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## RISK, RESILIENCE, AND POSITIVE DEVELOPMENT AMONG LATINO YOUTH

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National data indicate that Latino youth engage in high rates of many health risk behaviors, including attempted suicide (10%, a rate 32% to 86% higher than that of Black or White youth), unprotected sex (42%, a rate 12% to 26% higher than that of Black or White youth), lifetime cocaine use (11%, a rate 47% to 600% higher than that of Black or White youth; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC], 2007). Latino youth also have the highest rates of school dropout among major ethnic groups in the U.S. (26% compared to 11% of all people in the United States in the 16- to 24-year age group; National Center for Education Statistics, 2003). Youth violence, including both perpetration and victimization, are major concerns, with estimates that 9% of Latino males between the ages of 12 and 17 are victims of violence (National Center for Mental Health Promotion and Youth Violence Prevention, 2004), and that Latino gangs constitute 46% of all gangs in the United States (National Youth Gang Center, 2006).

These sobering statistics offer just a sampling of comparative national statistics on youth risk behaviors; a more complete examination would reveal varied patterns of risk by ethnicity depending on the particular behaviors being examined. The statistics showing Latino youth to be at high risk for many risk behaviors point to grave concerns for the development of a large and rapidly growing segment of the U.S. population. Attending to these statistics alone, however, does little to inform programs and policies that might improve the health, well-being, and achievement of Latinos, nor does it acknowledge that many Latino youth are developing quite well despite exposure to conditions in their social environments that reduce their chances for positive development (Ceballos, 2004; Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2001). In this chapter, we argue that a broader perspective is needed, one that accounts for the full range of adaptive and maladaptive behavior and attends to risk factors in the social environment that increase the likelihood of maladaptation as well as factors

that mitigate risk among Latino youth. After describing the population of Latino youth in the United States, we outline theoretical perspectives on resilience, particularly as they relate to Latino children and youth. We review literature that informs current understanding of resilience across domains of education and career development, psychosocial functioning, and health behaviors. We pay particular attention to how societal expectations and cultural beliefs and values directly influence Latino youth development. We conclude by delineating future directions to expand the horizons of research on positive development among Latino youth in the United States.

### LATINOS AND RESILIENCE— SETTING THE STAGE

The U.S. Office of Management and Budget (OMB) defines Hispanics or Latinos as “person[s] of Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, South or Central American, or other Spanish culture or origin regardless of race” (OMB, 1997). Latinos constitute the largest and one of the fastest-growing ethnic groups in the United States (Pew Hispanic Center, 2006). Latinos are a diverse group, varying in national origin and in immigration and migration histories; moreover, Latinos have settled in rural, suburban, and urban communities across many regions of the United States (Chun, 2007; Urban Institute, 2002). It is important that within-group studies of Latinos and race/ethnic-group comparative studies take such variation into account. These differences carry important implications for understanding the extent and nature of risk exposure, the availability of protective processes, differences in rates of engagement in problem behaviors, and opportunities for successful developmental outcomes (Cauce, 2002; Umaña-Taylor & Fine, 2001). For example, it makes little sense to compare the relative academic success of Cuban Americans in well-established Cuban communities in Miami to the relatively poorer academic performance of predominantly Mexican-origin youth in Atlanta without at least accounting for cultural and sociopolitical factors that contribute to those differences (e.g., level of education/socioeconomic status [SES] before immigrating, availability of culturally relevant services in host community).

### WHAT IS RESILIENCE?

Resilience is best viewed as a dynamic and multidimensional process through which individuals experience positive outcomes despite exposure to significant adversity (Luthar, Cicchetti, & Becker, 2000; Masten, 2001, 2007). Early descriptive writings focused on individuals who appeared to “make it” despite growing up under adverse circumstances and implied that those individuals were somehow invulnerable. Recent research, however, has shown that resilience is the result of “ordinary” human adaptive processes (Masten, 2001, 2007); that is, positive adaptation occurs when young people are able to benefit from protective processes that offset the effects of risk exposure. Resilient youth are active participants in this process in that they appear to generate health-promoting opportunities for themselves, for example, by forging connections to competent and caring adults in their families and communities (e.g., Lopez & Lechuga, 2007). Resilience is increasingly viewed as a multilevel systems concept spanning biological, social, and cognitive processes in transaction with factors in the family, neighborhood, school, societal, and cultural levels of analysis (Kuperminc & Brookmeyer, 2006; Masten, 2007).

Identifying resilience involves two inferences: first, that the individual has been exposed to significant adversity and, second, that the person is functioning adequately (Luthar et al., 2000; Masten, 2001, 2007). The former is captured by assessments of an individual’s exposure to conditions of risk that are known to affect development. With regard to the latter, there is some debate about what constitutes adequate functioning (e.g., absence of psychopathology, better than average academic performance, etc.); yet, there is growing consensus that the concept of resilience has utility for increasing understanding of both adaptive and maladaptive functioning (Luthar et al., 2000).

### THE CULTURAL-ECOLOGICAL- TRANSACTIONAL PERSPECTIVE

The ecological-transactional perspective provides a fundamental and overarching framework for resilience research. After presenting key features of this perspective, we argue that it

underestimates the ways that cultural factors contribute to development, and we offer a *cultural-ecological-transactional* perspective of resilience.

The ecological-transactional perspective identifies multiple levels of influence on the developing child, ranging from individual characteristics to broad cultural beliefs and values (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Cicchetti & Toth, 1997), and organizes environmental characteristics hierarchically, from proximal features (e.g., family interactions) that exert direct influences on children's psychological development and behavioral adaptation to distal features that exert indirect influences (e.g., mass media). Cicchetti and Toth (1997) propose that the environment provides opportunities and constraints on development; the child's task, in turn, is to organize, coordinate, and integrate information from the environment to negotiate the tasks of each developmental phase.

*Ontogenetic development* lies at the center of the ecological-transactional model and refers to factors within the person that contribute to development and adaptation (Cicchetti & Toth, 1997). Foci of ontogenetic development include aspects of personality that contribute to vulnerability for maladjustment (e.g., Blatt's notion of self-critical and dependent depressive vulnerabilities; see Leadbeater, Kuperminc, Blatt, & Hertzog, 1999) or neurobiological processes (e.g., brain structures involved in emotion regulation; see Steinberg & Avenevoli, 2000). The term *microsystem* refers to the immediate settings in which the individual lives, usually including the family, school, neighborhood, and peer group. More distal levels include the *mesosystem*, which includes interactions between two or more microsystems, the *exosystem*, which includes policies, practices, and norms of the communities in which children and their families live, and the *macrosystem*, which includes underlying cultural values and beliefs (Bronfenbrenner, 1988; Cicchetti & Toth, 1997).

One limitation of the ecological-transactional model for studying resilience among Latinos and other cultural minority groups in the United States is the implication that sociocultural factors play only a distal and indirect role (García Coll et al., 1996). For example, cultural beliefs and values about child rearing and the instrumental competencies needed for successful development set the stage for variations in parenting practices (Cauce, 2002; Jurkovic et al., 2004; Ogbu, 1981). Whereas

parenting and socialization processes have been viewed as the primary conduits for the transmission of cultural beliefs and practices (Hughes et al., 2006), it is also important to recognize more proximal influences of sociocultural factors (García Coll et al., 1996). For example, Latino youth have been shown to construe the self as interdependent with important others, and the challenge of reconciling this sense of interdependence with dominant expectations for independence shapes the ways youth approach developmental tasks of relationship formation, achievement and autonomy (Greenfield, Keller, Fuligni, & Maynard, 2003). Moreover, issues of race and ethnicity, minority status, economic stratification, immigration history, and current immigration status are determinants of the neighborhoods Latino youth live in, the adult role models they are exposed to, the schools they attend, the classrooms they are placed in, and the expectations their teachers have for their educational attainment. Cultural beliefs and values form the "lens" through which Latino youth experience and organize the information they receive from their environment and delineate the strategies they undertake to meet the challenges and opportunities of their development. Thus, within-group cultural beliefs, values, and practices can help explain between-group variations in risk and protective processes (Kuperminc, Blatt, Shahar, Henrich, & Leadbeater, 2004; Smith & Guerra, 2006).

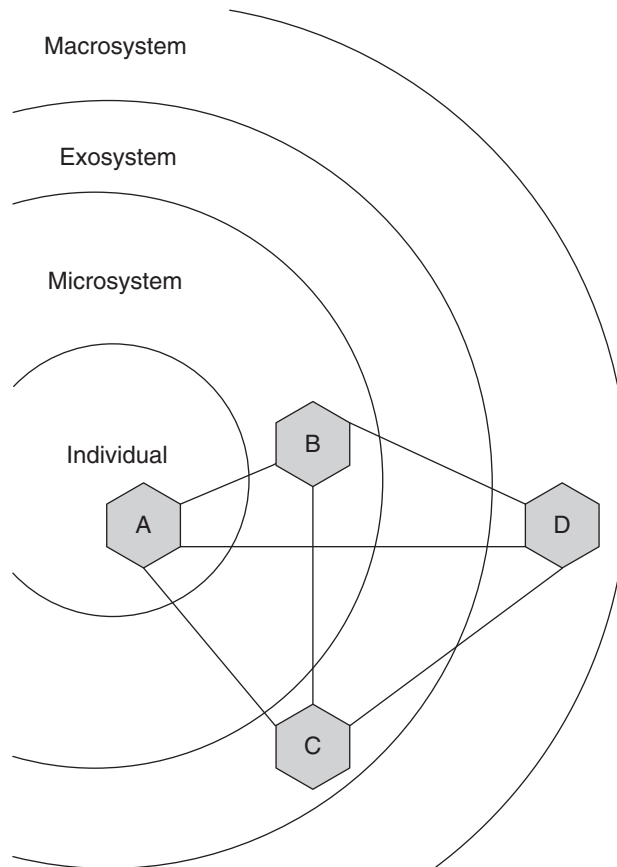
A second limitation lies in common uses of the ecological transactional model rather than in shortcomings of the model itself. Specifically, researchers drawing on this model have tended to emphasize ecological *structures*, or levels of analysis, rather than ecological *processes* (Bronfenbrenner, 1988). Relatedly, while emphasizing ecological influences on ontogenetic development, most research has failed to recognize the interdependence of development and well-being occurring at individual, relational, and collective levels (Evans & Prilleltensky, 2007). In this view, well-being occurs when individual, relational, and collective needs of individuals and communities are fulfilled. It is likely that the "proper" balance of these dimensions varies as a function of cultural beliefs and values (Birman, Weinstein, Chan, & Beehler, 2007). For example, achievement of psychological autonomy has long been considered a central developmental task of adolescence (Allen, Hauser, O'Connor, & Bell, 2002). Research

over the past two decades has recognized that autonomy in the family develops optimally in the context of strong relationships with parents (e.g., Allen et al., 2002) and that there are cultural variations in how youth and their families negotiate the balance of “autonomous-related” self-development (Kagitcibasi, 2005). Kwak (2003) notes that for immigrant and nonimmigrant families from collectivist cultures who have settled in Western societies, exposure to economic hardship necessitates that youth delay establishing their autonomy. However, the youths’ “self-less” contributions to the family are unlikely to lead to negative developmental consequences, because such contribution is consistent with their cultural beliefs and practices.

When seeking to understand resilience among Latino youth, it is necessary to incorporate a *cultural-ecological-transactional* perspective

that holds young people’s culture of origin and its interaction with mainstream cultures as central foci (García Coll et al., 1996; Ogbu, 1981; Perreira & Smith, 2007). As shown in Figure 13.1, we argue that development is influenced by individual and microsystem transactions with community and sociocultural (i.e., exosystem and macrosystem) processes. These include transactions of individuals with proximal settings of family, peers, school, and neighborhood (individual-microsystem transactions, path A-B), community norms and policies (individual-exosystem transactions, path A-C), and cultural beliefs and values (individual-macrosystem transactions, path A-D). We also consider processes involving the transactions of the family microsystem with other settings, such as school and neighborhood (mesosystem transactions, path B-B), community norms and policies

**(Pathways between the letters represent transactions across ecological levels.)**



**Figure 13.1** An Ecological Model of Development

(microsystem-exosystem transactions, path B-C), and cultural beliefs and values (microsystem-macrosystem transactions, path B-D).

## TOWARD A MODEL OF LATINO RESILIENCE

The preceding overview of the cultural-ecological-transactional perspective provides a framework for constructing a model of Latino resilience. Models of resilience must incorporate the following elements: (a) identification of risk and protective processes at each ecological level; (b) inclusion of indices of both adaptive and maladaptive development; and (c) specification of the mechanisms (i.e., direct or “main” effects, moderation, mediation) through which risk and protective processes operate. In the sections that follow, we consider each of these elements.

It is important to note that there are many methodological challenges in the existing literature on Latino youth, including the need for: (a) valid and reliable measurement instruments with established cross-ethnic equivalence (Knight & Hill, 1998) that can capture “universal” developmental processes, (b) group-specific instruments that can capture the unique experiences of diverse subgroups, (c) rigorous experimental evaluations and observational and quasi-experimental studies of programs designed to increase protective factors while limiting youths’ exposure to conditions of risk (Borden et al., 2006), and (d) studies that attend to within-group differences among Latinos, such as national origin, and avoid the use of pan-ethnic labels and analyses (Umaña-Taylor & Fine, 2001). Research is beginning to attend to these challenges, and we include relevant methodological information when available in the literature review that follows, particularly as it relates to Latino youths’ national origin.

### Identifying Risk and Protective Processes

Risk and protective processes include characteristics of individuals, families, communities, sociocultural forces, and the interconnections among them. Risk processes are related to increased likelihood of onset, greater severity, and longer duration of mental health problems (Coie et al., 1993). Risk factors include enduring conditions that persist over time, and transient events, whose influence is likely to vary with the developmental period in which they occur

(Cicchetti & Toth, 1997). Protective factors mitigate the effects of risk exposure through direct (counteracting) effects, interactive (buffering) effects, or effects that disrupt the causal link between risk and dysfunction (Coie et al., 1993). In many cases, risk and protective factors are continuous variables (e.g., poor to adequate parenting) that can be conceptualized as two sides of a coin (Masten, 2001).

Identifying the extent to which young people are exposed to significant risks that compromise development is one of the fundamental judgments necessary to the study of resilience. Given the diversity of the Latino population, it is important to consider adversities experienced by immigrant youth, children of immigrants, and U.S.-born youth whose families have been in the United States for two or more generations. Although an exhaustive treatment of risk processes is beyond the scope of this chapter, we describe conditions of risk commonly experienced by U.S.-born and immigrant youth, including exposure to poverty, discrimination, acculturative stress, and traumatic events. We recognize likely variations in the nature and extent of risk exposures for subgroups of Latino youth.

*Poverty.* Past work has noted that poverty typically co-occurs with single parenthood and unemployment (Lichter, Qian, & Crowley, 2005; McLoyd, 1998). In contrast, poverty among children of immigrants (who are predominantly Latino) often occurs despite parental work and the presence of two parents in the home (Capps & Fortuny, 2006). Compared to children in native U.S. families, children of immigrants are substantially more likely to live in crowded households and to experience food scarcity and health problems, but they are much less likely to receive public benefits and social services (ibid.). Overall rates of child poverty among Hispanics stood at 27% in the 2000 census and ranged from as low as 15% among Cubans to more than 42% among Island born Puerto Ricans (Lichter et al., 2005).

*Discrimination.* Several observers have noted the relative lack of research on experiences of discrimination (Araujo & Borrell, 2006; García Coll et al., 1996). Most research has focused on the actions of a dominant racial or ethnic group (usually White Americans) directed at one or more marginalized groups, and research is beginning also to consider in-group discrimination or discrimination between marginalized

groups (e.g., between ethnic groups or between subgroups of coethnics; Araujo & Borrell, 2006). Although varying in the operational definitions, studies conducted with samples of Mexican American, Puerto Rican, and Latinos of mixed national origins have found that discrimination is a relatively common experience among youth in the middle and high school years (Edwards & Romero, 2008; Kuperminc, Henrich, Meyers, House, & Sayfi, 2007; Szalacha et al., 2003; Umaña-Taylor & Updegraff, 2007). In our study of 176 Latino middle school students of varied national origins (predominantly Mexican), for example, substantial numbers reported experiences of being disliked (29%), being treated unfairly (23%), and seeing friends treated unfairly (43%) because of their ethnic group or race (Kuperminc et al., 2007).

*Acculturative Stress.* Immigrants typically experience a significant amount of stress resulting from individual, social, and cultural changes (Hovey, 2000). Whereas acculturative stress has been studied primarily among immigrants, research indicates that it also plays a significant role in the adjustment of U.S.-born Latinos (Fuentes & Westbrook, 1996). Acculturative stress involves feelings of confusion, anxiety, depression, marginality, alienation, psychosomatic symptoms, and identity confusion associated with attempts to resolve cultural differences (Hovey, 2000; Mena, Padilla, & Maldonado, 1987). Using an ecological framework, Seidman et al. (1995) conceptualized everyday stressful events as individual transactions within the family, peer, and school microsystems. The concept of acculturative stress goes beyond individual-microsystem transactions to describe transactions of individuals with broader ecological structures, including institutional barriers (exosystem processes) and cultural beliefs and values (macrosystem processes). For example, Stanton-Salazar (1997) described the process of institutionalized exclusion that many minority youth encounter at school and argued that linguistic barriers, economic constraints, inadequate support systems, and stigmatization prevent many ethnic minority youth from participating fully in school activities.

*Negative and Traumatic Migration Experiences.* The role of traumatic experience in the lives of refugee children and families has been well

documented (Fong, 2007). In contrast to refugees, immigrants and migrants exercise some degree of choice in their decisions to resettle; perhaps because of this distinction, less attention has been given to the role of negative and potentially traumatic experiences prior to, during, and after migration. Migration stress has been defined in terms of "difficulties resulting from disruptions in children's everyday lives when removed from a familiar environment" (Birman et al., 2007, p. 14). Such stressors include feelings of loss resulting from disruptions in family relationships, social networks, and cultural context. Family separations and reunions that occur often over the course of several years can be bittersweet, as when reuniting with parents means having to say goodbye to grandparents (Gaytan, Carhill, & Suárez-Orozco, 2007). The journey from home country to a new home can be as uneventful as boarding a plane and arriving a few hours later or as traumatic as losing a limb as a result jumping from a moving train (Kovic, 2008).

*Protective Processes.* Research has been consistent in identifying a "short list" of protective factors that contribute to resilience (Masten, 2007), and spanning ontogenetic (e.g., positive coping strategies, self-concept, and effective self-regulation), microsystem (e.g., positive relationships in family, school, and peer systems), and exosystem/macrosystem processes (e.g., collective efficacy, bonding to prosocial institutions). Race-ethnic comparative studies have demonstrated that these processes contribute to positive development in ways that are more similar than they are different (Rowe, Vaszyoni, & Flannery, 1994). Acknowledging cross-ethnic similarities in developmental processes is critical for informing universal prevention and wellness promotion interventions, but it may overlook subtle cultural variations and adaptations that are unique in the experiences of Latino or other cultural groups (Cauce, 2002; Greenfield et al., 2003; Ibañez, Kuperminc, Jurkovic, & Perilla, 2004; Kuperminc et al., 2004). As will be discussed, salient protective processes in the lives of ethnic minority youth, particularly Latino youth, are found in the domains of religious involvement, culturally rooted family values, attitudes, and behaviors, as well as in the processes of acculturation and negotiating a bicultural identity (Padilla, 2006; Perez & Padilla, 2000).

### Accounting for Adaptive and Maladaptive Functioning

The health and risk behavior profile of Latino youth in the United States seems in many ways not to follow conventional wisdom. Despite the fact that Latino youth are faced with many of the risk factors linked to, for example, substance abuse, they show lower rates of illicit drug use and smoking than their White and African American peers (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2002). In contrast, Latino youth rank higher than other ethnic groups on most indicators of risky sexual behavior. Between 1991 and 2000, Latina adolescents had the smallest decrease in teen birth rates compared to other ethnic groups (Ventura, Matthews, & Hamilton, 2001). Latino youth are also at a disproportionate risk for contracting AIDS and sexually transmitted diseases (CDC, 2007).

The educational profile of Latinos is equally complex. For example, Lowell and Suro (2002) report a narrowing gap in high school completion between foreign-born Latino adults and native-born Americans. Their analysis of data from the 2000 census also shows that foreign-born Latinos who came to the United States at an early age have higher educational attainment than those who were educated abroad. Despite these trends, however, academic performance of Latinos, both immigrant and U.S. born, continues to lag behind other groups (Lowell & Suro, 2002; President's Advisory Commission on Educational Excellence for Hispanics, 2000). Research consistently points to such factors as low rates of participation in early childhood education, overrepresentation of Latino students in resource-poor schools, and instruction that is unresponsive to language differences as reasons for poor performance (President's Advisory Commission, 2000; Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2001). It must be noted that there is wide variation in academic performance across subgroups of Latinos linked to national origin, immigration and generation status, and documentation status (Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2001). For example, Mexican and Central American Latino immigrants are less likely to have completed either secondary or postsecondary education than are Latino immigrants from the Caribbean and South America (Lowell & Suro, 2002). Factors such as "immigrant optimism" (Kao & Tienda, 1998) may

contribute to American-educated Latino immigrants completing high school and entering college at rates that are beginning to approach those of non-Latino White Americans (Lowell & Suro, 2002).

These mixed findings across domains of psychosocial, behavioral, and educational functioning point to the limits of explanatory models that focus only on conditions of risk and on maladaptive outcomes. Understanding this mixed health and risk behavior profile requires examining a complex web of factors across the social ecology that both promote and inhibit healthy behavior. The success that many Latino youth are experiencing across many domains of functioning suggests that a more productive approach to studying their development would incorporate a focus on the strengths and abilities that individuals, families, and communities draw upon to foster positive youth development (Rodríguez & Morrobel, 2004).

### TRACING CULTURAL-ECOLOGICAL-TRANSACTIONAL MECHANISMS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF RESILIENCE

Our study of racial/ethnic-group differences in developmental processes highlighted for us the need to consider how culture shapes young people's development (Kuperminc et al., 2004). Although measures of such cultural concepts as acculturation were not included in the database used for the study, we were alerted to the importance of examining direct influences of culture on individual development and family functioning. This study of 460 White, Black, and Latino young adolescents (primarily from Central and South America and the Caribbean) examined longitudinal changes in indices of *interpersonal relatedness* (quality of relationships with parents and peers) and *self-definition* (perceived self-efficacy and self-esteem). Consistent with past research, processes of relatedness and self-definition contributed to positive school adjustment and low levels of psychosocial maladjustment, but *negative changes* in relationship quality over time increased vulnerability to maladjustment for Black and Latino youth to a greater extent than for White youth. In contrast, *negative changes* in self-esteem increased vulnerability to maladjustment for White youth in comparison to Latino

youth. We reasoned that a culturally rooted emphasis on interdependence and relational well-being in the African American and Latino groups (Greenfield et al., 2003) might underlie the cultural variations discovered in this research.

In the paragraphs that follow, we examine societal and institutional risk processes that affect Latino youths' development, and we illustrate cultural-ecological-transactional mechanisms by which individuals and families marshal their resources to confront those risks. These mechanisms correspond to pathways in Figure 13.1 linking youth and their families to macrosystemic (paths A-D and B-D) and exosystemic (paths A-C and B-C) mechanisms of risk and resilience. We also review microsystemic and mesosystemic mechanisms, corresponding to pathways linking individuals to the proximal settings of development (family, peers, school, neighborhood) and the interrelations among those settings (paths A-B and B-B, respectively). In Table 13.1, we provide examples drawn from the literature review to illustrate these pathways.

### Macrosystemic Processes

Globalization, immigration, and the shifting ethnocultural composition of the U.S. population represent perhaps the most important macrosystemic processes affecting the development of Latino youth (Capps & Fortuny, 2006; Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2001). The impact of these social changes can be seen in political struggles over immigration reform and related policymaking in such areas as criminal justice, health care, and education (Anrig & Wang, 2006). Protective processes to offset the risks associated with these macrosocial changes include the internalization of cultural and religious values and beliefs.

Lack of access to education, prevention, and health-care programs place Latino youth at risk for health problems and school failure. For example, it is estimated that up to 20% of Latino youth in middle and high school do not feel they have anywhere to go to seek medical attention (Rew, Resnick, & Beuhring, 1999). Furthermore, despite their risk for unprotected sexual activity, Latino youth receive less information about contraception and family planning than any other ethnic group (Rew, 1998). Language barriers and a lack of cultural sensitivity among many

health-care providers provide additional challenges in accessing necessary sexual health services (Rew et al., 1999). With regard to substance abuse, studies have shown that Latino youth are exposed to more alcohol advertisements than non-Latino youth (Center on Alcohol Marketing and Youth, 2005), and some have suggested that heavy exposure to alcohol may lead to higher risk for illicit drug use (Warheit et al., 1996). Policies surrounding immigration reform affect Latinos regardless of their legal documentation status. Fears of deportation have been associated with concerns about seeking health services and with heightened stress, anger, and emotional and physical health problems (Cavazos-Rehg, Zayas, & Spitznagel, 2007). These risks are compounded by high rates of concentrated poverty, which itself is a risk factor linked to increased risk behavior, school failure, and compromised development (Fishbein et al., 2006; McLoyd, 1998; President's Advisory Commission, 2000).

Research is beginning to document how Latino adolescents and their families make use of cultural beliefs to resist societal pressures to engage in various forms of risk behavior. We highlight the interplay of religion, familism, and other cultural beliefs, factors that contribute to shaping the context in which young people experience, interpret, and act on societal pressures.

*Religion.* Religion plays a central but complex role in Latino adolescents' decisions to engage in health risk behaviors. For example, research with Mexican American and Puerto Rican adolescent girls suggests that the anticontraception beliefs of the Catholic Church often result in Latina adolescents' reluctance to use condoms and other safe-sex practices (Villarruel, 1998). This study also found that although religious beliefs were not linked to higher rates of abstinence among Latino youth, religious Latina girls were more likely to place a high value on delaying sexual intercourse as a sign of self-respect (ibid.). Religion may also influence the decisions Latina girls make when faced with pregnancy. For example, Latina teenagers have lower pregnancy rates but higher birth rates than their African American peers (Frost, Jones, Woog, Singh, & Darrocj, 2001), reflecting high rates of adherence to values of the Catholic Church that prohibit abortion (Pew Hispanic Center, 2002). Research has also shown that religion may serve as a protective factor for Mexican American youth against substance abuse, suicide ideation,



Table 13.1 Examples of Cultural-Ecological-Transactional Processes in the Development of Resilience Among Latino Youth

<i>Ecological Processes</i>	<i>Pathways</i>	<i>Examples</i>
<i>Individual in Transaction With. . .</i>		
Microsystem	A–B	<p><i>Risk Processes:</i> Low rates of participation in early childhood education, instructional practices that are unresponsive to language differences, and attendance at resource-poor schools contribute to poor academic performance (President’s Advisory Commission, 2000).</p> <p><i>Protective Processes:</i> Family support in the form of parental monitoring and family connectedness are associated with decreased risk of substance use, violence, and risky sexual behavior (Kerr et al., 2003); school support in the form of early intervention and intensive supplemental programming in schools promotes school achievement among poor Latinos (Gandara, 2006).</p>
Exosystem	A–C	<p><i>Risk Processes:</i> Acculturative stress and discrimination contribute to increased substance use and other problem behaviors (Gil et al., 2000; Hovey, 2000).</p> <p><i>Protective Processes:</i> Openness to interacting with members of other ethnic groups contributes to improved academic achievement (Guzman et al., 2005).</p>
Macrosystem	A–D	<p><i>Risk Processes:</i> Lack of access to educational support and health care leaves youth at risk for school failure and risk behavior (e.g., Rew, 1999); Latino youth are exposed to more alcohol advertising than non-Latinos (Center on Alcohol Marketing and Youth, 2005).</p> <p><i>Protective Processes:</i> Internalization of religious beliefs protects against multiple problem behaviors (Marsiglia et al., 2005; Villarruel, 1998).</p>
<i>Family in Transaction With. . .</i>		
School and Neighborhood Microsystems (Mesosystem Transactions)	B–B	<p><i>Risk Processes:</i> Low levels of Latino parents’ involvement may contribute to perceptions by their children and their children’s teachers that education is not valued (Kuperminc et al., 2008).</p> <p><i>Protective Processes:</i> Parental involvement in education builds social capital that supports school achievement (Kao &amp; Rutherford, 2007; Kuperminc et al., 2008); family ethnic socialization contributes to ethnic identity development for youth in low-risk neighborhoods but not high-risk neighborhoods.</p>
Exosystem	B–C	<p><i>Risk Processes:</i> Language barriers, work demands contribute to acculturative stress for parents and children, which may lead to overreliance on children (Arfaniarromo, 2001).</p> <p><i>Protective Processes:</i> Family responsibilities, including language brokering, chores, and sibling caretaking, are associated with better social skills and higher levels of maturity; positive perceptions of the usefulness and fairness of responsibilities are linked to lower psychological distress and acting-out problems (Kuperminc et al., in press; Weisskirch, 2005).</p>
Macrosystem	B–D	<p><i>Protective Processes:</i> Cultural values, such as familism, place parents in a culturally consonant position to provide guidance and emotional support for youths’ decisions to avoid substance use and other problem behaviors (O’Sullivan et al., 2000; Sommers et al., 1993).</p>

and other risks (Hovey, 2000; Marsiglia, Kulis, Nieri, & Parsai, 2005). In immigrant Latino communities, affiliation with the Catholic Church may help Latino youth and their families create social ties, establish a social support network, and facilitate a strong sense of community. All of these factors may then help by providing Latino youth with the support they need to resist engaging in risk behaviors.

*Familism and Other Cultural Values.* There are also indications that various aspects of *familism* (a strong connection with and responsibility to the family) and other culturally rooted beliefs and attitudes can serve as either risk or protective functions, depending on the particular behavior that is being examined. Familism has been credited with contributing to Puerto Rican youths' resilience in avoiding substance abuse (Sommers, Fagan, & Baskin, 1993), and research suggests that most Latino youth consider upsetting their parents to be a substantial risk involved in smoking marijuana (Office of National Drug Control Policy, 2005). This strong belief in the importance of family may help Latino youth base their decisions around the values of their families and combat peer pressure to engage in substance use.

Similarly, familism attitudes place parents and other family members in a central position to provide positive guidance and emotional support for positive sexual decision making (O'Sullivan, Meyer-Balzburg, & Watkins, 2000). In one study, Mexican and Puerto Rican mothers reported that they and other members of the family make special efforts to monitor their daughters' behavior to protect them from unintended pregnancy. Daughters, in turn, usually interpreted this supervision positively as a gesture of caring and concern (Villarruel, 1998). Research has also shown that in a sample of Latino adolescents predominantly of Mexican descent, those adolescents whose mothers engaged in open communication about sex with them were more likely to abstain from sex or delay initiation of sexual behavior (Romo, Lefkowitz, Sigman, & Au, 2002). On the other hand, traditional gender roles, in which males are expected to make decisions surrounding sex and contraception, have been linked to higher rates of unprotected sex and higher frequency of sexual behavior among Latino boys (Locke, Newcomb, & Goodyear, 2005). Research has also shown that Latina girls are more likely than their

non-Latina peers to date men who are 10 or more years older (Vanoss, Coyle, Gomez, Carvajal, & Kirby, 2000). These dating practices may put Latina girls at higher risk for hazardous sexual behavior, as such an age difference may further limit their power to negotiate abstinence and safe sex practices with their partners (Villarruel, 1998).

### Exosystemic Processes

We conceptualize acculturative stress and perceived discrimination as indicators of Latino youths' transactions with the social institutions and practices they and their parents encounter in their everyday lives. Latino youth and their families address institutional barriers through strategies of acculturation-enculturation and ethnic identity (path A-C) and through strategies involving the assistance of family members in maintaining family well-being via language brokering, sibling caregiving, and other family responsibilities (path B-C; Jurkovic et al., 2004).

*Acculturation-Enculturation and Ethnic Identity.* The so-called immigrant paradox has captured the attention of numerous scholars, lending substantial attention to understanding counter-intuitive findings that immigrants often tend to show better adaptation than their national peers despite poorer socioeconomic status (Sam, Vedder, Liebkind, Neto, & Virta, 2008). Studies have shown, for example, that immigrant Latino youth are less likely to engage in risky sexual behavior and substance use than their U.S.-born Latino peers (Minnis & Padian, 2001). These findings suggest that closer ties to traditional Latino cultural values may protect Latino youth from engaging in sexual risk taking. Some researchers suggest that U.S.-born Latinos are at higher risk for hazardous behavior and psychological maladjustment due to the stress involved in negotiating a "bicultural identity" that involves the traditional Latino culture of their families and the dominant U.S. culture in which they were born (Castro, Boyer, & Balcazar, 2000; Umaña-Taylor & Updegraff, 2007).

Acculturative stressors are transactions of individuals with both the dominant culture and their culture of origin (Fuentes & Westbrook, 1996); these include perceived discrimination and discomfort with adapting to expectations of the dominant culture, as well as feelings of disconnection from the culture of origin and

conflicts between personal and parental values and attitudes. Acculturative stress may have differing effects on Latino youth's adaptation, depending on where they are in the acculturation process. For example, Cabrera-Strait (2001) found that Latino youth who reported high rates of *acculturative stress* reported drinking more than their less stressed peers, while Guilamo-Ramos and colleagues (2004) found a more complex, curvilinear relationship such that alcohol abuse was most prevalent among youth who were either high or low on indicators of acculturation.

Gil, Wagner, and Vega's (2000) study of acculturative stress, family processes, and alcohol use among immigrant and U.S.-born Latino young adolescents in South Florida (whose countries of origin were in Central and South American and the Caribbean) further illustrates this complexity, in that English-language preference contributed to higher acculturative stress among immigrants but lower acculturative stress among U.S.-born youth. For both groups, acculturative stress predicted lower parental respect and familism attitudes, which in turn contributed to greater disposition to deviance and greater alcohol involvement. These findings suggest that acculturative stress can operate differently at various stages of the acculturation process.

Acculturation and identity development processes may put stress on the relationships between adolescents and their parents, which may in turn lead to a breakdown in the familial support systems linked to preventing risk behavior and psychosocial difficulties among Latino youth (Gil et al., 2000). Yet the weight of evidence in U.S. samples suggests that many youth are able to develop positive American and ethnic identities regardless of their immigration status (Phinney & Ong, 2007). A positive ethnic identity has been shown to offset the negative associations of perceived discrimination with self-esteem and depressive symptoms among immigrant and U.S.-born Latino youth of primarily Mexican origin (Umaña-Taylor & Updegraff, 2007). The use of active coping strategies, such as finding someone to talk to about feelings, has also been shown to reduce the negative association of perceived discrimination with self-esteem among Mexican-American adolescents (Edwards & Romero, 2008).

A study by Guzman, Santiago-Rivera, and Haase (2005) illustrates the interplay of cultural beliefs and identity processes in the educational resilience of Latino youth. Those authors studied

222 youth in Austin, Texas, with at least one parent of Mexican ancestry and an average age of 16 years. Participants completed measures of ethnic identity and such Mexican cultural constructs as fatalism, familism, folk beliefs, *machismo*, and *personalismo*. One of the strongest predictors of academic achievement and positive school attitudes was the extent to which youth reported a willingness to interact with members of other ethnic groups (i.e., an other-group orientation). The authors were careful to note that a positive other-group orientation did not mean that one has to be assimilated into dominant American culture or have a low ethnic identity in order to perform well in school. Instead, the study suggested that interventions with non-Mexican school personnel and students to help them become more welcoming to Mexican students might facilitate a positive other-group orientation, and that this, in turn, might contribute indirectly to improved academic achievement, perhaps via reductions in acculturative stress. This study indicates that cultural values and experiences with mainstream Anglo-Whites may all play a role in academic attitudes and achievement.

*Family Responsibilities.* Scholars from multiple perspectives (e.g., cultural, clinical, sociological, anthropological) have raised concerns about potential deleterious consequences of family responsibilities on children's development (Jurkovic et al., 2004). Family obligations may limit Latino youth's access to programs and services. For example, many Latino adolescents drop out of school in order to work and help support their families financially. Youth who drop out or do poorly in school, especially those who live in poor neighborhoods, are often at high risk for joining gangs and/or becoming involved in violence (Arfaniarromo, 2001).

While acknowledging those concerns, recent research with Latino youth predominantly of Mexican descent indicates that Latino children's contributions to the maintenance and well-being of their families may promote competence and maturity, particularly when they feel their efforts are valued, acknowledged, and reciprocated by parents or other family members (Kuperminc, Jurkovic, & Casey, in press; Weisskirch, 2005). For example, Weisskirch's (2005) study of 55 sixth graders (primarily U.S.-born children of Mexican immigrant parents) found that most children engaged in *language*

*brokering* for their parents. Language brokering and positive feelings about language brokering both had significant correlations with ethnic identity, but when entered in a multiple regression equation, only positive feelings contributed to higher levels of ethnic identity. In our research focused on the broader construct of *filial responsibility* among 129 Latino, predominantly Mexican, high school youth from immigrant families (Kuperminc et al., in press), we found that engaging in *caregiving activities* (including sibling caregiving, chores, and assisting family members in negotiating cultural expectations) was associated cross-sectionally with high levels of self- and teacher-reported social competence. Perceptions of the *fairness* of caregiving activities were associated with low levels of psychological distress and low levels of teacher-reported acting-out behavior. Longitudinal analyses with 199 middle school Latino, predominantly Mexican, students from the same community have largely replicated those results, indicating that increases in perceived fairness contribute to declines over time in aggressive behavior and psychological distress, while increases in caregiving activities contribute to increases in cooperative behavior and interpersonal skills (Kuperminc, 2007). In all, these findings suggest that family responsibilities carry some risk for the educational and psychosocial development of Latino youth but may also protect against maladjustment and promote positive psychosocial outcomes when those activities are valued and acknowledged by important others.

### Microsystemic and Mesosystemic Processes

Individual-microsystem transactions are often operationalized in terms of youth's perceptions of stress and support related to the important settings in their lives. In this section, we examine individual transactions with family, school, peer, and neighborhood settings (path A-B) and also explore mesosystemic transactions, the linkages between these microsystems (path B-B).

*Family Support.* Experiencing support from parents and other family members has been associated with positive psychosocial functioning and health behavior (Kuperminc et al., 2004). Kerr, Beck, Shattuck, Kattar, & Uriburu (2003) found in a sample of 446 Latino adolescents that perceived parental monitoring and family

connectedness were associated with less engagement in problem behavior (substance use, violence, and risky sexual behavior), and parental encouragement to explore non-Latino social and cultural experiences was associated with high levels of prosocial behavior (e.g., volunteering in the community, extracurricular activity involvement).

The role of family support in promoting academic achievement is less clear. Whereas research in ethnically diverse samples has documented a link between affective quality of relationships with parents and school grades (e.g., Kenny, Gallagher, Alvarez-Salvat, & Silsby, 2002), within-group analyses of Latino youth have not consistently replicated those findings (Kuperminc et al., 2004). For example, using data from the National Longitudinal Study of Youth on more than 1,000 Mexican, Mexican American, and Puerto Rican adolescents, Schmitz (2006) found that quality of the home environment, assessed in terms of cognitive stimulation and emotional support from parents, was unrelated to scholastic self-perceptions. Overall, these findings indicate that whereas parental support clearly plays a role in the psychosocial development and health behavior of Latino youth, more work is needed to understand how parents can facilitate those youth's academic development.

*Peer Relationships.* An extensive body of research has established that adolescent friendships contribute to development of interpersonal and relational skills, to cognitive and social development, and to psychological adjustment (Way & Pahl, 2001). Scholars (Azmitia, Ittel, & Brenk, 2006; Stanton-Salazar & Spina, 2005) have suggested that a preference for interdependence equips Latino youth with relational styles that are conducive to sharing and exchange of social support. Consistent with this expectation, Way, Cowal, Gingold, Pahl, and Bissessar (2001) used cluster analysis on data from 213 Black (predominantly African American), Latino (predominantly Puerto Rican and Dominican), and Asian (predominantly Chinese) high school students to identify friendship typologies and found that Latinos, particularly Latina girls, were more often represented than other ethnic groups in an "ideal" cluster characterized by high levels of positive friendship characteristics (e.g., intimacy, companionship, alliance, affection, and satisfaction) and low levels of negative characteristics (conflict and antagonism). Qualitative

analysis of in-depth interviews revealed that ideal friendships were characterized by mutual affection and trust, long duration, and an ability to resolve conflicts.

Friendships may be particularly important in the lives of recent immigrants. Friends, particularly those who are more acculturated, can compensate for the inability of parents to provide needed supports due to work demands and lack of experience with the school setting (Azmitia et al., 2006). However, immigrant parents may be more likely than others to restrict interaction with peers as a result of an emphasis on family cohesion and familism and fears that their children will be exposed to negative influences (ibid.). Moreover, poverty can adversely affect the quality of peer relationships and friendships. For example, Stanton-Salazar & Spina (2005) describe the peer networks of low-income, Mexican-origin adolescents as often characterized by alienation and social isolation despite being embedded in relatively large amounts of peer interaction. The lack of ability of many youth to form friendships characterized by mutual trust and support reflects the broader context of poverty, including lack of resources and harsh conditions in which they were living. The importance of institutional contexts, such as community and afterschool programs offering safety, mentoring, enrichment activities, and educational outreach is underscored in the work of both Azmitia and colleagues (2006) and Stanton-Salazar & Spina (2005), as a means of facilitating positive peer relationships.

*School Support.* School support can come in the form of policies and programs designed to increase academic achievement among Latino youth, as well as general perceptions of support and belongingness at school that can contribute both to academic achievement and to psychosocial adjustment. Gandara (2006) has argued that many Latino children of immigrant parents are at particular risk for school problems because the combination of poverty and low English skills puts them at a double disadvantage compared to middle-class, monolingual peers. She notes that early intervention (i.e., pre-K) and intensive supplemental programming have been shown to promote school achievement for Latinos in the face of poverty. In the face of these challenges, it may be that increasing the number of Hispanic or Latino teachers (Crosnoe, 2005) or undertaking strategies to increase Latino

students' sense of belonging in school (Ibañez et al., 2004; Kuperminc, Darnell, & Alvarez-Jimenez, 2008) can contribute to improvements in academic motivation and achievement.

Interventions to make school environments more welcoming and supportive have demonstrated that culturally relevant interventions can have a positive impact on education and career development (Conchas & Clark, 2002; Denner, Cooper, Dunbar, & Lopez, 2005; Rodriguez & Blocher, 1988). For example, Rodriguez & Blocher (1988) studied 75 Puerto Rican women in their first year at an urban college. They found that a culture-specific, 10-week career development program led by Puerto Rican counselors increased participants' career maturity and internal loci of control.

*Neighborhood.* Recent research indicates that structural qualities of neighborhood resources (e.g., poverty levels, employment, education levels, proportion of English-speaking neighbors) and perceptions of the availability of those resources in the neighborhood are related to psychosocial development, health behavior, and educational outcomes. Plunkett, Abarca-Mortensen, Behnke, and Sands's (2007) study of 534 Latinos in one Los Angeles high school found that students' neighborhood perceptions contributed positively to self-esteem, perceived self-efficacy, school grades, and academic aspirations. Structural qualities, assessed via neighborhood-level census data, had indirect associations with each of these outcomes mediated through student perceptions, and a direct effect only on self-esteem. Similarly, Eamon and Mulder (2005) found that poor neighborhood quality (measured in terms of mothers' ratings of such items as lack of respect for rules and laws, abandoned or run-down buildings, and parents not supervising their children) was associated with lower levels of reading achievement among 388 Mexican American youth (ages 10 to 14) sampled from the National Longitudinal Study of Youth. Using the same data set, Eamon and Mulder (2005) also found that poor neighborhood quality predicted increased risk of antisocial behavior.

This brief review of microsystem processes occurring as the transactions of Latino youth with their families, peer groups, schools, and neighborhoods demonstrates the importance of experiences in everyday settings for promoting or constraining resilient outcomes among Latino youth. These processes in many ways

have effects for Latino youth that are similar to those for youth from other ethnic/cultural groups. The cultural-ecological-transactional framework, however, directs us to look beyond risk and protective factors in these settings that are common across ethnic-cultural groups to also consider processes that are linked to the minority experience broadly (e.g., experiences of discrimination at school) or unique to the experience of Latino youth (e.g., language barriers; Smith & Guerra, 2006). We next turn to an examination of mesosystem processes involving connections between the family, school, and neighborhood settings.

*Parent-School Connections.* A promising approach to furthering knowledge of how parents and schools can promote academic attainment is to consider connections between these two important settings in the lives of Latino youth. Research has shown that whereas many Latino families place strong emphasis on the importance of education, Latino parents often avoid visiting their children's schools because of fear of formal institutions (especially for parents lacking legal papers; Bacallao & Smokowski, 2007), time constraints due to long work hours, and cultural barriers (i.e., language, different ideas about respect for schools' authority, etc.; Delgado-Gaitan, 1990).

The mesosystemic transactions between parents and schools can also be viewed as building social capital that can contribute to Latino youth's academic achievement (Kao & Rutherford, 2007; Kuperminc, Darnell, & Alvarez-Jimenez, 2008). Using parental involvement as an example, McNeal (1999) defined social capital as including three elements: (1) social ties between various members of a network (parents, teachers, students), (2) norms of obligation and reciprocity, and (3) investment of resources.

Kao & Rutherford (2007) examined parent involvement and another measure of social capital, which they labeled *intergenerational closure* (i.e., the extent to which youth know the parents of their friends), as longitudinal predictors of academic achievement in a large ethnically diverse sample of Latino, Asian, Black, and White adolescents who were first surveyed in 8th grade. High levels of both forms of social capital were associated cross-sectionally with higher 8th-grade academic performance and longitudinally with increases in academic performance by 12th grade. Kuperminc et al. (2008) examined

cross-sectional samples of Latino middle ( $N = 195$ ) and high school students ( $N = 129$ ) of predominantly Mexican descent to test a path model in which contributions of parental involvement to academic self-concept and school grades were mediated by student perceptions of school belonging and teacher expectations of students' academic attainment. The hypothesized model fit the data well, suggesting that parental involvement functions to increase Latino youth's social capital in the educational arena and pointing to ways that parents and school officials can work together to make school environments more welcoming and increase expectations for young people's achievement.

*Family and Neighborhood Connections.* Mesosystem transactions between the family and neighborhood microsystems are also important to the Latino youth's development. Using data on 800 African American and Latino 10- to 14-year-olds from the Three Cities Study, Roche, Ensminger, and Cherlin (2007) found that protective associations of uninvolved and permissive parenting with delinquency, depressive symptoms, and school problem behavior were strongest among youth living in high-risk neighborhoods. A study of family ethnic socialization and ethnic identity among 187 Latino young adolescents of Mexican, Guatemalan, and Salvadorian descent (Supple, Ghazarian, Frabutt, Plunkett, & Sands, 2006) found that family ethnic socialization was associated positively with youth's perceived ethnic affirmation when youth lived in low-risk neighborhoods (perceived as having low levels of drug use, illegal activity, etc.) but negatively associated with ethnic affirmation when neighborhood risk was high. Furthermore, ethnic affirmation mediated both the negative association of neighborhood risk with school performance and the positive association of having a high percentage of Latino neighbors with school performance.

Taken together, research on family, school, peer, and neighborhood (microsystem) processes in the development of Latino youth points to the importance not only of ensuring that youth experience support in each of these settings but also of building social capital across those settings (mesosystem processes). Parents' efforts to encourage their children's academic achievement and to protect them from involvement in problem behaviors may be most effective when reinforced by supportive processes in their

neighborhoods and at school. The cultural-ecological-transactional framework highlights specific processes occurring in each setting (e.g., areas of agreement or disagreement in parents' and teachers' conceptions of a good education) and points to strategies for bridging cultural gaps between them.

## CONCLUSIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

In this chapter, we have presented a model of resilience framed within a cultural-ecological-transactional model that accounts for proximal influences of cultural processes in the everyday lives of Latino youth, and views their individual well-being as interdependent with the relational and collective well-being of their families, schools, and neighborhoods. This model directs us toward research that can illuminate how youth reconcile the seemingly conflicting goals of developing both an independent and an interdependent sense of self through transactions with their social environment. Important protective processes are found at each level of the social ecology and include the internalization of cultural and religious values and beliefs, involvement in maintaining the well-being of the family, and development of a bicultural identity. Supportive relationships in the family, peer group, school, and neighborhood, reinforced by relationships that bridge those important settings of development, are also critical. As active agents in their own development, youth can make use of their experiences with each of these processes to forge a sense of self as both autonomous and connected to others (Kagitcibasi, 2005).

Tracing the history of research on resilience, Masten and her colleagues (Masten, 2007; Masten & Obradović, 2006) have noted that technological and conceptual-theoretical advances have led to a new wave of understanding resilience as a multilevel process. This new perspective defines *resilience* as the interplay between neurobiological, psychosocial, societal, and global influences on development. We believe that the study of resilience and positive development among Latino youth in the United States offers a window of opportunity to advance the broader field of resilience research beyond its potential contributions to a particular ethnocultural group. We make this claim because Latino youth growing up in the United States are situated in a social context punctuated

by the effects of rapid social change that can be observed daily in debates over globalization, immigration reform, accountability-based educational practices, and so forth, issues that in some way affect all youth in the United States.

Studying the varied contexts in which Latino youth are developing throughout the United States offers opportunities for natural experiments that can inform understanding of how exosocial and macrosocial processes affect developmental pathways. For example, the "new growth" states of the southeastern and midwestern United States have drawn large numbers of immigrant and migrant Latino families with the promise of economic advancement (Anrig & Wang, 2006), but the relative recency of the phenomenon often leaves families to build their own support networks in the absence of adequate formal support systems. Future research is needed to study how families and communities in these newly established migration destinations develop functioning social networks to fill the void. Existing rules of thumb about Latino communities in the more established destinations (e.g., Mexicans in California, Illinois, and Texas; Cubans and Central Americans in Florida; Dominicans and Puerto Ricans in New York) may become less useful as new patterns of immigration and migration bring together Latinos with multiple ethnic, racial, and national identifications. Future research should investigate how these varied contexts influence the development of ethnic identities rooted in national origin, race, or increasingly pan-ethnic communities of residence (Masuoka, 2008).

Although sociocultural processes offer a unique opportunity to expand understanding of cultural-ecological-transactional processes, it is important that research also work to better articulate the meaning of adaptive and maladaptive functioning in this population. Rodriguez and Morrobel's (2004) comprehensive review of more than 1,000 published articles found that Latino youth were underrepresented in leading developmental journals and that studies including Latino youth tended to be deficit oriented and to lack a specific theoretical framework. Building a science of resilience among Latino youth is fraught with challenges that include developing a greater understanding of variations in how Latino youth experience mental health and illness (Gorman, Brough, & Ramirez, 2003) and how stereotyped perceptions of Latino youth's risk behavior (Erkut,

Szalacha, Alarcon, & García Coll, 1999) serve to maintain a persistent deficit orientation in developmental studies. Current research is also limited by a lack of longitudinal studies on the interplay of acculturation and trajectories of development over time (Fuligni, 2001). In the spirit of a resilience perspective, we view these limitations not as deficits but as rich opportunities to advance the field and contribute to improving the life chances of Latino youth in the United States.

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