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The role of psychologists in international migration research: Complementing other expertise and an interdisciplinary way forward

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Abstract

This research note addresses the current and potential future role of psychologists in the study of international migration. We review ways in which psychologists have contributed to the study of migration, as well as ways in which psychological scholarship could be integrated with work from other social science fields. Broadly, we discuss four major contributions that psychology brings to the study of international migration—studying migrants' internal psychological experiences, incorporating a developmental perspective, conducting experimental studies, and integrating across levels of analysis. Given the position of psychology as a 'hub science' connecting more traditional social sciences with health and medical sciences, we argue for a more prominent role for psychologists within the study of international migration. Such a role is intended to complement the roles of other social scientists and to create a more interdisciplinary way forward for the field of migration studies. The research note concludes with an agenda for further scholarship on migration.

Keywords

acculturation; experiments; interdisciplinary; levels of analysis; psychological processes; well-being

1. Introduction

The study of migration is a complex endeavor that involves multiple perspectives, disciplines, and levels of analysis. Various social and health sciences focus on migration, such as demography, sociology, economics, geography, anthropology, political science, criminology, psychology, education, social work, and public health (see Bloemraad, Korteweg and Yurdakul 2008; Horevitz 2009; Campbell and Bedford 2014; Hollifield, Martin and Orenius 2014, for examples). Sociology, economics, demography, geography, anthropology, and political science adopt a broad perspective on migration—for example, examining trends in migrants' destination countries, availability of social benefits (e.g. education and health care) for specific migrant groups, labor market participation, and voting preferences (Geis, Uebelmesser and Werding 2011). Political scientists often analyze migration with a policy focus (e.g. contrasting assimilation, multiculturalism, and intercultural policies). Such information may inform policies and practices to help migrants integrate into the larger society. In contrast, public health, social work, and other health-related fields focus on impacts of migration and migration-related variables (e.g. immigration policies) on migrant health outcomes and to reduce health disparities. Disparities are a concern in multicultural education as well—identifying policies and practices to facilitate education of immigrant students.

Psychology adopts a middle ground, focusing on individual-level processes as influenced by, and interacting with, processes at various contextual levels (e.g. family, school, neighborhood, media, and popular discourse). Psychologists focus on mental and behavioral processes that predict migrants' biopsychosocial adjustment and on developing interventions to prevent or treat psychological problems and/or promote migrant wellbeing, integration, and positive intergroup relations. Psychology, therefore, may serve as a 'bridge' between

social science disciplines focusing largely on broader contextual processes and biomedical disciplines largely on health outcomes.

Our purpose in this research note is to outline the contribution that psychologists have made and can make to international migration scholarship. Our goal is to open a dialogue with other disciplines on the place of psychological research in the broader migration research field. In a conceptual organization of the sciences, Boyack, Klavans and Börner (2005) labeled psychology as a 'hub science'. Within a two-dimensional map of science, the *psychology hub* occupies a unique space between the social (e.g. sociology, anthropology, and political science) and medical sciences (e.g. public health). The psychology hub is highly relevant to international migration in terms of links with linguistics (e.g. language brokering), group behavior (e.g. intergroup dynamics), and health (e.g. behavioral medicine). To the extent to which this characterization is accurate, psychology would occupy an important place in the migration literature—between social sciences that 'characterize the situation' and medical sciences that 'treat the situation.' Psychology also focuses on both individuals and groups, such that we can examine the effect of macro-level social and political phenomena on individual-level behavioral and health outcomes (e.g. Verkuyten, Altabatabaei and Nooitgedagt 2018).

In this research note, we discuss what psychologists *have already done* and *can potentially contribute* in terms of scholarship on international migration. We adopt such an approach for two primary reasons. First, the 'track record' established by psychologists studying international migration can help to identify ways in which psychologists can contribute to migration research. Second, it is possible that some of the 'gaps' and 'missing pieces' within migration research can be filled—at least in part—by psychological scholarship. Focusing on prior accomplishments and future potential may highlight the value of psychological contributions and raise exciting future possibilities. For example, psychologists who are working in relevant areas (e.g. intergroup relations) may consider contributing to the international migration literature, and psychological scholarship might be included within interdisciplinary work on international migration.[1]

Importantly, our argument here is how psychology can *complement* and *extend* work on international migration within other disciplines—making the study of migration more interdisciplinary. By understanding each discipline's unique contribution to migration research, we can develop integrative research projects that can help migrants adjust, integrate, and thrive. For example, sociological and anthropological work tells us that migrants often settle in countries, regions, and communities where they have family members, friends, and compatriots; where work is available; and where they may be culturally comfortable (Sabates-Wheeler, Sabates and Castaldo 2008). At the same time, within the sociological context of the destination setting and the specific migrant groups living there, a range of individual psychological expectations, social interactions, and responses to those interactions may emerge (Titzmann and Stoessel 2014). These dynamics

[1]For the sake of brevity and focus, we do not focus on testing and evaluating interventions with migrant populations. A recent summary of such work can be found at http://www.apa.org/topics/immigration/report.aspx.

ultimately affect migrants' social integration and psychological well-being (e.g. Berry et al. 2006; Rohmann, Piontkowski and van Randenborgh 2008; Musso et al. 2017).

Psychology is well-suited to understand these processes, given its long tradition of studying individuals in context (Bronfenbrenner 1979; Silbereisen, Eyferth and Rudinger 1986; Trickett, Watts and Birman 1994). Indeed, psychologists view *migration* processes as interactions between person and context (e.g. Birman and Bray 2017). Such a perspective may help to bridge wider sociological, anthropological, and political science work with the development of interventions to improve the lives of migrants and migrant communities. Specifically, demographic, political, and sociological forces impact intergroup relations—which in turn impact migrants' physical and mental health outcomes.

The case of Mexicans in the USA illustrates the value of considering the interplay between sociological contexts and psychological processes. Mexicans have been migrating to the USA for more than 200 years (Henderson 2011). The continuing flow of Mexican migrants to southwestern US states has often been met with resistance and defensiveness (Chavez 2013). These demographic and intergroup trends may impact the thoughts, feelings, and psychological functioning of Mexican-descent individuals, families, and communities—which may then affect health and social outcomes and carry important implications for public health programs, education, and civic/political engagement. Importantly, however, not every Mexican-descent individual will share the same reactions. Psychological perspectives—which attend to migrants' internal experiences and their effects on migrants' health—may complement the 'wider' lens adopted by other social sciences (Walsh & Tuval-Mashiach 2012).

Intergroup tensions are based on perceived threat from a given migrant group (Stephan and Stephan 2000) and on the acculturation strategies adopted by that migrant group and by the majority population in the destination society (Bourhis et al. 1997). These psychological processes connect broader sociodemographic factors with migrant health outcomes. For example, demographic trends (e.g. continuing Mexican immigration to the USA) may influence policy decisions (e.g. increases in immigration law enforcement) and trigger hostile intergroup interactions. These demographic trends impact destination society individuals' appraisal of the immigrant group (e.g. suspicion and defensiveness versus openness and welcomeness) and the experiences of individual destination-society members (e.g. emphasizing national identity to differentiate themselves from the migrant group). These demographic, political, and sociological forces influence intergroup relations (a key focus of social psychology)—which then likely affect physical and mental health outcomes among individual migrants. Ultimately, multiple disciplines, including demography, sociology, psychology, and public health, are needed to fully understand—and intervene in—this chain of events.

Psychological mechanisms may represent the 'black box' connecting macro-contextual processes with individual experiences. For example, a commonly held assumption is that strong national identity is closely associated with prejudice toward immigrants. However, this association is moderated by national-level discourse. Pehrson and colleagues (Pehrson, Vignoles and Brown 2009; Pehrson and Green 2010) analyzed survey data across a range

of countries and found that, for individuals and countries for whom the nation was defined on the basis of *shared ancestry*, identifying with the nation often meant excluding migrants from the national in-group. However, for individuals for whom the nation was defined according to *specific behaviors*, such as speaking one or more national languages, identifying with the nation often meant including migrants within the national in-group. As a consequence of these opposing trends, for 15 of the 31 countries included in Pehrson, Vignoles and Brown's (2009) analyses, the correlation between national identification and anti-immigrant prejudice was j.10j. In contrast to settler societies such as the USA, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand, all of the countries where this correlation was .20 or greater were in Europe—where national identity is typically defined in terms of shared ancestry (see Geddes and Scholten 2016). In other words, it is not simply the *affiliation* with a national identity, but also the subjective *meaning* of that identity, which influences attitudes toward migrants (Leong 2014).

In the following sections, we focus on four areas where psychology has made, and can continue making, unique contributions to complement work from other disciplines: (a) studying migrants' internal experiences, (b) incorporating a developmental perspective, (c) conducting experimental work, and (d) connecting levels of analysis. In the following sections, we discuss each of these areas. We then conclude with ideas and further recommendations for more closely integrating psychological research with migration work in other social and health sciences.

2. Examining migrants' internal experiences

Psychology has focused closely on migrants' internal experiences before, during, and after the migration process. Here we focus on a specific range of experiences directly related to migration. These experiences include plans to migrate, acculturation, and reactions to cultural stressors. We detail the ways in which they have been shown to impact migrants' psychosocial and physiological outcomes.

2.1 Motivations to migrate

Among voluntary migrants, traditional models for understanding migration motivations have included both a 'push/pull' model (Parkins 2010) and a 'selection' hypothesis (Lu 2008). In many cases, migration is planned in advance, whereas in other cases (often in crisis situations) it occurs suddenly. Nonetheless, alongside socioeconomic processes, many of the motivations for migration are psychologically based. Indeed, Tartakovsky and Schwartz (2001), studying Russian and Ukrainian Jews moving to Israel, found three general motivations for emigrating—preservation (e.g. safety concerns and family reunification), self-development (e.g. adventure and education), and materialism (e.g. raising one's living standard). These motivations for emigration impact not only the likelihood of migration, but also one's psychological experiences during and after migration, including the intention to settle permanently (Wilson et al 2017). The basis for psychological motivations for migration may include personality characteristics, as well as perceived threat and available personal and social resources (Motti-Stefanidi, Asendorpf and Masten 2012). Cultural congruency may also be important as evidence suggests that migrants select destination

countries whose prevalent cultural values and systems match their own (Tartakovsky and Schwartz 2001; Bardi et al. 2014).

Given that there are clear migration streams between specific sending and destination countries (Geddes and Scholten 2016), Salas-Wright and Schwartz (2019) call for more psychological research predicting who will migrate and who will not. Sociological work indicates that economic migrants are generally drawn from weaker to stronger economies (e.g. Bartram 2013). However, it is doubtful that every person residing in a poorer country wishes to migrate to a wealthier country—or that everyone who wishes to migrate actually does so. Indeed, psychologists, have examined contextual, interpersonal, and intrapersonal factors, including expectations about the receiving society, perceived discrimination, openness to new experiences, and personal values, to identify which individuals within a given society will migrate and which migrants will return to their countries of origin or move on to a third country (Jasinskaja-Lahti and Yijälä 2011; Liu 2013; Tartakovsky, Patrakov and Nikulina 2017a,b; Wilson et al. 2017).

Ultimately, migration is the result of macrosystemic influences (conditions in the sending and destination countries), exosystemic influences (policy, community, and institutional), family processes, and individual-level factors (e.g. individual priorities, personal values, personality, and future plans). Therefore, psychological research examining migrants' motives, plans, skills, and adjustment may complement demographic, economic, sociological, and anthropological work characterizing migrant flows.

2.2 Elaborating acculturation processes

Among individuals who migrate internationally, *acculturation* is an unavoidable experience. Broadly, acculturation refers to migrants' adoption of destination-cultural practices, attitudes, values, and identifications—and/or retention of those from their countries of origin (Schwartz et al. 2010; Ward and Kus 2012; Berry 2017). As psychological processes, the dynamics of acculturation are helpful for understanding the interplay between the characteristics of individual migrants and those of groups or societies. As such, acculturation represents a bridge between macro-level contextual factors and migrants' wellbeing. Berry (2017) has developed a typology of ways in which migrants can acculturate, including separation (retaining one's cultural heritage and rejecting the destination culture), assimilation (discarding one's cultural heritage and adopting the destination culture), integration/biculturalism (retaining one's cultural heritage and adopting the destination culture), and marginalization (discarding one's cultural heritage and rejecting the destination culture).

Although acculturation theory emerged within sociology and anthropology to explain changes in cultural *groups* in contact (Park 1928; Redfield, Linton and Herskovits 1936), most individual-level acculturation research is now conducted in psychology (Schwartz et al. 2010; Schwartz and Unger 2017). Migrants were found not only to gradually acquire the destination country's values (Bardi et al. 2014) but to also retain those of their cultural heritage (Güngör, Bornstein and Phalet 2012). Integration tends to be preferred by most migrants (Berry et al. 2006) and appears to be the most adaptive strategy, being associated with greater psychological well-being and more effective social functioning (Nguyen and

Benet-Martínez 2013). However, bicultural integration is not always preferable or attainable. For example, Makarova and Birman (2015) found that, although biculturalism was positively related to school adjustment among minority students, within the school context assimilation was most conducive to academic achievement and psychological wellbeing. Furthermore, becoming bicultural may be difficult in assimilationist contexts that do not support migrant cultures (e.g. Baysu, Phalet and Brown 2011; Birman and Tran 2017).

Interactive models between person and context have been another important development in acculturation research (Bourhis et al. 1997; Titzmann and Jugert 2015). Broadly, these models—introduced and studied by psychologists—examine the interface between migrants' acculturation *approaches* and destination culture individuals' acculturation *expectations*. When these approaches and expectations match, relations between migrants and nonmigrants are likely to be smooth and collaborative, whereas mismatches between migrants' acculturation preferences and destination society members' expectations likely result in conflict (Berry 2006; Rohmann, Piontkowski and van Randenborgh 2008). Different countries, and different regions within a country, often hold different expectations for how migrants should acculturate in general and how different groups should acculturate more specifically (Kunst & Sam 2014). Overall, Canada and New Zealand are often viewed as relatively welcoming, multicultural nations; France is often viewed as an 'assimilationist' country where migrants are expected to conform to French ways; and the USA is somewhere in the middle, with opposing liberal and conservative factions holding drastically different beliefs regarding the desirability of migrant cultures (Berry 2006; Chavez 2013; Ward, Szabo and Stuart 2016). Multicultural environments are conducive to immigrant integration, whereas pressure to assimilate often results in social fragmentation as immigrants become more entrenched in their original culture and separated from the wider society (Berry 2005).

In summary, the psychological study of acculturation allows us to examine the 'black box' between sociopolitical factors and individual migrants' adjustment. Acculturation theory holds that individuals will experience immigration in different ways (Benish-Weisman 2009) and that a nuanced understanding of the interplay among personal, group, and intergroup resources and dynamic processes is needed to understand individual experiences. In the next section, we discuss *cultural stressors* that can arise among migrants and their immediate descendants

2.2.1 Cultural Stressors.—Cultural stressors occur both at the individual level (e.g. *individual* migrants and families being mistreated or struggling to navigate their way in a new culture) and at the societal level (e.g. migrant *groups* scapegoated for a country's problems). At the individual level, acculturative stress can occur as the result of discrimination, language barriers, homesickness, lack of social support, threats to ethnic identity, cultural isolation, and many other factors (Vinokurov, Trickett and Birman 2002; Jibeen and Khalid 2010; Miller, Kim and Benet-Martínez 2011). Legal and political issues can also exacerbate migration-related stress, particularly the anxiety associated with undocumented status and fear of deportation (Cervantes et al. 2012).

Risk and resilience perspectives in psychology aim to detect the underlying mechanisms by which cultural stressors lead to negative health outcomes, and psychologists have

identified individual- and family-level resources that may mediate and/or moderate the relationships between cultural stressors and adjustment (Oppedal and Røysamb 2007; Motti-Stefanidi, Asendorpf and Masten 2012). Studies have shown that active, problem-focused coping reduces the deleterious effects of acculturative stress on anxiety and depression in immigrants (Crockett et al. 2007). In addition, research has suggested that family communication and monitoring can buffer the negative impact of cultural stressors on migrant children's development (Lorenzo-Blanco et al. 2019).

Viewed from the societal perspective, some contemporary writers (e.g. Steyn 2006; Buchanan 2011) have framed Hispanic migration to the USA, and Muslim migration to Europe, as hostile invasions that threaten Western culture. These arguments tend to increase xenophobic attitudes, casting 'menacing' migrant groups in subservient positions, increasing migrants' acculturative stress and contributing to harmful health outcomes (Quesada, Hart and Bourgois 2011). Theory and research on intergroup relations, a primary focus within social psychology, provide valuable insights into prejudiced attitudes and behaviors of members of the receiving society (Schwartz et al. 2014). For example, social identity theory demonstrates how people are motivated to ensure favorable comparisons between members of their group and other groups as a means of bolstering their self-esteem (Tajfel and Turner 1986). Integrated threat theory identifies realistic and symbolic threats, as well as intergroup anxiety and negative stereotyping, as major obstacles to constructive intergroup relations (Stephan and Stephan 2000). Intergroup contact theory emphasizes the importance of interactions between migrants and nonmigrants vis-à-vis enhancing intergroup relations and social cohesion (Pettigrew and Tropp 2006).

3. Adopting a developmental perspective

Recently, developmental psychologists have contributed to the evolution of migration research. First, examining whether cultural adaptation differs among children, adolescents, and adult populations requires the integration of developmental theory into studies of acculturation (Birman and Trickett 2001; Cheung, Chudek and Heine 2011). Developmental approaches have also yielded a deeper understanding of within-family differences in acculturation (Birman 2006; Telzer 2010).

Second, developmental psychology has taught us that individuals are confronted not only with acculturation-related challenges, but also with normative developmental tasks around growing up—particularly during the adolescent years. Theories and methods have been advanced to differentiate developmental versus acculturative processes vis-à-vis mental and physical health (Fuligni 2001; Titzmann and Lee 2018). For example, the protective effect of older age against victimization experiences, as often observed among nonmigrants, does not emerge among new migrants in Israel and Germany (Jugert and Titzmann 2017). Only after three to four years in the new country does older age protect against victimization experiences among immigrants in these countries.

Third, developmental psychology has a long tradition of studying individual change over time. As acculturation is defined as 'subsequent changes in the original cultural patterns' through cultural contact, developmental psychology methods are now contributing to a better

understanding of acculturation (Redfield, Linton and Herskovits 1936: 149). Longitudinal psychological studies help in studying overall changes in cultural adaptation (e.g. Demes and Geeraert 2015), in identifying subgroups of longitudinal change (e.g. Stoessel, Titzmann and Silbereisen 2014; Schwartz et al. 2015), and in examining the directions of effects (e.g. Reitz, Motti-Stefanidi and Asendorpf 2014). Developmental psychologists also examine the ways in which social contexts (such as family, school/work, and neighborhood) influence developmental processes. Such approaches and methods may help to extend, expand, and integrate the study of migration.

4. Conducting experiments to provide evidence for causal processes

A fourth major psychological contribution to international migration research is largely methodological. In many scientific fields, randomized experiments represent the ‘gold standard’ for ascertaining causation (Shadish, Cook and Campbell 2002). Randomizing cases to conditions minimizes the likelihood that factors other than the condition assignment are responsible for the observed effects. Social psychology often relies on experimental studies to provide evidence that particular social dynamics cause emotional, cognitive, behavioral, and physiological effects (e.g. Salovey and Williams-Piehota 2004). Although randomized experiments are not unique to psychology, they are critical in providing evidence that intergroup (and other) processes affect immigrants’ psychosocial and health outcomes (e.g. Sawyer et al. 2012).

Indeed, Sawyer et al. (2012) randomized US Hispanic women to interact with an experimental confederate who expressed either egalitarian or anti-minority views. Women who interacted with a confederate with anti-minority views were more likely to experience increased emotional threat and cardiovascular reactivity. These findings indicate that perceiving prejudice can evoke physiological arousal that increases the risk for chronic health problems in migrants.

Research on implicit social cognitions—another important psychological innovation—has helped to advance the understanding of how unconscious biases toward immigrant and minority groups can create environments of social exclusion. These computer-based studies are modeled on individuals’ immediate reactions to pairings of stimuli; as the reactions are too rapid to involve conscious information processing, they reflect the extent to which the stimuli (e.g. a Chinese face and an American flag) are implicitly associated. The strength of the association is assessed by response latency, the amount of time between the presentation of the stimuli and the reaction (i.e. pressing a specific key on a computer keyboard). Shorter response latencies indicate stronger implicit associations or more ‘automatic’ pairings.

Devos and Heng’s (2009) research with ethnically diverse samples of US undergraduates found shorter response latencies when pairing White, compared to Asian, faces with US symbols. This effect occurred even when non-American White celebrities (e.g. Kate Winslet) were compared against Asian American celebrities (e.g. Lucy Liu). This implicit belief that ‘American ¼ White’ has been associated not only with doubts about Asian American national loyalty and more reluctance to hire Asian Americans into national security positions, but also with more negative evaluations of immigration policies reported

as having been proposed by Asian Americans, but not those reported as having been proposed by Whites (Yogeeswaran and Dasgupta 2010). Clearly, these implicit biases can constrain opportunities for migrants from visible minority groups.

Experimental social–psychological research also tells us *which* destination-society members hold the most anti-immigrant views. Falomir-Pichastor and Frederic (2013) found that perceived threat from, and prejudice toward, culturally dissimilar migrants was greatest among Swiss individuals who identified strongly with Switzerland. Smeekes, Verkuyten and Poppe (2011) found that, although Dutch people identifying strongly with the Netherlands often opposed Muslim immigration, low national identifiers could be persuaded to oppose Muslim immigration if the Netherlands was framed as a Christian nation. This pattern suggests that populist leaders can mobilize anti-immigrant sentiments using national descriptors that explicitly exclude specific migrant groups.

Other social-psychological research involves priming—increasing the salience of specific ideologies or group memberships to evoke shifts in perception and cognition (Benet-Martínez et al. 2002). Research indicates that priming multiculturalism, compared to color-blindness, results in lower levels of prejudice against migrants (Whitley and Webster 2019). At the same time, priming multiculturalism in concrete (how multiculturalism is achieved) versus abstract (benefits of multiculturalism) terms results in greater prejudice against immigrant and minority groups (Yogeeswaran and Dasgupta 2014). These studies suggest that experimental approaches can complement demographic, sociological, and public health approaches in studying migrant acceptance and adaptation. Combining mixed methods and multidisciplinary perspectives would allow us to draw causal conclusions while also utilizing ecologically valid research designs (Gamlen 2012).

5. Connecting across levels of analysis: Understanding mechanisms

A primary contribution that psychologists have made, and can continue to make, to migration research involves connecting across levels of analysis and exploring mechanisms linking contextual factors with individual experiences. In short, psychologists are interested in both context and process (Ward and Geeraert 2016). Following Bronfenbrenner (1979), these contexts involve multiple levels (e.g. Christ et al. 2014; Stevens et al. 2015). For example, in communities and schools, norms for positive intercultural contact are associated with lowered outgroup prejudice (Christ et al. 2014) and more friendships between migrant and native-born youth (Titzmann, Brenick and Silbereisen 2015). Furthermore, diversity climates that reflect cultural pluralism, equality, and inclusion have been shown to lead to greater psychological well-being and academic achievement in migrant students, and these effects are mediated by a sense of belongingness (Schachner et al. 2019).

At the national level, values and norms have received particular attention. Ponizovskiy (2016) found that individual-level values of universalism (e.g. broadmindedness, social justice, and equality) predicted more positive attitudes toward migrants but that the strength of the relationship was moderated by national level values, with stronger relationships found in Western European, compared to Eastern European, countries. Geeraert et al. (2019) examined the relationship between (a) tightness–looseness of heritage and destination

cultures and (b) psychological and sociocultural adaptation of short-term immigrants. Their results demonstrated that *relocating* to tighter cultures (those with stronger norms and greater restrictions for appropriate behavior) predicted poorer adaptation, whereas *originating* from tighter countries predicted more favorable outcomes.

More commonly, the impact of national policies and attitudes toward immigrants have been assessed in relation to health and well-being. Marks, McKenna and Garcia Coll (2018) examined how national immigration policies and attitudes toward immigrants can impact migrant mental health. They found links between integration policies and favorable attitudes toward migrants; between favorable attitudes and lower discrimination toward migrant youth; and between perceived discrimination and poor health and well-being. Dimitrova, Chasiotis and van de Vijver (2016) included the Migration Integration Policy Index (http://www.mipex.eu/), a country-level measure of the migrant receptivity of a given country, as a predictor in their meta-analysis of immigrant child mental health in Europe. They found that the more easily migrants could reunite with their families and become permanent residents of the destination country, the fewer mental health problems their children experienced. National-level policies also affect relationships between native-born and immigrant groups. Research has also shown that the impact of national assimilationist and multicultural policies on intergroup relations is mediated by individuals' perceptions of national diversity norms, and that perceptions of a normative multicultural climate is related to lower levels of prejudice and increased conational trust (Stuart and Ward 2019).

Because psychologists rely on social–ecological models to frame human behavior through individuals' interactions with multiple layers of context, they place strong emphasis on mechanisms. Such an emphasis has been notably absent in much of the broader social science literature. Despite the impressive array of findings suggesting positive outcomes of multicultural policies and diversity-receptive attitudes, including greater likelihood of naturalization, greater trust, less discrimination (Wright and Bloemraad 2012) and greater life satisfaction (Jackson and Doerschler 2016), the reasons for these relationships are unclear. Psychological theory and models can elucidate findings from this larger body of research on migration.

6. Final words

We have used phrases such as psychology as a 'hub', as exploring the 'black box', and as a means of examining the processes that 'trickle down'. Psychology examines processes and mechanisms within the individual and between individuals and their various levels of context. This research note is intended as an invitation to migration researchers from other disciplines who wish to enter into dialogue and collaboration. As migration rates increase and we seek to understand the 'health of a world on the move' (*Lancet*, December 2018), interdisciplinary discussion is of ever-growing importance.

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