Against the odds – Academically resilient students with a migrant background and how they succeed

Lunchtime seminar, 10 December 2018

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We would like to discuss…

1 | Study aims and design

2 | Our findings

3 | What next?

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Study aims and focus

Aim: Analyse how disadvantaged students with migrant background and those from language minorities succeed in European education systems.

Overarching research questions

1. What is academic resilience?

2. Who are the academically resilient students?

3. Which factors are associated with academic resilience?

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Key elements:

1. A **literature review** to **define academic resilience** and develop means to **identify resilient students** in PISA data

2. **Descriptive analysis** of the **shares and characteristics** of academically **resilient students**

3. **Advanced analysis** to identify which **factors associated with academic resilience**
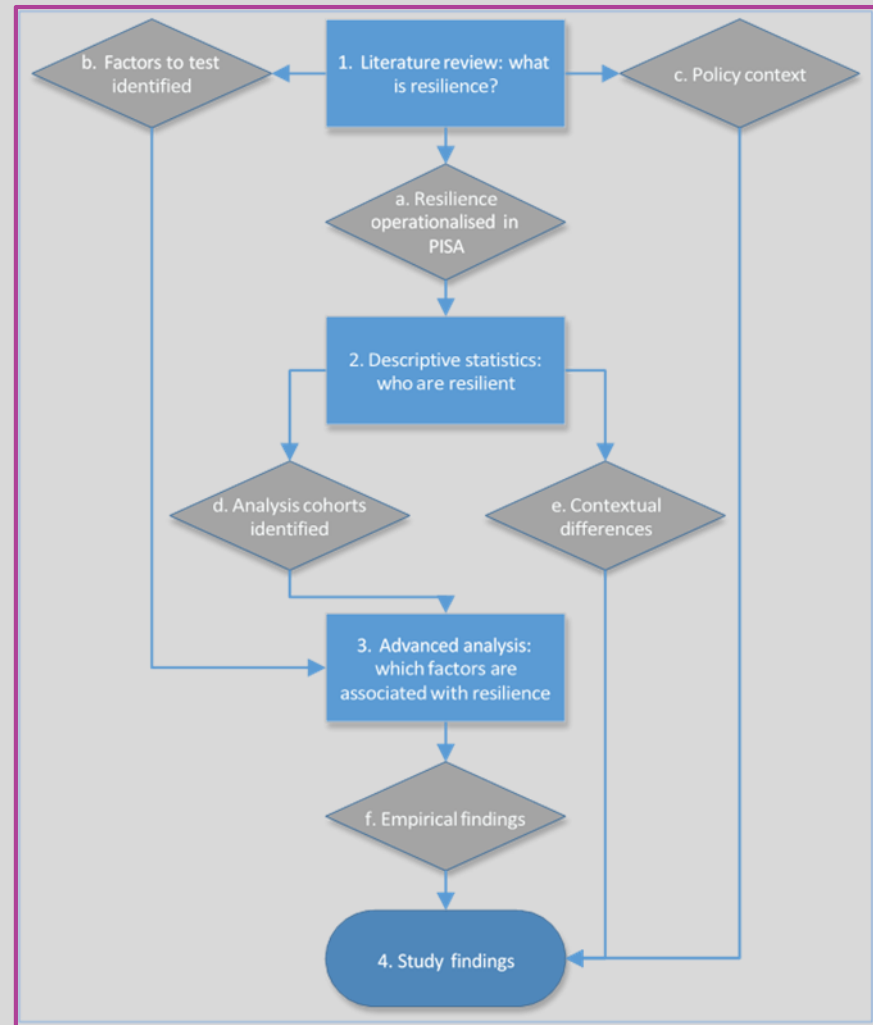
What is academic resilience?

- Can be conceived as a student **achieving academically in the presence of acute and/or chronic education-related adversity**.

- A **wide range of education-related adversity factors** were considered in analyses:

    - **Student/family factors** (e.g., economic, social and cultural status (ESCS), academic expectations etc.)

    - **School factors** (e.g., school characteristics, leadership, resources etc.)

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What is academic resilience?

Identifying academically resilient students in PISA

Approach	Description
Classic resilient	Consists of students in the **lowest quartile of ESCS** and **upper two quartiles of achievement**
Classic highly-resilient	Consists of students in the **lowest quartile of ESCS** and **upper quartile of achievement**
Cluster resilient	Consists of students who are **similar across a range of education related adversities** (including but not limited to ESCS) and are in the **upper quartile of achievement**
Deviation resilient	Consists of students who **outperform their predicted achievement** based on how they present on a **range of education related adversity factors**

Who are the academically resilient students?

Based on descriptive statistics, academically resilient students typically:

- Experience lower levels of ESCS

- Are male (due to the studies focus on mathematics achievement)

- Have higher academic expectations (highly-resilient and clustering approaches only)

Age, minority language status and motivation were not significantly different than the wider student cohort.

Who are the academically resilient students?

Robust resilient (55% of resilient students)	Precarious resilient (31% of resilient students)	Vulnerable resilient (14% of resilient students)
• Average age • **More likely to be female** • May or may not be a minority language student • **Very unlikely to have repeated a grade** • **High educational expectations** • **Above average motivation** • Average levels of peers/ friends • Average levels of skipping or being late to school	• Average age • **Male or female** • May or may not be a minority language student • **Very unlikely to have repeated a grade** • **Low educational expectations** • **Below average motivation** • Average levels of peers/ friends • Average levels of skipping or being late to school	• Average age • **More likely to be male** • May or may not be a minority language student • **More likely to have repeated a grade** • **Very low educational expectations** • **Below average motivation** • Average levels of peers/ friends • Average levels of skipping or being late to school

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Who are the academically resilient students?
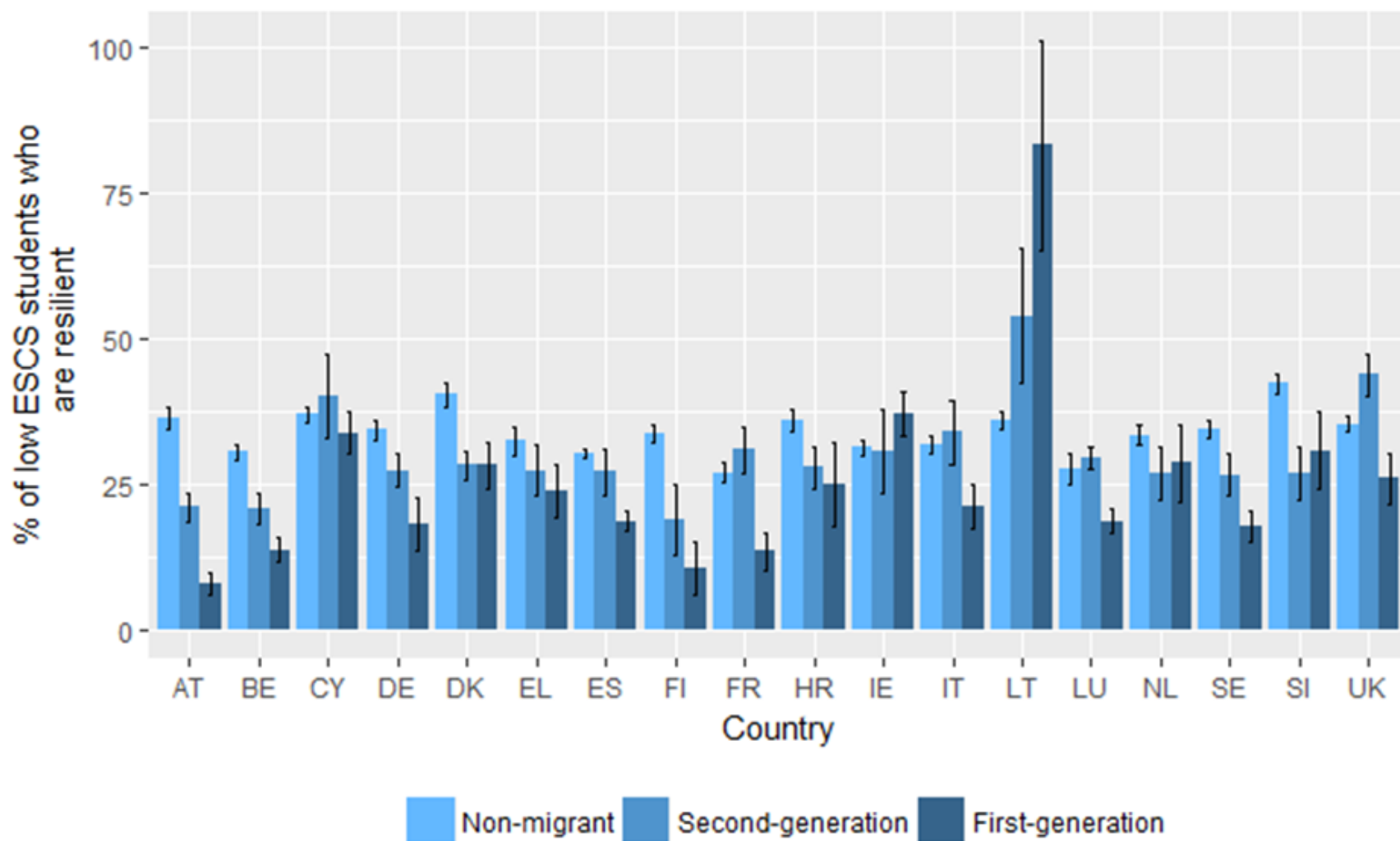
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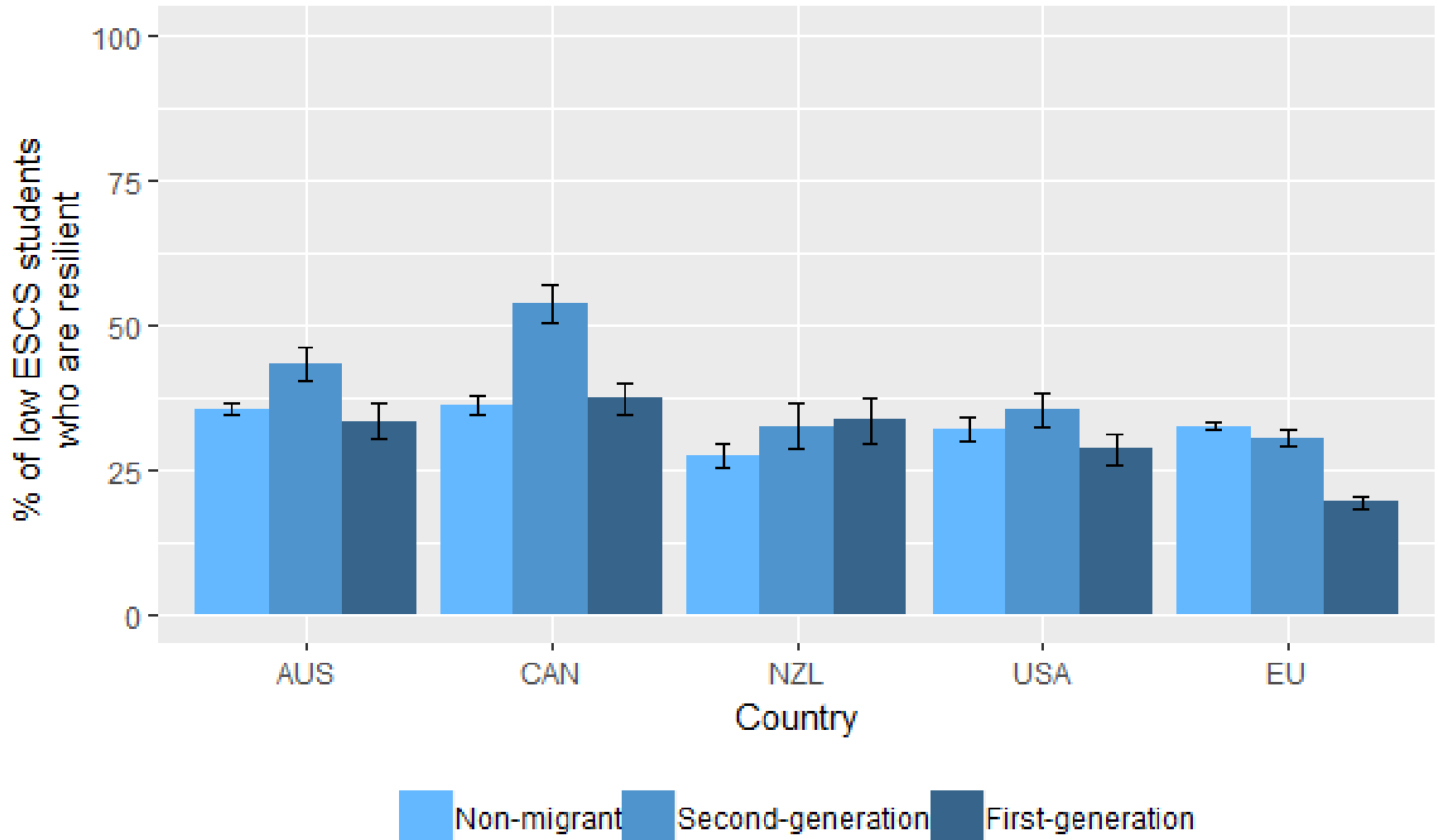
Which factors are associated with academic resilience?

A range of statistical techniques were used:

- Student-level models to understand which factors are associated with an **individual's resilience status**

- School-level models to understand which factors are associated with **schools that have greater numbers/proportions of resilient students**

- Models predicting the achievement of resilient students to understand the factors that are associated with a **student being more or less resilient**

- Person-centred analyses to 'tease out' **distinct sub-groups of resilient students**

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Which factors are associated with academic resilience?

Evidence	Factors
Consistent across analyses	• Positive academic self-expectations • School attendance
Identified in some sets of analyses and seem intuitively likely to influence resilience	• Staff support with homework • Schools providing study rooms • The provision of extracurricular activities • Schools undertaking internal evaluation • The use of student assessments to monitor teachers
Identified in some sets of analyses but less intuitive	• Larger class sizes • Levels of peers/friends • Undertaking fewer school improvement practices

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Summary of key findings

1. Within the group of academically resilient students, there are **distinct sub-groups (profiles) of students who exhibit similar characteristics**.

2. **Variation in** the **shares of academically resilient students across EU Member States** (and international comparisons) exists and is likely explained by differences in migrant population characteristics and integration policies.

3. We identified **several student- and school-level factors that have a statistical association with academic resilience** across multiple sets of analyses.

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Learning from the study

A range of empirical approaches, robust and exploratory, to operationalise and study academic resilience

Analytical approaches to study **different resilience groups of interest** e.g. a "resilient" group comprising students in top two quartiles of achievement and lowest quartile of ESCS

The importance of **clearly identifying the outcome of interest** when examining academic resilience among migrant background students

Variable- and person-centred approaches to reflect the reality that some interventions and policies will be focused on factors and some will be focused on students or groups of students.

What next? Future value of this research…

Providing new information about EU-wide patterns of academic resilience

Raising awareness and develop understanding of influences on academic resilience

Informing EU, and Member State, policy and practice

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