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Xenophobia: Understanding the Roots and Consequences of Negative Attitudes toward Immigrants

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Abstract

The current xenophobic cultural environment in the United States makes it imperative that psychologists understand the nature of xenophobia and recognize its consequences. This article explores sociological, social psychological, and multicultural research to examine the causes of negative attitudes toward immigrants. Xenophobia is presented as a concept descriptive of a socially observable phenomenon. Historical and contemporary expressions of xenophobia in the United States are examined and compared with cross-cultural scholarship on negative attitudes toward immigrants. Last, suggestions are provided for how counseling psychologists can integrate an understanding of xenophobia into their clinical practice, training, research, and public policy advocacy.

Rafael Garcia escaped torture and abuse during the days of brutal civil and drug gang wars in Guatemala when he came to the United States 15 years ago. Rafael works as a carpenter, pays his taxes, sends money back home to support his mother, and directs a choir at his church. He is, however, one of the "illegal alien" workers who says that he lives every day of his life in fear of being sent home, a place where he experienced tremendous abuse (*Catholic News*, 2006). Rafael is among many millions who have come to this country in search of a better life who are now being portrayed as dangerous criminals whose presence in this country is unwanted and burdensome. Tara, who is a legal immigrant from Albania, described her struggle to survive and her disappointments with the mistreatment she receives as an immigrant: "I am again that nobody, human dust that can be easily ignored and dismissed" (Berger, 2005, p. 80). Her statement echoes the voices of many recent immigrants who live and

work in dehumanizing conditions. Current news media are filled with stories in which recent immigrants are denigrated, belittled, and discriminated against. Incidents of anti-immigrant prejudice are common, yet often are not recognized as being connected by an underlying set of attitudes based on fear, dislike, or hatred of foreigners: xenophobia.

Immigration has become a focal point of heated national debates (Dillon, 2001; Fuentes, 2006; Munro, 2006; Smith & Edmonston, 1997; Toy, 2002). Immigrants are repeatedly associated with the declining economy, overpopulation, pollution, increased violence, depleted social resources (i.e., medical and educational), erosion of cultural values, and terrorism (Cowan, Martinez, & Mendiola, 1997; Munro, 2006). Immigrant individuals are often portrayed as criminal, poor, violent, and uneducated (Espanshade & Calhoun, 1993; Muller & Espanshade, 1985). Negative attitudes toward immigrants have begun to receive the attention of social psychologists (e.g., Stephan, Renfro, Esses, Stephan, & Martin, 2005; Stephan, Ybarra, & Bachman, 1999; Stephan, Ybarra, Martinez, Scharzwald, & Tur-Kaspa, 1998). The focus of their research has been primarily on the roots and characteristics of this prejudice. Little or no attention has being given to the detrimental influence of xenophobia on the targets of the prejudice, such as the psychological implications of prejudice toward immigrant individuals.

Counseling psychology has been at the forefront of examining multicultural psychology and the impact of multiculturalism on clinical practice (e.g., Pope-Davis, Coleman, Liu, & Toporek, 2003; Sue, 2001). Although a focus on immigrants who are racial and ethnic minorities has existed in counseling literature (e.g., Comas-Díaz & Greene, 1994; Sue & Sue, 1999), less systematic writing has been done on the unique influence of recent events and attitudes concerning immigration and the attitudes of host communities on individuals who relocate. Undoubtedly, counseling psychologists are serving and interacting with immigrant populations in their clinical, scholarly, and activist pursuits. Approximately 12% of the U.S. population is foreign born, of whom 75% have immigrated since 1980 (Larsen, 2004). Counseling psychology will be better equipped to work with the growing foreign-born population in the United States by giving explicit attention to the unique experiences of these populations, including the negative attitudes toward this group held by the host community. An understanding of xenophobia aids clinicians and scholars in recognizing sociopolitical factors that are detrimental to immigrants' adjustment and well-being. Moreover, understanding xenophobia can be a critical step in the direction of reducing and even someday eliminating prejudice against immigrants in the United States.

This article provides an introduction for counseling psychologists and others involved in the mental health field to xenophobia as a socially ob-

servable phenomenon. After a brief description of the migration circumstances and historical patterns of immigration in the United States, past and current expressions of xenophobia in the United States are highlighted. Current cross-cultural scholarship on negative attitudes toward immigrants is reviewed. Last, the article offers suggestions for how counseling psychologists can integrate an understanding of xenophobia into their clinical practice, training, research, and public policy goals.

Although marked differences exist between various groups of immigrants based on their relocation circumstances, such as their status as refugees or undocumented migrant workers, this article highlights immigrants' shared experiences of negative attitudes by the host community toward them as a group. Both legal and scholarly terminology have tended to refer to all people who relocate to the United States from other countries, regardless of their method of migration, as immigrants. Thus, this article uses "immigrant" as an overarching category while highlighting the unique experiences of different immigrant groups. To recognize the distinctive patterns of migration, a brief discussion of the U.S. legal immigration system is provided.

The U.S. Immigration System

Immigration is a complex phenomenon and constitutes a wide array of relocation circumstances. These circumstances have significant repercussions for individuals who enter the United States and their experiences while in this country. These various circumstances of relocation also carry unique challenges for those who come to the United States from Third World countries in comparison to immigrants from the "developed" world. For instance, difficulties faced by migrant workers from Mexico or "mail-order brides" from eastern Europe are much different than faced by a person coming from a wealthier background and with a white-collar skill, such as computer abilities. Although all mentioned individuals are immigrants or "aliens" in legal terminology, their experiences are likely to be widely divergent.

Legal immigration refers to the process by which noncitizens are granted legal permanent residence or a "green card" by the federal government of the United States. Legal permanent residence includes the right to remain in the country indefinitely, to be gainfully employed, and to seek the benefits of U.S. citizenship through naturalization, although it does not include the right to vote (Mulder et al., 2001). A distinction is made between legal immigrants who are new arrivees to the United States versus those who are termed adjustees (i.e., their immigrant status was adjusted while they were in the United States) or asylees (i.e., those

who claimed that it was impossible for them to return to their native countries because of wars or political persecution) (Perry, Vandervate, Auman, & Morris, 2001). One of the most common ways of receiving legal status in the United States is through family-sponsored immigrant visas, which are granted to individuals who seek to become citizens or residents of the United States through family connections to U.S. citizens or legal residents (Mulder et al., 2001). Besides having a family member sponsor, another avenue for immigration is commonly referred to as the "brain drain" method (Simon, 2001). U.S. immigration policies allow for legal immigrant status to be granted to those who are deemed to be "persons of extraordinary ability" or to those who have advanced training or skills in occupations that are important for the U.S. labor market (e.g., engineers, nurses). Companies or agencies can sponsor such individuals in gaining legal immigrant status. In 2002, approximately 175,000 out of 362,000 permanent resident documents were granted for "employment-based" reasons (U.S. Census Bureau, 2005). One of the more recent developments in U.S. immigration policy was designed to create more equal opportunities for individuals of various countries to legally emigrate to the United States. Each year, the Diversity Lottery Program makes 55,000 immigrant visas available for a fee to people who come from countries with low rates of immigration to the United States (U.S. Department of Justice, 2002).

A different type of immigration status is granted to individuals who are considered refugees. Refugees are defined by the 1967 United Nations (UN) Protocol on Refugees as those people outside their country of nationality who are unable or unwilling to return to that country because of persecution or a well-founded fear of persecution (Mulder et al., 2001). The U.S. Refugee Act of 1980 stated that under circumstances outlined by the UN protocol, the United States will allow a certain number of individuals of any country to enter the United States as refugees (U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, 2007). This number is determined by the U.S. president and Congress and has a ceiling. Approximately 20 countries in the world have official relocation programs for refugees, and the United States accepts approximately 4% of the estimated world refugee population (UN, 2004). Among the cultural and ethnic groups who have been resettled as refugees to the United States since the 1960s have been Hmong, Kurdish, Vietnamese, Cuban, Bosnian, Kosovo Albanian, Iraqi, Iranian, Sudanese, Ukrainian, and Russian individuals (Bemak & Chung, 2002).

A final category of immigrants includes individuals who relocate to the United States in search of employment and better living conditions. Often referred to as "illegal" or "undocumented," the unauthorized migrant population consists primarily of two groups: those entering the

United States, primarily across the land borders, without inspection and those entering the United States with legal temporary visas who stay beyond the specified time allotment (Mulder et al., 2001). The U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (2007) estimated that in recent years, nearly one third of all immigrants who enter the United States are undocumented (i.e., approximately 300,000 individuals a year). The majority of undocumented immigrants in the United States are Mexicans. However, individuals from all parts of the world may also be living and working in the United States without legal documentation (Passel, 2006). It is estimated that nearly 45% of unauthorized immigrants within the United States have entered the country legally (Pew Hispanic Center, 2006).

The current system of immigration in the United States has been shaped by historical events, broad cultural attitudes, and changing global realities. For instance, as will be discussed below, the Civil Rights movement in the United States significantly altered patterns of immigration. Because immigration is a core theme that runs through much of the post-Columbus American history, the following review of immigration and immigrant policies is concise and focuses on those policies that reflect cultural attitudes toward the recent immigrants.

A Brief History of Immigration and Attitudes toward Immigrants in the United States

The United States has been known throughout its history as a nation of immigrants (Smith & Edmonston, 1997). At the same time, the United States has a long history of xenophobia and intolerance of immigrants (Fuchs, 1995; Takaki, 1989). White western Europeans, who colonized the Americas, as well as individuals from many other nations, moved to the United States relatively freely and in great numbers until the restrictions of the early 1900s (Daniels, 2002). In 1921, the U.S. Congress passed the Quota Act, which established a new system of national origin restrictions, favoring northern European immigrants over those from other regions of the world. In 1924, the Johnson-Reed Act further reduced the quota and created the U.S. Border Patrol. Subsequent immigration policies continued to be guided by race and social class-based policies (e.g., Chinese Exclusionary Act, the Alien Land Act, the McCarran-Walter Act) that denied entry or the right to citizenship to non-White immigrants (Daniels, 2004). Non-White immigrants were first able to become naturalized citizens only in 1952, whereas this privilege had been granted to the majority of White immigrants since 1790 (Daniels, 2002). Immigration laws in the 1940s and 1950s were marked

by strong prejudices against individuals of German descent as well as all those who might be "communists" (Gabaccia, 2002). With the Civil Rights movement of the 1960s, the ethnically and racially restrictive immigration quotas were challenged (Daniels, 2002; Gabaccia, 2002). In 1965, the Immigration and Nationality Act abolished quotas that favored European immigrants (see Table 1 for demographic characteristics of immigrants reported by the 2000 U.S. Census). This policy resulted in significant demographic shifts in the immigrant population, with nearly 50% of documented immigrants entering the United States from Latin America and the Caribbean, 25% from Asia, and less than 15% from Europe by the year 2000 (Larsen, 2004).

Even greater diversity resulted from the ratification of the U.S. Refugee Act in 1980, which opened borders to several million refugees were then resettled across the country (Gabaccia, 2002). In the late 1990s, the number of resettled refugees approached 130,000 a year (U.S. Census Bureau, 2005). Recently, however, refugee resettlement has been restricted by the U.S. government because of the fear that refugee status would be used as a basis for entrance by potential terrorists (Sengupta, 2001).

Undocumented migration to the United States has been especially targeted in recent policies and cultural debates (Gabaccia, 2002). Prior to the 1960s, migrant agricultural workers, especially from Mexico, could gain lawful temporary employment in the United States under the *bracero* program. The 1965 Immigration Act resulted in a denial of all legal rights to migrant workers, and their status in the United States became that of undocumented or illegal immigrants. However, the demand for migrant labor in the United States increased rather than diminished, and in spite of policies that made life more difficult for them, the numbers of undocumented workers has continually increased (Daniels, 2004; Perea, 1997). New restrictions appeared in the 1980s to address this increase of undocumented immigration.

Since the 1980s, both documented and undocumented immigration continued to be viewed negatively by many politicians and the general public (Fry, 2001; Gabaccia, 2002). The 1990 Immigration Act established a ceiling for the overall number of immigrants admitted to the country, easing immigration opportunities only for those who have high-demand work skills such as scientists, engineers, and nurses (Daniels, 2002). Tougher measures to deal with immigration were implemented with the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigration Responsibility Act of 1996 (Daniels, 2004). New reforms came after the September 11, 2001 events. These events prompted the creation of the Smart Border Declaration and Action Plan, which was based on a view of immigration as "a potential threat to the public and economic security" of the United States

Table 1. General Characteristics of the Immigrant Population: Census 2000*

Characteristic	Total No.	Percentage
Total foreign born	31,098,946	100
Citizenship status		
Naturalized	12,556,533	40.4
Not a citizen	18,542,413	59.6
Place of birth		
Mexico	9,064,828	29.1
Asia	8,276,315	26.6
Other Latin America	6,917,622	22.2
Europe	4,956,908	15.9
Africa, Oceania, other regions	1,883,272	6.1
Year of entry		
Before 1970	5,012,740	16.1
1970-1979	4,789,199	15.4
1980-1989	8,437,062	27.1
1990-1999	12,326,269	39.6
2000	533,676	1.7
Age at entry		
Younger than 18	3,154,305	10.1
18-29	7,005,350	22.5
30-49	12,727,607	40.9
50 and older	8,211,685	26.4
Sex		
Male	15,487,452	49.8
Female	15,611,495	50.2
Race/Hispanic origin		
Hispanic	13,847,759	44.5
Non-Hispanic White	7,568,020	24.3
Non-Hispanic Asian	6,939,470	22.3
Non-Hispanic Black	2,157,634	6.9
Non-Hispanic other	586,062	1.9

Source: U.S. Census Bureau (2003).

* All categories reported as defined by the Census Bureau.

(Lin & Green, 2001, pp. 272-273). At the time this article is being written, political and cultural debates are focusing specifically on the legal status of the undocumented population, with repeated calls being made for increased border security and stronger pressure on those who employ immigrant laborers as well as possible felony charges for those who reside in the United States without proper documentation (Fuentes, 2006; Sarkar, 2006). An overview of the current media portrayal of the immi-

gration issues highlights the particularly strong anti-immigrant fervor of both the U.S. legislature as well as the public (e.g., Connelly, 2006; Rieff, 2005). Furthermore, many groups that focus on restriction of immigration, such as the Zero Population Growth and the Californians for Population Stabilization, have recently reported dramatic increases in members and contributions (Connelly, 2006).

A history of immigration in the United States would not be complete without the mention of organizations and individuals who lobby and work on the side of immigrants. Pro-immigrant movements have had a long history in the United States, and many Americans do indeed have favorable feelings toward immigrants (Haubert & Fussell, 2006). Recent anti-immigrant debates within the U.S. legislature resulted in an outpouring of anger and concern by both the immigrant community and its supporters (Sarkar, 2006). Arguments from these pro-immigrant quarters often emphasize the economic utility of immigrants willing to work difficult, low-wage jobs and frequently ask the U.S. government to be more concerned for the humanity and welfare of these people groups.

However, as this brief history reveals, immigrants coming to the United States have typically been met by discrimination and prejudice at worst and by mild distrust and indifference at best. Indeed, the popular myth of the United States as a "melting pot" of assimilated immigrants is neither supported by historical data nor by evaluation of the treatment of immigrants in the United States, especially for the immigrants of color (Schirmer, 1998). Although restrictive and punitive immigration measures have specifically targeted migrants because of their race and social class, a broader cultural milieu of anti-immigrant sentiment has prevailed regardless of immigrants' demographic characteristics (Perea, 1997). These prejudices are perhaps best comprehended under the heading of xenophobia, and recent research provides insights into the nature of xenophobic attitudes.

Xenophobia

Definitions

Xenophobia is a form of attitudinal, affective, and behavioral prejudice toward immigrants and those perceived as foreign. The Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary's (n.d.) definition of xenophobia as the "fear and hatred of strangers or foreigners or of anything that is strange or foreign" highlights that the term has been historically used to emphasize

a sense of fright of outsiders. However, more recent definitions of xenophobia suggest that the fear of foreigners and their impact is linked with ethnocentrism, which is characterized by the attitude that one's own group or culture is superior to others (Merriam-Webster Online, n.d.). V. Reynolds and Vine (1987) stated that xenophobia is a "psychological state of hostility or fear towards outsiders" (p. 28). Crowther (1995) emphasized that xenophobia focuses on individuals who come from "other countries" and toward whom native individuals have "an intense dislike or fear" (p. 1385).

Scholars have also used the term *nativism* to describe negative feelings toward immigrants and immigration (Gellner, 1995). Higham (1988) provided the following definition of nativism in the United States:

> Nativism is an intense opposition to an internal minority on the grounds of its foreign (i.e., "un-American") connections. Specific nativist antagonisms may and do vary widely in response to the changing character of minority irritants and the shifting conditions of the day; but through each separate hostility runs the connecting, energizing force of modern nationalism. While drawing on much broader cultural antipathies and ethnocentric judgments, nativism translates them into zeal to destroy the enemies of a distinctively American way of life. (p. 2)

The preference for the term *nativism* is typically based on the emphasis of the neutrality of the word in contrast to *xenophobia*, which implies the presence of prejudice or fear (e.g., Fry, 2001). However, even those scholars who use the term *nativism* usually highlight the negative implications of nativist attitudes (Fry, 2001; Perea, 1997). Because these attitudes are not neutral, *xenophobia*, as a term, seems to more clearly indicate the presence of attitudinal and behavioral hostility toward nonnative individuals. Moreover, the term *xenophobia* is commonly used by social psychologists, human rights organizations, and the United Nations to describe anti-immigrant sentiments. Thus, the term *xenophobia* may be most appropriate for naming and understanding prejudices toward recent immigrants to the United States.

Origins, Causes, and Characteristics

Not unlike other prejudices, xenophobia is a multidimensional and multicausal phenomenon. Xenophobia is intricately tied to notions of nationalism and ethnocentrism, both of which are characterized by belief in the superiority of one's nation-state over others (Licata & Klein, 2002; Schirmer, 1998). Esses, Dovidio, Semenya, and Jackson (2005)

teased out some important distinctions regarding constitutive elements of xenophobia. They found that individual and group national identity focus that is nativistic (i.e., believing that national identity is based on birth) rather than civic and cultural (i.e., believing that national identity is based on voluntary commitment to institutions) results in stronger negative views of foreigners. Their experimental studies also revealed that nationalism (belief in the superiority of one's nation over others) rather than patriotism (affective attachment to one's nation) is related to increased negative views of immigrants. Last, Esses, Dovidio, Jackson, and Armstrong (2001) have shown that high social dominance orientation, which is related to individual belief in inherent cultural hierarchies and inequalities within a society, is predictive of anti-immigrant sentiments. Thus, this scholarship suggests that ethnocentrism, nationalism, nativism, and belief in a hierarchical world order have been strongly associated with xenophobia.

Watts (1996, p. 97) hypothesized that xenophobia is a "discriminatory potential," which is activated when ideology, such as ethnocentrism, is connected to a sense of threat on a personal or group level. An example of such threat is an individual or cultural perception that foreigners are taking jobs from native workers. Watts further suggested that this prejudice produces political xenophobia, which results in the desire to create and apply public policies that actively discriminate against foreign individuals. Similarly, Radkiewicz (2003, p. 5) postulated that xenophobia is related to an ethnocentric "syndrome" with two separate dimensions: (a) beliefs about national superiority and (b) hostile, reluctant attitudes toward representatives of other countries.

Xenophobia is often associated with times of economic and political instability. Economic imbalance pulls individuals toward countries with prospects of higher earnings or sheer survival, whereas political, economic, and cultural tensions push many out toward new lands (Marsella & Ring, 2003). In turn, the migration of large groups of people across borders can result in the host community's reaction of feeling threatened by the newcomers whether because of perceptions of economic strain or of cultural dissimilarity (Esses et al., 2001). Suarez-Orozco and Suarez-Orozco (1995) argued that negative views of immigrants emerge from fears of diminished economic resources, rapid demographic changes, and diminished political influence. Scholars from both western Europe and the United States indicated that foreigners are often targeted as convenient scapegoats during difficult cultural and economic transitions. Fritzsche (1994) suggested that prejudice against immigrants can offer an emotional outlet for fear when both the internal and external affairs of a country are unstable.

Unlike other forms of prejudice, anti-immigrant discourse frequently focuses on justifying the legitimacy of prejudicial reactions (Fry, 2001). Questions such as "Should the needs and rights of the host country or the needs and the rights of its migrants be seen as primary?" and "Are selective immigration policies discriminatory?" are common in both popular and scholarly debates (e.g., LeMay, 2004). Anti-immigrant sentiments are frequently accepted as justifiable because they are seen as based on the realistic concern of the host community (Fry, 2001). Specifically, the bases for feelings of threat from immigrants have been related to evolutionary (Falkner, Schaller, Park, & Duncan, 2004; Kanazawa & Frerichs, 2001), economic (Buck et al., 2003; Thornton & Mizuno, 1999), and environmental (Ervin, 1994; Tactaquin, 1998) concerns. However, the presence of these reality-based considerations is not dissimilar to concerns that have underlined the causes of prejudice toward native nonimmigrant minorities. For example, economic recessions and resulting fears of losing jobs to minorities have been also connected to an increase in racist and sexist beliefs (Ott, 1995; Runciman, 1966). Furthermore, the economic and social data do not support typical anti-immigrant arguments. Economic and crime-rate statistics highlight the fallacy of claims that immigration puts economic and social strains on U.S. society (Lee, Martinez, & Rosenfeld, 2001; National Academy of Science, 1997). For example, immigrants as a labor force produce nearly $10 billion in profits for the U.S. economy, which is highly dependent on immigrants who are willing to work in low-level, low-paid jobs (National Academy of Science, 1997).

Theories About the Causes of Xenophobia

Because attitudes about immigration often relate to national economic stability, several theories have attempted to delineate how perceived feelings of threat contribute to the creation of negative views toward those who seem to challenge the economic well-being of the in-group. Realistic group conflict theory (Sherif, Harvey, White, Hood, & Sherif, 1961) suggests that competition for access to limited resources results in a conflict between groups. Competition for these limited resources between groups leads to prejudices against the out-group, whose members are viewed by the in-group as a source of competition.

Expanding the view of threat outside the economic area, the integrated theory of prejudice (Stephan & Stephan, 1996, 2000; Stephan et al., 1999) suggests that there are four types of threat that lead to prejudice: realistic threat, symbolic threat, intergroup anxiety, and negative stereotypes. Realistic threat concerns both the economic and political

power of the in-group that is perceived to be challenged by the out-group (e.g., jobs being given to the members of the out-group). Symbolic threat stems from differences in values, beliefs, morals, and attitudes between the in-group and out-group members. These threats are directly related to conflicts in worldviews between the members of the in-group whose values, beliefs, and attitudes are being challenged by the newcomers. The final two types of threat, intergroup anxiety and negative stereotypes, focus on the avoidance of unpleasant interactions with others and the meaning of this interaction. Stephan and Stephan (2000) suggest that individuals in the in-group experience feelings of threat when interacting with members of the out-group in ways that challenge their self-image (e.g., being embarrassed when in contact with something unfamiliar), and this threat perception results in anxiety. Furthermore, when members of the in-group approach interactions with members of the out-group whom they stereotype to be aggressive, unintelligent, and lazy, their feelings of threat are increased in light of the prospects of such interactions.

Theories about social hierarchies and justification of the systemic order also help explain how individuals develop and maintain xenophobic attitudes. Pratto, Sidanius, Stallworth, and Malle (1994) have suggested that individuals with high social dominance orientation believe that social structures are inherently hierarchical and that such structures must be upheld (e.g., native born individuals thus must be held in higher regard than foreigners). Jost and Banaji (1994) similarly highlight that individuals develop strong system-justification beliefs that emphasize the maintenance of the status quo in the society.

This overview of definitions, causes, characteristics, and theories about xenophobia and individuals who tend to be xenophobic highlights significant parallels between this form of prejudice and racism. Because large numbers of recent immigrants to the United States are also racial minorities (see Table 1) in the context of a racially segregated United States, it is important to discuss the shared and distinctive characteristics of racism and xenophobia. Recognizing the similarities and differences between xenophobia and racism aids the development of our awareness of how these two types of oppression influence the psychological functioning and well-being of immigrants.

Xenophobia and Racism

Xenophobia and racism are highly interrelated and mutually supporting forms of oppression. These two forms of oppression appear to

be very similar yet also have distinct features in regard to their origins, targets, and typical expressions. Moreover, communities across the globe may define racism and xenophobia differently because of specific historical factors. For example, in the context of western Europe, racism has been associated with the anti-Semitism of the Nazi period and the Holocaust, whereas xenophobia refers to what is termed racism in the United States as well as negative attitudes toward foreigners (Fernando, 1993).

Across the globe, racist and xenophobic prejudices share much in common (Wimmer, 1997). As stated earlier, the history of immigration to the United States has been significantly shaped by racist ideologies (Gabbacia, 2002; Miles, 1982). The socially constructed notions of race include the separation of people into distinct groups based primarily on their skin color as well as factors such as their worldviews, cultural values, attitudes, customs, and products (Gotanda, 1991). Racial minorities in the United States are often perceived as foreigners rather than as native-born individuals, especially in the case of persons of Asian and Latino descent (Sue, 2003). Upon relocating to Western countries, immigrants who are racial minorities enter the stratified racial social order that relegates people who appear non-White to a secondary status (Fernando, 1993; Wimmer, 1997; Yakushko & Chronister, 2005). On the other hand, immigrants who are White gain the many advantages accorded to White individuals in the United States: they inherit the benefits of White privilege (see Foner & Fredrickson, 2004; Jaynes, 2000, for discussion). Discrimination and hate crimes are more likely to be reported by immigrants who are visibly different from their host community, especially in regard to their racial characteristics (Jasinskaja-Lahti, Liebkind, & Perhoniemi, 2006).

Xenophobia and racism are also distinct. Racism has been typically associated with prejudices against individuals founded on a socially constructed notion of groups' differentiating visible phenotypical markers, such as skin color (Castles &Miller, 1993; Helms, 1994; Helms &Talleyrand, 1997; Marger, 1997).

In contrast, xenophobia targets specifically those individuals who are foreigners in a particular community, often regardless of their visible characteristics or visible differences with the native individuals (Boehnke, Hagan, & Hefler, 1998; Wimmer, 1997). Studies have shown that all immigrants, whether perceived as racially similar or dissimilar to the host community's majority, can be targets of prejudice and discrimination against them (Hernandez, 2006; Jasinskaja-Lahti & Liebkind, 2001; Liebkind & Jasinskaja-Lahti, 2000a, 2000b). Whereas racism focuses on the superiority of one race over others across all geographic

and ethnocultural boundaries (Helms & Talleyrand, 1997), prejudice against immigrants is typically connected to ethnocentrism, which is a belief in the superiority of one nation-state over others (Hagendoorn & Sniderman, 2001).

Furthermore, racism and xenophobia are influenced by different historical realities. The sociocultural factors that contribute to racism are based on histories of subordination, slavery, colonialism, and segregation (Gotanda, 1991; Helms, 1994). Xenophobia is typically related to times of economic and political instability or imbalance that result in the migration of large groups of people across borders as well as to the host community's reaction of feeling threatened by the newcomers (Esses et al., 2001; Marsella & Ring, 2003).

Racism characteristically occurs within cultural and economic structures in which one group seeks to dominate and exploit others, gaining cultural and economic privileges from such domination (Alexander, 1987; Helms & Talleyrand, 1997; Sue, 2003). Xenophobic prejudice typically emphasizes the discomfort with the presence of foreigners in a community and the infringement of these foreigners on the economic, cultural, and social capital of the host community (Esses et al., 2001).

It is important to recognize that incidences of xenophobia are as common in communities with shared racial characteristics as in those where distinct racial groupings are perceived. Tensions between native-born racial minority individuals and immigrants have been documented and examined (e.g., Espanshade, 2000; Kim, 2000; Thornton &Mizuno, 1999; Waldinger, 1997). The UN's (2006) State of the World's Refugees highlights that refugees across all areas of the world are subject to xenophobia and that experiences of prejudice are common for refugees who cross no boundaries of race. Xenophobia in western and eastern Europe, Australia, and the United States has been well documented and publicized (Baumgartl & Favell, 1995; Oakley, 1996; Pettigrew, 1998; Smith & Edmonston, 1997; Sue, 2003). Xenophobia is also widespread in Asia, Africa, and Latin America (Gray, 1998; Jung, 2004; Klotz, 2000; Ramachandran, 2002; Vale, 2002).

Unquestionably, xenophobia and racism are interactive and mutually supporting forms of prejudice. However, racism does not always imply xenophobia. Conversely, xenophobia does not always include racist attitudes. Recognition of both the convergent and divergent aspects of these phenomena can aid in theorizing about the roots of these prejudices as well as about their influence on individuals and society. The significance of the powerful effects of these two forms of prejudice on immigrants is especially staggering considering that the vast majority of immigrants to the United States are non-White (see Table 1).

The Impact of Xenophobia

An atmosphere of hostility can shape the cultural discourse on immigration and can have detrimental affects on those who are the targets of prejudice toward immigrants. Images of immigrants in the popular culture are often negative and inconsistent. Immigrants are likely to be portrayed in very stereotypical ways as, for example, lazy, criminal, and uneducated (Espanshade & Calhoun, 1993; Muller & Espanshade, 1985). Films about immigrants, such as *The Foreign Affair* and *The Birthday Girl*, create an image of scheming mail-order brides, and many TV shows about criminal elements in U.S. society focus on immigrant Mafia and gangs as sources of threat to the American public. Sexualizing or desexualizing immigrant women is also common (Lemish, 2001).

Contradictory perceptions held by native-born individuals often leave immigrants at impossible crossroads of expectations. For example, Esses and colleagues (2001) highlight that immigrants are perceived to be a threat to the majority culture when they are doing well because this perception emphasizes the fact that immigrants are taking jobs and educational opportunities away from native individuals. On the other hand, immigrants who are shown as having a need for governmental support in the form of social services are attacked for becoming a burden to society and its native-born members.

Several studies have shown that members of the host culture tend to demand that immigrants assimilate to their culture, leaving their own cultural heritage behind (Florack, Piontkowski, Rohmann, Balzer, & Perzig, 2003; Kosic, Mannetti, & Sam, 2005; Shamai & Ilatov, 2001). Such demands may result in increased cultural confusion and isolation as immigrant individuals and groups attempt to hold on to their sense of cultural identity while making an effort to connect to their host community and create a home for themselves and their children. Kurman, Eshel, and Sbeit (2005) found that immigrants' perceptions of host environments' hostile pressures to assimilate resulted in diminished psychological adjustment for these immigrants.

Horenczyk (1996) theorized that inconsistent and negative treatment of immigrants results in their vulnerability to anxiety and related disorders. Barry and Grilo (2003) found that East Asian immigrants perceived both individual and group discrimination in their host community and this perception negatively influenced their functioning. Perceived discrimination was related to psychological distress in a sample of 108 Arab Americans, a majority of whom were born outside the United States (Moradi & Hasan, 2004). Several recent studies with large samples of recent

immigrants to Finland have shown that perceived prejudice and discrimination were detrimental to their psychological functioning (Jasinskaja-Lahti, Liebkind, Jaakkola, & Reuter, 2006; Liebkind & Jasinskaja-Lahti, 2000; Liebkind, Jasinskaja-Lahti, & Solheim, 2004). Their studies found that immigrants' cultural or racial similarity to the host country did not protect individuals of various groups from experiencing perceived discrimination because of their immigrant status.

Because the pressure to acculturate is closely related to xenophobia, studies about ethnic identity and acculturation may provide insights into the influences of anti-immigrant sentiments on newcomers. Hovey (2000) reported a strong link between an experience of acculturative stress and depression and suicidality among recent immigrants from Mexico. Similarly, higher levels of anxiety were reported by migrant farm workers from Mexico who experienced greater acculturative stress (Hovey & Magana, 2003). Struggles with acculturation and cultural adjustment were associated with mental health distress in a sample of Chinese, Japanese, and Korean youth (Yeh, 2003). These studies highlight that discrimination is a reality for many immigrant individuals and that discrimination has detrimental effects on their mental health.

The negative influence of perceived discrimination and prejudice may extend to the second generation of immigrants. For example, Hernandez (2006) found that psychological and social functioning of immigrant children and adolescents declined from first to second generation across all studied immigrant groups. It is possible that one of the explanations for this finding is related to both the racist and xenophobic environments to which immigrants are exposed in their host country.

Xenophobic prejudice may carry a negative influence for individuals who experience it that is similar to other forms of prejudice. Studies about racial minorities within the United States have shown that experiences of both blatant and subtle racism have dramatic costs for those who are targets of prejudice (see Sue & Sue, 1999, for review). Certainly, xenophobia results in significant costs for the well-being of recent immigrants. Future studies ought to be aimed at investigating the role of xenophobia on immigrants' well-being by directly examining immigrants' perceptions of anti-immigrant hostility on their lives. In addition, attention must be given to the influences of intersecting oppressions on immigrants of color, lesbian and gay immigrants, immigrant women, and immigrants with disabilities. Counseling psychology stands in an excellent position to challenge the societal milieu that justifies xenophobia and, instead, to proactively address the unique needs of immigrant populations.

The Role of Counseling Psychology

Counseling scholars and professionals have long worked to develop a set of principles that could inform issues of diversity in all areas of psychology (e.g., Aredondo, 1998; Sue, Aredondo, &McDavis, 1992). The Guidelines on Multicultural Education, Training, Research, Practice, and Organizational Change for Psychologists, adopted by the American Psychological Association as policy and published in 2003, provide the framework for the essential competencies required in mental health work with minority populations. The guidelines emphasize the paramount importance of awareness, knowledge, and skills in working with marginalized groups, lack of which can result in detrimental consequences for the individuals with whom psychologists work. These principles can serve as a structure for addressing the issues involved in working with immigrants in the United States and seeking to address the role of xenophobia in their lives.

Practice

One of the key areas for addressing the needs of immigrants in the United States involves the provision of culturally relevant mental health services to this population (Prendes-Lintel, 2001). Immigrants are a vastly heterogeneous group, and many of their mental health needs may be best served with attention to multiple spheres of their experience, both premigration and postmigration. When providing services, practitioners may also be faced with unusual challenges. For example, frequently services must be conducted through interpreters, and issues of quality language interpretation in mental health settings have begun to receive more attention (Hwa-Froelich & Westby, 2003; Raval & Smith, 2003). Not only can it be difficult to locate a trained professional interpreter, but the obstacle of reimbursement for their services is another barrier that can prevent immigrant clients and providers from working together. In addition, practitioners who work with undocumented immigrants may have to struggle with ethical and legal dilemmas not encountered in other client situations (Pinto, 2002). In addition to facing these challenges, awareness of immigrant clients' sources of strength, positive coping, and resilience can help empower them in the contexts of discrimination and oppression (Yakushko & Chronister, 2005).

Scholarly literature on the unique aspects of clinical work with immigrants is beginning to emerge. Deen (2002, p. 3) provided an example of using various treatment modalities, such as education, counseling, and community work, to help newly arrived immigrants develop

a "survival kit" for dealing with a new culture. Among other in-depth discussions of therapeutic work with immigrants is the recent contribution of Bemak and Chung (2002), who suggested a multilevel model of counseling and psychotherapy that specifically focuses on mental health services for refugees. According to these authors, service provision to refugees should include mental health education, psychotherapy, cultural empowerment, and integration of Western and indigenous healing methods.

An example of creating a culturally responsive clinical practice with immigrants can be seen in the work of Dr. Maria Prendes-Lintel, a counseling psychologist who created the For Immigrants and Refugees Surviving Torture (F.I.R.S.T.) Project in Lincoln, Nebraska. The F.I.R.S.T. project employs a holistic, multidisciplinary approach to working with immigrants and their families and focuses on prevention, strength building, and community involvement. In addition to counseling, the project is able to provide such services as groups on parenting, yoga and meditation classes, art classes, massage, biofeedback, and psychiatric consultations. The project's office includes a separate space, termed the café, where anyone can come together over a cup of tea or coffee and work on a jigsaw puzzle, a game of chess, or read a newspaper and check e-mails. Services for immigrant individuals and groups such as the F.I.R.S.T. Project can be guided by multicultural service delivery models proposed in the counseling literature (e.g., Atkinson, Thompson, & Grant, 1993; Sue, 2001).

Education and Training

Training of counseling professionals is one of the fundamental areas of counseling psychology as a field. Information about immigrants has been included in the current multicultural coursework, albeit unsystematically, because of their possible status as racial minorities within the United States. However, a more systematic look at the sociopolitical influences and unique psychological needs of immigrant populations can provide a better theoretical and clinical framework for those who may eventually serve these individuals.

Knowledge, awareness, and skills are the components integral to the development of multicultural counseling competence (Sue & Sue, 1999). The training curriculum in counseling psychology can expand to include information on immigrant populations such as the history, circumstances of relocation, current policies, and legal practices that may directly or indirectly influence the psychological functioning of immigrant women, men, and children (Bemak & Chung, 2002). For

all those who are not the indigenous peoples in this country, awareness may be encouraged through trainees' reflections about their own migration stories or that of their families. Esses and colleagues (2001) found that helping individuals gain awareness of their own immigrant histories helped to develop greater empathy and reduce xenophobia. Awareness may also be raised through giving attention to beliefs, misinformation, and prejudices toward immigrants that are commonly expressed in the American public sphere and may be shared by students themselves. Trainees can work on attaining skills in serving immigrant clients by learning more about working with people whose cultural, religious, psychological, and social worldviews may be vastly different than theirs. Developing proficiencies in working with severe trauma, relaxation and biofeedback, dream work, and psychodrama may help future counselors have a necessary therapeutic repertoire to address the complex mental health needs of many immigrants (Bemak & Chung, 2002). Receiving training on working through interpreters may also be necessary for all new counselors (Prendes-Lintel, 2001). In addition, training ought to focus on helping future counseling professionals recognize the strengths and resilience of immigrant individuals as well as the essential role of cultural and personal empowerment (Bemak & Chung, 2002; Prendes-Lintel, 2001; Yakushko, 2006; Yakushko & Chronister, 2005).

Another specific example of creating a more immigration-focused training is through internationalizing curricula and including a specific focus on Third World peoples. Dr. Kathryn Norsworthy of Rollins College leads her graduate counseling psychology students on trips to villages in Thailand where students can witness firsthand the pressures to migrate placed on many people around the globe. Such direct international experience seems to result in students' greater recognition of their previously held ethnocentric and xenophobic attitudes. Indeed, cross-cultural exposure has been shown to reduce xenophobia (e.g., Sheunpflug, 1997).

A. L. Reynolds (1995) has suggested that changes in multicultural awareness proceed from the level of individual awareness to paradigm shifts. Efforts to create active learning environments for the distilling of information about immigrant populations can facilitate this transition from "knowing about" others to being actively concerned for the well-being of those who often have little power and protection in this country. This paradigm shift can then facilitate a way of working with immigrant populations that incorporates the social justice and multicultural delivery service models proposed in the counseling psychology literature (Atkinson et al., 1993; Vera & Speight, 2003).

Research

Culturally relevant practice and education must be informed by research on immigrant populations. Research with immigrants is growing, yet also continues to be unsystematic and difficult to conduct. Yu (1985) suggested that conventional research methods based on Western standards may not be appropriate with immigrant populations and that difficulties arising in such research may include low response rates, high mobility of migrant groups, suspicion of researchers' agendas, language barriers, and differences in status between the researcher and the researched. The universal applicability of conventional Western research methods with immigrants and refugees has been criticized by several scholars who study immigrant individuals and groups (Flaskerud & Liu, 1991; Pernice, 1994; Roysircar, 2003).

Pernice (1994), in her article titled "Methodological Issues in Research With Refugees and Immigrants," highlighted the uniqueness of studying this population in contrast to all other majority and minority groups. She proposed six areas that must be taken into consideration when conducting research with immigrants and refugees, especially from developing or non-Western countries. The first area deals with *contextual* differences between the researcher and the researched such as the contrasts between relative political calm in the West versus other countries' experiences of war and political instability and capitalist versus socialist or communist governments, as well as protection for legal rights versus living in fear of authority. As a result of these contextual differences, immigrant and refugee participants may avoid all contact with "official" researchers, refuse to sign consent forms, decline taping or recording, and respond to questions in ways that seek to protect them rather than reveal vulnerabilities.

The second area of difficulty in research with immigrants, according to Pernice (1994), deals with *conceptual* problems—mainly linguistic difficulties with communication, accurate translations, and use of instruments. For example, immigrant participants may not be able to read or write either in English or in their own language. The third area of difficulty arises when trying to find an adequate and random *sample* within a given immigrant or refugee population. Complexity arises especially in studying undocumented immigrants or those individuals and groups that frequently migrate. *Linguistic* problems are the fourth area of difficulty, which may result in miscommunication and mistrust of the researchers who are using interpreters. The fifth difficulty that Pernice highlights is knowledge and observation of *cultural etiquette* in researching immigrants from quite different cultural contexts than the Western frame of reference. For instance, researchers may need to approach a given community's leaders

to request their approval before beginning or proceeding with research within a given immigrant group.

A final difficulty that Pernice (1994) points out is the significance of researchers having such *personality characteristics* as "open-mindedness, having accurate perceptions of the similarities and differences between their social context and the context of the migrant group, the ability to communicate affectively with others, and to have minimal levels of prejudice and ethnocentrism" (p. 210). This difficulty may stem directly from unexamined xenophobic prejudices against immigrants and immigration. It may be necessary for researchers to undergo specific training in working with immigrants and refugees that would not only focus on the methodological difficulties that arise in such research but also on the pervasive nature of prejudice, ethnocentrism, and stereotyping of immigrants that is common to many native-born Western people.

Counseling psychologists who are interested in or already include immigrant populations in their work may heed Pernice's (1994) call for developing a set of guidelines for research specifically for studies with refugees and immigrants. In addition to new methodologies and approaches, current psychological research on racial and ethnic minorities in the United States has had developments that could apply to research with recent immigrants. As with native-born or second-generation immigrant communities, specific attention can be given to cross-cultural validation of measures used in research. Unique areas of research with this population may include investigations on processes of transition and acculturation; on the impact of xenophobia, racism, and other prejudices; on barriers and facilitators of successful adjustment; on the influence of premigration experiences on acculturation; and on the transformations of self and relationships in new communities. Studies that focus specifically on xenophobia can also be aided by new assessments, such as Ommudsen and Larsen's (1997) Attitudes toward Illegal Aliens Scale developed for assessing prejudice against undocumented immigrants. Qualitative and mixed-methods explorations are also essential in establishing that research with this population is culturally relevant and comprehensive. Suzuki, Prendes-Lintel, Wertlieb, and Stallings (1999) provide an excellent discussion of qualitative approaches to research with immigrants.

Research with recent immigrants and refugees can be grounded in the liberatory communitarian approach described by Prilleltensky and Nelson (2002). This approach views all scholarship as a tool toward empowerment of those who are studied. An example of such empirical work is found in the scholarship conducted by the University of Or-

egon counseling psychology faculty, Dr. Krista Chronister. Her studies with Latina women who are victims of domestic violence are integrated within the provision of needed services for these women. For example, she has worked to create a career intervention program that can aid recently immigrated Latinas who experience abuse within their relationships in identifying what career opportunities are available to them and how they can pursue their work goals. Such empirical work not only directly benefits the immigrant participants, it also serves as a springboard for subsequent policy work that is essential for changing the larger structures of oppression that recent immigrants and refugees face in their host communities.

Policy Work

Vera and Speight (2003) encourage all psychological research, practice, and education to be informed by the ideals of "communitarian social justice" (p. 265). These authors call for psychological practice to integrate attention to public policy, both in its prevention and intervention components. Specifically, they suggest that researchers aim to become involved in assessments of the influences of public policies on specific populations and/or conduct survey research that has direct policy implications for given populations. In light of the varieties of ways, outlined in this article, that immigrant populations can be seen as some of the least legally and socially protected groups within the United States (e.g., they do not have a democratic representation through voting), psychological research that seeks to understand and empower immigrants is likely to involve important implications for public policy.

Counseling psychologists can enter public debates on immigration by highlighting the detrimental effects of xenophobia on immigrants' well-being and the cost of prejudice for native-born individuals and society at large. Empirically based recommendations for pro-immigrant policy work have included a focus on native-born Americans' commonalities with immigrants as well as a dispute of fallacies about immigration as a social and economic burden rather than a benefit (Esses et al., 2001; Pratto & Lemieux, 2001). Moreover, studies have shown that advocacy by majority members on behalf of minorities and immigrants can facilitate attitude change among majority members (Mugny, Kaiser, Papastamou, & Perez, 1984; Sanchez-Mazas, 1996).

Another example of a specific area of policy work that can significantly improve delivery of mental health services to immigrant populations has focused on clinical work through interpreters. At this time, mental health

interpreters are rarely trained in systematic ways nor do they receive certification to conduct work specifically with immigrants. Inadequate training of interpreters in the medical field has received attention because of the possible consequences for poor outcomes such as complications or death as well as inefficiencies and increased costs of services (U.S. Department of Justice, 2002). Mental health interpreters, even more so than medical interpreters, may face challenges due to lack of training: They may deal with interpretations of disturbing information that evokes difficult feelings or memories, or they may be a part of a small ethnic community in which clients or those persons that their clients refer to are known to them (Hwa-Froelich, &Westby, 2003; Raval & Smith, 2003). Furthermore, public policy work can extend toward the mitigation of financial barriers of reimbursement for immigrants who seek mental health treatment, such as payment for interpreters.

Clinical practice, training, research, and policy work with immigrants are cornerstones for the counseling psychology profession's engagement with the immigrant community. Greater competencies in each of these areas will be useful for counseling psychologists who choose to increase their involvement in issues pertaining to immigrants and immigration. Such involvement, in turn, can bring about shifts in the zeitgeist of our profession and our communities: We can begin to directly address xenophobia, its impact on immigrant women and men, on our nation, and within ourselves.

Conclusion

Among Western nations, the United States has one of the highest numbers of total immigrants coming to live within its borders each year. Discrimination against immigrants in the United States has long been noted and documented. Nevertheless, xenophobia and other anti-immigrant prejudices in the United States have not received much focused attention from counseling psychologists. This is made more compelling by observations that ethnocentrism and xenophobia appear to be highly characteristic of U.S. society in general. The growth of personal and structural awareness of attitudes toward immigrants on the part of psychology and psychologists may be one of the first steps toward making immigrants and refugees more visible in psychology, and in general.

This article has outlined the roots, causes, and consequences of xenophobia. One aim of this work has been to suggest specific strategies for including a systematic focus on immigrant populations and the impact of xenophobia in psychological practice, education, research, and policy ad-

vocacy. Counseling psychology's leadership in the area of multiculturalism places our field in a solid position for extending our awareness and skills to the study of immigrants. In light of recent world and national events that may leave immigrant populations even more vulnerable to discrimination, this new focus may be urgent. By spotlighting immigrant women, men, and children, counseling psychology can once again "effectively promote the health, development, and well-being of oppressed groups" (Vera & Speight, 2003, p. 270).

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