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Cultural Orientation Gaps within a Family Systems Perspective

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Abstract

The intersection of a family's heritage culture and new mainstream cultural norms results in person-to-person differences in values, beliefs, and behaviors, particularly among immigrant families. These differences often lead to divergent cultural views and patterns of behavior both within and between family members. According to the acculturation gap distress hypothesis, these cultural orientation gaps between family members have consequences for family functioning, and, in particular, adolescents' adjustment. Studies supporting this notion have primarily focused on processes in parent-adolescent dyads. Although scholarship on family cultural gaps emerged from a systems perspective, application of key systems tenets are notably limited in existing work. In this paper, we review the background and current state of research on family cultural gaps, provide an overview of key principles of systems perspectives, and then, integrate the cultural gap literature with key systems principles to identify future directions in research and theory.

Keywords

adolescence; cultural-orientation; family systems; immigrant families; cultural gap; acculturation

Cultural adaptation processes are experienced by many immigrant families as they navigate and integrate with mainstream cultures. The challenge of retaining heritage cultural norms and values while integrating those of the mainstream culture has significant implications for individual adjustment and development that can be particularly salient in adolescence. For adolescents with immigrant backgrounds, whose heritage cultures (e.g., collectivist) may differ from those of the mainstream culture (e.g., individualistic), cultural identity challenges can be stressful and pose risks to behavioral and psychological adjustment (Gonzales, Knight, Birman, & Sirolli, 2004; Szapocznik & Kurtines, 1993). These processes also have developmental significance for adolescents as the process of integrating and/or rejecting cultural norms, values, and beliefs is an ever unfolding experience and inherently embedded in multiple aspects of their identity development (Berry, Phinney, Sam, & Vedder, 2006). To

orient readers toward the language of cultural processes, we provide a summary of key terms (see Table 1).

In adolescence, the salience of developing a cultural orientation and ethnic/racial identity arise from the changes in cognitive, social, and psychological domains taking place during this time in development (Titzmann & Lee, 2018). In particular, adolescence is marked by increased agency and negotiations of parent-adolescent autonomy (Fuligni, 1998) as well as increased involvement with peers (Updegraff, McHale, Whiteman, Thayer, & Crouter, 2006) and other settings (e.g., schools) outside the home (Way & Robinson, 2003). Further, important tasks such as moral, identity, and value development (Steinberg, 2017) can be informed by one's culture (Rogoff, 2003). Therefore, the process of cultural adaptation is significant to adolescent development and adjustment.

Studies examining cultural adaptation processes among adolescents with immigrant backgrounds have substantiated the importance of both individual-level experiences of the adolescent, as well as family-level experiences, in the context of the parent-adolescent dyad. From a systems perspective, adolescent development can best be understood in concert with relational patterns in the family system and subsystems (interdependent, smaller units of the family such as dyads) since change in one part of the system has implications for each part of the system (Cox & Paley, 2003).

At the individual level these processes have been studied most notably via examining adolescents' levels of acculturation and enculturation. *Acculturation*, henceforth referred as cultural adaptation, is a fluid process of cultural and psychological change (Berry, 2005; Buckingham & Brosky, 2015; Marsiglia et al., 2018) where individuals continually modify their values, behaviors, and identifications (Buckingham & Brosky, 2015) as a result of the prolonged intersection of mainstream and heritage norms and patterns. Through this process, individuals develop a *cultural orientation* that entails the level of integration and internalization of values, beliefs, and behaviors of mainstream and family heritage cultures into their everyday life (Gonzales et al., 2004). Further, the adoption of a cultural orientation towards either or both heritage and mainstream cultures has been considered a cultural and a developmental process (Sam & Berry, 2010; Sam, 2006).

Cultural orientation also develops in other individuals in a family and as shared meaning that arises through interactions within subsystems and overall family systems. While immigrant families likely have a sense of the meaning of culture in their lives prior to immigration, the contextual change into a different culture presents challenges at each system level. Cultural orientation is typically studied at the intersection of parent-adolescent dyads (or subsystems) to examine the extent to which gaps emerge in adolescence. Changes in context, such as immigration, complicate the process of adolescents developing a cultural identity through involvement in more than one culture that can result in culture orientation gaps. Immigrant and ethnic-racial minority adolescents who live in mainstream culture have distinct cultural scripts that often differ from those of their heritage culture. Thus, research on ethnic and racial minority families raising children underscores the salience of cultural socialization or transmission (Schonpflug & Bilz, 2009) of a family's heritage culture within a mainstream, dominant culture that can have stark differences in cultural goals, values, beliefs, and

patterns of behaviors. This area of research highlights how varying levels of adherence to mainstream and heritage cultural values, beliefs, and behaviors potentially create *cultural orientation gaps* or dissonance between parents and youth.

Cultural orientation gaps can be more pronounced in immigrant families as children and adolescents tend to adopt and be more oriented toward the mainstream culture than parents whereas parents tend to be more oriented to their heritage culture than children, although less common patterns also are evident (e.g., children more oriented to heritage culture than parents in some domains; Telzer, 2010). The acculturation-gap distress hypothesis (Szapocznik & Kurtines, 1993) or dissonant acculturation (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001) proposes that differing rates of cultural integration by parents and children can lead to *cultural orientation gaps* or divergent values, behaviors, and expectations within the parent-child dyad that can ultimately have negative consequences for parent-child dynamics and adolescent outcomes (see Telzer, 2010 for a review). The *gap* reflects the degree to which parents and adolescents differ in their orientation to both their heritage culture and the mainstream culture. For simplicity, henceforth we will use the term ‘cultural gaps’ to refer to cultural orientation gaps among family members.

The initial work on cultural gaps in immigrant families with adolescents emerged from a systems perspective that acknowledged the embeddedness of the individual within a family system and subsystems, as well as the family’s embeddedness within cultural systems (Sluski, 1979; Szapocznik & Kurtines, 1993). A family system can best be understood as interdependent relational patterns among individuals, subsystems, or the overall family system that influence and are influenced by each other and interact with others outside of the system (Cox & Paley, 2003). Thus, change in one part of the system such as the development of a cultural gap between one or more family members has implications for each part of the system, including adolescent development.

Yet, research to date is limited in the scope of application of systems perspectives due to an almost exclusive focus on parent-adolescent dyads. Systems perspectives on cultural adaptation in immigrant families with adolescents hold potential to move research on cultural gaps beyond its current focus toward a dynamic view of adolescents as embedded in family relational systems characterized by wholeness, self-organization, self-adaptation and stabilization (Cox & Paley, 1997; Henry, Morris, & Harrist, 2015; Kantor & Lehr, 1975). This promising approach moves beyond linear patterns to elucidate the complex dynamic processes involved in navigating both cultural gaps and, multiple family subsystem interactions as individuals and families progress through developmental, and sociocultural, transitions over time. To accomplish this, family cultural gaps are conceptualized as embedded in complex dynamic processes within multiple interrelated family adaptive systems (emotion, control, and meaning) that develop and regulate family subsystem interactions, overall family system patterns, and family interfaces with ecosystems.

Correspondingly, theory and research on cultural gaps can be extended beyond parent-adolescent dyads to address the complex interplay of family interactions as the stability and change through the regulation of multiple dimensions of family dynamics including emotion, control, and meaning. This process involves considerations of the feedback loops

that incorporate or inhibit change in ongoing interaction patterns as family members contemplate or adopt alternative approaches to manage the heritage and mainstream cultures in day-to-day life. This view can inform past research interpretations and propel future studies on cultural gaps toward greater integration of family systems perspectives, providing a deeper understanding of the role that cultural gaps have on adolescent outcomes as occurring within the complex relational dynamics of family systems. This integration also can challenge family theory to pay closer attention as to how cultural processes and divergences in cultural scripts within family members permeate ongoing family dynamics and the adaptation of adolescents.

The overall goal of this paper is to introduce and apply principles of family systems to expand the direction of future theory and research that can help us advance our understanding of cultural gaps within family systems, and in particular, the influence on adolescent adjustment. First, we provide a brief overview of past research on cultural gaps and refer readers to more in depth discussions of this topic by others (Costigan, 2010; Phinney, 2010; Telzer, 2010). Second, we provide an overview of family systems and pay special attention to two key principles of family systems perspectives: (1) families function as an organized whole, comprised of interconnected subsystems such that change in one part of the system reverberates throughout the system, and (2) families are adaptive and self-stabilizing (Cox & Paley, 1997). Third, we purposefully situate cultural gaps within family systems to provide a new direction to advance both theory and research on cultural gaps that allows for consideration of adolescent experiences within on-going family system dynamics.

Overview on the Current State of Research on Cultural Gaps

To provide an overview of the state of the field on cultural gaps, it is important to distinguish this construct from other concepts and ideas that are part of the broader field of acculturation. Specifically, previous work from Sam and Berry (2010) noted that the process of cultural adaptation occurs in affective (i.e., stress and coping), behavioral (i.e., culture learning), and cognitive (i.e., social-identification) domains. Within the existing literature, the focus and assessment of parent-adolescent cultural gaps mainly has been on behavioral (e.g., language use) and cognitive (i.e., ethnic-racial identity) differences of cultural adaptation. The affective (or emotional), stress domain of cultural adaptation focuses on acculturative stress and stressors such as discrimination and language barriers (Sam & Berry, 2010). To date, this domain has not been an integral part of the conceptualization, operationalization, and examination of cultural gaps.

Conceptualization of the gap.

The original conceptualization of cultural gaps emphasized the differences that emerge between parents and children in adherence to, or desistance from, the mainstream culture values, beliefs, and behaviors (Santisteban & Mitrani, 2003). Heritage culture gaps were not part of the original theoretical conceptualization, the addition of this concept to cultural orientation in research demonstrates their significance (Telzer, 2010). This broader multidimensional focus on cultural orientation revealed four types of cultural gaps based on the directionality of the gap (i.e., child can have a lower or greater orientation than parents

do to either or both cultures). Specifically, as depicted by Telzer (2010), a child can be *more* oriented to the mainstream culture (i.e., mainstream cultural gap higher) or *less* oriented to the mainstream culture (i.e., mainstream cultural gap lower) than a parent. Similarly, a child can be *more* oriented to the heritage culture (i.e., heritage cultural gap higher) or *less* oriented to the heritage culture (i.e., heritage cultural gap lower) than a parent.

It is important to note that existing research on cultural gaps in adolescence mostly focuses on Latinos and Asian Americans (from different ethnic backgrounds) with a majority of this work based on Mexican- and Chinese-heritage families. This focus is likely due to the larger numeric presence of these groups and the greater cultural dissimilarity between these groups' heritage cultures (collectivist) and the host culture (individualistic). Although both Latinos and Asian Americans are generally considered to come from collectivist cultures, the degree to which gaps exist and inform adolescent and family outcomes among these groups may differ depending on the degree of (dis)similarities between family heritage and mainstream cultures. Therefore, we focus our review and discussion on research with Latino samples given that they make up 18% of the U.S. population (Noe-Bustamante & Flores, 2019). We acknowledge the diversity within Latino sub-groups (e.g., Mexican, Salvadorian, Puerto Rican) in terms of sociopolitical history in the US, reasons for immigration, citizenship status (e.g., Puerto Rico is a US territory such that constituents are US citizens by birth), educational level, socioeconomic status of the families, and the length of time residing in the host country, to name a few (Noe-Bustamante & Flores, 2019). Our focus on Latino families minimizes the possibility of misattributing cultural differences that may exist between groups to discrepancies within the cultural gap literature.

Research on cultural gaps for adolescent and family outcomes.

The repercussions of cultural gaps on family and parent-child relational dynamics and ultimately adolescent adaptation (Santisteban & Mitrani, 2003) resulted in numerous investigations on this topic. Yet, the findings are mixed in the salience of cultural gaps on family dynamics and adolescent outcomes as some studies reveal significant patterns but others do not (see Telzer, 2010 for a review).

Cross-sectional research with Latino samples examined both direct and indirect associations among cultural gaps, family/parenting, and adolescent outcomes. In one study with 90% of families of Mexican heritage, Martinez (2006) conceptualized parent-adolescent mainstream behavioral gap as youth having a greater orientation to American culture (e.g., comfort and use of language and food) than their parents (combined both parents). Results of this study indicated that the mainstream cultural gap was indirectly related to adolescent substance use likelihood via effecting parenting behaviors (measured by several domains, including communication, monitoring, involvement), such that youth who had a greater orientation to mainstream culture than their parents had parents who reported less effective parenting which, in turn, predicted youth's reports on substance use. Another study (Smokowski, Rose, & Bacallao, 2008) largely comprised of Mexican heritage individuals, asked parents and adolescents to report on involvement in mainstream and heritage culture, cultural conflict with parents, and family dynamics. Findings indicated that families where parents were more highly involved in their heritage culture and adolescents were less involved in the

mainstream culture had parents who reported more family cohesion and adaptability. Family cohesion as an indicator of the collectivist values inherent in many Latino cultures (Behnke et al., 2008).

In a more recent cross-sectional study with Mexican heritage adolescents and primary caretaker (83% mother; Telzer, Yuen, Gonzales, & Fuligni, 2016), the authors conceptualized cultural gaps as statistical interactions between adolescents' and parents' behavioral and value orientation in mainstream and heritage culture. There were no significant statistical interactions as predictors of family functioning and adolescent outcomes. Only the main effect of adolescents' heritage cultural orientation (as assessed by Spanish proficiency and family obligations), regardless of their mainstream cultural orientation, consistently emerged as promotive such that those reporting more heritage cultural orientation reported more family support and less internalizing symptoms.

Longitudinal studies on cultural gaps have begun to emerge with Latino families, with most work focused on Mexican heritage families. Some of these studies examined direct longitudinal associations whereas others tested mediational (indirect) mechanisms to explain the cultural gap - family or adolescent outcome link. In one study of Mexican heritage families, Gonzales, Knight, Tein, Tanaka, and White (2018) examined trajectories of heritage cultural values for mothers, fathers, and adolescents and trajectory profiles to determine parent-adolescent cultural gaps. Based on trajectory profiles run separately for father, mother, and adolescent, two groups within mother-child or father-child dyads were identified, a problem gap group and a benign gap group. The problem gap group comprised youth decreasing in heritage culture while mothers and fathers were consistently high in heritage culture whereas the benign gap group comprised all other trajectories (e.g., mom slight decrease and youth slightly increase overtime). Overall, the link between cultural gap group and family and adolescent outcomes were present for mother-adolescent dyads, but not father-adolescent dyads. Specifically, among dyads with problem gaps, mothers reported more conflict with their adolescents, and youth reported fewer internalizing symptoms compared to dyads in the benign group (i.e., youth had slight decreases or increases in heritage values while mothers had slight decreases).

On the other hand, in a longitudinal study with a diverse sample of Latinos residing in Miami (60% of Cuban background) and Los Angeles (70% Mexican background), Schwartz et al. (2016) found that longitudinal heritage cultural gaps (across four times) were more salient in predicting family functioning than mainstream cultural gaps. Findings also revealed that these patterns were only present for adolescent-reported family functioning (i.e., combined parental involvement, positive parenting, parent-adolescent communication, and family cohesion), not for parent-reported. In this study, adolescent-reported family functioning also mediated the link between increased discrepant trajectories of cultural gaps in heritage culture and adolescents' outcomes (e.g., alcohol misuse and depressive symptoms).

Finally, another longitudinal study by Marsiglia, Kiehne, and Ayers (2018) with Mexican heritage families (88% mothers) examined mainstream and heritage behavioral gaps, parenting, and risky behavior, the latter two constructs were reported by adolescents only.

Their overall mediational findings indicated that a greater mainstream cultural gap at baseline was protective whereas a greater heritage cultural gap was compromising via the effects on later risky behavior. Specifically, a greater mainstream cultural orientation in youths relative to their parents was associated with later monitoring, which in turn predicted a decrease in later youth risk behavior. The opposite was evident for heritage cultural gaps (i.e., greater parent Mexican orientation relative to adolescent). Specifically, the more dissimilar parents and youth were on heritage orientation, the lower parental monitoring and involvement, which subsequently predicted an increase in risky behaviors.

Consistent with reviews of the subject (Telzer, 2010), these studies exemplify the current state in the field of cultural gap research and reveal that the conceptualization of the gap (e.g., cognitive and behavioral), operationalization (difference score vs. statistical interaction) or type of gap (i.e., mainstream or heritage culture) result in different patterns of associations, or lack thereof, between cultural gaps and outcomes. Further, these studies show some salient patterns that underscore the importance of research to continue on cultural gaps, especially with a greater focus on extending the work of the family as a system. First, both cross-sectional and longitudinal studies provide equivocal findings on when cultural gaps are related to family dynamics and youth adaptation and a clear mechanism of influence. While some studies show direct associations between parent-adolescent cultural gaps and adolescent outcomes, when family factors are taken into account, there is some evidence that cultural gaps are associated with family dynamics, and family dynamics are a mechanism by which the cultural gap - outcome association can be explained.

Second, past investigations mostly assessed mother-adolescent dyads; limited research included fathers, and research assessing the cultural orientation of other family members (e.g., siblings, grandparents) and overall family systems is nearly nonexistent. The inclusion of both adolescents' and parents' reports on family dynamics, and subsequent findings of these studies, however, point to the importance of including different family members to report on family and adolescent outcomes as these reveal distinct findings that may be driven by who is included in the study. For example, in Martinez (2006), the indirect-mediation model showed that mainstream cultural gap was associated with parent-reported effective parenting, and this was associated with adolescent-reported substance use. Further, Gonzales et al. (2018) did not test for indirect mechanisms but their findings showed that the problem gap group (i.e., youth decreasing in heritage culture while mothers were consistently high) reported more parent-child conflict (as reported by mothers) and fewer internalizing symptoms (as reported by adolescents) than the benign group and no significant findings were present for fathers' reports.

Third, there is a limited understanding of adaptive processes within families that develop and are activated or modified in order to adapt well in the midst of changes, including cultural changes experiences in family systems. This third issue is reflected in more recent work using qualitative inquiry to understand cultural gaps, which elucidates how families navigate and make meaning of differences in youth and parents' differential integration of mainstream and heritage cultures (Buckingham & Broaski, 2015; Nieri & Bermudez-Parsai, 2014). Specifically, this line of research suggests family members share similarities and

differences in their cultural orientation (e.g., referenced as cultural overlaps), especially with regards to heritage culture (Nieri & Bermudez-Parsai, 2014). Thus, cultural gaps are seen as minimal, normative, or necessary to family integration into mainstream culture and family goals of improving their family wellbeing. Thus, the meaning of gaps to family members is a critical part of potential implications for adolescents.

Systems perspectives on immigrant families hold strong potential to serve as a foundation for, and offer promising new directions in, unraveling family dynamics that can help us develop a stronger theoretical rationale for when cultural gaps can inhibit or promote positive family dynamics and individual long-term positive adaptation. To accomplish this, in the next section we discuss concepts associated with two systems principles: (1) families function as an organized whole, comprised of interconnected subsystems, and (2) families are adaptive and self-stabilizing.

Family Systems Perspectives

Family systems perspectives on adolescent development hold potential to extend theory and research on family cultural gaps by focusing on relational patterns that arise and are regulated over time as family needs and experiences occur. We provide a summary of key terms relevant to our discussion of family systems in Table 1. One key principle of systems theory is that *family systems function as an organized whole*, comprised of interconnecting subsystems (Cox & Paley, 1997). General systems theory, from which family systems perspectives are derived, proposes that systems are greater than the sum of the parts such that one part of the system (e.g., individuals or subsystems) cannot be understood apart from the overall system (von Bertalanffy, 1968). Individuals, subsystems that may be dyadic, triadic and higher-level, and overall family systems involve complex interrelated relationship patterns (Bornstein & Sawyer, 2006; Whitchurch & Constantine, 1993).

Interdependence exists within a family system (von Bertalanffy, 1968), as subsystem interactions can inform other subsystems, and lower-order subsystems (smaller; e.g., dyads) are part of higher-hierarchical systems (e.g., triads) and ecological systems (Cox & Paley, 2003). The amount or manner in which subsystems are interrelated varies depending on the permeability of boundaries between subsystems (Whitchurch & Constantine, 1993). Further, a hierarchy emerges among family subsystems, often including a parental subsystem that often serves as an executive system guiding overall family goals and interactions (Cox & Paley, 2003; Minuchin, 1974). Therefore, cultural gaps between two family members (e.g., mother-child) cannot be understood in isolation, and must be understood within the context of the larger family systems (e.g., mother-father-child-sibling), including in relation to other subsystems (e.g., child-sibling, grandparent-child). Further, this perspective suggests that certain family subsystems (e.g., mother-father, nuclear family) may be more important to the family's overall cultural socialization experiences, by directly or indirectly exposing adolescents to cultural norms and values, and other family subsystems (e.g., extended family) may serve to supplement or reinforce these cultural socialization messages that may promote or support larger or smaller cultural gaps among its members.

A second key principle of a family systems perspective is that *family systems are adaptive and self-stabilizing* when experiencing change (Cox & Paley, 1997). This occurs as family systems respond to changes by embracing (or amplifying) or resisting (or dampening) change through feedback loops with a common goal of equilibrium or maintaining a steady state of balance that is critical to positive adaptation of family systems and their members (Constantine, 1986). Negative feedback occurs when families resist change and seek to return to the prior steady state (or balance) in interaction patterns. Positive feedback occurs as a family recognizes a need for changes in family interaction, increasing the deviation from prior family interaction. The systems principle of equifinality posits families may take different pathways to same outcome (Whitchurch & Constantine, 1993). Moreover, the systems principle of multifinality posits that the same experience may lead to different outcomes for different families. Thus, families can vary in the specific within-family processes for navigating cultural orientation differences of its members as well as in how cultural gaps contribute to specific family and adolescent outcomes (Buckingham & Brodsky, 2015; Nieri & Bermdez-Parsai, 2014). These principles explain why specific families may find cultural gaps or overlaps as positive, negative, and/or neutral in the short- and long term (Buckingham & Brodsky, 2015). Below we propose using family adaptive systems as a way of understanding how the feedback loops in family systems provide insights into the complex and varied experiences of cultural gaps within families.

Over time and through interaction within family systems, family adaptive systems (FAS) develop and regulate complex, interrelated domains of dynamics that coalesce around key family functions such as meeting needs for members and society (Henry et al., 2015). Analogous to adaptive systems that develop and regulate functioning in the body (e.g., circulatory system or respiratory system) or individuals (e.g., information processing or emotion), multiple FAS develop and work in concert with each other to regulate family functioning (Harrist et al., 2018). We focus on three FAS domains that hold potential to advance systems perspectives on cultural gaps in immigrant families: the emotion, control, and meaning systems. In addition, we provide a brief overview of the feedback process system involved in family self-regulation and adaptation. Each FAS operates at multiple family system levels, since overall family system qualities interface with the family dynamics in subsystems (e.g., parent-youth) but, for simplicity, in this section we focus on the overall family system level.

Family emotion systems arise as family members develop and regulate interaction patterns involving family members' sense of self and interactions with others (Kantor & Lehr, 1975). Family emotion systems encompass processes such as emotion socialization of children (Morris et al., 2013), bonding or cohesion, communication (e.g., supportive vs. defensive), emotional reactivity, or emotion regulation; Morris, Criss, Silk, & Houlberg, 2017), or demand-withdraw emotional cycles (e.g., Caughlin & Huston, 2002). *Family control systems* inform the development and regulation of patterns of influence and include family power, authority, boundaries, rules, routines, and control tactics (Harrist et al., 2018; Henry et al., 2015). *Family meaning systems* arise through interactions and comprise a shared worldview, identity, and meanings on specific situations (Patterson & Garwick, 1994). The worldview is philosophical or spiritual in nature and involves beliefs about the world and how it works. The identity is the sense of "who we are as a family" (e.g., "we are

Guatemalan Americans”, “together we can manage challenges”. Situational meanings arise as specific experiences occur (e.g., how the family perceives the birth of an additional child).

In sum, the family emotion, control, and meaning systems tend work in concert with each other, and potentially with other family adaptive systems that go beyond the scope of this paper, to promote day-to-day family functioning and to regulate change. In particular, change that occurs as family members differentially adhere to, integrate, and/or maintain cultural orientations. This occurs through self-regulating processes that are inherent in family systems (Cox & Paley, 2003, von Bertalanffy, 1968) involving feedback loops that are activated as change is detected, and amplifying or dampening change (Constantine, 1986). Within the next section, we will describe how the cultural gap literature can be situated within the systems perspectives to inform our understanding of, and provide promising new directions for, research and theory on cultural gaps. This integration also challenges family theories to pay closer attention as to how cultural processes within family members permeate and affect ongoing family dynamics and the adaptation at a specific point in development (e.g., adolescence).

Cultural Gaps from a Family Systems Perspective

The guiding principles of systems perspectives described above are particularly useful in conceptualizing and researching cultural gaps in immigrant families. Below, we address these principles as they apply (1) in multiple levels of family system dynamics and (2) through family adaptive systems. Further, we provide a figure to help the reader see how we integrate family systems perspectives and conceptualization of the emergence and consequences of cultural gaps (see Figure 1). Within this figure, the double-sided arrows represent both the bidirectional influence of cultural transmission and the current state of the cultural gap between two family members (e.g., a family subsystem). Our figure focuses on the presence of cultural gaps for one target adolescent between multiple family members to minimize the presence of all the existing subsystems within a family system. Next, we identify multiple interconnected family subsystems that arise in nuclear and extended family systems, generally ranging in their salience within a specific adolescent’s life. Further, we depict each hierarchical system by dashed lines to acknowledge that the boundaries between these hierarchical systems tend to be, at least to some extent, permeable. Next, we link the presence of a gap to multiple interconnected family adaptive systems (FAS; e.g., emotion, control, and meaning) because we believe, based on family systems perspectives, that cultural gaps are experienced within the context of, and as a consequence of these FASs. The associations among the presence of a gap, FAS, adjustment (e.g., temporary, minor, or short-term change) and adaptation (e.g., long-term change involving in changes in family dynamics; Henry et al., 2015; McCubbin & Patterson 1983) are all linked through bidirectional arrows to acknowledge that each of these processes are emerging in relation to one another across time (e.g., chronological and developmental). We elaborate on the associations noted in this figure in the sections to follow.

Multiple Levels of Family Systems and the Development of Cultural Gaps

First, a systems perspective alerts us to the idea that cultural gaps of family members emerge and are experienced through interconnected subsystems, as well as the family system as a whole (Figure 1 – Family Structure and System Dynamics). The embeddedness of individuals within multiple levels of family systems (subsystems, overall family systems, family-ecosystem) suggests that mainstream and heritage cultural orientations of family members, and cultural gaps that may result between family members, involve multiple interacting family systems levels (e.g., dyadic, triadic and higher-level subsystems). Therefore, research on cultural gaps must go beyond a focus on one parent-youth dyad and consider other dyadic and triadic subsystems (e.g., sibling-sibling, mother-father-child, grandparent-grandchild, grandparent-parent) and overall family system qualities. Even within the literature studying parent-child cultural gaps, the integration of a family systems perspective offers promising new areas of research.

Parent-youth subsystems.—We benefitted greatly from the past literature, especially the emergent studies that explored mother-youth and father-youth cultural gaps separately (Gonzales et al., 2018; Perez-Brena, Updegraff, & Umaña-Taylor, 2014). This work suggests that mother-youth and father-youth dynamics are complimentary but distinct. For example, research focused on understanding how cultural gaps emerge within Mexican-heritage parent-youth dyads showed that cultural gaps emerged through different socialization mechanisms within mother-youth versus father-youth dyads (Perez-Brena et al., 2014). Specifically, more warmth and role modeling/imitation of mothers was linked to smaller heritage culture gaps within the mother-youth subsystem, whereas more explicit intentions to be different (e.g., de-identification) from fathers was linked to larger heritage and mainstream culture gaps. Further, research studying the consequences of cultural gaps also noted that mother-youth and father-youth dyads differ. For example, within Gonzales and colleagues' (2018) study, cultural gaps with mothers, but not fathers, were linked to mothers' reports of parent-youth conflict and adolescents' report of internalizing and externalizing behaviors. These findings distinguish the unique contributions of mother-youth versus father-youth cultural gaps and merit examination of multiple family subsystems as separate, but interrelated, cultural gap processes.

The small but emergent literature that is exploring the unique and complimentary role of multiple within-family dyads (e.g., mother-youth vs. father-youth dyads) highlight the importance of specifying what parent-youth subsystem is under study, as they may emerge through different mechanisms and have different consequences. However, parent-youth subsystems exist as part of the overall family system and do not exist in isolation. Family systems perspectives suggest that subsystem interactions can inform other subsystems, and subsystems are part of larger hierarchical systems (e.g., triads; Bornstein & Sawyer, 2006) and systems outside the family (Cox & Paley, 2003). Therefore, it is imperative that future research explores the cultural gaps that may emerge between parent-parent dyads (e.g., mother-father), especially because this subsystem often guides the cultural context of the overall family systems and permeability of boundaries with other systems. This can be accomplished both through exploring cultural gaps in among members of overall family systems and by exploring the manner through which cultural gaps in one family subsystem

(e.g., father-youth) are linked to gaps in other subsystems (e.g., mother-youth) to create an overall picture of the overall role of family cultural orientation and the implications for adolescent development. Through this additional line of inquiry, we may understand how the presence of a cultural gap with one or both family members, such as both parents, relates to variability in adolescent outcomes.

Moving beyond the parent-youth subsystem.—The almost exclusive focus on cultural gaps in the parent-adolescent subsystem does not translate into overall family dynamics. Multiple levels of family dynamics, including subsystems and overall systems, are comprised of interrelated relational patterns that include siblings, extended family members, or kin and quasi-kin who function as family members. The research focused on cultural gaps between siblings' and extended family systems (Silverstein & Chen, 1999) is scarce. Therefore, we rely on adjacent research that focuses on cultural socialization (Gutierrez, Goodwin, Kirkins, & Mattis, 2014; Rodríguez De Jesús, Updegraff, Umaña-Taylor, McHale, & Zeiders, 2018; Schmidt & Padilla, 1983) and family systems perspectives to provide some insights as to how these systems may inform adolescent cultural orientation, the emergence of cultural gaps, and the outcomes related to such cultural gaps.

Siblings: Sibling relationships are amongst the most important and enduring relationships that individuals experience (White, 2001). Sibling relationships, in contrast to parent-youth relationships, tend to be seen as more egalitarian in nature, allowing for more disagreement, negotiation, and exploration of ideas (Dunn, 2015). For immigrant families, siblings can be important resources in contexts outside of the family (e.g., school, neighborhoods; Updegraff, McHale, Killoren, & Rodríguez De Jesús, 2011). Therefore, siblings may play a key role in youths' exposure to and integration of mainstream cultural norms and values. For example, research that studied siblings' role in Mexican-heritage youth's cultural adaptation showed that siblings' mainstream orientation, not Mexican orientation, were linked to younger siblings' own mainstream orientations (Rodríguez De Jesús et al., 2018). Further, mothers' and fathers' mainstream orientations were not linked to younger siblings' mainstream orientation. This research supports the idea that siblings may be a source of information and, possible exploration, regarding the mainstream culture.

These findings highlight the promise of exploring triadic relationships (parent-youth-sibling), and other more complex relational patterns in overall family systems where researchers are able to identify the unique and complimentary role of mothers, fathers, and siblings, simultaneously. Given the long lasting and important nature of sibling relationships, systems guided theory and research is needed in the exploration of the development or consequences of cultural gaps between siblings. Emergent research is needed to understand how a cultural gap between siblings may (1) relate to sibling relationship dynamics in the short- and long-term, (2) inform other family dynamics subsystems (e.g., mother-youth-sibling) or overall family systems, or (3) inform youth adaptation.

Grandparents: Another important subsystem to consider is the youth-grandparent subsystem. Nearly 64 million households within the U.S. reside in multigenerational households, which may include a grandparent-parent-grandchild household or other residential kin (Cohn & Passel, 2018). Further, global trends suggest multigenerational

families are highly prevalent in more collectivist cultures and countries with a larger aging population (United Nations, 2017). Grandparents, in particular, are key actors who facilitate downward cultural socialization across generations (grandparent to parent, parent to youth; Bornstein & Sawyer, 2006). Grandparents, especially maternal grandmothers, are an important kin relationship that supports heritage cultural (Schmidt & Padilla, 1983) and religious (Gutierrez et al., 2014) socialization through direct (grandparent-youth) or indirect (grandparent-parent-youth) influence over children's cultural orientation. Grandparents' multiple avenues of influence suggest a dynamic and recursive system of socialization within the family that crosses family subsystem boundaries.

However, because grandparents may be more involved in the socialization of the heritage culture, cultural gaps may occur as grandchildren integrate more of the mainstream culture and these gaps may inform the grandparent-youth relationship. Within the grandparent-grandchild dyad, only one study has explored the emergence of cultural gaps. Findings from this study showed that a larger cultural gap between the dyad was linked to declines in Mexican-origin youths' reported affection towards their grandparents but was not related to changes in grandparents' reports of affection towards their grandchildren (Silverstein & Chen, 1999). This study shows that cultural gaps occur within grandparent-grandchild dyads, and they impact each actor in different ways. Additional research is needed, however, to truly capitalize on a family system perspective to understand (1) how gaps at multiple linked subsystem levels can help to enforce or undermine parents' and grandparents' socialization goals for youth, (2) and how the permeability of boundaries between different subsystem of varying salience (e.g., nuclear vs. extended, mother vs. grandmothers' perceived authority) may moderate that association.

Overall family systems and kin relations: Family systems tend to function as an organized whole (Bornstein & Sawyer, 2006), interacting with kin, and broader ecosystems. Because our primary focus lies in internal family contexts, we acknowledge rather than detail the potential influences of external family contexts, including broader ecosystems, in how families experience cultural gaps. The concept that a family system must be understood as a whole informs our belief that the level of agreement within the overall family system (including extended family) also may play a part in the emergence, experience, and interpretation of cultural gaps (Day, Gavazzi, Miller, & van Langenveld, 2009). Therefore, a systems perspective necessitates that we offer a new term to supplement the cultural gap literature and to account for cultural gaps that go beyond the dyads to integrate the larger system. We borrow from the concept of homophily (McPherson, Smith-Lovin, & Cook, 2001) to represent the level of similarity within a group, and suggest that the level of similarity may increase or decrease the pressure to conform to group norms. The term family cultural similarity (or dissimilarity), we argue, represents the level of agreement/similarities (e.g., cultural similarity) in family members' heritage and/or mainstream orientation, and high levels of family cultural similarity may create high levels of perceived unity in the family's cultural orientation, which can increase youths' sense of obligation or pressure to internalize and conform to similar cultural values and norms (Trommsdorff, 2009). If youth do not integrate similar cultural orientations and cultural gaps emerge within a highly

culturally-similar family system, family systems may experience a higher level of family-youth misfit and higher levels of stress.

Further, cultural socialization can simultaneously occur across different dyadic and intergenerational systems (e.g., grandparent-grandchild, parent-youth, uncle-youth) which serve to continuously expose youth to cultural information and provide supplemental and coordinated cultural socialization experiences. However, it is possible that family members do not agree in their cultural orientation, and instead show high family-cultural dissimilarity. Residing within a culturally-dissimilar family system may reduce the perceived pressure to comply with one set of norms, reduce the exposure to consistent cultural messages, and allow youth to find allies within the family who share in their cultural orientation. In other words, within culturally-dissimilar families, cultural gaps may be seen as the norm in the overall family experience and this may decrease the influence of cultural gaps between family members on family dynamics and youth adaptation.

In summary, a systems perspective alerts us to the importance of moving beyond our understanding of parent-youth cultural gaps in order to understand cultural gaps among other subsystems (e.g., mother-father, sibling-sibling, grandparent-grandchild), the dynamics and emergence of cultural gaps within higher-level subsystems (e.g., triads, quads), the interrelation of cultural gaps between subsystems, and the emergence and consequences of cultural gaps within the overall family system. Further, future cultural gap research that integrates a systems perspective will also help us to further examine and understand many family systems concepts such as the manner through which family executive systems may work to regulate the cultural context of the family, the boundaries and permeability within different system levels, and the manner through which family feedback loop can serve to support and reinforce cultural messages and family-cultural similarity/dissimilarity. Through this information, we will be better able to understand how diverse kin-youth dyads, triads, larger system or overall family system configurations interface with a larger cultural context that informs family and adolescent adaptation.

Although this line of research still does not explain why we may see divergent outcomes for the seemingly similar experiences (or multifinality) or similar outcomes for different experiences (or equifinality), this research base will provide foundation for research that is valuable in identifying factors involved in these varied pathways. In addition, family adaptive systems, discussed below, may help elucidate nuances in family dynamics that scholars and practitioners address these conflicting findings.

Cultural Gaps in Families: The Role of Family Adaptive Systems

Current scholarship is inconclusive regarding whether culture gaps are positive or negative in terms of family dynamics and adolescent outcomes (Telzer, 2010). Thus, we begin with the premise that the goal of considering family adaptive systems is to explain variation in the experiences of families with cultural gaps (Figure 1; Family Adaptive Systems). As we await future research to findings about how family systems and culture gaps inform one another in immigrant families, we offer insights on how FAS may be involved in regulating family adaptation to culture gaps.

Using systems perspectives, we assume that cultural gaps are not one dimensional and may involve multiple FAS. Culture gaps may arise when shared meaning is not present among family members regarding mainstream culture and heritage culture. Understanding how a family manages a cultural gap requires consideration of not only the broader family meaning system including worldview and identity as well as situational meaning, but also how the emotion and control systems may interface with the gap. Ongoing feedback loops support regulatory change if cultural gaps present challenges to a family, multiple FAS work in concert with each other to regulate the degree to which the cultural gaps matter for family and individual functioning. Positive feedback embraces change as families recognize a need for flexibility and increase the deviation from ongoing dynamics; such processes were indicated in the families interviewed in Nieri and Bermudez-Parsai (2014) and Buckingham and Brodsky's (2015) work, described later. Negative feedback occurs as families resist change and seek return to the prior steady state (or balance). Yet, how families experiences negative or positive feedback loops is rarely, if at all, measured and included in studies of cultural gaps.

As families immigrate and become established in a new environment, the processes of mainstream and heritage culture adaptation can challenge ongoing family dynamics, yielding feedback loops that regulate the extent to which stability or change are embraced or resisted often involving several FAS (Harrist et al., 2018). Systems perspectives conceptualize change potentially involving either different pathways to the same end (equifinality) or similar starting points with different outcomes (multifinality). As evident in Telzer's (2010) review and Buckingham and Brodsky's study (2015), family cultural gaps may follow different pathways and emerge in a variety of forms across families.

Below, we elaborate on how considering the emotion, control, and meaning systems may be critical to understanding cultural gaps from family systems perspectives. In turn, future research can push the field forward and help us understand when, why, and how cultural gaps matter for individual and family adjustment and adaptation. Although FAS do not function in isolation of one another within a family, for ease of presentation, we discuss each FAS separately.

Family emotion systems.—A key tenant of the acculturation-gap distress hypothesis (Szapocznik & Kurtines, 1993) is that cultural processes within families create disruptions within parent-child relationships (Santisteban & Mitrani, 2003). The empirical work on cultural gaps, however, tends to overlook the interface of parent-child emotion subsystems with overall family system dynamics. The family emotional system, a prevalent theme in the study of families as systems, holds strong potential to place the cultural gap between parents and children in the context of ongoing family dynamics (Bornstein & Sawyer, 2006; Harrist et al., 2018; Henry et al., 2015). In overall family systems, relational patterns around emotion develop and regulate family members' sense togetherness and individuality (Kantor & Lehr, 1975). Patterns of interaction coalesce around domains of family functioning including emotion-related processes such as bonding or cohesion, communication (e.g., supportive vs. defensive), emotional reactivity, or emotion regulation (Morris, Criss, Silk, & Houlthberg, 2017), or emotional cycles of demand-withdraw (e.g., Caughlin & Huston, 2002).

Of the FAS, emotion systems within the parent-child dyad have received the most interest from researchers studying cultural gaps, as much of this research has studied the direct association between cultural gaps with family warmth, conflict, and related constructs. This line of research has studied how warmth (Perez-Brena et al., 2014) and parent-child conflict (Padilla, McHale, Rovine, Updegraff, & Umaña-Taylor, 2016) predict cultural gaps or the manner through which gaps are linked to warmth, conflict, or related constructs (e.g., Gonzales et al., 2018). This work suggests that a cultural gap where adolescents are lower on heritage culture than parents is likely to interface with adolescents' perceptions of the family emotional climate. Thus, perceptions of the family emotional climate may be influenced by heritage culture gaps, which ultimately could compound the effect that cultural gaps can have on family functioning and ultimately youth outcomes. Combined, this line of research suggests there are bidirectional processes between family emotion systems and the emergence and consequences of cultural gaps as part of family system dynamics.

When considering the emotion system domain, it is important to consider how emotion systems interact with cultural gaps to inform family functioning and adolescent outcomes, however, little is known about this process. The one study addressing this issue suggest that the family emotional climate holds potential to clarify how cultural gaps function (e.g., detrimental vs. benign; Telzer, 2010). Specifically, with a sample of Mexican-heritage families, Schofield, Parke, Kim, and Coltrane (2008) found that father-child acculturation gaps in 5th grade predicted more father-child conflict in 7th grade and more externalizing symptoms in 7th grade but only when father-child relationship quality was low (i.e., not enjoying time together); mother-child models were not significant.

In sum, there is much needed future research on the role of emotional climates that can help elucidate how family emotion domains such as cohesion, warmth, conflict, and other constructs, create a family context in which gaps are experienced; thus, making cultural gaps feel minimal or significantly disruptive to family functioning. Moving forward with this line of research is, perhaps, the most promising line of inquiry that may allow us to understand why we see divergent outcomes across similar assessments of the cultural gap (e.g., multifinality) and similar outcomes for families who describe different cultural gap experiences (e.g., equifinality).

Family control systems.—How cultural gaps are experienced also may be informed by control systems (e.g., family power, authority, boundaries, rules, routines, and control tactics; Harrist et al., 2018; Henry et al., 2015). For example, if families can effectively regulate clear family rules, roles, and routines in the face of cultural gaps, the experience of a cultural gap may not adversely affect family relationships or youth outcomes (Buckingham & Brodsky, 2015). Or, if the hierarchy of who controls what in a family system, is challenged by different norms in the mainstream or heritage culture, then adaptation may be necessary. Further, families that are more flexible may be able to adapt to the emergence of cultural gaps, or the changing family dynamics caused by these cultural gaps. For example, in a qualitative study of two immigrant families, Buckingham and Brodsky (2015) show how families used control systems to navigate gaps and “bounce forward” towards new family adaptation patterns. That is, families who were willing to change role expectations (flexibility in roles) or willing to allow outside members to serve as mediators to a

subsystem (flexibility in boundaries and hierarchies) reported more positive adaptations. However, the successful navigation of gaps also required families to set and respect limits on values, behaviors, or norms that were deemed important to the family or to a particular family subsystem.

A second study explored the mediating role of parental monitoring (a family control technique) between cultural gaps and youth risky behavior (Marsiglia et al., 2018). Within this study, parental monitoring was described as a parental control tactic that helps parents remain aware of youth in order to intervene in a timely manner, when intervention is necessary. The results suggest that cultural gaps were associated to youth risky behaviors through the process of monitoring such that cultural gaps that were linked to less monitoring were linked to more risky behaviors, and gaps that were linked to more monitoring were linked to less risky behaviors. The authors suggest that parents who experienced large cultural gaps and increased their monitoring, did so in order to continue to foster closeness with their children, or because they felt a sense of apprehension with their children's cultural adaptations and wanted to find ways to temper this process. We are not aware of other research that has explore how control systems inform cultural gaps; therefore, this is an emergent and promising new line of inquiry.

Family meaning systems.—Since family meaning systems involve a shared sense of family worldviews, identity, and ways of perceiving specific situations (Patterson & Garwick, 1994), it is critical to consider how these elements are involved in the emergence and management of cultural gaps in families. During and after immigration, overall family systems, subsystems, and individual family members are challenged in terms of the meaning of the heritage and mainstream cultures in their lives. This process may be experienced differently or at different paces by individual family members depending on their assessment of the level of support and acceptance of the heritage culture within the mainstream culture, and each members' choice on how to address this perceive acceptance (James, Cord, Fine, & Rudy, 2018). Thus, it is critical to take into account how the on-going family meaning making processes, and larger societal acceptance of the heritage culture, may facilitate or hamper the adjustment or adaptation of family members in the presence of a cultural gap.

Meanings are a critical to family systems conceptualizations of culture gaps for multiple reasons. First, there is complexity of developing shared meaning in an immigrant family that has two or more cultural frames of reference. Second, different members may have different levels of exposure to the cultures. For example, if parents and children were raised in different countries, then children's experience of the heritage cultural may come indirectly through parents' cultural socialization. Third, adolescent or adult family members who migrated from the heritage culture to the mainstream culture may experience challenges to, and often refinements of, their individual identity, potentially challenging the existing family identity. Fourth, adolescents often experience increased cognitive capabilities and are increasingly able to consider not only possible individual cultural identities, but also possible family cultural identities as they face a development challenge of developing an identity. Altogether, these are important considerations for the relevance of meaning systems to become an important area of inquiry within the cultural gap research area.

Existing qualitative research on cultural gaps noted the importance of meaning systems among immigrant families since parenting and parent-child interactions can be interpreted differently by individual family members and, as a result, lead to more positive adaptation than expected based on theory (Bacallao & Smokowski, 2007; Niere & Bermudez-Parsai, 2014). For example, in Bacallao and Smokowski's research, parents and youth noted that they chose to support youths' more rapid mainstream cultural integration, leading to a cultural gap, as a means to help the family integrate into the mainstream culture. In fact, some youth saw their higher mainstream cultural orientation as an opportunity to help the family (e.g., by helping with translation tasks).

Further, in a study of a parent and an adolescent in 30 Mexican immigrant families, several parents noted that they saw the emergence of a cultural gap in the heritage and mainstream culture as normative to adolescent development and a manageable outcome of the immigration and acculturation process (Niery & Bermudez-Parsai, 2014). Nieri and Bermude-Parsais found that how family members affiliated with their heritage culture and mainstream culture as well as whether or not affiliation was automatic versus effortful, had implications for how the "gap" was viewed within the family as well as the association to family dynamics. In particular, in families who perceived these processes as normative, and as differences in degree of orientation, as along a spectrum, were less likely to show parent-child conflict. In cases where parent-child conflict did exist, family members perceived it as a result of developmental and generational differences, and not from a cultural gap. Although not measured in their study, these findings likely implicate the importance of adaptive family meaning making processes in navigating cultural orientation among family members.

Finally, drawing from Buckingham and Brodsky's (2015) study, the authors described how families managed the distress caused by cultural gaps by describing the distress as manageable, explaining why the gaps existed, or normalizing the experience of a gap. Further, families often positively reframed the experiences of gaps by stating that their families would grow from, or despite, the experiences of these gaps. Altogether, these articles showcase how a meaning system can be used to moderate the associations between cultural gaps and family functioning and adolescent adaptation. Although qualitative research findings support the importance of understanding the moderating role of meaning systems, these ideas have not been tested using quantitative or mixed methods, providing another promising new avenue of research to enrich our understanding of cultural gaps.

Additional Considerations

It is important to note that research on cultural gaps and their interface with family dynamics and adolescent outcomes must consider the stage of development of the child (Figure 1 - Time and Development), as some changes that are normative in adolescence also could potentially inform when cultural gaps are detrimental, beneficial, or neutral with regard to adaptation. For example, due to increasingly sophisticated cognitive abilities youth tend to gain through adolescence (Choudhury, Blakemore & Charman, 2006; McLean & Thorne, 2003), the degree or nature of cultural gaps and their interpretation may influence family dynamics in areas of functioning such as emotion, control, or meaning. Specifically, the

association between cultural gaps and parent-child dynamics may decrease in strength as adolescent cognitive maturity leads to increased capabilities in taking perspectives of and understanding the intentions of others (including parents; Choudhury et al., 2006; McLean & Throne, 2003). In turn, as adolescents are more able to see their parents' perspectives, parent-adolescent cultural gaps may be interpreted in ways that give insights and alternative positive interpretations of conflicts between their own and parents' cultural desires and expectations (Buckingham & Brodsky, 2015). Similarly, increases in cognitive abilities can assist adolescents in framing cultural gaps with greater understanding (e.g., "Being traditional and strict is typical for most Latino parents."), decreasing the potential of cultural gaps presenting challenges to parent-adolescent dynamics (Bacallao & Smokowski, 2007). These examples of age-related changes in adolescents illustrate how the associations between cultural gaps and family dynamics across time are a critical limitation in existing research that merits further investigation.

Also, it is critical to consider the longitudinal changes in family members' own cultural orientation. For example, Gonzales et al. (2018) uncovered different patterns of longitudinal change (three time points) in Mexican values among mothers, fathers, and youth. Specifically, the authors identified one class where mothers depicted continuously high endorsement of Mexican values across time, and a second class where mothers depicted initially moderate endorsement of Mexican values with slightly decreases over time. For fathers, one class was initially high and slightly decreased over time, and a second class reported continuously moderate values. Finally, youth showed three different patterns of change such that one class, relative to other classes, generally showed high values, one class started lower on values and showed steeper declines on values (i.e., youth decreasing), and one class started low but showed increased values over time (i.e., youth increasing). Schwartz et al. (2016) also showed changes in parents' cultural orientation across time; however, this was evident for mainstream and heritage practices but only U.S. identity.

Lastly, it is important to acknowledge that, although cultural gaps existed within many of the families in the studies discussed in this manuscript, these gaps are often small in nature. Therefore, we must internally reflect on our own research meaning system, to acknowledge that it is possible that the framing of this line of research, focused on gaps, may be prohibiting us from identifying additional family strengths that foster positive adaptation. As highlighted in Nieri and Bermudez-Parsai (2014), an alternate point of reference that focuses our study on *cultural overlaps* may be warranted. That is, they suggest that we turn our attention towards understanding how cultural similarities *and* differences emerge, and the family and individual processes that support such similarities and differences.

Conclusions

Given the equivocal findings on cultural gaps, family dynamics, and youth adaptation, in this paper we advocate for the integration of a larger comprehensive unifying framework to guide the interpretation of findings (or lack thereof) and the development of future hypotheses regarding these phenomena. A systems perspective is aptly suited to conceptualize and delineate relevant mechanisms and dynamics that occur in investigations of cultural gaps. We recommend a systems lens to investigating cultural gaps that expands

beyond the parent-child dyad to additional family members' and family subsystems' cultural orientations (Figure 1).

We also underscore the view of families' self-stabilizing and adaptive nature (Cox & Paley, 1997) in studies focused on cultural gaps and their contribution on family dynamics and individual adaptation. As adaptive and self-stabilizing systems, when families and their members face changing conditions (i.e., living in a new culture, stage of development), FAS are set in motion so that families can adapt to create a new normal or steady state in on-going family dynamics within the new culture. In turn, FAS processes can progressively decrease the detrimental influences of cultural gaps or work with existing culture gaps to develop positive family dynamics over time. Ultimately, expanding our research on family cultural gaps (or overlaps) within a family systems framework holds promise to explain why cultural gaps matter at times but not others.

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Family Structure and System Dynamics

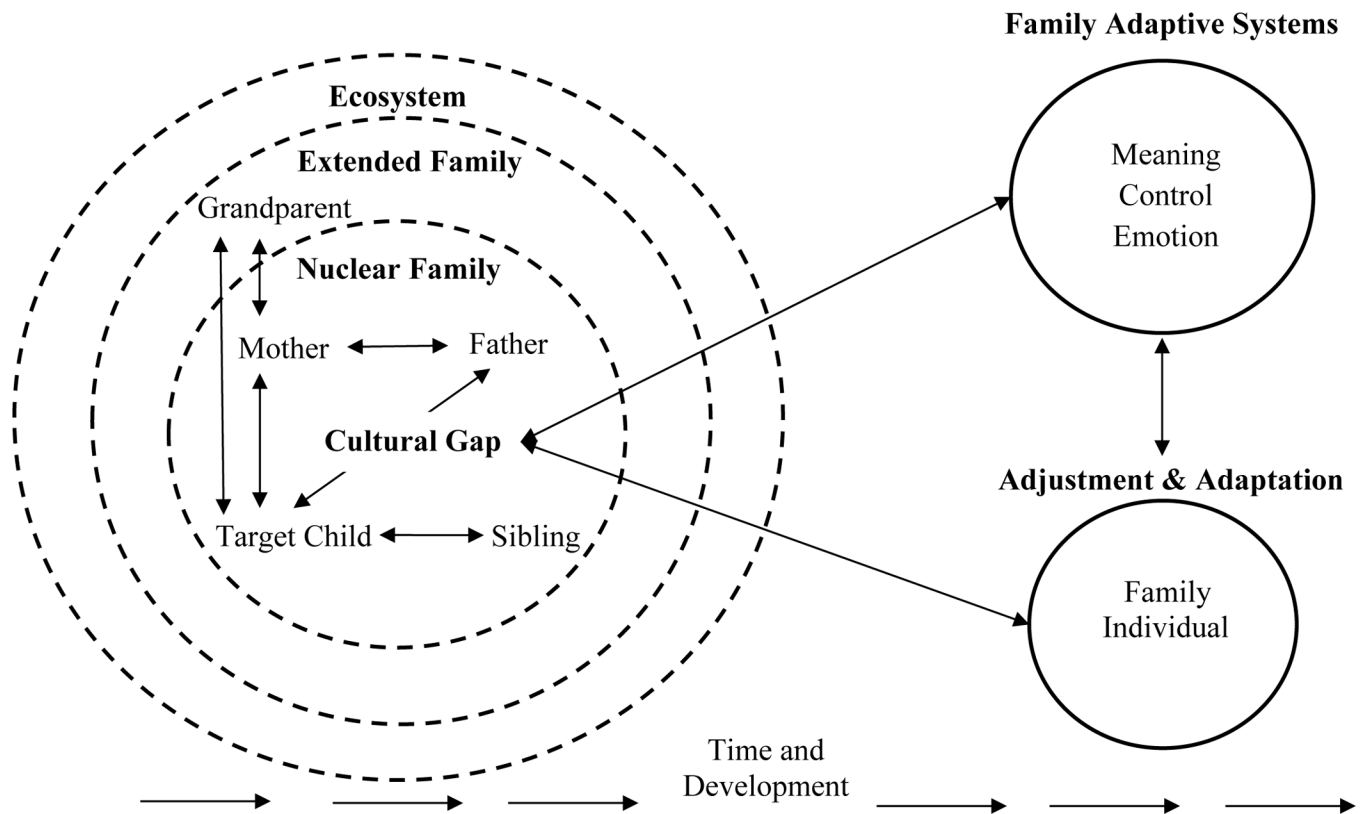


Figure 1.

Situating Cultural Gaps within a Family Systems Framework

Note. Focus is on cultural gaps for one target child. Dashed lines acknowledge that family subsystems may be permeable. Double-sided arrows represent bidirectional influence of cultural transmission, state of the cultural gap between two family members, FAS, and adolescent adjustment across time.

Table 1

List of key terminology related to cultural adaptation, socialization, and family systems

Term	Definition	Reference(s)
Cultural Processes		
Acculturation	Generally referred as the process of cultural adaptation that occurs when two distinct cultural groups come into prolonged contact with each other and which is continually negotiated as individuals modify their values, behaviors, and identifications.	Berry, 1995; Marsiglia et al., 2018; Buckingham & Brosky, 2015
Cultural adaptation	Encompasses the idea that individuals experience both <i>acculturation</i> , as they interact with and adapt to the host or receiving culture and <i>enculturation</i> , as they interact with and adapt to their heritage or ethnic culture.	Gonzales et al., 2018, p. 1612
Enculturation	Interaction and adaptation to the heritage or ethnic culture.	Gonzales et al., 2018, p. 1612
Heritage culture	The cultural values, beliefs, and behaviors from the heritage/ethnic culture.	Marsiglia et al., 2018; Schwartz et al., 2016
Mainstream culture	The cultural values, beliefs, and behaviors that are held by most people within a society.	Marsiglia et al., 2018; Schwartz et al., 2016
Cultural orientation	The degree or level of internalization and integration of values, beliefs, and behaviors of mainstream (i.e., acculturation) and family heritage (i.e., enculturation).	Gonzales, Knight, Birman, & Sirolli, 2004
Cultural gap	Different patterns and emerging differences in cultural orientation between parents and children due to their individual adherence to the values, beliefs, and behaviors of mainstream and heritage cultures.	Santisteban & Mitrani, 2003; Telzer, 2010
Mainstream cultural gap	Difference in mainstream cultural orientation between parent and youth. This difference can be higher or lower. Higher - A child can be <i>more</i> acculturated than a parent. Lower - A child can be <i>less</i> acculturated than a parent.	Telzer, 2010
Heritage cultural gap	Difference in heritage cultural orientation between parent and youth. This difference can be higher or lower. Higher - A child can be <i>more</i> enculturated than a parent. Lower - A child can be <i>less</i> enculturated than a parent.	Telzer, 2010
Cultural overlap	The level of agreement or similarities that family members have in their cultural orientation	Nieri & Bermudez-Parsai, 2014
Cultural transmission	The process of sharing, passing down, and internalizing of cultural information from one generation to the next or from one group to another group	Schonpflug & Bilz, 2009
Cultural socialization	The process through which individuals are taught or exposed to rules, norms, roles, and values of a particular culture.	Schonpflug & Bilz, 2009
Family-cultural similarities	Family systems that show high levels of similarity or agreement in their cultural orientation.	Informed by McPherson, Smith-Lovin, & Cook, 2001
Family-cultural dissimilarities	Family systems that show low levels of similarity or agreement in their cultural orientation.	Informed by McPherson, Smith-Lovin, & Cook, 2001
Family Systems		
Family system	"Relational patterns among family members and interfaces with ecosystems". Can be viewed at multiple system levels: (a) overall family system, family subsystem, individual family member, or family-ecosystem interface.	Henry et al., 2015 (p. 28)
Family subsystem	Smaller units within family systems such as a couple, father-child, mother-child, grandmother-grandchild, grandfather-grandchild, sibling.	Whitchurch & Constantine, 1993
Hierarchy	Family systems involve a hierarchy of lower-order subsystems, overall family systems, suprasystems (or ecosystems).	Whitchurch & Constantine, 1993
Wholeness	Family systems dynamics are more than the sum of the parts of individual family members or subsystems.	von Bertalanffy, 1968
Equilibrium	Establishing, restoring, or creating a new balance of stability and change in family systems.	von Bertalanffy, 1968
Feedback loop	A process through which family systems respond to change in one part of a family system by through self-regulation that dampens (negative feedback) the change to restore balance or amplifies (positive feedback) the change to create a new balance.	Constantine, 1986

Term	Definition	Reference(s)
Multifinality	A principle derived from general systems stating that the same starting point can yield different outcomes.	von Bertalanffy, 1968
Equifinality	A principle derived from general systems theory stating that there are different paths to the same outcomes.	von Bertalanffy, 1968
Adaptation	Competent functioning across family system levels after developmental or other changes. Often used when referencing long-term change	McCubbin & McCubbin, 2013; McCubbin & Patterson, 1983; Patterson, 2002
Adjustment	Short-term changes across family system levels after developmental or other changes.	McCubbin & McCubbin, 2013; McCubbin & Patterson, 1983
Family adaptive systems	Interrelated patterns that arise and are modified or maintained through day-to-day interactions that regulate stability and change in key domains of family life including, but not limited to, emotion, control, meaning, maintenance, and stress-response. Can (a) increase family protection or vulnerability during or after change or (b) indicate levels of adaptation to change.	Harrist et al., 2018; Henry et al., 2015
Family meaning system	Family worldview, identity, or perceptions of situations that arise through interaction.	Patterson & Garwick (1994)
Family emotion system	Overall emotional climate of a family that defines and regulates connections with others within and outside of the family. Includes, but is not limited to, one's sense of self in relation to one's family system, emotional bonding, emotion cycles, emotion regulation, emotion coaching, emotion socialization, emotional support.	Henry et al., 2015
Family control system	Overall control climate of a family that defines and regulates authority, power, boundaries, roles, rules, routines, and behavior.	Henry et al., 2015