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INTRODUCTION

Intraregional Migration in Latin America From a Psychological Perspective

VANESSA SMITH-CASTRO, DAVID SIRLOPÚ, ANJA ELLER, AND
HÜSEYİN ÇAKAL

As part of their nature, humans have been migrating during the past 77,000 years (Campbell & Tishkoff, 2010). Nowadays, in a globalized world, resettling from one country to another has become increasingly frequent. The World Bank Group (2017) estimated that more than 247 million people live outside of their countries of birth and warned that demographic forces, labor market shifts, and climate change will increase migration pressures both within and across borders in the next decades.

From a psychological perspective, decades of research have shown that moving from one culture to another is a major life transition, often accompanied by unique stressors impacting individuals' psychological well-being and adaptation (Berry, 2006). Yet, most of these studies have focused on the psychological consequences of migration to classical receiving countries as the United States, Canada, or Australia (Berry & Hou, 2016). Migratory flows targeting nations in the same region have been less studied from a psychological perspective, and the Latin American region has been neglected in this sense.

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Intraregional Migration in Latin America: Psychological Perspectives on Acculturation and Intergroup Relations, V. Smith-Castro, D. Sirlopú, A. Eller, and H. Çakal (Editors)
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The main goal of this volume is to contribute to bridging this gap by offering an overview of the empirical research carried out recently by Latin American scholars to address the consequences of intraregional migration flows from a psychological perspective. To this end, researchers from Argentina, Brazil, Bolivia, Chile, Costa Rica, Mexico, and Peru present and discuss their original empirical findings guided by theoretical frameworks on the fields of intergroup relations and acculturation. In this way, the volume provides novel evidence of these phenomena in a less studied social context, highlighting the particularities of the south–south migration flows.

As this volume shows, intergroup relations and acculturation phenomena in the Latin American region are by no means homogenous across countries and depend on the specific historical features of the intergroup relations in the region and the specific characteristics of the ethnic groups involved in the everyday contact. Therefore, a few words describing the Latin American context and its migratory trends are necessary.

LATIN AMERICA AT A GLANCE

As Dominguez Espinoza and Dantas (2016) nicely synthesized, Latin America is a “vast region [that] starts from the border of Rio Bravo (in Mexico) south to Cabo Hornos National Park (in Chile)” (p. 227). If we add the Caribbean zones to it, we have 48 countries with nearly 650 million inhabitants (8.42% of the total world population).

According to Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC, 2020), the female population in the region is slightly smaller than the population of men (50.77%), and the average age of the total population is 31.5 years. On the other hand, the Gini coefficient in the region is 0.469 on average, but the variability of the index across countries remains high, showing that Latin America continues to be the most unequal region in the world.

More than 600 ethnic groups exist in the region, of which 42 million are Indigenous People, representing almost 8% of the continent’s total population (Puyana, 2015). However, some scholars estimate their number at 50 million because of the age of the data and difficulties in obtaining this information (World Bank, 2015). The countries that concentrate 80% of the indigenous population are Mexico, Peru, Guatemala, and Bolivia.

Additionally, one in four Latin Americans identifies themselves as people of African descent. Afro Latin Americans are one of the largest minorities in the region, comprising more than 133 million people (21% of the total population of the continent), the majority living in Brazil, Colombia, Cuba,

Ecuador, Mexico, and Venezuela (ECLAC, 2017). They comprise a highly heterogeneous population and are unevenly distributed across the region but share a common history of displacement, structural racism, discrimination, and exclusion (ECLAC, 2017; Freire et al., 2018). In general, it can be argued that Afro Latin Americans and Indigenous People remain among the most marginalized and socially excluded peoples on the globe.

Around 60% of Latin Americans speak Spanish, followed by 35% Portuguese speakers who live mainly in Brazil and other languages, including native ones such as Nahuatl, Mayan, Guarani, or Quechua. Catholicism prevails in most countries, as this religion was used as a cultural domination instrument by Spanish and Portuguese colonizers. In the past decades, there has also been significant growth of Evangelicals, Protestant churches, and Pentecostal movements. However, these traditional beliefs live together with several expressions of Indigenous religiosity, such as “Haitian Voodoo, Cuban Santería, Brazilian Candomblé and Umbanda,” as well as other popular religious forms (De la Torre & Martín, 2016, p. 474).

MIGRATION TRENDS IN AMERICA LATINA

From the late 15th century to the 1st decade of the past century, Latin America was a major destination for thousands of immigrants from Spain and Portugal. These newcomers arrived with the mission of colonizing the continent, which meant not only the occupation of historically indigenous lands but also the imposition of their Western culture that included language, religion, and laws (Estermann, 2014) upon the occupants of these lands. Latin America was also the destination of a large contingent of Africans, who were taken prisoners and enslaved. At the end of the 19th century, other immigrants from Japan and China, as well as from the Middle East, made Latin America their home.

This situation changed dramatically in the middle of the 20th century. From becoming a receiving region for immigrants, Latin America became a larger source of emigrants to overseas. Manifold factors, among which the economic, labor, social, and political ones stand out, have been proposed to account for this exodus. At present, it is estimated that around 30 million Latin Americans and Caribbean people live in countries other than the ones in which they were born. This number is equivalent to approximately 4% of the continent’s total population (Martínez et al., 2014).

Although the largest percentage of Latin American emigrants go to countries outside the region, emigration to neighboring countries began to consolidate around 1990s (IOM, 2019). During this period, many countries

in Latin America started to experience severe economic and political crises, and industrialized nations—which still are the preferred destinations for Latin Americans—imposed more entry restrictions and hardened control at their borders. This led migratory flows to change direction toward more developed countries within Latin America, especially those with stronger economies, lower levels of violence, and political stability. Among the most emblematic cases are the arrival of Guatemalans, Hondurans, and Nicaraguans to Mexico and Costa Rica; the Peruvians, Bolivians, and Colombians to Chile in the early 1990s; and the more recent massive exodus of Venezuelans to Colombia and Chile. In general, it is estimated that in the 1st decade of the new millennium, more than 3 million Latin Americans lived in a Latin American country other than their country of birth—more than those residing in the United States and Spain (2.7 million and 2.0 million, respectively; Cerrutti & Parrado, 2015).

Parallel to the increase in Latin Americans who left their countries, the Indigenous Peoples also began to move from their ancestral territories to the urban metropolises. The factors that explain these displacements can be divided into “pull” (e.g., access to better basic services, security) and “push” (e.g., environmental deterioration and poverty) factors. It is noteworthy that Indigenous Peoples also migrate outside their countries. Nevertheless, this migratory flow corresponds rather to a cross-frontier issue associated with the ancestral territories that become part of different countries following the establishment of the nation-states (Stavenhagen, 2010).

Most research on these differential aspects of migration within the region has been through sociocultural, political, and economic perspectives. However, social and cross-cultural psychology has also been prolific in providing conceptual, theoretical, and methodological tools for understanding the psychological processes at the basis (and consequently) of migration in all its forms. Thus, one of the major goals of this volume is to make the findings of empirical research carried out by Latin American psychologists on these issues available to a wide audience of scholars and helping professionals.

SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY OF LATIN AMERICA INTRAREGIONAL MIGRATION

The issue of cultural diversity posits a timely debate in academic and political circles worldwide. One reason is the exponential and steady growth of international immigration, as we described earlier. Intraregional migration

in Latin America has probably been less studied by psychologists because moving to another country within the same region is associated with lower levels of conflict and less stress because of the minimal cultural differences between immigrants and the host society. This has not been the case in our region. On the contrary, research on this topic has found elevated levels of prejudice, negative stereotypes, and discrimination toward not only immigrants but also local ethnic minorities, especially those of indigenous or African American origin and of low socioeconomic status (González et al., 2010).

The key concept of *acculturation* (Berry, 2019) is relevant to both immigrants and Indigenous People. When immigrants settle in their new society, they establish and maintain intense contact with native people, and vice versa. This interaction leads to changes in the cultural patterns of immigrant groups, but changes also occur among host society members, which is the acculturation process (Berry, 2019; Brown & Zagefka, 2011; Rudmin, 2009).

Acculturation can be applied to Indigenous Peoples as well, of course. Even though Indigenous Peoples have lived for thousands of years on their lands, colonization processes triggered the massive arrival of members of cultures completely different from their own. As a result of their military superiority, these newcomers quickly proclaimed themselves “owners” of these lands. Since that epoch, and subsequently in the colony and the founding of the States, indigenous peoples have suffered systematic exclusion and misrecognition by non-Indigenous societies. Therefore it is not surprising that, in general, the statistics of the Latin American countries report that these groups suffer “higher incidence of poverty, lower-income, schooling and life expectancy, higher infant and maternal mortality, and less access to health and drinking water” (Del Popolo & Oyarce, 2005, p. 17).

Surprisingly, acculturation as a theoretical framework has been neglected in the research of Latin American psychologists. According to Dominguez Espinosa and Dantas (2016),

The information that is available to understand the processes and the implications of acculturation phenomena is quite limited in all Latin America. The main findings are based on anthropological and sociological studies; there is a lack of information about the psychological implications of the cultural encounters that have been happening for centuries. All Latin American societies exhibit a rich pluralism, a setting where opportunities for more studies is both possible and important. These need to be conducted to understand acculturation processes in the cultural communities and their members. (p. 241)

Most foreign immigrants and members of indigenous peoples usually occupy subordinate positions and face similar obstacles. However, as

Curthoys (2000) mentioned, it would be a conceptual mistake to consider them within the same category. On one hand, immigrants mostly face challenges that revolve around issues such as multiculturalism and interactions with members of the society at large. On the other hand, Indigenous Peoples face challenges resulting from demands associated with the right to land ownership and the recognition of their culture by non-Indigenous members of the society.

Understandably, research on prejudice, racism, and discrimination—key processes in intergroup relations—as part of the migration-related diversity phenomena has seen an increase in the last 30 years (Pisarevskaya et al., 2020). Surprisingly, however, most Latin American psychologists conducting research on these issues have not relied on theories and models derived from the intergroup relations.

The social psychology of intergroup relations deals with the causes and consequences of individuals' actions and perceptions toward other individuals as members of different social groups (Hogg, 2013). Sherif and Sherif (1979) described this field as follows: "Only those behaviors and associated attitudes that stem from membership in or aspired membership in a human group are properly cases of intergroup relations" (p. 8). Thus, this area of research focuses on individuals' intergroup behavior (Tajfel & Turner, 1979), which are those similarities and uniformities in behavioral patterns that emerge from peoples' self-categorization as members of social groups or social categories (Turner et al., 1987). Research on intergroup relations involves the study of many psychological phenomena, including social identity, prejudice, stereotyping, discrimination, group dynamics, and conformity, among many others. In this way, this field of research contributes to the understanding of the attitudinal and behavioral dynamics that shape the acculturating processes.

These two research frameworks guide the research presented in this volume.

OVERVIEW OF THIS VOLUME

The present book compiles and systemizes the current state of the art of empirical research carried out by Latin American psychologists addressing the psychological consequences of a particularly tense climate of intergroup relations in the context of the most recent migration flows within the region. We invited a collection of researchers from different Latin American countries, informed by classical and novel theories on acculturation

(Berry, 2019; Sam & Berry, 2006), ethnic identity (Phinney, 2000), intergroup contact (Allport, 1954; Pettigrew, 1998), intergroup emotions (Mackie et al., 2008; Stephan et al., 2000), stereotyping (Cuddy et al., 2009), and ideological attitudes (i.e., right-wing authoritarianism and social dominance; Altemeyer, 1981; Pratto et al., 2006), to present and discuss their original empirical findings on intergroup relations and acculturation phenomena.

The integration of classical theories from the social psychology (as intergroup contact theory) and cross-cultural psychology (as acculturation models) has been proved to be extremely helpful to understand complex psychosocial phenomena (Brown et al., 2007; Brown & Zagefka, 2011; Eller et al., 2016; Smith-Castro, 2003; Van Acker & Vanbeselaere, 2011).

In Latin America, intraregional migration has inevitably resulted in groups with different cultural backgrounds coming into direct contact with each other. This contact is affected by the characteristics of the groups and the history of the intergroup relations that are often represented by prejudice and hostility between groups in each subregion and country within Latin America. Intergroup contact also has important psychological consequences for the members of the groups in contact, producing cognitive, affective, and behavioral shifts at the individual level.

Social psychological theories allow us to understand the nature of the contact in each country and the psychosocial predictors of prejudice and hostility. Acculturation theories, on the other hand, provide us with insights to understand the psychological changes and outcomes produced by direct contact. These two frameworks offer a more comprehensive analysis of the psychological implications of migration in Latin America.

Following these two theoretical frameworks, this book is divided into two parts. In the first part, we present four chapters focused on acculturation phenomena from Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, and Costa Rica. The second part includes five contributions addressing specific features of intergroup relations in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Mexico, and Peru.

Building on the interactive acculturation model, Chapter 1, by María José Mera-Lemp, Gonzalo Martínez-Zelaya, Marian Bilbao, and Aracely Orellana, presents a series of studies on acculturation orientations among both host community members and immigrants in Chile and explores the relationship of acculturation orientations with several intergroup and health variables.

In Chapter 2, Eric Roth and Adriana Méndez analyze multicultural identities among Bolivian students with different ethnic backgrounds (Aymara people and non-Aymara mestizo or European descendants) and how acculturation orientations shape the expression of their multicultural identities.

Alejandro Castro Solano and María Laura Lupano Perugini present in Chapter 3 a series of studies addressing acculturation dynamics and outcomes in university samples in Argentina, including Argentinian students' perceptions and attitudes toward international students and international students' acculturation strategies, psychological sociocultural, and academic adaptation in this country.

In Chapter 4, Vanessa Smith-Castro, Eugenia Gallardo-Allen, and Mauricio Molina-Delgado examine Costa Rican attitudes toward immigrants and immigration. Informed by acculturation models (Berry, 2006, 2008, 2019), and theories from the intergroup-relations literature, their chapter describes a series of studies among host society members linking acculturation expectations with intergroup variables.

Natalia Salas, Dante Castillo, David Huepe, Luis Eduardo Thayer Correa, and Felipe Kong present in Chapter 5 the data addressing the dynamics of inclusion/exclusion (prejudice and discrimination) of immigrant children in several schools of the Chilean educational system, using a mixed-methods approach involving qualitative interviews and sociometric procedures.

Chapter 6, by Anja Eller, Hüseyin Çakal, and David Sirlopu, presents research results testing predictions from intergroup contact theory and the emerging literature on the *social cure* on the relationships between sociopolitical variables related to disadvantage, intergroup contact, and various health-related measures among indigenous people in Mexico and Chile.

In Chapter 7, Carlos Díaz-Lázaro, Jeremías Tosi, Luz Castro, and Carolina Borgeat-Linares explore differences between explicit and implicit attitudes toward diverse ethnic groups in Argentina, and how authoritarianism, social dominance, and empathy predict both types of attitudes.

On the basis of social identity theory and social dominance orientation literature, Rosa María Cueto, Agustín Espinosa, and Harry Lewis examine in Chapter 8 the complex ways in which the Peruvian national identity is constructed by people from two Peruvian regions (Lima and Ayacucho) and the ways in which these regional identities relate to the perception of intergroup dynamics.

Finally, Chapter 9 presents recent findings from Valdiney Gouveia, Rafaella Araújo, and Taciano Milfont supporting their functional theory of values to explain prejudice toward Venezuelan immigrants, Indigenous Peoples, and Northeasterners in Brazil.

Taken together, the collection of work we present here offers a refreshing psychological perspective on the dynamics of intercultural contact, acculturation, intergroup relations, and their psychological consequences for the lives and development of millions of people in several countries of Latin America, including several acculturating groups as voluntary and

nonvoluntary immigrants, local ethnic minorities, host community members, and majorities.

OUR GOALS

Recently, in his Agenda article for the *European Journal of Social Psychology*, Maykel Verkuyten (2018) argued that the continuous study of the worldwide immigration processes not only contributes to a better understanding of the social consequences of the increasing cultural diversity that characterizes our societies but also is of great benefit for psychology itself, raising new questions in the discipline, creating new lines of inquiry, and promoting new ways to think about the role of psychology in producing knowledge that contributes to the solution of fundamental human problems. We hope the research described in this book might contribute in this regard, providing data from a less studied social context, highlighting the particularities of the south–south migration flows.

The book is intended to support the research and teaching work not only of Latin American psychologists and social scientists but also of scholars around the world interested in the study of the complexities of human contact anywhere. We also hope the book will familiarize curious students from the social sciences with a fascinating research field.

We would have liked to present contributions from other countries in the region for a more comprehensive picture of the intraregional particularities. Despite this, we believe that this volume brings together a wide range of research groups that, together, offer a broad overview of intergroup processes involving immigrants, African descendants, indigenous populations, and members of the majority society in Latin America.

Last but not least, the existing psychological research on immigrants, Afro Latin Americans, and Indigenous Peoples has been generated largely in Western, educated, industrialized, rich, and democratic (WEIRD) societies (Henrich et al., 2010). This way of making science not only imposes the universality of psychological processes but also neglects knowledge that is carried out in emerging knowledge centers of the world. In that vein, the present volume arises as an effort to fulfill this gap through a deeper understanding of individuals as cultural beings while shaping a more inclusive and respectful psychological science.

Finally, we hope the book will contribute to making more visible all those social minorities in Latin America who struggle to gain respect for their social and cultural identities and hope to develop meaningful and productive life pathways for themselves and their families.

OUR COEDITOR, ANJA ELLER

During the process of completing this book, our coeditor Anja Eller passed away after a long struggle with chronic illness. Anja was present from the genesis of the book's original concept, and she collaborated in the selection of authors as well as in the revision of the respective chapters. We think it is appropriate to share some of Anja's biographical information so you can understand how closely this book was linked to her career and her life.

Anja was born and raised in Germany, where she obtained her degree in psychology. Later, in 2002, she earned her PhD from the University of Kent under the supervision of Prof. Dr. Dominic Abrams.

In 2003, Anja was awarded the SPSSI prize for best doctoral thesis. One of the six studies she completed for her thesis was devoted to the analysis of intergroup relations between Mexicans and Americans in California and Mexico. In 2008, after a short period as a researcher at Saint Andrews University, she moved to the Autonomous University of Mexico. There she settled with her husband and her two children and worked as a professor and researcher at the School of Psychology.

From that time onward, Latin America, and particularly Mexico, was the primary contexts for Anja's research, which was published in leading journals. Her contribution to hundreds of young social psychologists was also important; they viewed her as a model of a serious and rigorous academic who was also warm and fun. Those of us close to Anja were aware that she had to travel to Germany from time to time to deal with a chronic illness. The hope that, in the end, Anja's personal fortitude would come out triumphant led us to dream of future projects that, just like this book, would be able to generate ever closer collaboration between Latin American psychologists.

In a way, it is surprising (or perhaps not so surprising) that it was a German woman who inspired several of us from this continent to understand ourselves better and to collaborate together. Anja, we will never forget you, and rest assured that your scholarly seed has been planted here on a continent where you are now considered one of its people.

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