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## Understanding Adolescents' Acculturation Processes: New Insights from the Intergroup Perspective

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### Data Availability Statement

*The datasets generated and/or analyzed during the current study are not publicly available but are available from the corresponding author on reasonable request.*

## **Understanding Adolescents' Acculturation Processes: New Insights from the Intergroup Perspective**

### **Abstract**

Recent developments in the acculturation literature have emphasized the importance of adopting *inter-group perspectives* that provide a valuable background for investigating how acculturation orientations (i.e., maintenance of the culture of origin and the adoption of the destination culture) of adolescents from migrant families are embedded in their proximal socialization contexts. Accordingly, we sought to understand the combined effects of the perceived parents' acculturation orientations and classmates' acculturation preferences on adolescents' own acculturation orientations in two independent cultural contexts, namely North-East of Italy (Study I) and South-East of Turkey (Study II). Participants were 269 (53.2% female;  $M_{\text{age}} = 14.77$ ) and 211 (71.1% female;  $M_{\text{age}} = 15.37$ ) adolescents from migrant families in Italy and in Turkey, respectively. Findings indicated that adolescents' acculturation orientations were influenced by their perceptions of both parents' acculturation orientations and classmates' acculturation preferences. In addition, the effects of parents' adoption of the destination culture were stronger than the effects of classmates' preferences for adoption of the destination culture in both countries. However, the effects of parents' maintenance of the culture of origin were stronger than the effects of classmates' preferences for maintaining the culture of origin in Turkey, but not in Italy.

*Keywords:* Adolescence, Migration, Refugees, Acculturation, Inter-group perspective

## Introduction

Migration processes have largely shaped the multicultural mosaic of contemporary societies (International Organization for Migration, 2019), giving rise to many profound changes in relationships among groups and individuals. Adolescents from migrant families (i.e., individuals born outside the destination country or who have at least one parent born outside the destination country; European Commission, 2020; United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, 2006) may be closely affected by relations between and among ethnic groups, given that their normative developmental processes are strongly influenced by person-context transactions (Beyers & Goossens, 2008). Immigration policies, for example, represent a form of unbalanced intergroup relationships, in that the dominant ethnic group in a given country generally is most widely represented in government and therefore is most able to dictate policy (Guimond et al., 2013). Migrant youth may be “demonized” because of their ethnic group membership and because the influx of foreigners may be viewed as a threat to national identity and heritage (Louis et al., 2013). Deportation (of oneself or of a family member; Golash-Boza, 2012; Zayas, 2015), marginalization (Berry, 1997, 2005, 2017), and discrimination (Albareello et al., 2019; Cobb et al., 2019) represent possible events that may occur in the lives of youth from migrant families – with the likelihood of these events varying across countries, and across migrant groups within a given country.

Thus, youth from migrant families face complex identity challenges (Crocetti et al., 2011). Specifically, they are confronted with the normative developmental tasks of choosing a career, identifying relationship partners, and establishing a value system (Crocetti, 2018; Schwartz et al., 2017; Syed & Fish, 2018); further, they must define themselves within multiple cultural spaces (i.e., the destination society and the heritage-cultural community; Berry, 2017; Schwartz, Montgomery, & Briones, 2006). These cultural spaces may have different expectations for how youth “should” acculturate. These conflicting expectations

(Romero et al., 2020, have referred to these conflicting expectations as “bicultural stress”) may cause confusion and distress among migrant-descent youth (see also Berry et al., 2006; Pfafferott & Brown, 2006).

Recent developments of the acculturation literature (e.g., Bourhis et al., 2010; Mancini et al., 2018; Navas et al., 2005) have highlighted the importance of adopting *inter-group perspectives* that consider the interplay between the experiences of migrant adolescents and their non-migrant peers. Notably, intergroup perspectives consider both (a) the acculturation orientations adopted by adolescents from migrant families and (b) the acculturation orientations (or preferences) adopted by destination-society individuals towards individuals from migrant families. At the same time, intergroup perspectives reflect the dynamic nature of interactions between migrants and non-migrants in multicultural settings (Bourhis et al., 1997; Navas et al., 2005). In this vein, by taking into consideration the primary socialization contexts of adolescents – family and peers (Lerner, 1992, 2002; Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006), the present studies adopted such an intergroup perspective aimed at understanding how acculturation processes among adolescents from migrant families are influenced by the acculturation orientations of their parents (ingroup) and their native peers (outgroup). Furthermore, we examined acculturation processes in two different cultural contexts: Italy, where most adolescents from migrant families are second-generation (i.e., born in Italy but raised by foreign-born parents), and Turkey, where Syrian refugees represent the majority of adolescents from the first-generation migrant families.

### **Acculturation Processes in Adolescence**

Early theories of acculturation were unidimensional, in that migrants were expected to discard their cultural heritage as they adopted the destination cultural system (e.g., Gordon, 1964). Such unidimensional theories, however, do not match the lived experiences of migrant

youth – many of whom are bicultural and endorse both their cultural heritage and the customs and traditions of the destination country (Nguyen & Benet-Martínez, 2013). Berry (1997, 2005, 2017) was one of the first theorists to propose bidimensional models of acculturation, where heritage-cultural retention and destination-culture acquisition represent separate dimensions. Berry crossed these two dimensions to create four acculturation strategies: separation (an individual rejects the destination culture and retains the heritage culture), assimilation (acquires the destination culture and rejects the heritage culture), integration (acquires the destination culture and retains the heritage culture), and marginalization (rejects both the heritage and destination cultures). Berry (2017) provides an in-depth review of these orientations and their correlates. In particular, integration has been identified as linked with the most favorable psychological, sociocultural, and intercultural outcomes (Berry, 2017; Berry et al., 2006). Notably, integration is associated with the highest levels of life satisfaction, self-esteem, academic achievement, career success, and social skills, and with the lowest levels of behavior problems (for a meta-analysis, see Nguyen & Benet-Martínez, 2013).

Although it is important to consider which acculturation orientations are endorsed by adolescents from migrant families, it is also undoubtedly relevant to consider which acculturation orientations are preferred by the members of the destination society (Berry, 1997, 2005, 2009). Along these lines, theoretical advancements building on Berry's model (i.e., Interactive Model of Acculturation, Bourhis et al., 1997, 2010; Concordance Model of Acculturation, Piontkowski et al., 2000; Rohmann et al., 2006) have emphasized the importance of adopting *intergroup perspectives* in which different types of relationships between natives (i.e., non-migrants) and migrants can be consensual (harmonious), problematic, or even conflictual based on the interplay between the acculturation orientations of migrant groups and the acculturation attitudes and preferences of destination-society

individuals. For example, in some countries, migrants are encouraged to celebrate their ethnic heritage, whereas other countries expect migrants to “leave their cultural baggage at the door” (see Pehrson, Vignoles, & Brown, 2009).

In line with these theoretical advancements, the Relative Acculturation Extended Model (Navas et al., 2005) has integrated prior theoretical contributions by considering the perspectives of both natives and migrant-descent individuals. Notably, this model differentiates between acculturation orientations put into practice, and acculturation preferences of individuals from both migrant and native groups and argues that people can display different acculturation orientations and preferences across different life domains (Mancini & Bottura, 2014; Mancini et al., 2018; Navas et al., 2005). A prime example is the delineation between “public” (e.g., in schools or workplaces) and “private” (e.g., in family settings) acculturation (Arends-Tóth & van de Vijver, 2008). Indeed, several studies (e.g., Mancini & Bottura, 2014; Taylor & Lambert, 1996) suggest that migrants tend to prefer integration in public life domains (e.g., education, work) and separation in private life domains (e.g., family relations, child-rearing practices, cultural habits). As such, the Relative Acculturation Extended Model provides a valuable theoretical foundation for investigating how acculturation orientations are embedded in adolescents’ life contexts.

### ***Adolescents’ Acculturation Orientations as Embedded in Family and Peers Socialization Contexts***

In adolescence, the experience of the increase in autonomy leads individuals to a certain number of changes in the type of relationships with parents and peers (Grotevant & Cooper, 1986). In terms of parent-adolescent relationships, the structure of the relationship gradually becomes more egalitarian from early to late adolescence, with a progressive decrease in perceived parental authority (De Goede, Branje, & Meeus, 2009a, 2009b). As

parent-adolescent relationships become less asymmetrical from early to late adolescence, adolescents also prefer to spend more time with their peers, who become a source of intimacy, support, and security (Albarello et al., 2018; Allen, 2008; Brown, 2004; De Goede et al., 2009b). Indeed, from early to middle adolescence, parental influence declines whereas peer influences increase (e.g., De Goede, Branje, Delsing, & Meeus, 2009). Consistent with developmental perspectives, social-psychological literature suggests the importance of investigating adolescents' development within both family and peer socialization contexts (e.g., Crocetti et al., 2018; Ward & Geeraert, 2016).

Within the family context, intergenerational transmission processes (cf. Degner & Dalege, 2013) highlight that acculturation orientations of adolescents from migrant families are affected by the acculturation orientations of their parents (e.g., Wang et al., 2012), but migrant youth's acculturation patterns are nonetheless somewhat independent from those of their parents. In migrant families, adolescents and their parents may adapt to the host society at different levels, and most adolescents usually adopt values, beliefs, and behaviors of the host culture more rapidly than their parents do (Pfafferott & Brown, 2006; Schwartz et al., 2016; Sun et al., 2020). This difference between the acculturation orientations of adolescents and those of their parents is a phenomenon known as the *acculturation gap* (e.g., Hwang, 2006; Telzer, 2010). Acculturation gaps, especially those involving heritage-cultural dimensions, can be related to stress and conflict in the family (Dinh & Nguyen, 2006; Schwartz et al., 2016; Wang-Schweig & Miller, 2018), as well as to maladaptive adolescent outcomes (e.g., depressive symptoms, delinquent behavior; Wang et al., 2012).

Little work, however, has examined how peers' acculturation can influence adolescents' own acculturation. Given that adolescents spend most of their time with their peers, such as friends and classmates (Albarello et al., 2018), peers become another crucial



acculturative context for adolescents (Celeste et al., 2016; Crocetti et al., 2018; Ward & Geeraert, 2016). Previous studies also implied that classmates (as an important reference group in the peer context; Albarello et al., 2020) can have an important impact on acculturation processes among adolescents from migrant families (e.g., Asendorf & Motti-Stefanidi, 2017; Pfafferott & Brown, 2006). In line with prior studies, and consistent with the interactive nature of acculturation processes (e.g., Navas et al., 2005), it might be expected that acculturation orientations among adolescents from migrant families are influenced by the acculturation preferences of their non-migrant classmates.

### **Overview of the Present Studies**

In light of the recent developments in the acculturation literature emphasizing the importance of adopting intergroup perspectives (Mancini et al., 2018; Navas et al., 2005), the current studies address how acculturation processes of adolescents from migrant families are embedded in their primary proximal socialization contexts across two nations. Specifically, the main aim of the current studies was to understand the combined effects of parents' acculturation orientations (i.e., reflecting ingroup norms) and acculturation preferences of non-migrant classmates (i.e., reflecting outgroup norms) on adolescents' own acculturation orientations. To address this aim, two different cultural contexts were considered: North-East of Italy, in which most adolescents from migrant families are second-generation (Study I), and the South-East of Turkey, where most adolescents from migrant families are first-generation Syrian refugees who migrated to Turkey in the last few years (Study II).

### **Study I**

In this study, we examined how adolescents' acculturation orientations are influenced by parents' acculturation orientations and classmates' acculturation preferences in a context (Italy) where most adolescents are second-generation migrants with a longer experience of

peer relationships in the destination society. According to official statistics (International Organization for Migration, 2019), about 6 million migrants live in Italy (Eurostat, 2020), and only 5.7% of them are classified as refugees (United Nations, 2019). Most migrants in Italy come from other European countries (e.g., Romania, Albania), North African countries (e.g., Morocco), and the former Soviet Union (e.g., Ukraine, Kazakhstan, and Uzbekistan). The median age of these migrants was estimated as 40.4 years, and 8.6% of them were younger than 19 years (United Nations, 2019). As a result, most adolescents from migrant families in Italy are Italian-born and raised by foreign-born parents.

In terms of the integration of migrants in Italy, a recent Eurobarometer report (2018), indicates that more than half of the native respondents in Italy (56%) reported that fostering migrants' integration is a necessary investment for the future of their country. However, a sizable portion of respondents (60%) reported discrimination as the major obstacle to the integration of migrants in Italy. Consistently, a study with Italian adolescents (Miglietta et al., 2014) indicated that the main reasons behind ethnic prejudice against migrants include ignorance and close-mindedness on the part of non-migrant Italians, therefore, being open-minded regarding the cultural beliefs, customs, and traditions of migrants has been proposed as a primary solution. Studies on acculturation among adolescents from migrant families in Italy (e.g., López-Rodríguez et al., 2014) have found that the majority of these adolescents prefer an integrated acculturation approach, and this preference has been recognized by the majority of the non-migrant peers (Mancini & Bottura, 2014; Mancini et al., 2018). In particular, migrant adolescents often endorse Italian customs and traditions of the society in more peripheral life domains (e.g., school and consumer habits), whereas they maintain their heritage culture in more central life domains (e.g., family, religion, values; Mancini & Bottura, 2014).

Given that adolescents are influenced by multiple socialization agents such as parents and peers (e.g., Degner & Dalege, 2013; Ward & Geeraert, 2016), adolescents' acculturation orientations (i.e., maintenance of the culture of origin and the adoption of the destination culture) are expected to be positively related to both parents' acculturation orientations and classmates' acculturation preferences —i.e., preferences for maintenance of the culture of origin and preferences for adoption of the destination culture—. Furthermore, given that most adolescents from migrant families in Italy are second-generation, and have thus experienced frequent interactions with native peers in the school context, we expected that the effects of the classmates' acculturation preferences would be stronger than the effects of the parents' acculturation orientations.

## Method

### *Participants*

Participants were 269 adolescents (53.2% female;  $M_{\text{age}} = 14.77$   $SD_{\text{age}} = 0.78$ ) from migrant families (i.e., with at least one non-Italian parent). Participants were attending the first year of secondary high schools located in different areas of small (about 25,000 inhabitants), medium (about 97,000 inhabitants), and large (about 150,000 inhabitants) cities in the North-East of Italy (i.e., the region of Emilia-Romagna). All participants came from multiethnic classrooms (the average percentage of adolescents from migrant families in these classes was 28.53%). Most participants (72.7%) were second-generation immigrants, and 27.3% were first-generation immigrants and they have been living in Italy for an average of 7.19 years ( $SD_{\text{years}} = 4.90$ ). Most adolescents' parents came from other European countries (59.9% and 62.8% of fathers and mothers, respectively), with Romanians and Albanians the most represented groups; the remainder came from Africa (25.5% and 21.1% of fathers and mothers, respectively), Asia (7.8% and 9.6% of fathers and mothers, respectively), South

America (5.2% of fathers, 6.1% of mothers), and the Middle East (1.6% of fathers, 0.4% of the mothers).

In terms of the reasons for migration, the majority of the participants indicated that their parents migrated for economic reasons (66.3% and 43.6% of their fathers and mothers, respectively) and family reunification (13.3% and 31.8% of their fathers and mothers, respectively). Regarding family structure, 68.5% of the participants came from two-parent families, 23.6% reported that their parents were separated or divorced, and 7.9% indicated other family situations (e.g., one deceased parent). The vast majority of the adolescents (95.9%) were living with one or both parents, whereas 4.1% were living with other relatives (e.g., grandparents). Fathers' educational levels were as follows: 43.1% less than high school diploma, 41.9% high school diploma, and 15% university degree. Mothers' educational levels were as follows: 30% less than high school diploma, 49.2% high school diploma, and 20.8% university degree.

### ***Procedure***

The study was approved by the Ethics Committee at the Alma Mater Studiorum University of Bologna (Italy). Before initiating the study, we sought permission from the school principals to administer a questionnaire during class hours. Researchers then contacted adolescents to inform them about the study and to ask for their active assent to participate. Participants received oral and written information about the study and were asked to sign the informed consent form. In addition to the active youth assent, active parental consent was also obtained by sending the parental consent forms at least one week before the data collection. Data were collected in May 2019 through paper-and-pencil questionnaire in the classrooms during regular school hours.

### ***Measures***

Participants completed a questionnaire, including socio-demographic questions and measures of acculturation processes. The Acculturation Strategies and Attitudes Scale, based on Navas et al.'s (2005) Relative Acculturation Extended Model, was used to measure adolescents' own maintenance of the culture of origin (i.e., "How much are you currently maintaining the traditions of your country of origin in each of the following domains [i.e., school, consumer habits, friendships, family relationships, religion, ways of thinking]?") and adoption of the destination culture (i.e., "How much have you adopted the traditions of the destination country [Italy] in each of the following domains [i.e., school, consumer habits, friendships, family relationships, religion, ways of thinking]?"). In addition, this tool was used to assess adolescents' perceptions of the acculturation orientations endorsed by their parents (i.e., "How much are your parents currently maintaining [have adopted] traditions of your country of origin [destination country] in each of the following domains [i.e., work, consumer habits, friendships, family relationships, religion, ways of thinking]?") and of the acculturation preferences of their native classmates (i.e., "How much your native [Italian] classmates would like you to maintain [adopt] the traditions of your country of origin [destination country] in each of the following domains [i.e., school, consumer habits, friendships, family relationships, religion, ways of thinking]?"). Acculturation orientations were measured with 12 items (6 for maintenance of the culture of origin and 6 for adoption of the destination culture), each scored on a 5-point Likert-type rating scale ranging from 1 (*not at all*) to 5 (*very much*). All participants were fluent in Italian; thus, they filled the Italian version of the scale validated by Mancini and Bottura (2014).<sup>i</sup> Cronbach's Alphas for all scores are displayed in Table 1.

## Results

Results of Little's (1988) Missing Completely at Random (MCAR) test yielded a normed  $\chi^2$  ( $\chi^2/\text{df}$ ) of 1.08, indicating that data were likely missing at random (the ratio of the

missingness varied between 9.3% to 15.6% across the variables). Therefore, all participants in Study I were included in the analyses, and missing data were handled using Full Information Maximum Likelihood (FIML) procedure in *Mplus 8.1* (Kelloway, 2015; Muthén & Muthén, 1988-2018). Descriptive statistics and correlations are reported in Tables 1 and 2, respectively. Path analyses were conducted in with the Maximum Likelihood Robust (MLR) estimator, to examine how parents' acculturation orientations and classmates' acculturation preferences were related to adolescents' acculturation orientations.

The results (see Figure 1 and Table S2 in the Supplementary material) indicated that adolescents' maintenance of the culture of origin was significantly related to both parents' maintenance of the culture of origin ( $\beta = .320$ ) and classmates' preferences for the maintenance of the culture of origin ( $\beta = .485$ ). A comparison of these two paths conducted with the Wald test ( $\chi^2(1) = 1.742, p = .186$ ) revealed that they were not significantly different from each other. Furthermore, adolescents' adoption of the destination culture was significantly related to both parents' adoption of the destination culture and classmates' preferences for adoption of the destination culture. In this case, results of the Wald test ( $\chi^2(1) = 18.882, p < .001$ ) highlighted that the effect of parental acculturation ( $\beta = .606$ ) was significantly stronger than the effect of classmates' acculturation ( $\beta = .163$ ).

In addition to these regression paths, correlations between maintenance of the culture of origin and adoption of the destination culture were not significant for either adolescents or their parents. However, classmates' preferences for maintenance of the culture of origin and adoption of the destination culture were found to be significantly and positively interrelated ( $r = .196$ ). Furthermore, classmates' preferences for maintaining the culture of origin were positively related to both parents' maintenance of the culture of origin ( $r = .587$ ) and parents' adoption of the destination culture ( $r = .206$ ). Additionally, parents' adoption of the

destination culture was positively linked with the classmates' preferences for adoption of the destination culture ( $r = .455$ ).<sup>ii</sup>

## Study II

In Study II, we aimed to examine how adolescents' acculturation orientations were linked with parents' acculturation orientations and classmates' acculturation preferences in the Turkish context in which a vast majority of the adolescents from migrant families are Syrian refugees. As reflected in official statistics, as the largest refugee-hosting country in the world, Turkey received about 4 million refugees after the Syrian civil war in 2011 (International Organization for Migration, 2019; United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2020). Nearly half (47.64%) of these refugees were children and adolescents (Republic of Turkey Directorate General of Migration Management, 2017). Turkish citizens perceive themselves as thoughtful and sensitive towards the necessity to host a high number of Syrian refugees. However, a vast majority of Turkish citizens are against providing Turkish citizenship to Syrian refugees (Erdoğan, 2014).

To date, most studies have documented high rates of post-traumatic stress disorder, depression, and anxiety among Syrians in refugee camps (Acartürk et al., 2018; Alpak et al., 2015; Çelebi et al., 2017). Nevertheless, Çelebi et al. (2017) reported that higher levels of perceived discrimination are related to lower levels of mental and physical health among refugees, but not for those refugees who experience a sense of efficacy from their ethnic identity. Moreover, Bağcı and Canpolat (2020) found that, among adult refugees in Turkey, perceived discrimination is negatively associated with the maintenance of Syrian culture and it is positively associated with adopting Turkish culture. Specifically, recent studies with refugee adolescents in Turkey found that psychosocial resilience is associated with a high level of hope, perceived social support from family, quantity of social contact, and sense of

school belonging (Bozdağ, 2020; Sarıpinar, 2019). With respect to their acculturation processes, integration and to a certain extent marginalization have emerged as the most common acculturation strategies (Bozdağ, 2020). However, empirical evidence on the acculturation processes of refugee adolescents in Turkey is still relatively scarce (e.g., Bozdağ, 2020). Therefore, we contend that adopting an intergroup perspective can provide a more nuanced understanding of the acculturation processes among refugees. In the present study, we examined how adolescents' acculturation orientations linked with parents' acculturation orientations and classmates' acculturation preferences in the Turkish context, where most adolescents are first-generation Syrian refugees who recently migrated into a new context.

In line with the theoretical background on interactive acculturation models reviewed earlier (e.g., Bourhis et al., 1997; Degner & Dalege, 2013; Navas et al., 2005), adolescents' acculturation orientations were expected to be positively related to corresponding parents' acculturation orientations and to classmates' acculturation preferences in Turkey. Moreover, given that a great majority of adolescents from migrant families arrived recently with their families in a new country, and thus, have experienced limited interactions with their non-migrant classmates in the school context, we expect, differently from hypotheses advanced in Study I, that the effects of parents' acculturation orientations would be stronger than the effects of the acculturation preferences of their non-migrant classmates. In this way, we sought to determine the extent to which the acculturation patterns evidenced by refugees in Turkey would be similar to (or different than) the acculturation patterns evidenced by migrant youth in Italy.

## **Method**

### ***Participants***



Participants were 211 adolescents (71.1% female;  $M_{\text{age}} = 15.37$   $SD_{\text{age}} = 0.96$ ) from migrant families. Participants were attending the first or the second years of secondary high schools in a large metropolitan area with about 2 million inhabitants in the Southeastern Anatolia Region of Turkey. All participants came from multiethnic classrooms (the average percentage of adolescents from migrant families in these classes was 35.29%). Almost all participants (98.1%) were first-generation immigrants (i.e., born outside of Turkey). Of these first-generation immigrants, 97.1% migrated from Syria mainly to avoid war in the last eight years ( $M_{\text{years}} = 4.60$ ,  $SD_{\text{years}} = 1.60$ ).

In terms of family structure, 86.7% of participants came from two-parent families, 9.5% specified other family situations (e.g., one deceased parent), and 3.8% indicated that their parents were separated or divorced. In addition, most participants (97.5%) reported living with at least one parent; only 2.5% indicated living with other relatives (e.g., grandparents). The educational levels of participants' fathers were as follows: 23.8% less than a high school diploma, 37.6% high school diploma, and 38.6% university degree. The educational levels of adolescents' mothers were as follows: 39.5% less than a high school diploma, 40% high school diploma, and 20.5% university degree.

### ***Procedure***

The study was approved by both the Ethics Committee of the Alma Mater Studiorum University of Bologna (Italy) and Provincial Directorate of National Education (Turkey). Data were collected in April 2019 using the same procedure used in Study I.

### ***Measures***

As in Study I, participants completed the socio-demographic information form and the measures of acculturation orientations. The Acculturation Strategies and Attitudes Scale (Navas et al., 2005) was used to assess adolescents' own maintenance of the culture of origin

and adoption of the destination culture. An adapted version of this instrument was used to measure adolescents' perceptions of the acculturation orientations used by their parents and acculturation preferences of their Turkish classmates.

To provide an opportunity to complete the questionnaire with the language in which the participants were more fluent, both Turkish and Arabic versions of the questionnaire were presented to the participants. Therefore, Navas' scale has been translated from English into Turkish and from Turkish into Arabic by a team including several experienced researchers and two professional translators. Accordingly, participants could respond to the questionnaires either in Turkish or in Arabic.<sup>iii, iv</sup> Cronbach's alphas for all scores are reported in Table 1.

## Results

Results of Little's (1988) MCAR test yielded a normed  $\chi^2$  ( $\chi^2/\text{df}$ ) of 1.17, indicating that data were likely missing at random (the percentage of the missingness were ranging from 0.5% to 2.8% across the variables). Therefore, all participants in Study II were included in the analyses, and missing data were handled using the FIML procedure available in *Mplus*. Descriptive statistics and correlations among study variables are displayed in Tables 1 and 2, respectively. Path analyses were conducted with MLR to investigate how parents' acculturation orientations and classmates' acculturation preferences were associated with adolescents' own acculturation orientations.

Results (see Figure 2 and Table S2 in the Supplementary material) of the path analyses indicated that adolescents' maintenance of the culture of origin was significantly associated with both parents' maintenance of the culture of origin and classmates' preferences for maintaining the culture of origin. A comparison of these two paths conducted with the Wald test ( $\chi^2(1) = 13.482, p < .001$ ) highlighted that path from parents' heritage

acculturation ( $\beta = .434$ ) was significantly stronger than the path from classmates' acculturation expectations ( $\beta = .180$ ). Moreover, adolescents' adoption of Turkish culture was significantly related to their parents' adoption of Turkish culture, but not to classmates' preferences for adopting Turkish culture. Consistently, results of the Wald test ( $\chi^2(1) = 12.711, p < .001$ ) indicated that path from parents' adoption of destination culture ( $\beta = .497$ ) was significantly stronger than the path from classmates' preference for adopting Turkish culture ( $\beta = .131$ ). In addition, adolescents' adoption of Turkish culture was significantly linked with classmates' preferences for maintaining Syrian culture ( $\beta = .284$ ), but not to parents' maintenance of Syrian culture ( $\beta = -.060$ ).

Correlations between study variables also indicated that maintenance of Syrian culture and adoption of Turkish culture were not significant for either adolescents or their parents. However, classmates' preferences for maintenance of Syrian culture and for adoption of Turkish culture were significantly interrelated ( $r = .382$ ). Moreover, classmates' preferences for adopting Turkish culture was significantly associated with both parents' maintenance of the culture of origin ( $r = .239$ ) and parents' adoption of the destination culture ( $r = .220$ ). Furthermore, parents' adoption of the Turkish culture was positively associated with classmates' acculturation preferences for maintaining heritage culture ( $r = .389$ ).<sup>v</sup>

### General Discussion

In line with the recent developments in the acculturation literature (e.g., Mancini et al., 2018; Sun et al., 2020; Wang-Shweig & Miller, 2018), the present results provide novel evidence that adolescents' acculturation orientations are influenced by the perceived acculturation orientations endorsed by their migrant parents and the perceived acculturation preferences of their non-migrant classmates. Considering that adolescents from migrant families develop their own acculturation orientations by taking into account the combined effects of parents' acculturation orientations (i.e., ingroup norms) and classmates'

acculturation preferences (i.e., outgroup norms), we examined how the acculturation processes of adolescents from migrant families are embedded within these two primary socialization contexts.

Consistent with our expectations, results from Studies I and II suggest that adolescents' maintenance of the culture of origin may be influenced by both parents' maintenance of the heritage culture and classmates' preferences for maintenance of the heritage culture. In addition, adolescents' adoption of the destination culture may be influenced by parents' adoption of the destination culture in both countries, and by classmates' preferences for the adoption of the destination culture only in Italy. These findings are in line with intergenerational transmission theory, according to which adolescents adopt the acculturation orientations of their parents, at least to a certain degree (Degner & Dalege, 2013), and with interactive models of acculturation, which emphasize the interplay in acculturation between adolescents from migrant families and their native peers (e.g., Mancini & Bottura, 2014; Mancini et al., 2018; Pfafferott & Brown, 2006). Notably, these findings emphasize the importance of proximal socialization contexts, such as family and peers (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006; Lerner, 1992, 2002; Ward & Geeraert, 2016), in shaping the acculturation processes of adolescents from migrant families in both Italy and Turkey. Therefore, consistent with intergroup perspectives (Navas et al., 2005; Mancini et al., 2018), this evidence suggests that the acculturation processes of adolescents from migrant families are clearly embedded in parents and peer contexts.

Taking a step further, we found that, when directly compared, parents' influences were significantly stronger than classmates' influences vis-à-vis adolescents' adoption of the destination culture. These findings were counter to our expectations in Study I in Italy, and consistent with our expectations in Study II in Turkey. These findings indicated that parents

are perceived as the primary socialization context, particularly for destination-culture adaptation, among adolescents from migrant families both in Italy and Turkey. Believing that their parents (as ingroup members) adopt the values, beliefs, and behaviors of the destination culture might make the adoption of the host culture easier for adolescents from migrant families in both countries (Wright et al., 1997). Parents thus appear to be of paramount importance (for a discussion of the modeling role of parents, see also Crocetti et al., 2016), even though the peer context is particularly relevant during adolescence (i.e., playing the role of “social laboratory”; Sherif & Sherif, 1964). Similarly, as an important indicator of acculturation (Brown & Zagefka, 2011), intergroup contact literature (e.g., Bagci & Gungor, 2019) also suggests that parents’ positive intergroup contact experiences may lead to greater willingness to engage in positive interactions with destination-culture individuals. It might therefore be argued that adolescents from migrant families might tend to follow their parents’ examples in terms of adopting the destination culture and this evidence is consistent in both first-generation and second-generation migrant adolescents.

With regard to heritage-culture maintenance, parents’ influences were significantly stronger than classmates’ influences in Turkey as we expected, but no difference emerged in Italy (where we expected to find classmates’ effects to stronger than parents’ effects). The findings in Turkey might be explained by referring to the limited amount of interactions that the refugee adolescents have had with their classmates in the school context. The Italian findings, which suggested a nonsignificant trend for parent influences to be stronger than peer influences, might imply that parents’ influences on adolescents’ heritage-culture maintenance remain constant despite continuing interactions between migrant-descent adolescents and their native classmates.

In addition, we found that adolescents’ destination-culture adoption was associated

with classmates' preferences for the maintenance of the culture of origin only in Turkey. Considering that most of the adolescents are first-generation Syrian refugees who recently migrated to Turkey, these findings might be explained in light of similarities between Turkish and Syrian cultures derived from the common Islamic religion. By referring to common religious practices, refugee adolescents in Turkey might not find themselves in a completely foreign culture (Şahin & Eşici, 2020). Therefore, they might perceive their classmates' preferences for maintenance of Syrian culture as the reference point for their adoption of Turkish culture. In Italy, however, the cultural distance between Italian culture and the cultural backgrounds from which participants' families migrated may be more different and more heterogeneous – perhaps creating somewhat of a gap between parent and peer acculturation.

Apart from these findings, it is worth noting also that the orthogonal structure of the bidimensional acculturation model (e.g., Berry, 1997, 2005) was confirmed in both studies. Notably, we found no significant associations between adolescents' heritage-culture maintenance and destination-culture adoption. The same result was also found for parents' acculturation orientations. Because the orthogonal model of the acculturation allows for biculturalism (Costigan & Su, 2004; Ryder et al., 2000), we may assume that the results of the current studies reflect bicultural orientations espoused by migrant adolescent and their parents in both countries.

Finally, the strength of the associations between parents' acculturation orientations and corresponding classmates' preferences was generally stronger in Italy as compared to Turkey. This evidence highlights that adolescents' ecological systems (i.e., parents and peers, Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006) may be more aligned in Italy than in Turkey. Because both migrant-descent adolescents and their parents have experienced more interactions with

destination-culture individuals Italy (given that most of the youth were born in Italy), our results are consistent with the intergroup perspective suggesting that the quantity and quality of intergroup contact experiences (Hayward et al., 2017) become essential major determinants of which acculturation orientations are endorsed (or preferred) by members of minority and majority groups (Brown & Zagefka, 2011). Overall, this finding might underline the importance of investigating the intergroup contact experiences of adolescents from migrant families by considering both parent and peer contexts.

### **Limitations and Directions for Future Research**

The present results should be considered in light of some important limitations. First, parents' acculturation orientations and classmates' acculturation preferences were examined through adolescents' perceptions. In order to avoid subjectivity, memory bias, and single-reporter bias, future studies should investigate these associations with a multi-informant design, collecting data directly from migrant parents and non-migrant classmates. In addition, the attitudes of native adolescents' parents on the value of classroom cultural diversity might be considered as an important indicator of acculturation preferences of native adolescents in future studies (Arar et al., 2019). Second, in line with the recent advancements in the acculturation literature, adolescents' acculturation processes were examined in relationship to family and peer contexts; however, future studies might investigate the role of the entire school context, including the attitudes of teachers and school principals (Arar et al., 2018; Crul, 2019; Schachner, 2019) as well as considering other family members, such as grandparents (Jackson et al., 2020) and siblings (Cardwell & Soliz, 2019), as well as peers from one's own (and other) migrant groups (Titzmann & Jugert, 2015).

Beyond the analysis of the effects exerted by proximal ingroups and outgroups, it is essential to examine the effects of differences in macro-level policies. In this framework, the

educational system's responsiveness to the integration of adolescents from migrant families (e.g., the extent to which the educational system provides support for finding the right school and for catching up to the academic achievement levels of native students) and the presence of anti-discrimination policies (e.g., referring to availability and endorsement of laws to prevent ethnic, racial, and religious discrimination) should be examined in future cross-cultural studies (Migrant Integration Policy Index, 2015; Şimşek & Çorabatur, 2016). Finally, another crucial limitation is the cross-sectional design of the present studies, which cannot provide evidence regarding the developmental trajectories of the acculturation processes in adolescents. Longitudinal designs are needed to understand the interplay between acculturation processes of adolescents, parents, and classmates in greater depth.

### **Conclusions**

Despite these limitations, our studies have examined the underexplored issue of how acculturation processes among adolescents from migrant families are embedded in parent and peer contexts in both Italy and Turkey. Findings suggest that adolescents' acculturation orientations were influenced by the acculturation orientations (or preferences) of both parents and classmates. Notably, in line with intergenerational transmission theories (Degner & Dalege, 2013), we found that the effects of parents' adoption of the destination culture were stronger than the effects of classmates' preferences for adoption of the destination culture in both countries. In addition, the effects of parents' maintenance of the culture of origin were stronger than the effects of classmates' preferences for maintaining the culture of origin in Turkey, but not in Italy. Overall, our studies highlight the importance of adopting the inter-group perspective to facilitate understanding of how acculturation processes among adolescents from migrant families are embedded in parent and peer contexts. Such findings may help to facilitate social inclusion in contemporary societies (Barbot et al., 2020).



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### Tables

**Table 1**

*Means (M), Standard Deviations (SD), and Cronbach's Alpha Coefficients ( $\alpha$ ) of the Variables in Study I and Study II*

	Study I (in Italy)			Study II (in Turkey)		
	M	SD	$\alpha$	M	SD	$\alpha$
Adolescents' Acculturation Strategies						
Maintenance of the culture of origin	2.77	1.04	.85	3.92	0.70	.68
Adoption of the destination culture	3.45	0.88	.85	3.16	0.99	.82
Parents' Acculturation Strategies						
Maintenance of the culture of origin	3.08	1.08	.88	4.16	0.73	.79
Adoption of the destination culture	3.27	0.88	.84	3.08	1.05	.85
Classmates' Acculturation Preferences						
Maintenance of the culture of origin	2.77	1.05	.90	2.91	1.12	.89
Adoption of the destination culture	3.22	1.05	.91	3.44	1.14	.90

*Note.* All items were scored on a 5-point Likert-type rating scale (1=not at all; 5=very much)



**Table 2***Bivariate Correlations between Study Variables*

	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Adolescents' maintenance of the culture of origin	-	.13	.47***	.14*	.26***	.20**
2. Adolescents' adoption of the destination culture	.02	-	.05	.63***	.52***	.34***
3. Parents' maintenance of the culture of origin	.61***	-.09	-	.09	.13	.24***
4. Parents' adoption of the destination culture	.10	.67***	-.04	-	.39***	.21**
5. Classmates' maintenance of the culture of origin	.68***	.14	.60***	.19**	-	.38***
6. Classmates' adoption of the destination culture	.16*	.43***	.14*	.43***	.20**	-

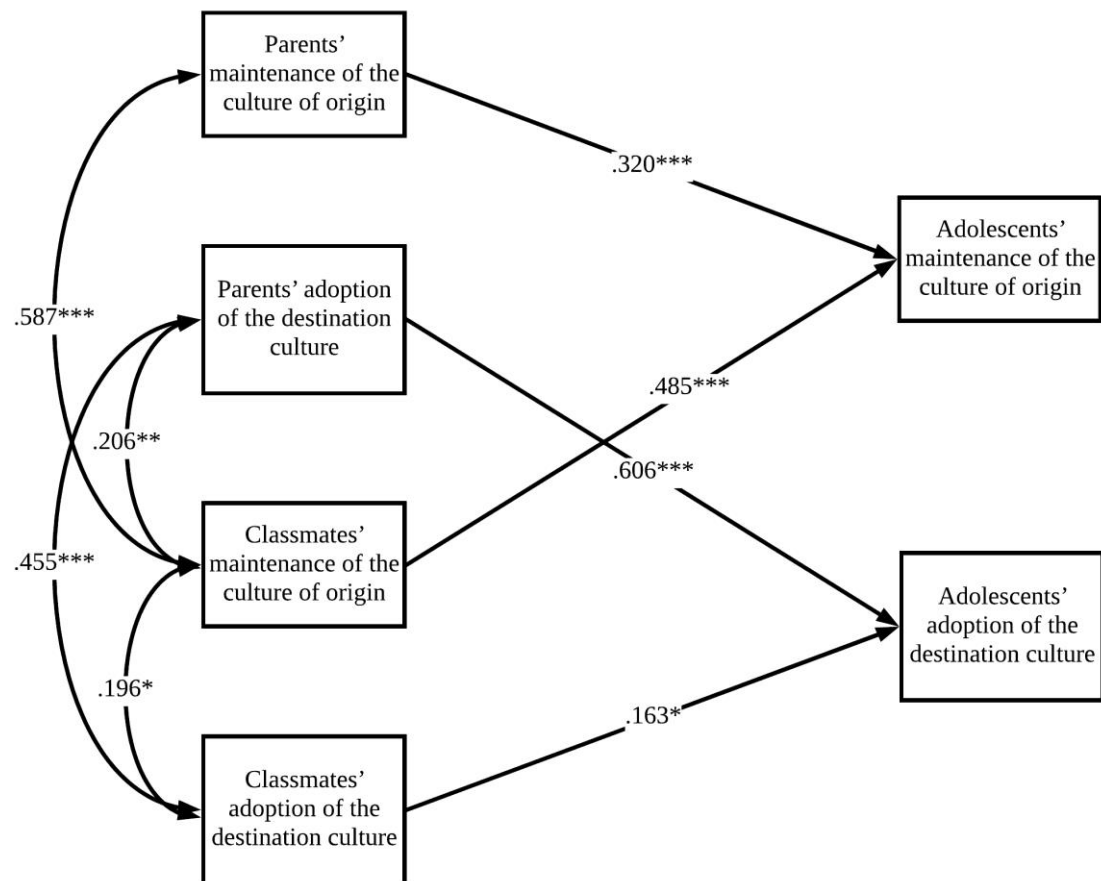
*Note.* Bivariate correlations for Study I are presented below the diagonal, and bivariate correlations for Study II are presented above the diagonal.

\*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$ .

## Figures

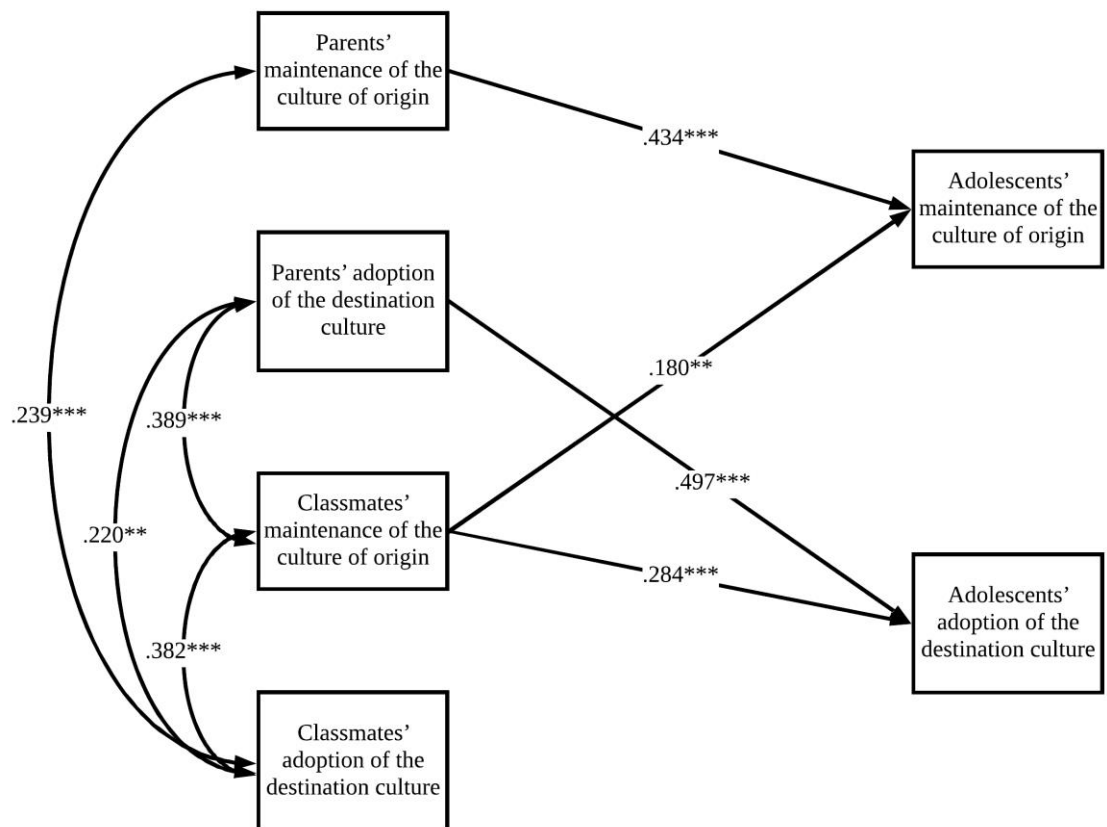
**Figure 1**

*Standardized Results of Study I (in Italy)*



*Note.* For the sake of clarity, only significant standardized estimates are displayed.

\*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$ .

**Figure 2***Standardized Results of Study II (in Turkey)*

*Note.* For the sake of clarity, only significant standardized estimates are displayed.

\*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

## Endnotes

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- <sup>i</sup> Confirmatory Factor Analyses (CFAs) were conducted to test the factor structure of the Acculturation Strategies and Attitudes Scale. In line with the previous validation study (i.e., Mancini & Bottura, 2014), the fit of the two-factor model (i.e., maintenance of the culture of origin and adoption of the destination culture) was very good for adolescents' acculturation orientations, parents' acculturation orientations, and classmates' acculturation preferences. The fit indices are presented as supplementary material of this study (see Table S1).
- <sup>ii</sup> Sensitivity analyses were performed to test whether these findings were replicated across gender groups. Results of multi-group analyses and pairwise comparisons conducted with the Wald test indicated that only 1 out of 15 (correlation and regression) coefficients was significantly different ( $p < .05$ ) across gender groups: Parents' adoption of the destination culture was more strongly related to adolescents' adoption of the destination culture for males than for females (Wald  $\chi^2(1) = 4.671$ ,  $p < .05$ ).
- <sup>iii</sup> Since the participants filled in the questionnaire either in Turkish or in Arabic, language measurement invariance was tested through consequential multi-group CFAs. To this end, the configural model (the same number of factors and pattern of fixed and freely estimated parameters hold across language groups) was compared to the metric model (in which factor loadings are constrained to be equal). In order to determine differences between models, at least two of the three criteria had to be matched:  $\Delta\chi_{SB}^2$  significant at  $p < .05$  (Satorra & Bentler, 2001),  $\Delta CFI \geq -.010$ , and  $\Delta RMSEA \geq .015$  (Chen, 2007). Model comparisons (for adolescents' acculturation orientations,  $\Delta\chi_{SB}^2 = 9.051$ ,  $\Delta df = 10$ ,  $p = .527$ ,  $\Delta CFI = .012$ ,  $\Delta RMSEA = -.008$ ; for parents' acculturation orientations,  $\Delta\chi_{SB}^2 = 10.839$ ,  $\Delta df = 10$ ,  $p = .370$ ,  $\Delta CFI = -.001$ ,  $\Delta RMSEA = -.004$ ; for classmates' acculturation preferences,  $\Delta\chi_{SB}^2 = 16.654$ ,  $\Delta df = 10$ ,  $p = .082$ ,  $\Delta CFI = -.001$ ,  $\Delta RMSEA = -.004$ ) indicated that metric invariance could be established.

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<sup>iv</sup> As was in Study I, CFAs were conducted in the total Turkish sample to test the factor structure of the Acculturation Strategies and Attitudes Scale. In line with the results of the Study I, the fit of the two-factor model (i.e., maintenance of the culture of origin and adoption of the destination culture) was satisfactory for adolescents' acculturation orientations, parents' acculturation orientations, and classmates' acculturation preferences. The fit indices are presented as supplementary material of this study (see Table S1).

<sup>v</sup> Ancillary sensitivity analyses indicated that all results were replicated across gender groups.