Communiqué

Special Section
Psychological Perspectives On Immigration
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SPECIAL SECTION INTRODUCTION

Historically, our nation's major challenges are often rooted in the needs and aspirations of its immigrant or 'newcomer' populations. The same is true today. Immigration is the source of the majority of the nation's population growth. As has been the case for the past 50 years, immigration continues to be marked by increasing racial/ethnic/cultural diversity. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, more than 49% of the nation's foreign born entered the U.S. since 1990. In 2003, 53.3% of the U.S. foreign born were born in Latin America; 25.0% were born in Asia, 13.7% were born in Europe; 4.0% were born in Africa; and 4% were born in other world regions (U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, Annual Social & Economic Supplement, 2003, http://www.census.gov/population/www/socdemo/foreign/slides.html).

Typically, issues of immigration are cast in social, economic, or political terms. However, the APA Committee on Children, Youth and Families developed the APA Resolution on Immigrant Children, Youth and Families (http://www.apa.org/pi/cyf/res_imm.html), which was adopted by the APA Council of Representatives in 1998. That resolution affirmed the psychological dimensions of immigration – such as its implications for the psychological well-being of immigrants, the psychological stresses and trauma of immigration and immigrant status, and the negative impact acculturation may have on immigrant family communication and functioning. That resolution called for APA to engage in a variety of efforts, including but not limited to: Advocacy for the development of a scientific database related to adaptation, development, education, health and mental health; promoting and facilitating psychologists' acquisition of competencies in providing services to and conducting research on immigrants; and promoting and supporting public policies that recognize and provide for the psychosocial needs of immigrant children, youth and families.
SPECIAL SECTION INTRODUCTION

As a means of promoting the objectives of the APA Resolution on Immigrant Children, Youth and Families, and reiterating the psychological aspects of immigration and immigrant status and the contributions psychologists can make in enhancing immigrant psychological well-being, the Communiqué is pleased to present this Special Section on Psychological Perspectives on Immigration.

— Bertha G. Holliday, PhD
— Alberto Figueroa-García, MBA
OVERVIEWS ON IMMIGRATION
"Give me your tired, your poor,  
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,  
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore,  
Send these, the homeless, tempest-tos't to me,  
I lift my lamp beside the golden door!"

The inscription on the base of the Statue of Liberty on Ellis Island offers a warm and open invitation (Endex Industries, Inc., 2001). The installation of the national monument in 1886 marked a time when the United States of America was experiencing a large influx of immigrants. Some 18 million newcomers from countries all over the world arrived on U.S. shores or crossed U.S. borders.

The U.S. is again experiencing a great influx of immigrants. Currently, nearly 10% of U.S. residents are immigrants. This percentage was only higher around the turn of the 20th century, when the rate was roughly 15% (Public Agenda, 2006).

Over the past 40 years the national population has increased from 200 million to 300 million. Fifty-five million (55% of the increased population) of these persons were immigrants or U.S.-born children and grandchildren of immigrants. Latinos, 29 million in all, made up more than half of that number. Another 22% (12 million) were Asians and Pacific Islanders, while 7% (4 million) were Black. (Pew Hispanic Center, 2006)

In just the five years between 2000 and 2005, 42% of the total U.S. population increase of 15 million persons was due to immigration. The majority of this increase occurred in the “gateway states” of California, Florida, Illinois, New Jersey, New York, and Texas. Immigration to these states accounted for 61% of the national net increase. California saw the largest net increase with 1.4 million immigrants added to the population. The smallest increase nationwide occurred in Montana, with only 2,141 immigrants added to the state population. (U.S. Census Bureau, 2005)

Immigration Overview
Dennis R. Bourne, Jr.
Despite the Ellis Island invitation, reception of immigrants is clouded by a number of socio-political, socio-cultural, and socioeconomic factors. Questions and concerns regarding national security, public education, emergency services, job availability, and multi-lingualism often arise.

For example, research has demonstrated that the average immigrant child, especially among Latino immigrants, exhibits several risk factors for educational attainment and educational achievement. Among these are poverty, crowded housing, parents with little formal education, lack of health insurance, no enrollment in pre-kindergarten program, and linguistic isolation (Garcia & Jensen, 2006). Linguistic isolation also has been shown to be an issue in providing mental health services to immigrant populations. This is particularly true for those who speak a very complex native language, like Hmong (Goh, Dunnigan, Yang & McGraw Schuchman, 2006). Many of these issues are more salient in non-gateway states, such as many in the Midwest, that previously had low numbers of Latinos and Asian Americans, but are now experiencing a rapid increase in immigration.

It is also important to consider the benefits of increased immigration. Rob Paral, of the American Immigration Law Foundation, notes that, “In the factories of Chicago, which is losing native [non-immigrant] population, immigrants are more than one out of four workers, and without their presence those factories might need to move elsewhere to find needed workers.” (AILF, 2005) The light manufacturing, construction, and food service industries have an established reliance on the labor of immigrant workers (Moran, 2006).

The Statue of Liberty’s call may be welcoming, but the real work of making immigrants feel at home and making our country a viable "golden door" of opportunity requires great effort. And a good deal of research is required in order to maximize this effort and ensure that our nation's newest immigrants have access to all of the things that make our nation great.
References


Commentary:  
The Challenges of Immigrant Families  
Carola Suárez-Orozco  
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Immigrant families add new threads of cultural, linguistic, and racial diversity to the American tapestry of diversity. Arriving from hundreds of countries, some are highly educated professionals, while others are illiterate, low skilled and struggling in the lowest-paid sectors of the service economy. Some families are escaping political, religious, or ethnic persecution; others are motivated by the promise of better jobs and the hope for better educational opportunities. Some are documented migrants while others are in a documentation limbo. Some arrive in well-established immigrant receiving communities with dense supporting networks that ease entry while others move from one migrant setting. Their experiences and adaptations will thus vary substantially depending upon their constellation of resources and ethos of reception.

The Stresses of Migration

For many families, immigration results in growth, opportunity, and the dawning of new horizons. But there are costs involved in all immigrant journeys. Immigration is a transformative process with profound implications for the family. Immigrant youth undergo a constellation of changes that have a lasting impact on their development.

Transitions, while pregnant with possibility, are always stressful. Transitions can trigger a variety of reactions, including excitement, anticipation, and hope as well as anxiety, anger, depression, somatic
complaints, and illness. By any measure, immigration is one of the most stressful events a family can undergo, removing family members from many of their relationships and predictable contexts — community ties, jobs, customs, and (often) language. Immigrants are stripped of many of their significant relationships — extended family members, best friends, and neighbors. These changes in relationships, contexts, and roles are highly disorienting and nearly inevitably lead to a keen sense of loss.

Many refugees and asylum seekers experience harrowing situations in their native lands before migrating. Undocumented immigrants encounter a variety of dangers at the border including the threat of heat exhaustion, drowning, rape, and other forms of violence. These experiences can lead to transient and sometimes permanent post-traumatic symptoms. For many immigrants, the cumulative losses of loved ones and familiar contexts will lead to feelings that range from mild sadness to depression to "perpetual mourning." As a result, many immigrant parents are relatively unavailable psychologically to their child presenting them with a developmental challenge.

Immigrant children too may display symptoms with clinical acuity, while others feel only transient discomfort and adapt to their circumstances with relative ease. Many immigrant children manifest symptoms of sadness, anxiety, anger, and somatic complaints in the initial period after migration. Boys exhibit greater levels of anger and depression but over time these symptoms tend to decline. Girls, while doing better academically than boys, report more psychosomatic complaints the longer they are in their new homeland.

Separations and Reunification

For many new arrivals, the principal motivation for migration is to be reunited with family members who emigrated earlier. For most immigrant children, a period of separation from one or both parents is normative. If the youth was left with a loving caretaker for an extended period of time, she will become attached to that caretaker. When the child is called on to
join the parents, although she will be happy about the prospect of "regaining" them, she will also "lose" sustaining contact with the caretakers to whom she has become attached. Immigration always involves gains and losses.

After reunification in the new country, mutual calibrations are required. If the separation was for a long period of time, the reunited child must first get reacquainted with the family. Further, they often find themselves entering new family constellations that may include stepparents, step-siblings, and siblings they have never met. Youth respond in a variety of ways to these family separations. For some it is a painful process, leading to high reports of depressive symptoms. If children and youth are well prepared for the separation and if the separation is framed as temporary and necessary and undertaken for the good of the family, the separation will be more manageable than if they feel abandoned. If parents and caretakers manage the separation cooperatively and if the accompanying losses are minimized, the youth, though changed, may not necessarily be damaged by the experience.

Learning Culture

Cultural practices are first learned in childhood as part of socially shared repertoires that make the flow of life predictable. This social flow changes dramatically following migration; without a sense of cultural competence, control, and belonging, immigrants often feel disoriented. Immigrant children typically come into contact with American culture more intimately and intensely than their parents do. Schools are sites of cultural change for immigrant youth. In schools they meet teachers — often members of the dominant culture — as well as children from other backgrounds. Their parents, however, are often removed from American culture, particularly if they work in immigrant-jobs with other co-ethnics. The relative speed of the child's absorption into the new culture will create opportunities but also predicaments and tensions. Immigrant adolescents may feel vague to intense embarrassment about their parents' cultural practices. Immigrant parents often attempt to slow down acculturation by warning children not to act like American peers.
As a result of their greater exposure to the new culture, not only in schools but also in the media and for some the streets, youth frequently learn the new language more quickly than their parents. Though youth may continue to speak the home language, the level of fluency is likely to atrophy over time. Without a concerted effort, the vocabulary and literacy level in the language of origin will begin to lag behind that of the new language. Although youth may easily communicate about basic needs in her home language, over time she is likely to have more difficulty communicating subtleties of thought and emotion. Often, the opposite is true with the parents. Hence, in complicated communication sequences, one of the parties in the conversation is likely to be at a disadvantage; miscommunication is a frequent outcome.

Generational Distinctions

It is important to distinguish generational status in the study of immigration. Outcomes vary significantly according to length of residence, generation, and country of origin. Newcomers — often referred to as the first generation — are born abroad and spend their childhoods and receive the foundations of their education abroad. The 1.5-generation are born abroad but arrived to their new homeland prior to age 12, exposing them to U.S. schools and culture during their formative years. The second-generation are born in the U.S. of foreign born parents. All share immigrant parents and the repercussions of immigration within their families. In general, the first generation has the advantage of immigrant optimism and the ability to take a dual frame of reference in comparing their current circumstances to that in their homeland. The second generation and beyond have the advantage of full-citizenship and more consistent exposure to English facilitating both a foreign-accent-free speech as well as curricular access.

Findings from a number of recent studies suggest that while many immigrant origin youth are successfully navigating the American educational system, large numbers struggle academically, leaving schools without acquiring the tools to enable them to function in the highly competitive knowledge intensive economy. In addition to this pattern of
variability of performance among diverse immigrant groups, a counter-intuitive trend has emerged. While newly arrived students from Latin America, the Caribbean, and Asia display adaptive attitudes and behaviors to succeed in school, the longer they are in the United States, the more adverse their health, psychological well-being, and their academic outcomes. The data suggest that it is the children of immigrants - the generation that is able to take advantage of full schooling in the new country - that seems to have the best educational outcomes with successive generations losing that advantage. The losses and stresses of migration along with chronic exposure to poverty, toxic schools, segregated neighborhoods, discrimination, and being cast into low-status are negatively associated with academic, physical, and psychological well-being of immigrant youth.

Structuring Opportunity

Although some immigrant youth come from privileged backgrounds, large numbers of immigrant youth today, especially those originating in Latin America and the Caribbean, must face the challenges associated with poverty. Immigrant children are more than four times as likely as native-born children to live in crowded housing conditions and three times as likely to be uninsured. Poverty limits opportunities and frequently coexists with a variety of other factors that augment risks - such as single-parenthood, residence in violent neighborhoods saturated with gang activity and drug trade, as well as schools that are segregated, overcrowded, and understaffed. Children raised in circumstances of poverty are more vulnerable to an array of psychological distresses including difficulties concentrating and sleeping, anxiety, and depression as well as a heightened exposure to delinquency and violence.

Where immigrant families settle will strongly shape the immigrant journey and the experiences and adaptations of children. Immigrant families who settle in segregated and impoverished urban settings have few opportunities in the formal economy and virtually no systematic contact with middle-class Americans, which in turn affects a host of experiences including cultural and linguistic isolation from the mainstream. Segregated
and poor neighborhoods are more likely to have dysfunctional schools characterized by ever-present fear of violence, distrust, low expectation, and institutional anomie. Such settings undermine well-being and students' ability to sustain academic engagement.

Undocumented students are particularly at risk following family separations and traumatic border-crossings. Once settled, they may continue to experience fear and anxiety about being apprehended, being again separated from their parents, and being deported. Such psychological and emotional duress can take their toll on the academic experiences of undocumented youth. Undocumented students with dreams of graduating from high school and going on to college will find that their legal status stands in the way of their access to post-secondary education.

Social Disparagement

The social disparagement frequently encountered by immigrant youth adversely affects their academic engagement. In cases where racial and ethnic inequalities are highly structured, such as for Algerians and Moroccans in France, Koreans in Japan, or Mexicans in California, social disparagement often permeates the experience of many minority youth. Members of these groups are not only effectively locked out of the opportunity structure (through segregated and inferior schools, and work opportunities in the least desirable sectors of the economy) but also commonly become the objects of stereotypes of inferiority, sloth, and proneness to violence. Facing such charged attitudes, socially disparaged youth may come to experience the institutions of the dominant society as alien terrain reproducing an order of inequality. While nearly all immigrant and racial minority groups face structural obstacles, not all groups elicit and experience the same attitudes of social disparagement across generations. Furthermore, some immigrant groups elicit more negative attitudes-encountering a more negative social mirror- than others do. In U.S., for example, Asians are seen more favorably than Afro-Caribbeans or Latinos.
Networks of Relations

Companionship, a basic human need, serves to maintain and enhance self-esteem and provides acceptance, approval, and a sense of belonging. Instrumental social supports provide individuals and their families with tangible aid (such as baby sitting, running an errand, or making a loan) as well as guidance and advice (including information, job and housing leads). These instrumental supports are particularly critical for disoriented immigrant newcomers.

For many immigrants, social relations play a critical role in initiating and sustaining motivations. While for mainstream white American students achievement is often motivated by an attempt to gain independence from the family, immigrant students are typically motivated to achieve for their families. Further, Latino students (more so than Asian or Caribbean students) often perceive that receiving the help of others is critical to their success.

Family cohesion and the maintenance of a well-functioning system of care, supervision, authority, and mutuality, are perhaps the most powerful factors in shaping the well-being and future outcomes of all children. For immigrant families, extended family members are critical sources of tangible instrumental and emotional support. Family functioning is enhanced when it is imbedded in a cohesive community serving to "immunize" immigrant youth from the more toxic elements in their new settings. Children who live in cohesive communities where adults within the community can monitor their activities, are less likely to be involved with gangs and delinquency and are more focused on their academic pursuits. Youth-serving organizations, much like ethnic-owned businesses and family networks, can enrich immigrant communities and foster healthy development among its youth through the support they provide to parents and families. Such urban sanctuaries, often affiliated with neighborhood churches or boy and girls clubs, provide youth with supervised out-of-school safe havens. Staff can serve as "culture brokers" for youth, "bridging" the disparate norms in place in children's homes and norms in school. Taken together, these networks of relationships can make a
significant difference in adaptation and educational outcomes. They can serve to help immigrant youth develop healthy identities, engender motivation, and provide specific information about how to successfully navigate their new homeland.

One in five youth are of immigrant origin and it is projected to be one in three by 2040. The preponderance of evidence suggests that immigrant youth arrive sharing an optimism and hope in the future that must be cultivated. Over time however, many immigrant youth face negative odds and uncertain prospects. The future of our country will in no small measure be tied to the constructive harnessing of the energies of these new young Americans.

Further Reading Suggestions


Laurie Olsen (1997) Made in America: Immigrant Students in our Public Schools.


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**Just the Stats: The Impact of Language Barriers and Poverty On First-Generation Students**

By Olivia Pullmann  
Sept. 30, 2006

Parental involvement is key to a student’s success, but a new report shows language barriers continue to hamper non-English speaking parents. Spanish-speaking parents, in particular, receive fewer personal notes or e-mails about their children's educational progress than English-speaking parents. Spanish speakers are also less likely to receive general notices about school events or offers to volunteer.

Those were among the findings of a school-to-home communication survey reported in a study by the National Center for Education Statistics released this month, called “School and Parent Interaction by Household Language and Poverty Status: 2002-2003.”

About 82 percent of Spanish-speaking households received school newsletters and other notes universally addressed to all parents, the survey found. By comparison, 92 percent of English-speaking households received the newsletters.

Diverse Issues in Higher Education  
http://diverseeducation.com/artman/publish/article_6429.shtml
RESEARCH ISSUES
Culturally Competent Research with Latino Immigrants
Rocio Rosales, MA; Lizette Ojeda, MA; Veronica Medina, BA, Monique Mendoza, BA, Lisa Flores, PhD

The increasing population growth of Latinos in the U.S. is attributed, in part, to high immigration rates of individuals from Spanish-speaking countries. Relatively few studies have investigated the Latino immigrant experience or culturally competent research procedures with this population. The research process with Latino immigrants is as critical as the research outcomes due to skepticism within that community on how the information will be utilized. Recruitment issues, developing interview protocols, interviewing procedures and language and cultural issues with this population are complex. Better knowledge on conducting culturally competent research with Latino immigrants can promise better understanding of the psychological stressors and needs of this critically underserved population.

Culturally Competent Recruitment

Culturally competent recruitment targeting Latino immigrants, involves dedicated attention to the political and social climate that impacts their participation. Moreover, this population's frequent lack of familiarity with the research process coupled with anti-immigrant hostilities may contribute to their unwillingness to participate. Building relationships with individuals and key stakeholders from the community over time are essential. Recruitment efforts might be coordinated through local community-based organizations whose missions include meeting the needs of Latino
immigrants. Access to the community is time consuming and should include efforts such as word-of-mouth, personal contacts in the Latino community and with Latino community leaders to identify potential participants and inform them of the study. These community contacts go a long way to establish meaningful relationships. Equally important is to ensure that participants are routinely and repeatedly reassured about confidentiality and anonymity concerns.

Developing a Culturally Relevant Interview Protocol

It is important to make certain that both the concepts and questions that are being asked can translate from English to Spanish/Spanish to English and are also relevant to Latino immigrant’s culture, worldview, and experiences. One way of making sure that the concepts/questions are culturally relevant is to practice conducting the interviews with other Latinos who are representative of the target population in terms of language and culture proficiency. Through practicing, researchers also may be able to anticipate possible challenges with questions and concepts. In addition, maintaining flexibility in restructuring questions and formulating additional questions is important. For example, instead of asking “What does work mean to you?” ask more descriptive and broader questions such as “What is your work day like?” Also attend to the important role of Spanish folk sayings [idioms] in translating concepts. Translating concepts and expressions by meaning and not literal translation are key to maintaining culturally-specific information and experiences. In addition, maintaining these sayings in the research protocol is important as they may express cultural values, beliefs and ideas that would preserve the authenticity of participants’ responses.

Culturally Relevant Interview Procedures

Integrating Latino cultural values is also crucial. Central to this process is the importance of attending to the participant and not just the interview. Another aspect involves assuring interviewees that their experiences or responses are neither right nor wrong as this will alleviate potential fears of judgment.
A Latino cultural value that is important in the interview procedure includes *personalismo* (being personable). For instance, engaging in *platica* (small talk) demonstrates a personal interest in the participant. Conducting interviews in the participants’ home is also important as this demonstrates the Latino cultural value of *personalismo* and also increases participants’ comfort level with the interview process.

Spanish language competency is also critical, particularly if participants are monolingual. Spanish language competency helps the interviewer to accurately ask the interview questions, understand the participant’s responses, understand the meaning behind their responses, and establish a connection with the Latino participant. The importance of interviewers strong Spanish language ability cannot be overstated.

To conclude, ensuring cultural relevance in conducting research with Latino immigrants involves attending to the political and social climate in recruiting participants, translating concepts to maintain cultural and folk sayings, and integrating Latino cultural values in the interviews.

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The debate about the role of immigrants in U.S. society is as old as the nation itself. Over the course of U.S. history arguments have been raised that either hail immigrants as contributing to the nation’s rise to prominence, or label them as threatening the social fabric of U.S. society. Because this debate shifts targets to reflect historical and regional immigration, immigrants from Ireland, Italy, Japan, Eastern Europe, China, and Portugal, are among the many groups historically targeted in this discussion. Most recently, debate has focused on immigrants from Latin American countries, particularly those who have arrived without proper government approval.

As with other controversial public issues, science can play an important role in the immigration debate. Many of the specific questions raised in this debate can be answered most accurately through scientific inquiry (e.g., What is the effect of undocumented immigration on regional economies? Is there a role of prejudice in forming opinions on immigration?, etc.). However, scientists historically have shied from informing public debate, often citing a concern that involvement will lead away from impartiality and into advocacy. As Crosby et al. (2003) have highlighted, the decision to refrain from participation in debate about social problems is every bit as political as the decision to inform the debate using available data. Moreover, as long as there is transparency regarding scientist’s values and accuracy in reporting the data on which scientific conclusions are based, good science can co-exist with political debate.
In order to assist scientists in developing a knowledge base that can enable participation in the public debate on immigration, a thematic index of empirical literature directly relevant to the immigration debate has been created. To be included in this index, a paper had to reflect either quantitative or qualitative scientific inquiry, and be directly and explicitly related to immigration. The nature of a paper’s findings or their interpretation was not taken into consideration when developing this index. As long as papers met the two stated criteria, papers were included in the thematic index. As papers meeting these criteria were identified using various searchable electronic databases (e.g., PSYCHinfo, EBSO, Highwire, Google Scholar), an inductive process was used to develop categories to group them thematically. The current version of this thematic index is available in pdf format at: http://sweb.uky.edu/~idacev0/immigration.pdf. It includes approximately 70 papers categorized into the following 16 thematic areas:

1. Attitudes Toward
2. Demographic Patterns
3. Education Issues
4. Economic Effects
5. Health Care
6. Immigration Law
7. Immigrants’ Perspectives
8. Media Portrayal
9. Mental
10. Overviews
11. Political Behavior
12. Proposition 187
13. Sexual Health
14. Special Issues
15. Substance Use
16. Women’s Issues

Suggestions regarding this index (e.g., other papers for consideration, new thematic categories) should be addressed to its author at Acevedo@uky.edu.

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PSYCHOLOGICAL ISSUES AND INTERVENTIONS
Muslim Immigrants — Diverse Community, Unique Mental Health Needs
Mona M. Amer, PhD
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The term “Muslim immigrants” typically conjures up images of Arabic-speaking peoples from the Middle East. Indeed, the first significant groups of Muslims to arrive in contemporary America were from Lebanon, Syria, and Palestine in the late 1800’s to early 1900’s. The period between the two world wars, however, saw Muslim immigrants from Turkey, Albania, and Yugoslavia, as well as from South Asian India and Pakistan. American Muslims currently number about 7 million, comprising 80 nationalities of origin, and they are the fastest growing faith group in the U.S. (Hanif, 2003).

Muslims contribute to the multicultural landscape of America – immigrants bring with them countless languages, styles of dress, family cultures, and world views. Notwithstanding their diversity, they face many challenges in common. Like other Americans, they experience stressors ranging from minor daily hassles to life-changing events such as a death in the family. And like immigrants from other faith groups, they experience acculturation challenges such as grieving family and friends left behind, learning a new language and system of life, combating prejudice, and negotiating their cultural heritage with American values and practices.

Despite similarities to other immigrant groups, Muslims face unique challenges in the post September 11 socio-political climate. According to the Council on American Islamic Relations, rates of anti-Muslim discrimination and violent hate crimes have progressively increased since 2001, each year producing a record high (CAIR, 2006). In a 2002 poll of
945 Muslims across the U.S., 57% had experienced bias or discrimination, 87% knew someone who had experienced discrimination, and 48% agreed that their lives had changed for the worse (CAIR, 2002).

Increased rates of discrimination have paralleled a deterioration of public opinion towards Muslims. According to The Washington Post/ ABC News poll (2006), 46% of Americans had an unfavorable opinion towards Islam in March 2006, compared to 24% in January 2002; similarly, 33% believed Islam encourages violence in 2006 compared to 14% in 2002. A 2006 USA Today/ Gallup Poll found that among the 58% of Americans who had never met a Muslim, 50% believed that Muslims should carry a special ID, and 49% supported intensive airline security checks (Elias, 2006). These “Islamophobic” sentiments may be fueled by an increasingly hostile media infused with anti-Islamic hate rhetoric.

The intensity of anti-Muslim attitudes in the U.S. is associated with increased mental health needs. Studies of American Muslims have linked post 9/11 discrimination with psychological distress such as anxiety, post-traumatic stress symptoms, and depression (Amer, 2006; Moradi & Hasan, 2004; Rippy & Newman, 2006). As a result, more and more Muslims are seeking emotional support from their religious leaders to cope with the post 9/11 climate (Abu Ras & Gheith, 2006; Ali, Milstein, & Marzouk, 2005), and anecdotal evidence suggests a similar increase in mainstream mental health service access (Stress-related ailments…, 2003).

Is the American mental health system prepared to serve Muslim immigrants? Many agencies do not offer linguistically competent services or culturally sensitive logistical arrangements (e.g., same-sex clinician assignment, halal meals in the inpatient setting). Clinicians’ exposure to the Muslim community is often limited to the misconceptions that are strewn throughout the media, and those who genuinely try to inform themselves find the academic literature restricted to a handful of scattered articles. On the other hand, 9/11 catalyzed efforts to support mental health of Muslim immigrants, including the development of ethnically- and religiously-tailored services, an increase in Muslim students pursuing doctoral psychology degrees, several Muslim mental health research programs, and...
the introduction of the Journal of Muslim Mental Health… and these efforts are hopefully just the beginning.

References


Mona Amer, PhD is a clinical psychology postdoctoral fellow at Yale University's Program for Recovery and Community Health, and the recipient of the 2005-7 APA Minority Fellowship Program’s postdoctoral fellowship in mental health and substance abuse services. Her work focuses on eliminating ethnic/racial disparities in behavioral health through culturally competent and recovery-oriented care, with a special interest in the Muslim and Arab minority groups.

Strengthening Intergenerational/Intercultural Ties in Immigrant Families
Yu-Wen Ying, PhD
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At the dawn of the 21st century, 12% of the American population consists of immigrants, most of whom migrated from Latin America and Asia (U.S. Census Bureau, 2003).

Consequently, the majority of Latino and Asian American children are growing up in immigrant households (Zhou, 1997). Altogether, 20% of American youth have at least one parent who is non-native born.
(Capps, Fix, Ost, Reardon-Anderson, & Passel, 2004). Research has documented that ethnic minorities tend to underutilize traditional mental services due to cultural barriers (Snowden & Cheung, 1990; Sue, Fujino, Hu, Takeuchi, & Zane, 1991). Thus, community-based, non-mental health specific services are needed to assist them. Strengthening Intergenerational/Intercultural Ties in Immigrant Families (SITIF) is a culturally-sensitive intervention that aims to ameliorate intergenerational conflict in immigrant families. The current article examines this problem, presents the newly developed SITIF intervention, and provides initial evidence of its effectiveness with Chinese American parents.

Intergenerational/Intercultural Conflict in Immigrant Families

Intergenerational conflict is a normative stressor in immigrant families and occurs because of differential rates of acculturation between immigrant parents and their children (Garcia Coll, Meyer, & Brillon, 1995; Kibria, 1993; Sluzki, 1979; Ying & Chao, 1996; Ying & Han, in press; Ying & Han, in press-a). This intergenerational gap is likely to be particularly prominent among Asian and Latino immigrant families due to significant variation between the traditional values held by the immigrant parents and the majority American values their children increasingly embrace (Falicov, 1982; Ho, 1993; Sandoval, & De La Roza, 1986; Ying, Coombs, & Lee, 1999). Research has shown the resulting conflict to be associated with negative mental health consequences in both parents and children (Aldwin & Greenberger, 1987; Buki, Ma, Strom, & Strom, 2003; Hernandez-Guzman & Sanchez-Sosa, 1996; Ying & Han, in press; Ying & Han, in press-a). However, in spite of this literature, very few interventions are available to ameliorate this problem. SITIF aims to fill this gap.

Strengthening Intergenerational/Intercultural Ties in Immigrant Families (SITIF)

SITIF is a community-based educational intervention that aims to strengthen the intergenerational relationship between immigrant parents and their school age children. SITIF may be used as a primary or secondary prevention as well as tertiary prevention or treatment for
intergenerational/intercultural conflict in immigrant families. Informed by Bandura's social learning theory (1977), SITIF concurrently targets the parents' affect, cognition, and behavior which may reciprocally influence one another (Munoz & Ying, 2002). Specifically, through the intervention, parents learn to effectively empathize with their child's perspective, to cognitively understand variation in the ethnic and American cultures and its impact on their child's development, values and their intergenerational relationship, and to develop effective behavioral parenting skills, all of which promote intergenerational communication and intimacy and reduce conflict. Additionally, parents are introduced to methods that may be used to cope with the stresses of parenting and migration (Munoz & Ying, 2002).

A notable characteristic of SITIF is the incorporation of cultural competency principles in its development (Zayas, Torres, Malcolm, & DesRosiers, 1996), including awareness of cultural differences, knowledge of cultural content (such as norms, customs, language, lifestyle, etc.), accurate assessment and differentiation of culture and pathology (i.e., the culture-bound nature of normality and abnormality), and use of culturally competent intervention (i.e., that employs a familiar, educational format).

SITIF's Effectiveness with Chinese American Immigrant Parents

A recent study assessed the effectiveness of SITIF with Chinese American immigrant parents (Ying, in press). Using a pre-post design, the 8-week, 16 hour SITIF curriculum was taught to 16 middle class and 14 working class parents. The immigrant parents completed objective and subjective pre- and post assessments (all conducted in Chinese). Acceptance of the intervention was demonstrated by high attendance (an average of 7 out of 8 classes). Parents rated SITIF as highly effective (mean=4.73, SD=.34 on a 7-item 5-point Likert type scale). Furthermore, they demonstrated mastery over the curriculum by correctly answering the majority of questions assessing retention of the curriculum content. Furthermore, over 90% reported a positive change in parenting method and the intergenerational relationship, as well as general personal change. Additionally, a previous quantitative research using standardized measures showed significant pre-post intervention improvement in parenting efficacy and intergenerational
relationship among middle class parents (Ying, 1999, 1999a). However, as working class parents expressed significantly difficulties responding to these questions in spite of individualized assistance and verbal administration, these were discarded. Future research needs to utilize measures with simpler wording that reflect Chinese colloquial expressions. Additionally, studies should empirically test SITIF's effectiveness in large, non-Chinese immigrant populations.

References


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**What’s for mi cyan be un-for mi”: West Indians’ Religious Responses to Psychological Outcomes**

Sheri-Ann E. Cowie, PhD, New York University

Unlike other Americans of African descent, who have a history of forced migration, and acculturation in a rejecting and segregated society, West Indians migrate voluntarily, maintain transnational ties (Murphy & Mahalingham, 2004) and are often welcomed and perceived as model [Black] minorities (Ogbu, 1974). However, for West Indians and other
immigrants, immigration is a stressful process that exposes immigrants to a higher risk for psychological problems (Berry, 2001; Neff & Hoppe, 1993). While research examining psychological issues among African Americans has blossomed, there are few studies in the United States that help us to understand the psychological well-being of West Indians despite their increasing presence as well as their distinct migration and cultural histories.

The relationship between immigration, psychological outcomes, and religion is not surprising. Indeed, centuries before Gordon’s (1964) assimilation models, and prior to religion’s recognition as a major cultural domain with links to acculturation (Bhugra, 2004), Maroons in the West Indies and other displaced Africans throughout the diaspora weathered the migratory process with a resiliency steeped in traditional beliefs in African cosmology. Religion continues to play an authoritative role in the lives of African Americans and West Indians (Cone, 1997; Dayfoot, 1999) and is linked to positive mental and physical health outcomes (Levin et al., 1995; Taylor et al., 2000).

Using religion as a cultural framework to examine the psychological effects of immigration on West Indian populations reveals important distinctions. For instance, accessing care is a major health practice that influences psychological outcomes among immigrants. The church is a preferred pathway of care for both West Indians and African Americans with psychological problems (Gopaul-McNichol, 1993). However, unlike other African descendant populations, West Indians seek traditional spiritual healers and herbal rituals to address illness such as HIV/AIDS (Cowie et al., 2006). This West Indian health practice emphasizes the importance of examining spiritual as well as organized dimensions of religion and highlights the interconnectedness of the individual, the natural, the spiritual, and the supernatural.

The migratory process has also been linked to identity imbalance, a form of psychological distress resulting from the immigrant’s struggle to maintain or change identity (Akhtar, 1999). However, if we view identity as socially constructed (Erikson, 1956) and assume that West Indian
immigrants privilege their social identities, we may miss the opportunity to explore cultural health beliefs that attribute negative health outcomes to the loss of a shared spiritual identity conceptualized as a "failure to heed God’s law" (Cowie et al., 2006).

While there is a strong tendency to ignore how ancestry, distinct religious histories, and pre-socialization in the United States inform West Indians’ responses to psychological issues, these factors provide a context in which we can begin to understand how West Indian immigrants attribute specific cultural health beliefs and health practices to psychological outcomes and the protective health factors that lie therein.

References


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ADVOCACY AND SOCIAL ACTION
Marching For Human And Immigrant Rights: A Psychologist's Experience  
Elena Flores, PhD  
University of San Francisco  

As a Chicana, Mexican American, clinical psychologist, the May Day 2006 march for immigrant rights was an experience of inspiration and empowerment. The experience reminded me of marches during the Chicano student movement and farm workers movement. We have a long history of fighting against repressive legislation, economic and political violence inflicted upon our families and communities, and various forms of discrimination. Once again, we are called to protest the injustice to our people. To me, the difference in this march was the overwhelming turn out of our diverse Latino community and the unity among us nationally and internationally. I was never so proud of us.

I attended the march and rally in San Francisco taking BART train from Daly City to downtown S.F. The moment I arrived at the BART station I became very emotional and could not hold back the tears to see all my people gathering with their children and elders, signs, t-shirts, and flags. During the ride I realized that my tears expressed the pride I was feeling for the courage displayed in speaking out, for the political consciousness evident in their action, and for the sacrifices being made in loss of wages or risk of deportation to fight for our human rights.

Once I left BART and entered Market Street, I was engulfed in a sea of Latinos chanting, music and speakers in the background. It was an inspirational experience and my tears of pride turned into feelings of empowerment. As we marched I took several pictures of the faces of our diverse people, the diverse and amazing signs, and our allies (e.g., gay and
lesbian groups, sanctuary organizations). It was a powerful day for all of us, clearly evident in the empowered faces of everyone there. It was a reminder that we can make a difference, especially when we work together as a community. It raised the cultural awareness and sociopolitical consciousness of our youth and inspired them to social action on behalf of their families and community. For psychologists, it is a reminder that advocacy and social action must be a part of our mental health practice.

I was aware and disappointed in the lack of African American and Asian Americans marching with us; I had expected more. Later I was glad that Jesse Jackson, Al Sharpton and other African American leaders, as well as Ron Takaki (author of *A Different Mirror*) and other Asian American activists made powerful statements in support of the marches encouraging their communities to come out. I am optimistic support will grow. We must come out for each other!

I believe Ethnic Minority Psychology has a great leadership role to play in raising the sociopolitical consciousness of our communities concerning the injustices we must fight together; in raising awareness about the common psychological wounds created by these injustices; in developing dialogues within and between ethnocultural groups for healing together; and in advocating for public policy that supports family unification, labor and human rights. After all, we are all migrants; we honor our ancestors when we recognize that our humanity is connected to each other.

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Migration Policy Institute Launches New National Center on Immigrant Integration Policy

Washington, DC — The Migration Policy Institute has established a new National Center on Immigrant Integration Policy. The Center will connect government agency administrators, researchers, community leaders, service providers, the media, and others who seek to understand and respond to the challenges and opportunities today’s high rates of immigration create in local communities.

The launch also includes the release of an agenda-setting volume, Securing the Future: US Immigrant Integration Policy – A Reader, in which top health, education and fiscal policy experts focus on trends in education, health, the workforce, citizenship, and the second generation. The authors also explore issues raised by proposed reforms to the U.S. immigration system, including impact aid to states and health care coverage for the foreign born. More information about the volume, including the Table of Contents, is online at: http://www.migrationinformation.org/integration/securing_future.cfm.

As part of the launch of the Center, MPI is also unveiling its electronic resource center, which provides online information and analysis across more than a dozen integration subfields, and a new, cutting-edge data tool that provides instant access to the most current demographic and social information on the foreign born in each state. The electronic resource center provides “one-stop shopping” for individuals seeking information on integration topics ranging from proposed changes in the U.S. citizenship test and application fees to the performance of immigrant students in U.S. schools.

The electronic resource center can be accessed through MPI’s website at www.migrationpolicy.org/integration.

For additional information and/or questions about the Center or its resources, please contact Colleen Coffey at 202/266-1910 or via email: ccoffey@migrationpolicy.org.
Myths vs. Facts: Commonly Used Criticisms of Immigrants

Information provided by: http://www.justiceforimmigrants.org

Myth: IMMIGRANTS DON'T PAY TAXES
FACT: Immigrants pay taxes, in the form of income, property, sales, and taxes at the federal and state level. As far as income tax payments go, sources vary in their accounts, but a range of studies find that immigrants pay between $90 and $140 billion a year in federal, state, and local taxes. Undocumented immigrants pay income taxes as well, as evidenced by the Social Security Administrations suspense file (taxes that cannot be matched to workers names and social security numbers), which grew by $20 billion between 1990 and 1998. Source: http://www.immigrationforum.org/DesktopDefault.aspx?tabid=724

Myth: IMMIGRANTS ARE A DRAIN ON THE ECONOMY
FACT: During the 1990s, half of all new workers were foreign-born, filling gaps left by native-born workers in both the high- and low-skill ends of the spectrum. Immigrants fill jobs in key sectors, start their own businesses, and contribute to a thriving economy. The net benefit of immigration to the U.S. is nearly $10 billion annually. As Alan Greenspan points out, 70% of immigrants arrive in prime working age. That means we haven’t spent a penny on their education, yet they are transplanted into our workforce and will contribute $500 billion toward our social security system over the next 20 years (Source: Andrew Sum, Mykhaylo Trubskyy, Ishwar Khatiwada, et al., Immigrant Workers in the New England Labor Market: Implications for Workforce Development Policy, Center for Labor Market Studies, Northeastern University, Boston, Prepared for the New England Regional Office, the Employment and Training Administration, and the U.S. Department of Labor, Boston, Massachusetts, October 2002. http://www.nupr.neu.edu/11-02/immigration.PDF)

Myth: IMMIGRANTS DON'T WANT TO LEARN ENGLISH OR BECOME AMERICANS
FACT: Within ten years of arrival, more than 75% of immigrants speak English well; moreover, demand for English classes at the adult level far exceeds supply. Greater than 33% of immigrants are naturalized citizens; given increased immigration in the 1990s, this figure will rise as more legal permanent residents become eligible for naturalization in the coming years. The number of immigrants naturalizing spiked sharply after two events: enactment of immigration and welfare reform laws in 1996, and the terrorist attacks in 2001. (Source: American Immigration Lawyers Association, Myths & Facts in the Immigration Debate, 8/14/03. http://www.aila.org/Content/default.aspx?docid=17242 (Source: Simon Romero and Janet Elder, Hispanics in the US Report Optimism New York Times, (Aug. 6, 2003).

Myth: MOST IMMIGRANTS CROSS THE BORDER ILLEGALLY
FACT: Around 75% of today’s immigrants have legal permanent (immigrant) visas; of the 25% that are undocumented, 40% overstayed temporary (non-immigrant) visas. Undocumented immigrants estimated to be less than 2% of the US population. (Source: Department of Homeland Security (http://uscis.gov/graphics/shared/statistics/index.htm)
The Communique received permission to reprint the following web-based Column of the Americas article which explores perspectives on immigration of U.S. indigenous citizens, who, since the 17th century have witnessed repeated waves of immigration into the United States.

The Right to be Anywhere on this Continent (Excerpts)
Column of the Americas
Roberto Rodriguez & Patrisia Gonzales
June 19, 2006

Along the U.S.-Mexico border, the body count continues to pile up daily. Meanwhile, the Minutemen patrol the U.S.-Mexico border and shameless politicians find it easy to denounce illegal immigration as the cause of all the nation's problems – including linking it with "the war on terror."

Amidst all the clatter, the only views not being heard are the ones that matter most. Thus here, we bring you a truly historic column, featuring the views of the nation's only non-immigrants: American Indians:

The immigration issues are many and are so very complex; however, we cannot have a productive dialogue about anything when we begin the conversation, thinking it is "us against them" or when the 'truth' is only half true or we only use rhetoric to back our claims. We can't resolve any of these complex issues if we label our neighbor as an "immigrant" and not as a relative, friend or human.
--Nadine Tafoya, friend and colleague, Mescalero Apache, Salt River Pima, Maricopa

I feel that as Native Peoples of the Americas, we have the right to be anywhere on this continent as we have for generations. To hear people telling my relatives that they are 'illegal aliens' and criminals and to get out of our own land is very disturbing!
--Maria Yellow Horse Brave Heart, PhD, President/Director, The Takini Network
Indigenous peoples haven't known any borders. Colonial borders are new. It's ironic that essentially white men of privilege who created the category of white - that it is they who determine who gets permitted into our lands.
--Winona LaDuke, founding director, White Earth Land Recovery Project

From the point of view of the laws of the indigenous nations of North America, the Europeans are the original illegal immigrants in the area of North America. The United States has for more than 200 years methodically and militarily violated indigenous law, and even solemn treaties, in order to take over and occupy the vast majority of the lands of Indigenous nations and peoples. It is hypocritical in the extreme for the people of the United States to now pretend that it is paragon of virtue, and a country that has always conducted itself on the basis of the rule of law.
--Indian Law Scholar, Steven Newcomb

The movement to try to force the Mexican people to learn the English language and the culture and traditions of America to stay in this country may not be totally successful. I can tell you from firsthand experience that when the federal government tried to strip me of my language and traditions, it did only a partial job, because of my resistance to being subdued. Today I am glad I have retained my culture, traditions and the Keres language, for that is where my heart and soul belong.
--Katheirne Augustine, Laguna Pueblo, retired nurse, excerpts from Albp Tribune

In an important and emphatic way, the indigenous peoples of the Americas are reclaiming their continent, whether with the ballot, by boat, by air, or on foot. Let us call it repatriation on the march.
--Shirley Hill Witt, Coauthor, El Indio Jesus

The argument used by the Minute Men, that their mission is to keep terrorists out of the U.S., cannot be ignored: With terrorist
training camps recently found just north of the U.S.-Canadian border, their mission makes little sense and gives weight to my belief that the Minuteman movement is clearly racist. So is the new U.S. policy to keep our southern relatives out by militarizing the border to the south. Not that troops are wanted on the northern border either, but why send 6,000 troops to the southern border when no terrorists ever have been detained there?
--JoKay Dowell, Quapaw-Peoria-Cherokee, OK, Eagle and Condor Indigenous Peoples' Alliance

Are "immigrants" the appropriate designation for the indigenous peoples of North America, for enslaved Africans and for the original European settlers? No. Are 'immigrants' the appropriate designation for Mexicans who migrate for work to the United States? No. They are migrant workers crossing a border created by US military force. Many crossing that border now are also from Central America, from the small countries that were ravaged by US military intervention in the 1980s and who also have the right to make demands on the United States. So, let's stop saying 'this is a nation of immigrants.
--Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz, mixed-Cherokee activist, professor, writer

Naturalization was not race-based as the Haudenosaunee (Iroquois) granted citizenship to other ethnic groups. Once a person became a Haudenosaunee citizen they were expected to discard any previous connection to their birth nation. They had to speak an Iroquoian language, dress as Iroquois, contribute to the security of their host nation and provide for the well being of their new families and communities though a host of activities ranging from hunting, fishing, food preparation and home building. They took part in the elaborate ceremonies which defined Haudenosaunee spirituality and were given extensive instruction into the history, customs and beliefs of their new
nation. In the end, the Haudenosaunee people expected the new citizen to undergo an almost complete transformation; physically, mentally and spiritually. This process worked extremely well… [it] secured our survival and provided for our prosperity…

--Doug George-Kanentiio, Mohawk writer