

Bifurcated and Complex: Examining Immigrant (Marginalized) Experiences



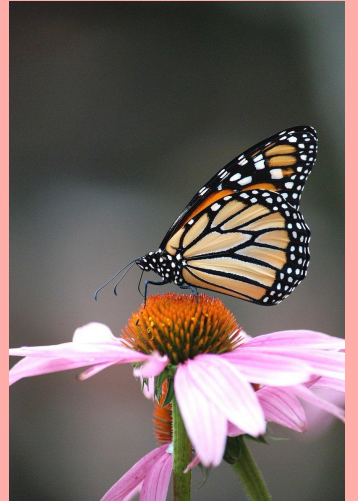
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Today's Road Map

1. Myths & Facts
2. Immigration & Integration
3. Bifurcation & Experiences
4. Ways Faculty, Staff, and Allies Can Respond



Myths and Facts



Immigrant vs. Involuntary Minorities

There are different ways in which racial/ethnic minorities can “become a part of” society:

- Some racial and ethnic individuals voluntarily relocate to a new country where they become the racial/ethnic minority (these are referred to as **immigrant minorities**)
... while others ...
- Become racial/ethnic minorities through conquest, slavery, and colonization (these are known as **involuntary [nonimmigrant] minorities**).

Immigrant vs. Involuntary Minorities

These distinctions are not always so clear. Some panethnic labels/groups fall under both. IE: Latine/Black Americans

See: [Puerto Rico: A U.S. Territory in Crisis | Council on Foreign Relations](#)

Panethnic Labels: labels typically created by outsiders meant to encompass and aggregate several distinct cultural/national groups into one.



Minoritized > Minorities

There's been some push to use the word: minoritized instead of minority.

Why?

Minoritized addresses the fact that such groups are a result of social constructs that have given them less power or representation compared to other members or groups in society.

Women, POC, non-heterosexuals, immigrants, individuals with disabilities are not inherently born “inferior” – rather, they experience these conditions because of systems of oppression we have in place. It is these systems of oppression which create prejudice beliefs and discriminatory practices that can, or will, limit their quality of life – including the opportunities, agency, power, mobility, and respect they are/are not granted.

Marginalization (to marginalize) means:
To treat a group, person, or an idea as insignificant and unimportant; to exclude and disempower them (to take away or limit their power); to push someone or something to the fringes and shadows of society.

Migrant vs. Immigrant

- An **immigrant** is someone who makes a decision to leave his, her, their home and move to a foreign country with the intention of permanently settling there.
- A **migrant** is someone who is moving within his, her, their country or across borders; however, not permanently and might not have defined a legal, permanent destination.

In contrast to refugee, IDP (internally displaced people), and asylum seekers. See: [Migrants, asylum seekers, IDPs, refugees and immigrants: What's the difference? | The IRC](#)

Keep in mind, these terms are also socially constructed and reflect privilege, power, oppression, colonialism: who gets to define what counts as legitimate violence or disaster? Or, who is worthy of protection?

Migrants and Minorities

1. A common concern (fear) when interacting or discussing migrants and ethnoracial minorities is “cultural distance”
 - a. Cultural distance is not an objective fact – keep in mind that difference can be socially constructed (points of similarities can be ignored or denied).
2. This fear/anxiety can enable the Great Replacement Conspiracy Theory.
 - a. GRCT argues there is a deliberate attempt to make whites extinct and replace them with non-western immigrants.
 - b. GRCT can become a Moral Panic (true of all conspiracies)
 - c. Not all immigrants trigger cultural anxieties (European, white, and Christian immigrant trigger them less)
3. Successful integration of groups does not require assimilation (cultural convergence)

Realities (over Myths)

Benefits of migration for both destination countries and migrants

- Destination Countries: ↑ labor markets, economic productivity, economic growth, and innovation
- For migrants: ↑ income, education*, reduction in child mortality*

Fact: migrants tend to complement workers already in labor marks

- They have positive or neutral fiscal impacts on destination countries

→ Because of this: there are negative effects of migration restrictions

Looking beyond + Economic Impact

If people and societies want to foster social inclusion:

- We must move beyond the focus on the positive impact of immigration on economic growth (wages, jobs, etc.)
- Positive integration and inclusion goes **beyond** economics. Im/Migrants are not just workers but “fellow human beings with rich social and cultural lives, and members of families who are embedded in communities.”

Let's be clear: Immigrants are not valuable because they do the jobs no one else wants. They're valuable because they're human.

What's happening right now isn't about "security." It's about control. Fear. Dehumanization.

People are being ripped from their homes in the middle of the night. Families are disappearing, not because they're dangerous, but because they're undocumented.

And too many only speak up when the economy is at risk. When crops go unpicked. When restaurants can't find kitchen staff.

But we should care because they are human. They our neighbors, friends, and family.

Even if they're not "model minorities."

Because the vast majority are simply here to live, breathe, and belong.

This isn't about labor.

It's about dignity.

It's about who gets to be seen as fully human and who doesn't.

If you're only defending immigrants when they serve you, you're not defending them at all. You're defending a system that uses and discards people based on profit.

This is a fight for humanity. And humanity cannot be negotiated.

"Far from "poisoning the blood of this country," as former President Donald Trump has said, immigrants are building and maintaining the very foundations of our society even as they remain unseen, unrecognized and underappreciated. It's time we changed that."

RAUL RAYMUNDO AND SYLVIA PUENTE

From "To jump-start the economy and provide workers, Biden should OK work permits for all undocumented immigrants," April 9th, 2024

Chicago Sun Times

Sam Hyun, Entrepreneur

Public Opinion vs. Discourse

Public opinion about migration has remained somewhat stable or supportive. However:

- **Debates** over immigrants have become more polarized (in legislative debates, electoral discourse, and the media).
- Anti immigrant groups have also gained electoral support in many wealthy democracies.

Overall, the economic fears and concerns that persist:

- Migrants and minorities are too culturally and socially different, will fail to integrate, and will change demographics/culture of a destination society/community.

What makes for an American?

Typically, Americanness has been associated with:

- a protestant work ethic (diligence, discipline, frugality),
- property ownership,
- and ability to control one's labor.

In exploring frustration, we can explore how corporate capitalism is limiting individuals ability to be “in” and increasing scapegoating and xenophobia. However, structural racism has also limited who can reach this criteria and how even when POC individuals meet this criteria, they are not accepted.



Immigration and Integration



Immigration

Immigration → Family Affair where parents or adults bring their children to the U.S.

Can result from: entering a country can be either without authorization or limited authorization that eventually expires (i.e. work, travel, student visas).

Undocumented immigrants do not have legal authorization to live or work in the United States (such as a temporary visa, residency, or citizenship); because they never had it or the authorization expired.



Reaction of Societies

1. **Cultural assimilation:**
 - a. require migrants to shed their prior cultural identities and practices and adopt the destination society's culture
2. **Cultural convergences through interpersonal engagement:**
 - a. produce a two way integration facilitated by the interaction and intergroup contact by immigrations and those in the destination society (changes in both individuals and societies).
3. **Cultural Separation:**
 - a. when distance is seen as unbridgeable, destination societies set up parallel institutions (schools, residential enclaves) – this perpetuates cultural separation and there is no effort to reduce perceived cultural distance
4. **Physical exclusion/expulsion:**
 - a. occurs when groups are seen as “unable or unwilling to assimilate” and when there is no desire for parallel institutions. In this final option, preventing “culturally distant migrants” from entering the country in the first place OR from settling permanently (evident in the U.S. now – changes in TPS, DACA, asylum, immigration enforcement).

FYI

Focusing on certain differences to monitor, surveil minoritized groups can lead to “racism without race/s.”

Supreme Court lifts limits on Los Angeles immigration sweeps - CalMatters

Kavanaugh opinion:

“To be clear ... ethnicity alone cannot furnish reasonable suspicion; under this Court’s case law regarding immigration stops, however, it can be a ‘relevant factor’ when considered with other salient factors.” - such as language and employment.

BREAKING NEWS

SCOTUS DECISION WILL LEAD TO RADICAL EXPANSION OF RACIAL PROFILING BY LAW ENFORCEMENT

The Supreme Court again greenlit Trump’s abuse of the emergency docket, in a ruling that will allow immigration agents to conduct roving patrols and use racial profiling as a “relevant factor” in stopping individuals to question them about their immigration status.



Reflection

Can we identify ways in which our college campuses uphold racism without race?

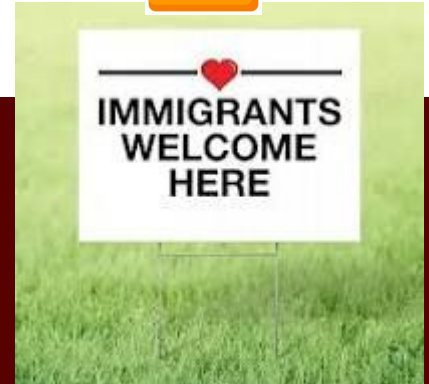


Reaction of Societies

- Another impact on integration is the destination society's value of immigrants.
- Immigrant groups that are more “highly valued” can be more supported in their integration; Those from “devalued groups” might be expected and responded with more separation/segregation.
- Political elites can emphasize differences to exclude specific migrants, such as shape them to be threats.
- Who is Mahmoud Khalil, Palestinian student activist facing US deportation?



It's time to ban third world immigration, legal or illegal. We've reached our limit and we have a huge cultural, educational, housing, financial, and essential services problem to fix now because of it. We need a net-zero immigration moratorium with a ban on all third worlders.



Individual Reactions/Adaptations

- Assimilation (in the US, “Americanization” or “Anglo-Conformity”):
 - migrants/immigrants shed their prior cultural identities and practices to adopt the destination society’s culture so that migrants become like the destination population (strong history)
- Accomodation:
 - Immigrants adopt and accept some aspects of their host society and maintain some of their traditional beliefs (there’s a blend of cultures in individuals and society; not a new one).
- Persistent Subcultures (cultural separation):
 - migrants/immigrants set up parallel institutions, separately, for members, such as separate schools, distinct residential enclaves, and so forth, preserving their culture and perpetuating cultural separation.

Individual Reactions/Adaptations, FYIs:

- These patterns can occur with **transnationalism** (interacting/participating with home/other countries)
- Most immigrants have **both desires** to
 - Retain one's culture, heritage, and identity and
 - Maintain and establish contact and participation with the destination society
- **Best outcomes** are associated with **accommodation** over assimilation.
 - + outcomes = bidimensional integration: have strong attachment to destination society AND one's ethnocultural identity or heritage.
 - Immigrants' differences may be (typically are) a positive resource for themselves and even for society (ie practicing healthy living habits; collectivism)
- There can be **intergenerational change** (assimilation or accommodation) over time.
 - Evidence of intergenerational convergence exists: language use; intermarriage, income, place of residence.
 - HOWEVER, integration patterns reveal racialized integration (some individuals are more easily integrated)

Returning to a Cultural Identity

There can also be movements to respond to colonialism and oppression by “returning to” a cultural identity:

Pan-Indianism, Pan-Africanism, Pan-Latinidad



Complexities

Keep in mind that there are complexities, critiques, and limitations to these frameworks:

- Acculturation is **multifaceted** and its performance can be different across domains
 - IE: people can code switch in certain situations and not others. Why people code switch (how people present themselves) vary.
 - <https://health.clevelandclinic.org/code-switching>
- Immigrants do not make choices or have experiences around acculturation in a vacuum.
 - Perceptions, expectations, attitudes impact the attitudes and behaviors of immigrants, too.
- Acculturation can be an **adaptive strategy** to reduce conflict and tension and improve harmony.

Complexities, continued.

Assimilation ≠ Successful Integration

Immigrants do best when they are able to continue a commitment to their heritage along with a commitment to their destination society.

Us vs Them narrative doesn't help with integration (outsiders vs insiders).

Keep in mind that being in/out changes

Sometimes people are not “full outsiders” or “full insiders” – membership can be gradient; degree of conditional inclusion – staff, do you ever experience this?

Ring of Fire

There can be limits and difficulties to Latine Assimilation.

Latinos are viewed as foreigners as they differ from Anglo society (“strangers in the land”).

Manifest in microaggression, jokes about one’s ethnic background

Exists even when people WANT to assimilate; yet, are not accepted.

“Ultimately, the assimilation experiences of Latinos reveal much about race, ethnicity, and nationhood in the United States.” – Johnson, 2018



Experiences



Immigrants, Families, Communities Responding to increased Xenophobia and Immigration Enforcement

"We are U.S.-born citizens, but we don't feel safe."

"The church classes have to lock their doors to keep our students safe."

"Last Sunday, I chose to attend an English mass service because I was afraid the Spanish service I normally attend would be raided by ICE."

"I am not the same person I was."

"I remember the fear of being taken, separated, and dehumanized at such a young age and, today, as a teacher, I see the same fear in some of my students."

"Trump is dividing this nation. I fear being profiled, and I don't feel safe in the U.S. anymore."

"Students are abandoning their dreams."

Bifurcated Consciousness

- “Marginal beings” who experience discrepant and inconsistent experiences (from their lived experiences in comparison to the knowledge given by the “ruling relations”) can develop a bifurcated consciousness.
- Several individuals operate from two standpoints: American and Immigrants; American and Latines; etc.
- See Bryan Stevenson: <https://www.instagram.com/p/DPG7p1MiYk6/>
 - What two standpoints does he seem to operate from/hold?
- Engaging in the world as minoritized individuals is “problematic” (Smith 1987) because it contradicts their experiences as Americans (or the “dominant” status)

Dorothy Smith's Bifurcated Consciousness

- Individuals who have different modes of being develop a BC. Smith (1987) argued that she experienced a “gender subtext” and “gender divide” and maintains that her modes of being and thinking shifted between academic and mother.
- I argue that there are different types of subtext and divide due to how the social world is structured, what it “requires” of people, and what it assumes.
 - Many of us who belong to minoritized groups will experience this divide and a shift in consciousness – especially as we encounter institutions and systems of control/oppression.
- Gonzalez (2007) finds that undocumented students consequently begin to “straddle two worlds” from contradictory standpoints.

Settlers vs. Immigrants

Individuals might attempt to make the argument that there are clear differences between settlers and immigrants.

Furthermore, they might argue that the U.S. is not a nation of immigrants because it was founded by “settlers.”

This argument is flawed and ultimately incorrect and also reflects Eurocentric standards of migration, Anglo-Conformity, and racial prejudice.

Settlers are not superior to immigrants. Settlers are immigrants but not all immigrants are settlers.

Ways to Respond: Allyship

Actions to Adopt

- Celebrate positive aspects of people's distinctive, multiple socio cultural identities (which are a source of pride and solidarity for many).
- Foster light touch activities: to promote empathy and perspective taking. LT: Entails brief exercises that ask individuals to:
 - imagine themselves in the shoes of others
 - have them think about their own family immigration histories,
 - listen to recordings of immigrants tell their stories,
 - have a ten minute conversation/interview with an immigrants or individual from a different background
 - However, it's unclear how durable the positive effects of light touch can be.
- Enable Intergroup contact
 - BUT: there are four optimal conditions equal status among groups/people, intergroup cooperation, working towards a common goal, an institutionally supportive context**

Keep in mind that more data is needed; unsure of how positive the effects are and how long they last

Support

- Legalization programs with a pathway to citizenship to reduce social boundaries of us/them; in/out
 - Avoid legal exclusions
- Messaging to remind/make individuals aware of similarities between their values/norms to others (might entail monitoring or changing messaging)
- National narratives of belonging and membership
- Im/migrants to have political agency (a voice in social inclusion)
- Straightforward pathways to citizenship
 - Naturalization does not automatic mean inclusion, recognition, or acceptance.
 - Naturalized citizens can still experience exclusion but it can provide psychological reassurance and encourage immigrants to further invest in their destination societies
- As individuals, we can decide to ignore certain cultural differences and include people in our circles of we/us.
- Avoid rigid nationhood, it can trigger xenophobia; unless ideas of nationhood include the “legitimacy and value of immigrants” ie multicultural conceptions of nationhood ... when that isn’t the case – mitigate national pride. Question: with what?



Thank you! Please join us for Part Two.

Date: Monday, November 17th
3:00–4:30pm