes & Rumbaut, 1996; 2001; Szapocznik & Kurtines, 1980, 1993).**

Role of Cultural Adaptation



Measuring of Parent-Child Acculturation Gaps (Birman, 2006)

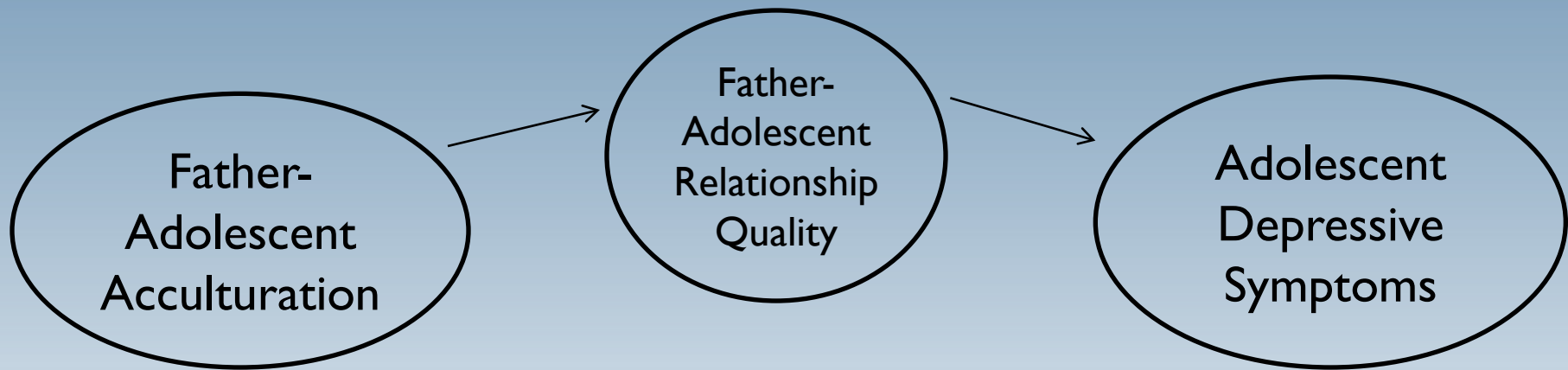
- Levels of **conflict** in immigrant versus native-born families
- **Perceived acculturation gaps** as rated by a single family member, typically youth
- **Actual discrepancies** as reported by multiple family members

Role of Cultural Adaptation



- **Current work focuses primarily on actual discrepancies.**
- **Several studies find that discrepancies with fathers, but not mothers, are linked to youth adjustment (Kim et al., 2009; Schofield et al., 2008; Updegraff et al., 2006).**
- **Moderating and mediating processes: father-child relationship quality**

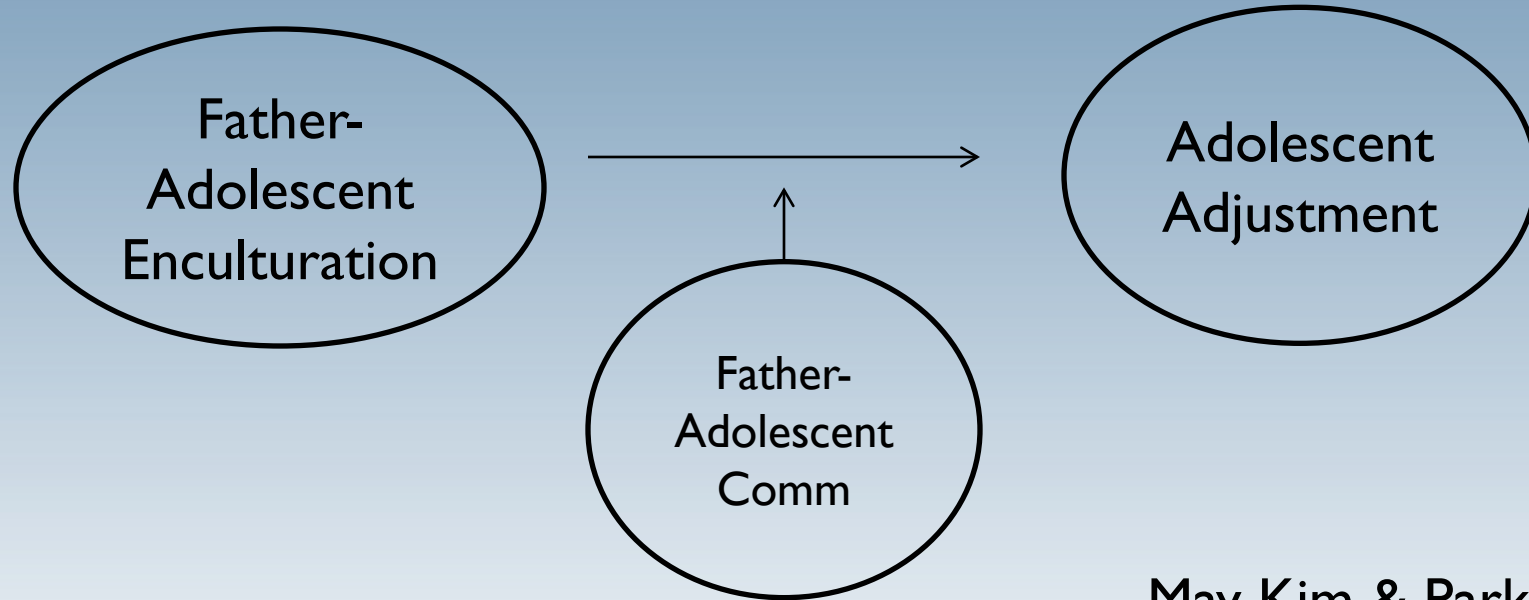
Role of Cultural Adaptation



Father-adolescent warmth, monitoring, and inductive reasoning **mediate** the associations between acculturation discrepancies and youth adjustment.

Su Yeong Kim, Chen, Li, Huang & Moon (2009)

Role of Cultural Adaptation



May Kim & Park (2011)

Father-adolescent communication **moderates** enculturation discrepancy --- adjustment linkages.

Immigrant Fathers in the US: *Opportunities and Challenges*





Defining Immigrant Fathers

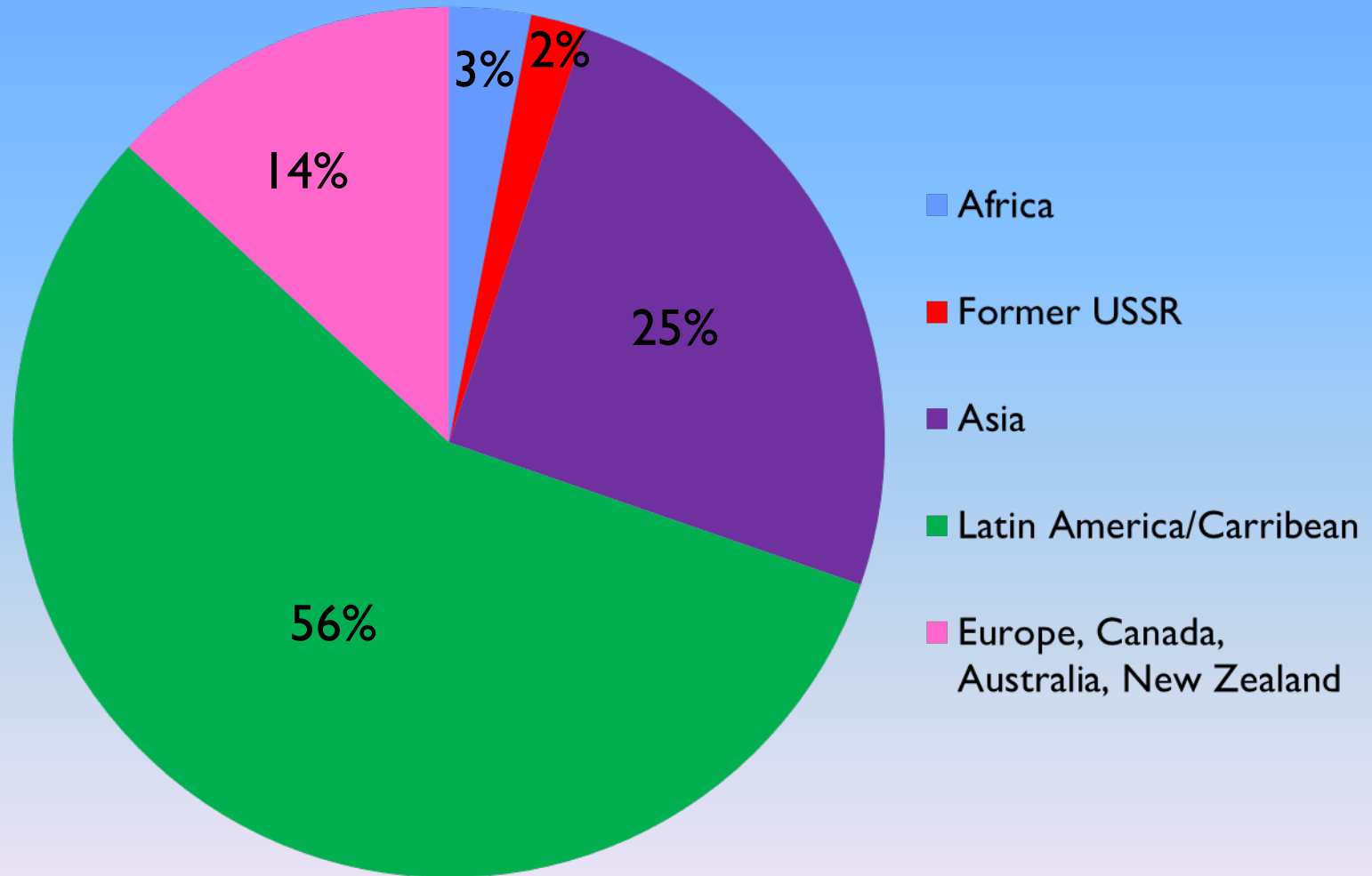
- **Fathers living with dependent children under the age of 18 who were born outside of the country or who live with a foreign-born wife (Hernandez & Brandon, 2004).**



Diversity Among Immigrant Fathers

- **Country of Origin**
- **Educational and Economic Resources**
- **Legal/Citizenship Status**
- **English Language Fluency**

Foreign-Born Fathers

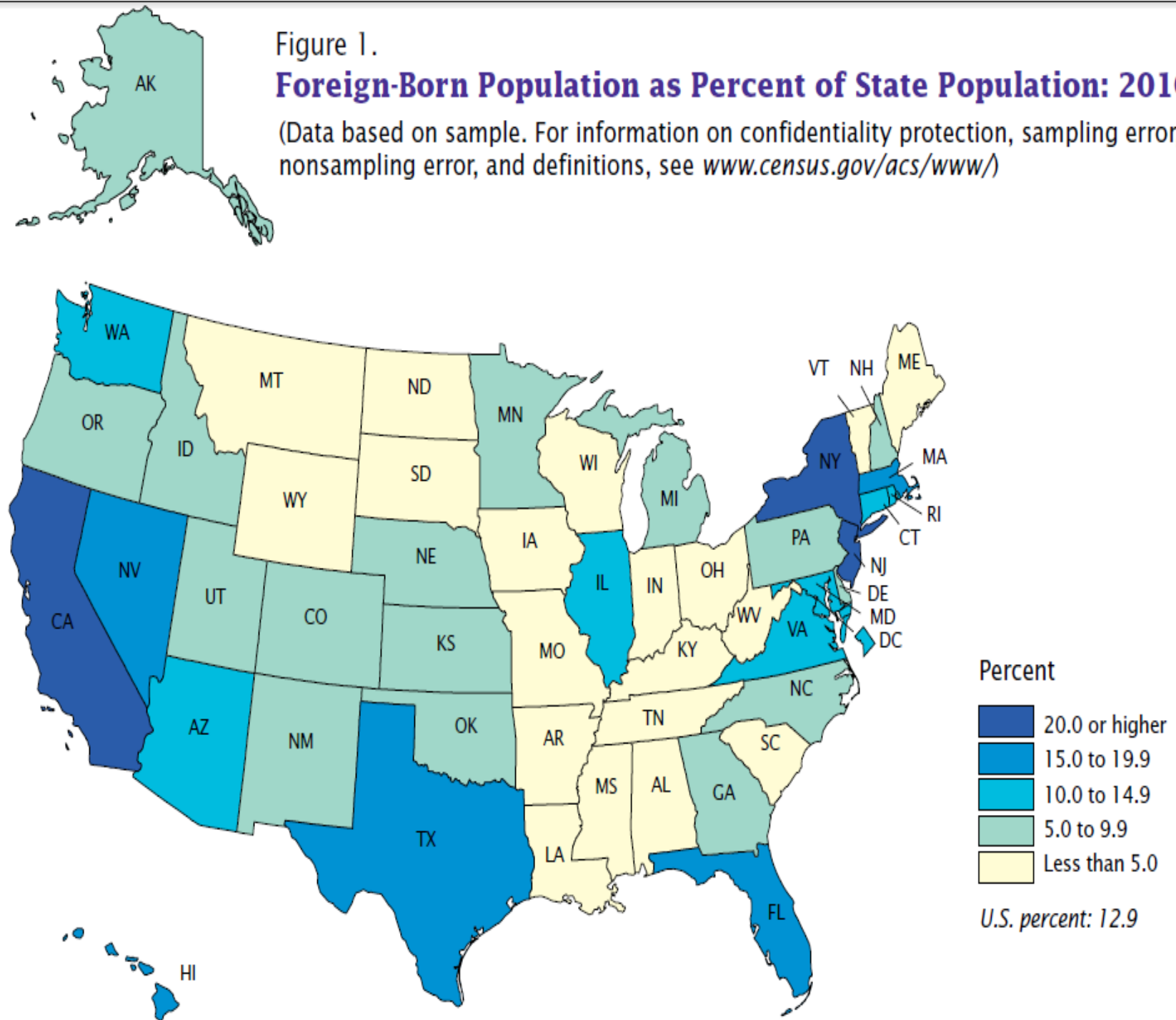


Hernandez et al. (2008)

Figure 1.

Foreign-Born Population as Percent of State Population: 2010

(Data based on sample. For information on confidentiality protection, sampling error, nonsampling error, and definitions, see www.census.gov/acs/www/)





Diversity Among Immigrant Fathers

Educational and Economic Circumstances

HS Degree: 36%

26% (Mexico) to 58% (Jamaica)

College Degree: 26%

4% (Mexico) to 77% (Taiwan)

% poverty: 15%

4% (Philippines) to 31% (Hmong)



Diversity Among Immigrant Fathers

Educational and Economic Circumstances

HS Degree: **36%**

26% (Mexico) to **58%** (Jamaica)

College Degree: **26%**

4% (Mexico) to **77%** (Taiwan)

% poverty: **15%**

4% (Philippines) to **31%** (Hmong)



Diversity Among Immigrant Fathers

- **Legal/Citizenship Status**

50% non-citizens with US-born children

29%

64%

Taiwan

Mexico

- **Limited English Fluency**

50% foreign-born fathers

< 10%

>70%

Africa, Europe

Mexico, Vietnam

Diversity Among Immigrant Fathers



- **Legal/Citizenship Status**

50% non-citizens with US-born children

29%

Taiwan

64%

Mexico

- **Limited English Fluency**

50% foreign-born fathers

< 10%

Africa, Europe

>70%

Mexico, Vietnam



Diversity Among Immigrant Fathers

- **Country of Origin**
- **Educational and Economic Resources**
- **Legal/Citizenship Status**
- **English Language Fluency**
- **Characteristics of Sending Community**
- **Reasons for, timing of, and circumstances surrounding migration to US**



Implications for Research Design

Comparative Research Designs

- + Identify similarities and differences across groups
- + Important for establishing measurement equivalence



Implications for Research Design

Comparative Research Designs

- + Identify similarities and differences across groups**
- + Important for establishing measurement equivalence**
- Deficit model**
- Ignores within-culture variability**

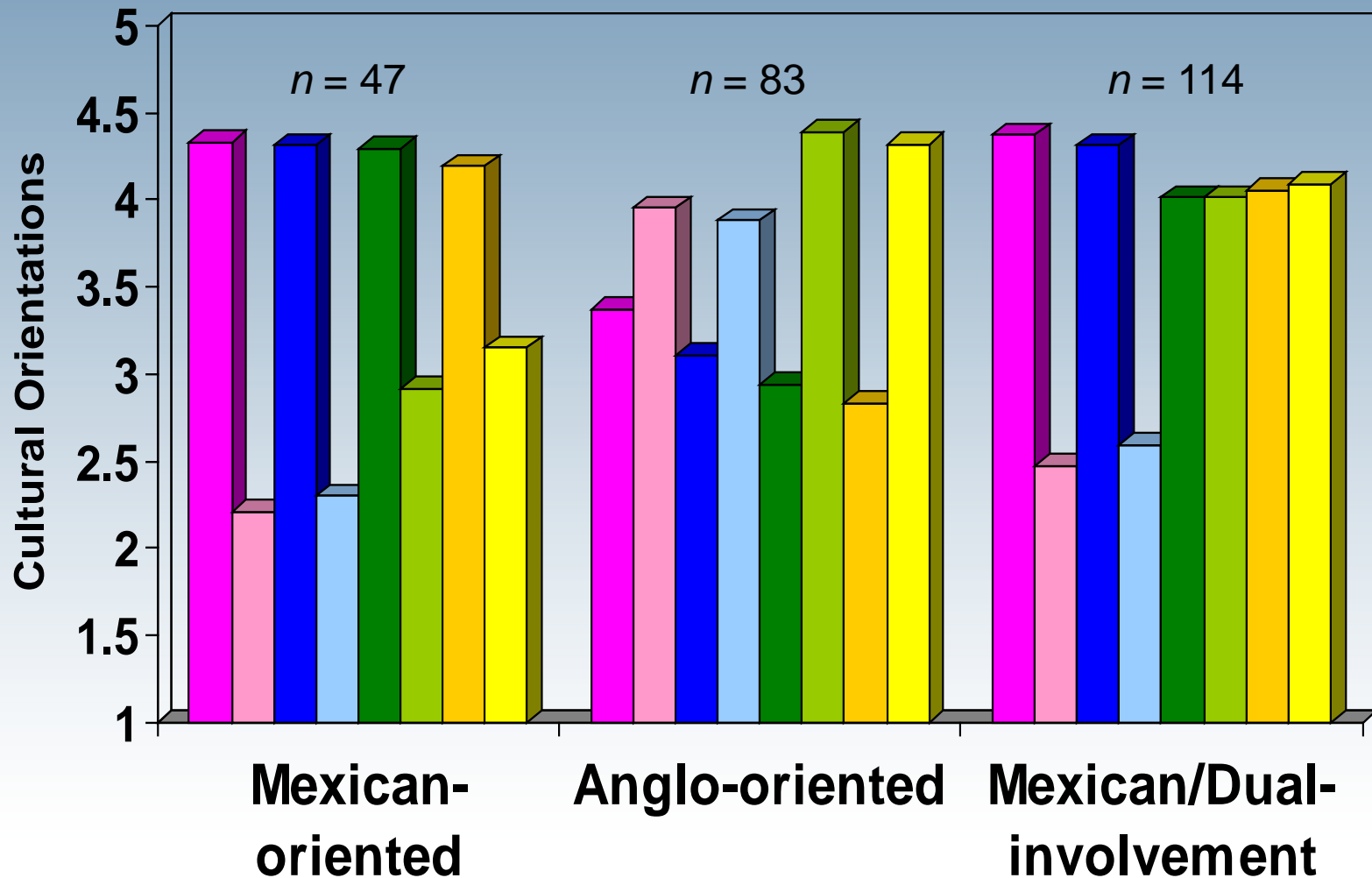


Implications for Research Design

Within-Group Variability

- **Scholars note that there is substantial variability **within** groups.**
- **Opportunities to focus on culture-specific processes and identify how they are directly linked to fathering constructs.**

Profiles of Predominantly Immigrant Mexican-Origin Families





Culture as a Dynamic Process

- Immigration and adaptation are dynamic processes that occur over time.
- **Longitudinal** data are rare, however, and we know little about trajectories of cultural adaptation and how they are interrelated within families.

Reciprocal Influences



- **Little attention has been paid to the ways that immigrant fathers may influence the parenting and family relationships of fathers in the receiving or host context.**

On Parenting

sponsored by

VOICES
OF MENINGITIS™

What Immigrant Parents Can Teach Us About Raising Good Kids

June 8, 2009 |  [RSS Feed](#) |  [Print](#) [Comment \(6\)](#) [Tweet](#) [Like](#) [+1](#) 0 [Share](#)

Culture has a big effect on how parents raise children, and since 20 percent of children in the United States were born to immigrant parents, with that number expected to rise to 30 percent by 2015, those families have a big impact on American culture, too.

As a member of an immigrant family (my husband grew up in Russia), I'm intensely curious about how parents use their native culture for better or worse in raising children. The current issue of the *Journal of Family Psychology*, which is all about immigrant families, gives clues as to how culture affects [child rearing](#). For instance, immigrant Chinese-American moms and dads are much better at being on the same page in their expectations for children than are European-American mothers and fathers, who vary much more in their [parenting style](#) and

Related Articles

[U.S. Teens Heading for Heart Trouble: Study](#)[Parents Often Lose](#)[Child](#)

Opportunities

Rapidly growing segment of US

Prominent Role of Fathers

Understand Families as Systems

Challenges

Defining Immigrant Fathers

Diversity and Within-group Variability

***Interdependent Trajectories of Culture,
Family & Individual Development***

