

## Social deviance among immigrant adolescents from the former Soviet Union in Israel: Data and risk factors

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**Título:** Desviación social entre adolescentes inmigrantes procedentes de la antigua Unión Soviética en Israel: Datos y factores de riesgo.

**Resumen:** Este trabajo describe los problemas de adaptación de los inmigrantes adolescentes de la antigua Unión Soviética (AUS) en Israel y comenta los factores de riesgo relacionados con estos problemas. En la pasada década, los adolescentes de familias inmigrantes de la AUS, nacidos en su país y en el extranjero, constituían entre el 11 y 10% de su grupo de edad en Israel. Se presentan datos recientes sobre los problemas relacionados con la educación, el abuso de sustancias y la delincuencia entre estos adolescentes. Los datos indican que: a) los inmigrantes de la AUS están sobre-representados entre los estudiantes inadaptados en las escuelas y entre los que la abandonan; b) el uso de alcohol y cigarrillos es más común entre los jóvenes inmigrantes de la AUS que entre los adolescentes israelíes no inmigrantes, así como el uso de éxtasis; c) la implicación de los adolescentes inmigrantes de la AUS en actividades criminales es considerable y supera su peso relativo en la población. Las dificultades económicas y de integración en la nueva sociedad se combinan como factores de riesgo para la inadaptación y la delincuencia entre los adolescentes inmigrantes de la AUS. Sin embargo, el factor decisivo que determina el alcance de su inadaptación es la calidad del funcionamiento familiar - cohesión y relaciones familiares, estilo parental y apoyo que los jóvenes inmigrantes reciben de sus padres.

**Palabras clave:** adolescentes inmigrantes; Unión Soviética; inadaptación; delincuencia, padres.

**Abstract:** This paper describes the adjustment problems of immigrant adolescents from the former Soviet Union (FSU) in Israel and discussed risk factors for these problems. Adolescents from FSU immigrant families, native- and foreign-born, comprised in the last decade between 11% and 10% of their age-group in Israel. Presented are recent public data on education-related problems, substance abuse and delinquency among these adolescents. The data indicate that: a) FSU immigrants are highly over-represented among maladjusted students in schools and among those who drop out of school; b) the use of alcohol and cigarettes is more common among FSU immigrant youth than among Israeli non-immigrant adolescents as is the use of ecstasy; c) the rate of involvement of FSU immigrant adolescents in criminal activity is considerable and surpasses their relative weight in the population. Economic hardships and difficulties to integrate into the new society combine as risk factors for maladjustment and delinquency among FSU immigrant adolescents. However, the decisive factor that determines the extent of their maladjustment is the quality of family functioning – family cohesion and relationships, parental functioning and the support extended to immigrant youths by their parents.

**Key words:** immigrant adolescents; Soviet, maladjustment; delinquency, parents.

### Introduction

Adolescent who experience immigration must cope with the challenges of adjusting to a new culture during a developmental period already characterized by rapid conflicts and changes (Ausubel, 2002; Smetana et al., 2006). As a result, immigrant-adolescents are reported to exhibit more psychological, social and educational difficulties than their non-immigrant peers and are often defined as a group of risk (Janssen et al., 2004; Oppedal & Roysamb, 2004; Slonim-Nevo et al., 2006; Mirsky, 2009). Adolescents born in immigrant families have not undergone migration, but they too have been identified as risk-generation. Many studies indicate a decline in health and mental health status in the second generation of immigrants (Ebin et al., 2001; Darwish Murad et al., 2004; Guillermo-Ramos et al., 2004). This chapter describes the adjustment problems of immigrant adolescents from the former Soviet Union (FSU) in Israel and discussed risk factors for these problems.

### Immigrant adolescents from the FSU in Israel

#### Figures

In the past two decades, over 1.2 millions of immigrants came to Israel from the former Soviet Union. Russian speakers are the largest ethnic group in Israel and comprise about 17% of the population in the country (Statistical Abstracts of Israel, 2009). In 2008 about 47,000 children and adolescents, who were born in the FSU and themselves undergone migration (foreign-born), lived in the country. Additional 178,000 children and adolescents were born in Israel to FSU-immigrant parents (native-born). Adolescents from FSU immigrant families, native- and foreign-born, comprised in the last decade between 11% and 10% of their age-group in Israel (Kosher et al., 2009). Evidently, the predominant group in this population is that of second-generation native-born children and adolescents.

#### Socio-economic profile

FSU immigrants in Israel are a very heterogenic group in their background. Most of them came from major urban centers in the European parts of the former Soviet Union, mostly Russia and Ukraine and were removed from Jewish culture and traditions. Yet, a substantial numbers of immigrants came from former Asian republics of the Soviet Union, which differed from the European republics not only in their climate, also in their cultural tone. In these areas, the

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majority culture was often Muslim and the Jewish communities were much more traditional. In spite of this heterogeneity, two characteristics are common to most members of the FSU immigrant community in Israel: a high socio-economic status and relatively high educational achievements in their countries of origin. Depending on the year of immigration, and the specific geographic area of origin, the rate of individuals with academic education among FSU immigrants varies between 35% and 70% and is almost equal for men and for women (Statistical Abstracts of Israel, 2009; Cohen-Strubchinsky et al., 2010). However, many of these immigrants are underemployed or unemployed in Israel. The income of the majority of immigrant families is below the national average income (Leshem, 2008) and high rates of poverty are continuously observed among immigrant families: In the year 2007, over 25% of immigrant children lived in poverty. This can be partially explained by the high rate of single-parent families among FSU immigrants, where typically a mother is the sole provider of the family. As compared to the moderate rate of 10.3% of single-parent families in the general Israeli population, in the FSU immigrant community in Israel, 27.3% of the families are headed by one parent and typically a woman (Kosher et al., 2009).

### Policy

Immigrants in Israel are entitled to a substantial support especially during their first year in the country. They receive stipends, free language classes, subsidies for housing, employment and retraining. As time goes by, these benefits narrow, immigrants join the labor market and those in need receive social security benefits like other Israeli citizens. Immigrant children and adolescents are typically entitled to special educational assistance during their first year in the country. Like educational systems in other immigration countries, the Israeli educational system seeks ways to cope with the special needs of children from immigrant families. However, the achievements in this area are rather modest (Sever, 1999). Children born in Israel to immigrant parents do not enjoy the immigrant status in the educational system and do not receive benefits or special support.

### National data on social deviance and delinquency among FSU immigrant adolescents in Israel

Presented below are recent data on immigrant adolescents from the FSU that were published by The Israeli Ministry of Immigrant Absorption and the Israel National Council for the Child (Kosher et al., 2009). This publication, combines data from numerous government sources (Ministries of Education, Health and Welfare, the Police etc.). Presented are data on education-related problems, substance abuse and delinquency, the most frequent in this population. Based on additional data and a review of studies that have been per-

formed in Israel in the last two decades, factors that may explain the recent figures are suggested.

### School maladjustment

In the academic year 2008-2009, about 15% of all students in primary and secondary education in Israel were immigrants, the decisive majority of them – FSU immigrants. Only about one third of these students were foreign-born, while most were born in Israel to FSU immigrant families. Although the rates of FSU immigrant and non-immigrant students who take the matriculation examinations are similar (about 80%-90% depending on the year), **only 47% -51% of immigrant students pass the matriculation exams, while the general rate of success in these exams is over 60%**.

Immigrant students in general and FSU immigrants in particular are highly over-represented among maladjusted students in schools. In the academic year 2007-2008 **FSU-born immigrant students comprised 65% of all students on files for truancy<sup>1</sup>** - a much higher rate than their weight in the student population (10%-11%). It should be noted that Israel-born students from FSU immigrant families are not included in these statistics, as in the educational system they do not enjoy immigrant status.

The phenomenon of school drop-out is also more pronounced among FSU-born immigrant than among non-immigrant students. In the transition from the academic year 2006\7 to 2007\8 a total of 19,200 students dropped out of the educational system. 4,600 of them, (24%) were foreign-born immigrant students, most from the FSU, a rate much higher than their rate in the student population. Figure 1 presents the drop-out rate from the educational system of FSU born immigrant students as compared to the drop-out rates of non-immigrant students.

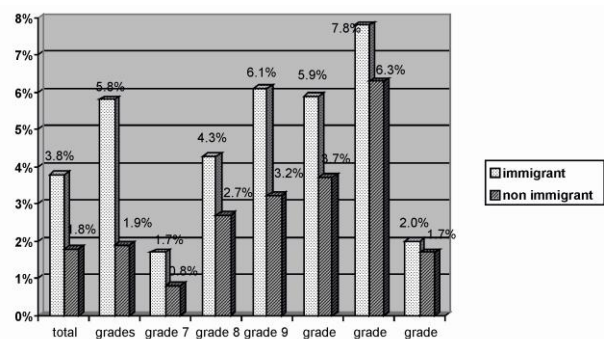


Figure 1. Drop-out rates among FSU immigrant (foreign born) and non-immigrant students in the years 2006\7 – 2007\2008 (Adapted from Kosher et al., 2009)

As Figure 1 shows, the drop-out rates of immigrant students are consistently above the general average.

<sup>1</sup> Intentional unauthorized absence from compulsory schooling.

**Substance abuse**

As shown in Figure 2, the use of alcohol and cigarettes is more common among FSU immigrant youth than among Israeli non-immigrant adolescents. The rates reflect yearly consumption of alcohol, cigarettes and drugs. It is noteworthy that one third of FSU immigrant adolescents smoke cigarettes on daily basis. Although immigrant adolescents do not differ from their non-immigrant peers in the use of cannabis, they use ecstasy twice as much.

Other studies confirm the finding about more widespread substance abuse among immigrant as compared to local born adolescents (Edelstein & Bar-Hamburger, 2007) and reveal a more detailed picture. As compared to their non-immigrant peers, FSU immigrant youth initiate substance use at a younger age, use alcohol more often and have more alcohol-related problems. They are also more inclined to regard their use of cigarettes, alcohol and illegal drugs as an aid to coping with stress (Israelowitz & Slonim-Nevo, 2002). FSU immigrant adolescents also tend to have higher levels of last 30-day alcohol and ecstasy use and binge drinking than their non-immigrant peers. Binge drinking behavior among them was found related to trading property to obtain drugs; deterioration of school achievement; selling drugs; and truancy (Israelowitz & Reznik, 2007).

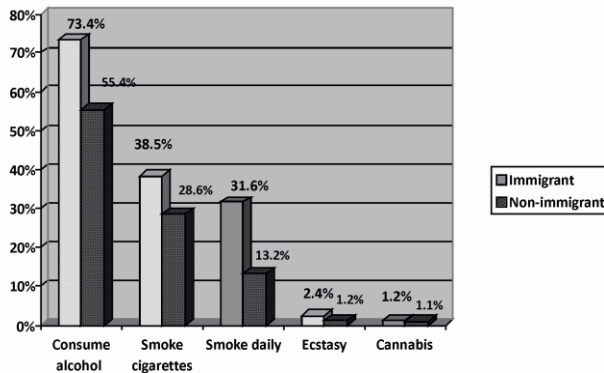


Figure 2. Substance abuse among FSU immigrant (foreign born) and non-immigrant students in the year 2007 (Adapted from Kosher et al., 2009)

**Delinquency**

The involvement of FSU immigrant adolescents (foreign- and native-born) in criminal activity is considerable and surpasses their relative weight in the population.

Although the involvement of immigrant adolescents in juvenile delinquency seems to have subsided since 2000 (Table 2), this decrease is accounted for by the drop in the number of immigrants to Israel and hence, in the rate of immigrant adolescents in their age group. This decrease notwithstanding, there is a considerable over-representation of immigrants in the population of juvenile criminal offender as compared to their weight in their age-group. The figures published refer to all immigrant adolescents, but

most them are immigrants from the FSU. For example, in 2007 immigrant adolescents from the FSU were involved in 76.8% of immigrant criminal cases country-wide, and in quite a number of cities their share in immigrant juvenile criminal cases was 97% and even 100%. Noteworthy is the fact that in 2007 of all juvenile delinquents referred to probation officers 33.6% were FSU-born immigrant adolescents.

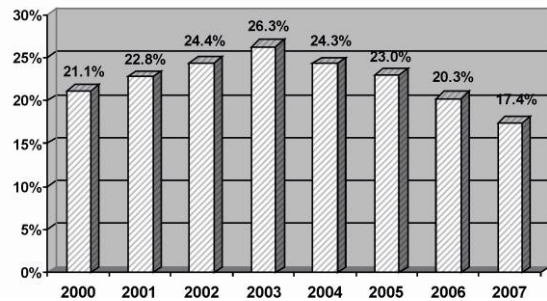


Figure 3. The involvement of FSU immigrants (ages 12-17) in juvenile criminal cases, % of all juvenile cases in the years 2000-2007 (Adapted from Kosher et al., 2009)

As can be seen, property offences are the most common among immigrant adolescents, and so are offences connected to drugs.

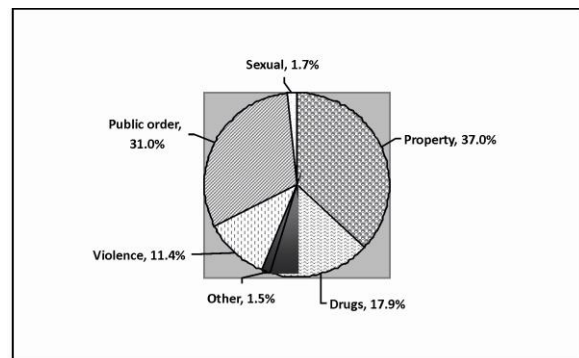


Figure 4. Distribution of criminal offences by FSU immigrant minors in the year 2007 (adapted from Kosher et al., 2009)

**Immigrant adolescents and children at risk**

To complete the picture and consider possible sources of risk, presented below are data on reasons for which immigrant children and adolescents are defined at risk by Social Services. In the year 2008, over 66,000 children and youths from the FSU immigrant community (foreign- and native-born, aged 0-17) were listed with Social Services, almost 17% of all young clients of these services. Of these children and adolescents 68% were in direct or familial risk<sup>2</sup>, about 19% of all children and adolescents in such risk throughout Israel. Table 1 shows the types of risks for these children and adolescents.

<sup>2</sup> Encountering problems that endanger the child's development or life and demand intervention

**Table 1.** Primary risks for immigrant children and adolescents in direct or familial risk as compared to the general population of children and adolescents at risk in Israel (Adapted from Kosher et al., 2009).

Type of risk	All children and adolescents in Israel	Immigrant children and adolescents	Rate of immigrants among all children and adolescents at specific risk
Child abuse	8,300	1,800	22.4%
Violence between parents	34,700	6,200	17.8%
Behavioral and discipline problems	141,000	22,400	15.8%
Economic problems	213,300	32,500	15.3%
Functional disability of mother\father	90,700	11,400	12.5%
Delinquency or substance abuse by parents	23,600	2,800	12.0%
Physical\emotional\old age handicap of parents	132,000	15,800	12.0%

It is evident that immigrant children and adolescents are at an elevated risk for direct and indirect domestic violence and child abuse. In line with this, there is a substantial overrepresentation of immigrants among children and adolescents that placed by social services in therapeutic boarding schools or emergency centers. **In the year 2006\2007 immigrants comprised 24.6% of residents in such boarding schools and 36% of residents in emergency centers for children and adolescents.** This, while their rate in the young population in Israel was about 10%. In a similar vein, **almost 30% of missing children in the year 2007 in Israel were foreign-born immigrant children.**

### Risk factors

Israeli national data presented above reveal serious maladjustment among FSU immigrant children and adolescents in Israel and this situation will be presently discussed. But, before proceeding, a note of caution is in order: the figures notwithstanding, the decisive majority of FSU immigrant children and adolescents adjust well and only a small number of them exhibit signs of maladjustment. For example, of 42,000 FSU-born children and adolescents 4,600 (about 10%) dropped out of school in the year 2008, while 90% continued their schooling. Of the 220,000 FSU immigrant children and adolescents (foreign- and native-born), who resided in the country in 2007, only 30% (66,000) were listed with Social Services, while 70% have not experienced psycho-social problems that necessitated intervention. Similarly, a decisive majority of immigrant adolescents are drug-free. Thus the data does not indicate a general maladjustment in the population of immigrant youths from the FSU in Israel, but rather identify a group of risk that needs attention.

### Cultural background

When considering possible risk factors for adjustment problems among immigrant adolescents, it is reasonable to explore first their cultural baggage, the values and norms they might have brought from their country of origin. However, in the case of FSU immigrants, it is quite unlikely that pre-migration factors are related to the reported phenomena. As Israel accepts only Jewish immigrants and their families, FSU immigrants in Israel are not representative of the general population in the FSU. They typically belonged to the

highest socio-economic layers and not given to socially deviant behaviors. Unlike the general population in the FSU, Jews were less involved in alcohol consumption or delinquency; therefore, it is unlikely that their children were exposed to models that legitimize social deviance and delinquency. Moreover, the rate of individuals with academic education among FSU immigrants is very high (Statistical Abstracts of Israel, 2009). They appear to have brought with them to Israel and passed on to their children the very high value attached to education: In a recent study, 83% of FSU born high-school students in a large representative sample reported that they plan to continue their education at a college or a university level (Cohen-Strubchinsky et al., 2010). It appears therefore, that their culture of origin is not likely to render FSU immigrant adolescents at risk. As a number of studies showed, it is more reasonable to search for risk factors in their immigration experience (Slonim-Nevo et al., 2006; Mirsky et al., 2008, 2010).

### Economic status

Among immigration related risks, the most obvious to consider is the economic situation of the immigrant family. Table 1 shows that immigrant children and adolescents are overrepresented among those in need of social benefits (12% as opposed to their weight of 10% in their age group). Indeed in 2008 over 72% of immigrant children and adolescents listed with Social Services, suffered economic hardships and in 2007 over 25% of all immigrant children and adolescents in Israel were living under the poverty line (Kosher et al., 2009). A number of studies have found an association between economic hardships and socially deviant behavior of FSU immigrant adolescents such as alcohol consumption (Israelowitz & Slonim-Nevo, 2002). Other studies identified economic assets as protective factors against delinquency (Schmitt-Rodermund & Silbereisen, 2008). Especially vulnerable to economic hardships in migration are single parent families (Soskolne, 2001) as with only one breadwinner, they may naturally encounter more economic difficulties than full families. A recent study found a very high rate (37%) of single-parent families (typically headed by a mother) among FSU immigrant adolescents at risk (Rubinstein et al., 2010).

### Social integration

Social integration has been traditionally considered as a protective factor against conduct disorders and delinquent behaviors. And it has also been suggested that the failure to integrate in the host society is one of the main risk factors for delinquency among FSU immigrant adolescents in Israel (Shechory & Ben-David, 2010). In a similar vein, it was found that discrimination and lack of recognition by the host society is a risk factor for violent behavior among immigrant adolescents from the FSU (Mesch et al., 2008). Dis-integrated identity and the inability of the adolescent immigrant to identify with either the host or the old culture were also found to raise the risk for violent behavior (Mesch et al., 2008). However, simple assimilation in the host culture – that is, a full rejection of the old identity in an attempt to fully adopt one oriented towards the new culture, does not seem to protect FSU immigrant adolescents from violence and delinquency. It was found that the assimilation strategy increases the likelihood of delinquent behavior among immigrant adolescents from the FSU in Israel (Turjeman et al., 2008). A strong identity based on identification with the culture of origin or the new culture, and preferably with both, seems to be a resilience factor associated with normative functioning (Mesch et al., 2008; Finzi-Dottan et al., 2011).

Specifically associated with delinquent behavior among FSU immigrant adolescents were relationships with delinquent peers (Mesch et al., 2008). In contrast, acceptance by peers in school was found to be positively associated with adjustment (Walsh et al., 2010). Especially interesting is the differential significance of the school in the adjustment of immigrant and non-immigrant adolescents: while for non-immigrant youths the relationships with parents, teachers and peers had a significant impact of risk behaviors, for FSU immigrant adolescents it was the school environment (parental support at school, teacher support and peer relationships) that proved to be the significant predictor of risk behaviors (Walsh et al., 2010). These findings suggest that the school may play a more important role as a social support network for immigrant than for non-immigrant youth.

### Family and parental support

Family support is known to play a critical role in the development of conduct problems (De Clercq et al., 2008). Ample evidence supports this association in the case of FSU immigrant adolescents: family support, the quality of relationships with parents and of family functioning – have been found to be associated with normative adjustment among FSU immigrant adolescents (Elitzur et al., 2007; Mesch et al., 2008; Oznobishin & Kurman, 2009; Slonim-Nevo et al., 2009; Sagy et al., 2009; Dwairy & Dor, 2009).

Family support is not guaranteed in migration as familial crises and decline in parental functioning are a common phenomenon. Numerous factors may negatively affect parental functioning in migration. The preoccupation with financial problems and their own adjustment difficulties may

render parents less available or attentive to their children (Eisikovits & Shamai, 2001; Yakhnich & Ben-Zur, 2008; Oznobishin & Kurman, 2009; Dwairy & Dor, 2009). Single parents may be less capable than parents in full families to provide parental protection and support (Soskolne, 2001). Figures in table 1 suggest that the prevalence rate of extreme parental failure and malfunction as expressed in child abuse and domestic violence is higher among immigrants than expected from their rate in the general population.

Cultural difference in childrearing practices and norms that prevailed in the FSU and those accepted in Israel is another source of difficulties for FSU immigrant parents. In contrast to Western middle-class values of independence, individualism, and assertiveness, Eastern Europeans value interdependence, collectivism, and cohesion (Robila, 2004). Therefore, childrearing practices of FSU immigrants are more restrictive and controlling, condone corporal and psychological punishment and do not foster individuation and autonomy (Slonim-Nevo et al., 1999; Shor, 1999; Mirsky, 2001). While in the past decade, societal transformations altered childrearing practices in Russia, FSU immigrants in Israel are slower to revise their practices and adopt local norms. Because of mistrust and fear of interference in their privacy, they avoid seeking help from formal services in Israel and underutilize informal sources of help as well (Shor, 2007). Intergenerational conflicts may arise between them and their children who are exposed to local norms, and are willing and pressured to accept them (Mana et al., 2009; Knafo & Schwartz, 2001). Very often, rigid adherence to old values looses the parents their parental authority and leaves the youth without adult protection, guidance or support (Roer-Strier, 1997). Because of the phase-specific immaturity of adolescents, their psychological development depends on adequate parental support and the impact of parental malfunction may be especially grave in their case (Vazsonyi & Belliston, 2006; Sharabani & Etzioni, 2008). Indeed, in a study that compared FSU immigrant and Israeli non-immigrant adolescents, immigrants reported less positive parenting which was associated with higher levels of aggression and conduct disorder and more diffused ego identity. The latter was found to be the most powerful predictor for aggression and conduct disorder. Moreover, positive parenting was found to moderate the contribution of diffused ego identity to aggression and conduct disorder (Finzi-Dottan et al., 2011). In another study, organized sense of self and the level of self-organization were found to be contingent on closeness, caring and identification with parents (Walsh et al., 2005).

### Interactions between factors

Although family functioning appears to be the decisive factor affecting the adjustment of immigrant youth from the FSU, its impact is not simple. For example, in one study FSU adolescents reported being less connected to their families, experiencing their parents as less warm and more inconsistent in their childrearing behavior, and their mothers



more controlling. Yet, while among non-immigrant controls, these factors were associated with maladjustment, no such association was found among FSU immigrant adolescents (Dwairy & Dor, 2009). It is possible that immigrant adolescents from the FSU share their parents' culturally determined values of childrearing and parent-child relationships (Knafo & Schwartz, 2001). Thus, parental attitudes that are considered non-normative in the Western culture and negatively affect Western youths, may be perceived and experienced by immigrant youths as normative and have no detrimental effect on their behavior.

The phenomenon of parentification – when adolescents are assigned or assume roles and responsibilities normally the province of adults provides another example for the complex effect of the family on the adjustment of immigrant adolescents. In the case of FSU immigrant adolescents in Israel, such role reversal did not necessarily have a negative effect on their adjustment. Studies showed that FSU immigrant adolescent indeed assume more dominant roles and parental responsibilities than their non-immigrant Israeli peers (Oznobishin & Kurman, 2009; Walsh et al., 2006). However, the effects of this behavior on these youths' adjustment were mediated by other family factors: family support, which was found as the most important factor related to better adjustment (Oznobishin & Kurman, 2009) and family climate of cohesion and independence orientation, which rendered parentification into an empowering experience for immigrant adolescents (Walsh et al., 2006).

Obviously, individual factors may also interact with family variables. For example, it was found in a follow up on FSU immigrant adolescents, that initial emotional distress from the immigration experience differentially affected their later functioning. Among adolescents with initially fragile psychological organization, immigration distress negatively affected their subsequent coping behavior, while those with an initially healthy psychological organization were less likely to be negatively affected by immigration distress (Walsh et al., 2005). The results of another follow up study provide support for these findings. In this study, the best predictor of the adjustment of FSU immigrant adolescents at risk was their baseline adjustment level. Adolescents who at a given time experience mild adjustment problems, succeeded in coping and overcoming their difficulties. However, youths who at a given time were at the bottom of a risk continuum were less likely to recover and over time deteriorated to more severe maladjustment (Rubinstein et al., 2010).

### Summary and implications

Relatively high rates of non-normative behavior and delinquency have been found among immigrant adolescents from the FSU in Israel and although most of these youth are coping and adjusting well, sizable risk groups exist among them. These risk groups need to be identified and assisted lest immigration related crises develop into long term social deviance. An important lesson from Israeli data and research

is that immigration-related maladjustment may occur not only among foreign-born but also among native-born adolescent immigrants. These youths may even be at a greater risk for maladjustment and must be included in intervention efforts.

Israeli research suggests that economic hardships and difficulties to integrate into the new society combine as risk factors for adjustment problems among FSU immigrant adolescents. However, the decisive factor that determines the outcomes of these adolescents' adjustment is the quality of family functioning – family cohesion and relationships, parental functioning and the support extended to immigrant youths by their parents.

In view of their immaturity, the unsettling process of immigration may render adolescents especially vulnerable to the crisis in their families' functioning, the weakening of parental figures and parental authority. Immigrant adolescents often encounter difficulties in communicating with their new countrymen due to language problems and because they are not familiar with the new way of life. They may therefore often feel alienated and isolated in their new environment. Not understanding the local norms of behavior and ignorant of unwritten social codes, they often fail to perceive social structures and boundaries and feel unprotected, vulnerable and anxious. When the adults fail to contain these anxieties, the more vulnerable individuals may act them out in the form of aggressive and deviant behavior. In extreme cases, juvenile gangs become a psycho-social mechanism that structures the lives of immigrant youths, offers care and protection to its members, establishes affiliation, and boundaries in a society which is perceived by them as alien and therefore dangerous (Tartakovsky & Mirsky, 2001).

The central role of the parents in the adjustment of FSU immigrant adolescents is an important lesson from the Israeli experience. It points to the need for parent-centered interventions in order to prevent or ameliorate non-normative behavior among immigrant adolescents. Such interventions need to be directed at restoring the parental functioning and authority of immigrant parents, helping them to communicate with their children and be involved in their lives. Parent-centered interventions are being implemented by various public services in Israel, such as those of the Ministry of Immigrant Absorption, of the Ministry of Education, the Anti-Drugs Authority etc. A number of non-government organizations established by the FSU immigrant community also promote and apply parent-centered approach through training, workshops and conferences. Regrettably, these efforts have not been documented in academic publications. A multilevel, family-centered intervention designed to prevent problem behavior in Hispanic adolescents in the USA (Coatsworth et al., 2002) has been adopted by practitioners and services in Israel. The efficacy of this model has been empirically demonstrated (Pantin et al., 2009). This model provides a helpful conceptual basis and practical guidance for parent-centered interventions and its culturally-sensitive approach makes it particularly helpful for interventions with immigrant families.

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(Article received: 8/5/2011; reviewed: 4/9/2011; accepted: 10/9/2011)