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Contemporary Immigration: Psychological Perspectives on Challenges and Solutions

Fathali M. Moghaddam and Margaret J. Hendricks

"Gang members, criminals, freeloaders, threats to our country!"
"Hard-working, devoted to the family, essential for our country!"

In the early decades of the 21st century, sharply divided visions have emerged of immigrants and their role in society, not just in the United States but also in the European Union (EU) and other parts of the world. On the one hand, there is a vision of immigrants as representing threats: a threat to our safety, a threat to our jobs, a threat to our standard of living, a threat to our communities and culture, a threat to our language. Immigrants seen as threats lead people to launch attacks, such as "Go back to where you came from!" This is a subtractive vision, in the sense that immigrants are seen to take away from, to harm, the assets and strengths of our society. But there is an alternative, additive vision, that presents immigrants as bringing benefits: they add new workers and consumers to

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the economy, they are "family people" who help society grow. Immigrants are hardworking and bring much-needed new skills and knowledge; they add new ways of life, cultures, and languages that enrich our society. This additive perspective sees immigrants as essential to the future progress, success, and even survival of our society. The additive vision is reflected in statements such as, "We are a nation of immigrants; that is what makes us successful."

THE GLOBAL CONTEXT OF THE IMMIGRATION DEBATE

These two competing visions of immigrants are taking shape in the context of fractured globalization, "the tendency for sociocultural disintegration to pull in a local direction at the same time that macroeconomic and political systems are set up to accelerate globalization" (Moghaddam, 2008, p. 13). On the one hand, technological and economic forces are pushing societies around the world to integrate into one global society. This integration is best represented by the European Union (EU), which has both expanded by adding many new member nations and become politically, economically, and culturally more cohesive. But at the same time as EU integration has progressed, there is a counter movement of separatism, localism, and attempts to fragment and even break away—as represented by Brexit, for example. A major driving force for separatism and dis-integration is reactions against immigration, and what detractors view as "invasions," particularly by Muslims, Mexicans, and certain other groups.

Perceived invasions by immigrants and refugees are attracting a great deal of international media attention, particularly focused on immigration to North America and the EU, and to a lesser extent to migration across national borders in the Global South (Adamson & Tsourapas, 2020). The international movements of people are often perceived in exaggerated ways, divorced from actual immigration trends, which remain stable relative to the world population. As de Haas et al. (2019) reported, "Between 1950 and 2017, the relative number of international migrants has remained relatively stable, fluctuating between 2.7 and 3.3 percent of the world population" (p. 888). Exaggerated perceptions of the size

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of immigration have resulted in some extreme reactions, such as by the Norwegian right-wing nationalist Anders Breivik, who in 2011 committed a terrorist attack killing 77 people in an effort to prevent what he saw as a "Muslim invasion" (Bangstad, 2014). Apparently, Breivik later inspired the White supremacist Brenton Tarrant, who attacked mosques in New Zealand and killed 51 worshippers in 2019 and who is part of a wave of far-right terrorism (Ben Am & Weimann, 2020). The rise of White nationalist extremism, including the Donald Trump-led "Build the Wall" movement in the United States, is an important result of perceived invasions from "outsiders" who are visibly different from members of the dominant culture.

The perception of immigration as a threat is associated with changing patterns of immigration in the post–World War Two era, influenced recently by climate change (Weerasinghe, 2021). Although immigration as a percentage of the global population has remained stable (de Haas et al., 2019), the ethnic characteristics of immigrants and refugees have changed. For example, in 1960, 84% of immigrants living in the United States were born in other Western countries, but in 2018 this share went down to only 13%. In contrast there was a corresponding upward shift of immigrants born in non-Western countries; for example, in 1960 only 6% were from Mexico, whereas in 2018 this percentage increased to 25% (Budiman et al., 2020). Correspondingly, immigration from North African (Kassar et al., 2014) and Middle Eastern countries (Fotaki, 2019) to Europe has dramatically increased in the 21st century, bringing tens of millions of "dissimilar others" to European societies. Thus, the majority of the foreign-born in Western societies are now from non-Western societies and characterized by their dissimilarity with the receiving population. The role of intergroup similarity–dissimilarity remains an implicit theme in much of our discussions, and is addressed explicitly in Chapter 16, which explores psychological solutions to immigrant integration and incorporates psychological research on similarity-attraction.

Therefore, immigration in the 21st century is leading to greater diversity, in Western and most other major societies (Putnam, 2007). This more diverse context has created new challenges for the integration of

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immigrants and refugees in receiving societies, and it is this challenge we address in the forthcoming chapters, the first of which are organized in three parts dealing with local, national, and international contexts for integration. Chapter 16 in Part IV looks to solutions and the future of immigration.

THIS BOOK IN THE CONTEXT OF THE LARGER LITERATURE ON PSYCHOLOGY AND IMMIGRATION

Psychological theorizing and empirical research on immigration have grown in the 21st century and are now fast expanding as a specialized field (Birman & Bray, 2017; Cobb et al., 2019; Dovidio & Esses, 2001; Hernandez, 2009; Jasso, 2014; Mahalingam, 2006; Okazaki et al., 2019). In this research, attention has been given to a range of topics including the mental health of immigrants (Torres et al., 2018), the education of immigrant children (Frisby & Jimerson, 2016), immigrants and social technology (Bacigalupe & Cámara, 2012), and identity development among immigrants (Verkuyten et al., 2019). Promising attempts have been made to review and categorize this expanding research area. For example, Berry (2001) broadly categorized the literature into two groups, concerned with acculturation and intergroup relations. More recently, the International Working Group on Migration (Schwartz et al., 2020) identified four main ways in which psychological research is contributing to a better understanding of migration: (a) examining immigrants' internal experiences (including the motivation to migrate, acculturation experiences, cultural stressors); (b) looking at immigrants' developmental experiences (including acculturation experiences of different age groups of immigrants, the relationship between acculturation and developmental processes, lifelong changes in individual immigrants as they adapt to the new conditions in the adopted land); (c) exploring causal processes through psychological experiments (e.g., experiments on implicit processes and prejudice against immigrants); and (d) examining the relationship between contextual factors and individual level processes (e.g., how national immigration policies can impact the mental health of immigrants).

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In addition to these groupings of the psychology of immigration literature, there are three themes that characterize this research literature but are not always made explicit. The first theme is the global context of the immigration experience and the fact that migration is taking place in both Western and non-Western regions (e.g., Latin America; Smith-Castro et al., 2021; see also Salas Schweikart & Hendricks, Chapter 12, this volume). This collection includes contributions from psychological researchers based in different parts of the world, who examine immigration as part of a global experience. We believe that theoretical and empirical research on the psychology of immigration has to develop within the context of globalization and with an awareness that immigration is now truly integral to the experiences of all major societies.

The second theme concerns the relative priority given to local, national, and international processes. Of course, immigration always involves all three levels, but researchers differ in how much priority they give to each of these three levels. Even though immigration is necessarily to some degree "international" (e.g., because national borders are crossed), as well as "national" (e.g., because immigrants are influenced by national immigration policies), researchers can study immigration by giving priority more to local rural issues, as do Esses and Adegbembo (Chapter 2 in this text). Giving priority to one of these three levels does not negate the presence of the other two, but simply acknowledges the priority and importance of one particular level of analysis above others in a specific study.

The third theme is solutions suggested by psychological research to solve the challenges and problems experienced in the process of immigration, from the perspective of both arriving immigrants and the receiving society. The link between psychological research and solutions underlies much of the literature on the psychology of immigration but is seldom made explicit. For example, the report of the International Working Group on Migration (Schwartz et al., 2020) discusses research on various cultural stressors in relation to the mental health and well-being of immigrants. However, more efforts should be made to explore particular solutions that are suggested by psychological research. A contribution of this volume is that solutions involving the contact hypothesis and the common group identity model, as well as others, are explored.

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One of the contributions of this edited collection, then, is to critically explore these three themes, in order to further develop the contributions of psychological science to better address challenges and inform solutions to contemporary immigration. In this endeavor, we adopt a broad perspective on psychological science, which we conceptualize as encompassing both causal and normative behavior (Harré & Moghaddam, 2012). That is, we agree with traditional approaches that psychological science must examine causally determined behavior, but we argue that not all human behavior is causally determined (Harré & Moghaddam, 2016) and there is also a second type of behavior that must be studied in psychological science, and this is normatively regulated behavior (Moghaddam & Studer, 1997), which assumes humans have some measure of free will (Moghaddam, 2021) and has both universal and local characteristics (Moghaddam & Lee, 2006). This broader perspective on psychological science leads us to include in this book topics such as *crimmigration*, the merger of criminal law and immigration law (as prominently discussed by Woolard, Chapter 11, and Hopner et al., Chapter 14); gentrification, the process of wealthier people moving into and changing the character of a poor urban neighborhood and displacing the original inhabitants (as discussed by Pietrantonio et al., Chapter 4); and trust as central in the relationship between newcomers and receiving-society authorities (discussed by Tesfai et al., Chapter 13). Consequently, the range of topics included in this psychological exploration of immigration is more inclusive and, we argue, richer and more constructive, than if we had adopted a narrow perspective on psychological science, focused only on causal relations.

ORGANIZATION OF THE BOOK

The chapters in this book are organized in four parts. The first three parts give priority to integration contexts that are local in Part I, national in Part II, and international in Part III. All immigration experiences are to some degree local, to some degree national, and to some degree international, so these categories are to some extent overlapping. However,

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the three-part organization distinguishes between chapters that give more priority to the local context, those that give more priority to the national context, and those that prioritize the international context. Consequently, despite some overlap, these loose categories serve as a useful framework for our discussions of immigrant integration experiences, as well as explorations of possible solutions based on psychological science. Part IV looks to the future, by weaving together ideas from earlier chapters on solutions. The main solutions considered in the different chapters are based on, first, intergroup contact and, second, common group identity. In order to highlight connections between the different invited chapters, so as to achieve a more integrated book, each invited chapter also begins with a brief Editors' Note.

Part I: Immigration in Local Community Context

Immigrants move to neighborhoods, they occupy houses, they often work in nearby businesses, their children attend local schools, and immigrant families attend local religious, cultural, and community centers. It is at this local level that the impact of immigrants is most directly tangible. Interactions between immigrants and receiving society members typically take place in local communities. Thus, the first and primary context of immigrant integration is local, particularly in domains such as culture, language, housing, education, and employment. The three chapters in Part I provide different perspectives on this local context for integration.

Esses and Adegbembo (Chapter 2) offer a particularly intriguing perspective because they are also offering a solution by recommending that there should be a greater distribution of immigrants in smaller urban and rural communities. This advice goes against the classic stereotype of immigrant integration, which presents a picture of immigrants starting in densely populated major urban centers and working their way out to suburban and less densely populated areas (see discussions of the Chicago school of sociology in Brettell & Hollifield, 2000, and the classic work of Park, 1950). But Esses and Adegbembo point out that for the distribution of immigrants across smaller urban and rural communities to work as a solution,

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a number of changes have to be made, including a warmer reception for immigrants in these small communities. For example, community centers and social services need to be better trained to meet the needs of immigrants, and often more affordable and accessible public transportation must be made available to the newcomers. The relative scarcity of immigrants in smaller urban and rural communities means that local receiving society members have less experience with such "outsiders," and this lack of contact can be a stumbling block to the smooth integration of immigrants.

Discriminatory "not in my backyard" reactions to immigrants and the possible role of intergroup contact and community collective action as solutions are the central themes of Chapter 3 by Feddes et al. The authors report the results of research exploring the root factors that shape receiving community negative reactions to immigrants. Among the most important of these factors is a feeling among receiving community members that the newcomers are subtractive rather than additive, in that they are taking from receiving society resources, such as social and welfare services and housing, without putting anything into the community "pot." There is a sense that something unfair is going on, with outsiders pushing to the front of the line and getting access to resources they have not earned and do not have a right to. The solutions the authors explore concern varieties of intergroup contact, linking to more recent research on indirect and alternative forms of contact, as well as a need to include members of the receiving community and stakeholders in resettlement decisions.

Immigrants often continue to face challenges even after they have to some degree established themselves in a neighborhood. In Chapter 4 by Pietrantonio et al., the discussion focuses on the problems caused for immigrant neighborhoods that are forcibly transformed through gentrification. Immigrant neighborhoods face a dilemma. On the one hand, they want to become a magnet to outsiders, to attract visitors from outside the neighborhood, as well as outside investors to help the local ethnic businesses thrive and become more profitable. They want to make their cultural centers and ethnic restaurants lively and busy places. On the other hand, when they succeed and develop into an attractive, lively neighborhood,

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people from outside the immigrant neighborhood want not only to visit but also to come and live with them, as well as to set up new businesses. The arrival of outsiders drives up property prices, rents, and other costs of living, with the result that very soon the immigrant residents of the neighborhood find it unaffordable and have to move out.

Thus, immigrants arrive in local neighborhoods, and their most direct and immediate interactions are with locals where they live. However, the national context also impacts them in powerful ways, and this national context is the focus of chapters in Part II.

Part II: Immigration in a National Context

Immigrant integration takes place within the context of national policies, national politics, and national economic trends. The seven chapters in Part II explore immigrant integration by giving priority to the national context. Huo and Tyler (Chapter 5) examine a range of different motivations for including or excluding immigrants in the United States and suggest that solutions can be found to match the motivations for exclusion. Among the solutions they consider are the common group identity model and intergroup contact. However, they also point to the important role played by local and national leaders. The national context of immigrant integration can be shaped by anti-immigrant slogans and actions publicized by national leaders, such as former President Donald Trump's use of "Build the Wall!" as a political slogan to mobilize anti-immigrant forces.

The themes of intergroup contact and common identity are also explored in Chapter 6 by Lizzio-Wilson et al., who consider immigration in the Australian context. These authors point out that intergroup contact between immigrants and receiving society members can be both positive and negative in outcome. They suggest that negative outcomes can be limited by increasing intergroup contact during the earlier years of development, pointing to the importance of appropriate school programs. Those who develop a more global sense of citizenship have more positive attitudes toward immigrants, but those who want to give priority to Australian nationalism will not support giving priority to global citizenship in the socialization of the young.

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In Chapter 7, Sammut et al. examine attitudes toward immigrants in Malta, which has become an important gateway to the EU. Immigrants of all backgrounds, including affluent immigrants able to "buy" their way into Malta, are using this path to gain European citizenship. The authors focus on increasingly negative attitudes toward immigrants, as well as possible solutions to this problem. In line with much of the rest of the EU, the Maltese people feel increasingly threatened by the continuing waves of immigrants—but at the same time they need immigrants to keep expanding their economy. Thus, there is tension here between the material benefits immigrants bring to the whole economy and the perception of immigrants as subtractive, as a threat to receiving society culture, and as competitors in employment, housing, and other areas. The authors consider different solutions, including indirect intergroup contact.

Bozatzis et al. (Chapter 8) use a number of narrative studies to explore immigration in the context of Greece, which is another important gateway to the EU. Greece is often the first European destination of immigrants and refugees from the Near and Middle East, as well as North Africa. Greeks' attitudes toward immigrants vary a great deal, depending on their ethnicity, religion, and similarity to Greek society. Some outsiders are considered "backward" and discussed in a very negative light. The Greek economy is heavily dependent on tourism, as well as other European immigrants investing in Greek businesses (hotels in particular). However, many Greeks feel that the sudden uncontrolled influx of millions of refugees, such as from Syria and other Near and Middle East countries, has proved to be damaging to the Greek economy and society.

The context for the discussion by Valentim (Chapter 9) is Portugal, which has an extensive colonial past and is a destination for many immigrants and refugees in the 21st century. Valentim argues that culture has become the main lens through which groups and societies are perceived and interpreted. While some political groups see cultural diversity as an asset and additive, others see it as a definite weakness and subtractive. The subtractive view of cultural diversity is associated with anti-immigrant sentiments, and the empirical evidence shows these sentiments

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are high in Portugal. What he refers to as the "culturalization" of the other has not resulted in the disappearance of negative outgroup stereotypes, but a more nuanced way to include and exclude outgroups, largely based on how similar they are perceived to be to "us." In considering possible solutions, Valentim warns against disregarding economic and power differences between majority and minority groups. This reminds us of conditions Allport (1954) stipulated for intergroup contact to succeed, which included equal intergroup status.

The final two chapters in this part bring us back to the U.S. context, with Hendricks (Chapter 10) focusing on the undocumented immigrant population and the threat these immigrants pose to the American national identity. Hendricks's timely review of the bias against people of Latinx ethnicity, who are indiscriminately perceived as undocumented and not American, is another example of immigrants representing a dissimilarity with the majority population. Anti-undocumented immigrant policies negatively impact Latinx legal immigrants and U.S. citizens. This targeting of anyone who does not "look American" suggests that the threat of undocumented immigration extends beyond undocumented immigrants and has created situation where millions of people living in the United States are seen as outsiders and deportable.

Crimmigration has emerged as a new and important critical field of scholarship in the 21st century, and Woolard's discussion (Chapter 11), focused on the criminalization of immigrants in the United States, is integral to understanding how far anti-immigrant bias extends. She describes the various agencies involved in the federal civil immigration system, and how lack of knowledge about the workings of this complex system leads many newcomers to take or be placed on the wrong path, for example resulting in "voluntary removal." Woolard also critically examines the relationship between the criminal justice system and the immigration system, illustrating how individuals who are simultaneously involved in both face complex and very difficult paths to achieving legal immigrant status.

Next, in Part III, the chapters give priority to the international context of immigration, where often the laws, policies, and traditions of more than one country influence the immigration experience and outcome.

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Part III: Immigration in an International Context

Immigration always involves leaving the heritage homeland, travelling to the adopted new land, and integrating in some way into the adopted society. International travel and movement from one country to another are always involved. The international nature of immigration necessarily means that at times the laws of different countries, as well as international human rights, become applicable to the people on the move from country to country. The four chapters in Part III focus on immigrant integration in more than one country, taking a more expansive and comparative look at immigration around the world. Importantly, these chapters focus on both countries in the well-studied Global North (e.g., the United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Europe), and the understudied Global South (e.g., Mexico, countries in Asia, Latin America, Africa).

Salas Schweikart and Hendricks (Chapter 12) examine differences and similarities between immigration in the Global South and the Global North, focusing on the case of Chile, which has seen a relatively rapid increase in immigration in the past 10 years. They note the similarity between these regions in immigrants' motivation to migrate, while highlighting notable differences in essential contextual factors that influence immigration management, such that there are more cultural similarities among immigrants and receiving citizens in the Global South. In particular, the relationship with Indigenous peoples, the colonial past, and the history of political instability in Chile constitute challenges that influence current attitudes toward immigration. Cultural and ethnic similarities among immigrants and the Indigenous population in Chile are associated with racial prejudices against immigrants who are visibly different from the dominant White Chilean population. This inequality constitutes a major challenge for the newly immigrant-receiving country.

In Chapter 13, Tesfai et al. examine the plight of the increasing number of displaced persons in South Africa and Canada. They review the various international human rights conventions applicable to the different types of displaced people, and they argue that a human rights perspective on displaced people moves away from an interpretation based on "victimhood" and lack of rights to one of displaced people having rights and

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states having duties and obligations toward them. The authors see a lack of trust as a central problem, for both the potential receiving societies and the newly arriving populations who might become new citizens. By using illustrative examples, such as the case of Yazidis forced to flee from persecution by ISIS and others, Tesfai and coauthors argue that an important part of the solution to the successful integration of displaced persons in adopted societies is to build up trust between the newly arrived and government institutions and officials.

Hopner et al. (Chapter 14) critically examine how "boat people," specifically from New Zealand, experience integration in Australia. They begin by pointing out that there have been successive groups of boat people arriving in Australia, including the British Navy, which first arrived uninvited in the 18th century. As in Woolard's discussion (Chapter 11), the focus is on the plight of the boat people entangled in both criminal and immigration laws. In practice, the integration of boat people depends a lot on their country of origin, with Europeans being favored. After 2001, immigration laws have made it far more difficult for New Zealanders to gain legal citizenship in Australia, and 50% more New Zealander boat people end up in Australian prisons. This example of crimmigration is particularly interesting because New Zealanders previously had a relatively privileged position as immigrants to Australia, but many of them now live in a state of continuous probation and are often deported back to New Zealand. In New Zealand, they receive little support from the government and must navigate a new life in essentially a new country with a criminal record.

Power and Jindra (Chapter 15) tackle a subtle, complex, and consequential paradox through case studies in Denmark, the United States, China, and India, the equality–difference paradox, which is also at the heart of the challenge of managing diversity. This paradox arises from priority given, on the one hand, to celebrating differences between groups, including in moral systems, cultural practices, and other important facets of culture and, on the other hand, giving priority to commonality and equality in material and nonmaterial characteristics of people in society. The main policies for managing diversity are critically considered in regard to the future of this paradox.

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Part IV: Looking Ahead

The final chapter, by the volume editors, looks to the future, with a focus on psychological solutions. The point of departure is the solutions put forward in earlier chapters, the main ones being intergroup contact and common group identity. Until earlier in the 21st century, the general consensus was that certain conditions had to be met, such as equal intergroup status and common goals across the two groups, in order for intergroup contact to have a beneficial outcome, particularly for minority groups. However, research by Pettigrew and Tropp (2006) upended this traditional perspective. Also, alternative forms of indirect contact and imagined contact are now also listed as improving intergroup relations. The second major solution examined is influenced both by the identity tradition (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) and Sherif's (1967) concept of superordinate goals: This solution involves the two groups adopting a common group identity (Gaertner & Dovidio, 2005). In the solutions chapter, the editors also consider dilemmas arising from crimmigration and the similarity-attraction paradigm in societies where intergroup differences (rather than similarities) are celebrated.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Immigration is an increasingly problematic issue in the 21st century, in part because of the prominence of what we have termed the "subtractive view" of immigrants, which has come to have a major role in the national politics of many countries. The subtractive view depicts immigrants as a threat, as taking away from and diminishing the resources of the receiving population, as harming receiving society culture, language, and way of life. As we have witnessed in the United States and some other countries, populist politicians have used this subtractive view of immigrants to manufacture "threats," and to demand the building of different types of walls to limit or end immigration and to attack minorities (Moghaddam, 2019). The chapters in this book provide psychological reports of the immigration experience in different countries, in a global context in which the subtractive view of immigrants has gained influence. Importantly, the chapters also point to solutions provided by psychological science, as a

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means through which an additive view of immigrants can be made more prominent: immigrants as adding to the economic and cultural strength and dynamism of the receiving society.

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