

Living in Two Homes

Integration, Identity and Education of Transnational Migrants in a Globalized World

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of Transnational Migrants in a
Globalized World

Edited by

Mariella Espinoza-Herold

Northern Arizona University, Flagstaff, AZ, USA

Rina Manuela Contini

University of Chieti-Pescara, Chieti, Italy

Foreword by

Alejandro Portes



United Kingdom – North America – Japan – India – Malaysia – China

Emerald Publishing Limited
Howard House, Wagon Lane, Bingley BD16 1WA, UK

First edition 2017

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British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN: 978-1-78635-782-3 (Print)

ISBN: 978-1-78635-781-6 (Online)

ISBN: 978-1-78714-630-3 (Epub)



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List of Contributors

<i>Maurizio Ambrosini</i>	University of Milan, Milan, Italy
<i>Riccardo Armillei</i>	Deakin University, Melbourne, Australia
<i>Maddalena Colombo</i>	Catholic University of the Sacred Heart, Milan, Italy
<i>Rina Manuela Contini</i>	University of Chieti-Pescara, Chieti, Italy
<i>Deborah de Luca</i>	University of Milan, Milan, Italy
<i>Christofer Edling</i>	Lund University, Lund, Sweden
<i>Mariella Espinoza-Herold</i>	Northern Arizona University, Flagstaff, AZ, USA
<i>Angelo Ishi</i>	Musashi University, Tokyo, Japan
<i>Karol P. Kaczorowski</i>	Jagiellonian University, Krakow, Poland
<i>Bruno Mascitelli</i>	Swinburne University of Technology, Hawthorn, Australia
<i>Antonio V. Menéndez Alarcón</i>	Butler University, Indianapolis, IN, USA
<i>Gerald Mollenhorst</i>	Utrecht University, Utrecht, The Netherlands & Stockholm University, Stockholm, Sweden
<i>Antoine Pécoud</i>	University of Paris 13, Paris, France
<i>Flora Petak</i>	University of Konstanz, Konstanz, Germany
<i>Alejandro Portes</i>	Princeton University, NJ, USA
<i>Sonia Pozzi</i>	University of Milan, Milan, Italy
<i>Melita Ptashnick</i>	University of Toronto, Toronto, Canada

<i>Jens Rydgren</i>	Stockholm University, Stockholm, Sweden
<i>Mari Rysst</i>	Lillehammer University College, Lillehammer, Norway
<i>Mariagrazia Santagati</i>	Catholic University of the Sacred Heart, Milan, Italy
<i>Daniyal Zuberi</i>	University of Toronto, Toronto, Canada

Dedication

The United States since its inception has been a nation of immigrants. The success of the country would not be possible without the generations of immigrants who have come to our shores from every corner of the globe. I dedicate this volume to all immigrants around the world who like me, came to this great nation to realize dreams and aspirations.

The lives of most immigrants are dialectic between the memories of the world left behind and the day-to-day struggles of learning the ropes of a new society. Mastering a new language, living and working among strangers, and coping with the unfamiliar. Due to their resiliency, persistence and hard work, many immigrants are innovators, entrepreneurs, creators of new jobs, and vital contributors to the economic well-being of a nation.

To you goes my gratitude,

Mariella Espinoza-Herold

I dedicate this volume to my father, Ernesto Contini, with deep gratitude for his love, wisdom and support.

Rina Manuela Contini

Acknowledgments

We are honored to have Alejandro Portes' respected voice in the Foreword of this volume. Professor Portes is one of the most prominent sociologists in the field and his influential research has been cited in the related subfields of economic sociology, cultural sociology, race and ethnicity, education and others. His academic studies have focused on immigration to the United States and factors affecting the fates of immigrants and their children. He has also done work on shack settlements in Latin America.

We would also like to express our deep appreciation to all the authors in this volume. Their efforts in translating their material into English has been a patient labor of love and perseverance.

Finally, we would like to thank Kimberley Chadwick and Charlotte Hales from Emerald Group for their unwavering support in publishing this volume.

Mariella Espinoza-Herold
Rina Manuela Contini
Editors

Foreword

The 11 case studies in this volume provide a broad glimpse at the intertwined processes of immigrant transnationalism and incorporation in host communities and countries. As such they add to the mounting evidence concerning the existence and significance of immigrant transnational ties and the simultaneity of both processes: transnationalism and incorporation. The emerging scholarly consensus on these points replaces early traditions that viewed immigration as a one-way escape from misery and want and continuing linkages with sending countries as inimical to successful assimilation to the host society. Today, we know better: immigrants seldom leave for good; instead they maintain multi-tiered linkages with kin, home communities and home countries. Moreover, such ties often accompany and support successful incorporation to receiving communities and nations.

There are still some naysayers,¹ but the former large chorus of skeptics have largely vanished in the face of increasing empirical evidence supporting both points mentioned above.² This is not to say that transnational activities are always positive and unproblematic or that the process of incorporation does not meet significant obstacles in many instances. The assembled case studies in this volume provide plenty of evidence on both points. Moreover, they do so in widely different contexts of reception, spanning three continents. This globe-encompassing character is one of the strengths of the present collection.

Results presented in the 11 case studies also support a second theoretical conclusion, namely that international migration inexorably related to the globalization of the capitalist economy.

¹As an example of lingering skepticism as these points, see [Waldinger \(2015\)](#).

²Another collection of recent empirical studies supporting these points and countering lingering skepticism is [Portes and Fernández-Kelly \(2015\)](#).

As Castles and his associates note in the conclusion to their well-known text, migration is an inevitable component of an increasingly complex world (Castle, de Haas & Miller, 2014). As we noted some 15 years ago, immigrant transnationalism can be interpreted as a form of “globalization from below” through which individuals and families seek to both adapt and neutralize the “globalization from above” foisted on them by states, banks, and multinational corporations (Portes, 1999).

In synthesis, this collection is a welcome and valuable addition to the empirical literature on contemporary immigration. In combination with other recently published studies,³ it will contribute to each a basis for novel theorizing on the topic, including the development of more complex and more accurate typologies of the multiple forms that immigrant transnationalism and incorporation take in the present world.

Alejandro Portes
Princeton University

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³See Eckstein and Najam (2013); Portes and Fernández-Kelly (2015).

Introduction

Today's rapid societal demographic transformations have redesigned the structure and organization of contemporary societies in the European Union, the United States, and other parts of the world. Globalization has increased people's mobility presenting serious challenges to the receiving countries. However, these transformations also create opportunities to develop intercultural societies that effectively utilize diverse human capital and knowledge.

The large flow of immigrants throughout the world is bringing about economic and educational inequities that are forcing nations and governments to reflect on these differences and imagine solutions. The economic and social manifestations of these migrations have been explained by social science researchers. However, several issues are understudied. These issues include immigrants' integration into host countries, their transformative identity, and the psychological impact of these human mobilizations to the host countries and to their educational systems. This volume fills this gap and adds new dimensions to previous studies on integration, identity development, and education.

This book offers a holistic and multidisciplinary view from researchers throughout the world to examine the challenges resulting from transformation of today's societies due to international migration and globalization. The impact of immigration is examined from several cultural backgrounds, viewpoints, and experiences that link the three main themes of this book: integration, identity, and education. We present case studies from four continents and 11 nations so as to provide a current snapshot of world realities and challenges.

Part I of this volume includes five studies dedicated to the integration of culturally diverse people into societies across the world. Menéndez Alarcón focuses on second-generation Mexican immigrants to the United States. His study addresses the complex issue of integration from a microsociology perspective.

This analysis is fundamental to understanding the immigration process and policies that contribute to the coexistence of different cultures in the same territory. Rather than looking at the traditional “macro” dimensions (legal rules, policies, structural barriers, institutions, social indicators of difference, etc.), typical of comparative literature on immigration, this chapter concentrates on “micro” processes of integration and explores possible alternatives and/or modifications to the citizenship and integration model.

In the second chapter, Pécoud presents an ethnographic description of several small shops owned by German-Turkish entrepreneurs and situated in multiethnic neighborhoods in Berlin. His chapter builds on scholarship of immigrant minorities, focusing on private enterprise, business creation, and self-employment. It also sheds light on what he calls “mixed” cultural competencies in entrepreneurship, explaining the way business relies on in-betweenness of entrepreneurs and their capacity to successfully conciliate ethnic and nonethnic resources. Pécoud advances the current scholarship, which is usually dominated by two key orientations: (1) a socioeconomic nature, with comparatively little attention to cultural implications of business, and (2) its embeddedness in an “ethnic” approach according to which ethnicity is a key explanatory factor.

The third study by Ambrosini, de Luca, and Pozzi examines the complex relation between immigrants and trade unions in Italy. Specifically, it analyzes the Italian case of Cgil (Italian General Confederation of Labour) and Cisl (Italian Confederation of Workers’ Unions) in Milan, focusing on promoting social mobility through union career pathways and overcoming the three “traditional functions” performed by unions: (1) representing interests of immigrants as workers, (2) political participation for their integration as citizens, and (3) providing services directed at immigrants as persons.

The issue of effectively integrating migrants into society is at the core of Petak’s case study. Her analysis combines a qualitative and quantitative empirical approach to focus on migrants’ subjective notions of integration into the wider German mental health-care system. She also examines immigrants’ perception on migration, and the impact of their mobilization to their psychological well-being. Petak reviews empirical data of the integration of immigrants

into Germany and presents three theoretical frameworks to explain their integration and psychological well-being: (1) the acculturation theory, (2) the theory of acculturative stress, and (3) the theory of bicultural identity. Contacts with home and host cultures are worth investigating as measures of integration, including social contacts with ethnic communities and with other minorities in the host country. In sum, her study reveals that migration-related factors can facilitate or hinder the integration of migrants.

Armillei and Mascitelli provide a historical overview of immigration policy in Australia, and they examine the changes in the country's demographic makeup with specific attention to Italian settlements. In particular, this study addresses the deficiency of information for recent young, skilled, and educated migrants and investigates temporary and permanent migration from Italy to Australia from 2004 to 2015. The authors chose 2004 as the starting point of analysis because it marks the date of the so-called *Working Holiday Arrangement* between Australia and Italy (a creative agreement which Australia now has with 28 countries). Their chapter also provides an extended overview of Australian immigration policy shaped by successive governments and focusing on Italian and Chinese populations.

In Part II, four studies elucidate current identity development theory. Kaczorowski links identity to education by presenting findings on the social construction of ethnic identity among young Kurdish immigrants living in Turkey. The chapter focuses on Kurdish education and preservation of their cultural identity in Istanbul. Kurdish immigrants gain positive opportunities from nonpublic educational organizations in Turkey, but they often struggle to maintain their cultural identities in the midst of discrimination and cultural negativity. The study shows ambivalence in young Kurdish migrant attitudes towards educational institutions. On the one hand, the Kurds perceive public education in Turkey as a discriminatory entity and the city of Istanbul is viewed as a place of assimilation. Alternatively, higher education institutions operating in Istanbul allow self-realization and the development of studies on Kurdish culture and language that is often impossible to achieve in their predominantly Kurdish-inhabited hometowns. The study frames these issues

under critical historical and political lenses, illuminating ties between Turkey and Kurdish culture, and the complex relations between the Turkish state and the Kurds since the establishment of the Republic in 1923.

Ethnic identity construction is at the core of Rysst's case study. She reviews current identity construction theoretical frameworks by focusing on young immigrants to Norway, a country that has experienced a significant increase in ethnic diversity since the late 1960s. Norway's population has over five million inhabitants. Out of this total, foreign-born and Norwegian-born children of immigrant parents comprise 16.3% of the total population. The study addresses the dynamic process of interpersonal relations among children of various cultural backgrounds in Norwegian schools at two sites: Furuset and Lillehammer. Furuset, located 10 minutes east of Oslo, is ethnically and culturally diverse (people of immigrant origin constitute the majority), making the social and economic integration of immigrants a prioritized political goal. In Lillehammer, approximately two hours north of Oslo, children of immigrant origin are in the minority in all local social contexts. Specifically, the chapter compares four dimensions of ethnic identity construction: (1) how children of immigrant origin experience having "one foot in two cultures," which means living in an "in-between" space, (2) the importance of appearance regarding skin color, (3) the importance of appearance through clothing, in which the two different classification systems serve as the backbone for understanding the varieties in (gendered) ethnic identity constructions, and (4) proficiency in the Norwegian language.

Ishi discusses the possibilities of transnational connections (or integration) of Brazilian immigrants living in different parts of the world. The study focuses on commonalities among the Brazilian immigrants' experience as well as their collective needs and goals. It highlights four key events that are defined as catalysts of a "diasporic consciousness." In this vision, these diasporic, cross-border events might create consistent transnational social spaces among Brazilians throughout the world. Brazilians in Japan are a distinct community among the world's Brazilian migrants because most of them are of Japanese descent. This is due to Japanese government immigration policy which allowed long-term visas only to people who could prove their Japanese roots. Specifically, the chapter analyses the increase in the transnational connections

between Brazilians in Japan and Brazilians who migrated to other countries. These transnational connections become stronger in the sphere of political activities and in virtually all other social sectors including information exchange, business partnerships, cultural events, artistic productions, and a greater flow of people between countries. This chapter focuses on the role played by ethnic Brazilian events as the most visible and palpable facets of the transnational diasporic networks. All of these events started at similar times which creates challenges to identify those events that had the most significant impact on diasporic communities.

Mollenhorst, Edling, and Rydgren's case study focuses on social integration of young immigrants in Sweden by analyzing the personal networks of young immigrants from Iran and former Yugoslavia living in Sweden. The study utilizes two data sources collected in 2010 and 2014 from 1,537 individuals who live in Sweden and who were born in 1990. Surveys included 447 first- and second-generation immigrants from former Yugoslavia, 325 first- and second-generation immigrants from Iran, and 805 native Swedes. For all respondents, the authors describe changes in the composition of their core personal networks. In particular, they address close contacts with other individuals whose parental country is the same as or different from their own, and how these contacts changed over a short, but turbulent and important time in their lives. They also address causes for such changes in terms of their national origin, key life events, and opportunities to meet others. These types of networks are important indicators of social integration of immigrants in their host country as they may negatively affect the social, cultural, and economic integration of ethnic minorities.

Part III focuses on education and assesses the challenges migration poses to the education system in different countries. Colombo and Santagati discuss this theme through a compelling analysis of the Italian educational system in an increasingly multiethnic context. The authors used statistical indicators related to two dimensions of integration: (a) the *institutional* dimension (school access and achievement/School Integration-Educational Achievement), and (b) the *relational* dimension (well-being and absence of conflicts among peers – school climate). The analyses demonstrate a positive correlation between the percentage of nonnative students in the classroom and a low degree of integration.

The study reinforces the notion that integration is a complex phenomenon that also is affected by ethnic composition in the classroom, gender imbalance, and the high concentration of students whose families had a low socioeconomic status. These results enabled the authors to de-construct the concept of school integration, identifying a plurality of integrative factors. The study also provides relevant suggestions for interventions.

Zuberi and Ptashnick address the experiences of racialized students at Canadian universities. The authors note that the Canadian system increasingly serves a diverse student population, and they assess students' perceptions related to the quality of postsecondary education. Their case study features qualitative interviews of "Asian-Canadian" undergraduate students, and it explores challenges to identity expression and participants' strategies to earn admission and obtain campus resources. The study reveals how racialized undergraduate students express malleable identities subject to the variable demographics of groups encountered in their daily life experiences. Study participants contest the perceptions and "labels" that mainstream people have of their identity as compared to mainstream college student population, especially given the high proportion of Asian-descent population in the city and at the university.

Conclusion

"Home" means more than one country for millions for transnational migrants who, day after day, work, study, pray, and voice their political decisions in two or more societies simultaneously. The growing transnational movement of migrants (and their ties to two countries) challenges conventional notions about living in a traditional assimilationist model or their moving into a more pluralistic multicultural society. As we know, transnational migration is not a new phenomenon. Various other things are new, however. This includes improvements in transportation, information, and communication; the mode in which migrants are inserted into the labor market, the increasing dependence on remittances, as well as the policies developed to encourage migrants' long distance nationalism. Additionally, not all migrants are transnational migrants and not all who take part in

transnational activities do so all the time. Many studies conducted by the respected sociologist Alejandro Portes (Guarnizo, Portes, & Haller, 2003; Portes, Guarnizo, & Landolt, 1999; Portes, Haller, & Guarnizo, 2002) reveal that a small percentage of transnational migrants in the United States regularly participated in transnational economic and political activities. Other literature in the field informs us that most migrants are occasional transnational activists. At some stages in their lives they are more focused on their countries of origin while at others they are more involved in the host country. Similarly, they climb two different social ladders, moving up, or experiencing downward mobility, in various combinations, with respect to both sites. How do ordinary people sustain connections to two nations? What happens to the social fabric when large numbers opt for partial membership or when they continue to participate primarily in their country-of-origin even though they have resided for an extended period in the host countries? Is this a recipe for long-term political marginalization in both contexts?

By the same token, the term “transnationalism” is used to describe many different social processes at many levels of social interaction across national boundaries. In this volume, the authors focus on the current manifestation of the transnational phenomenon in various corners of the world as they attempt to answer the questions we posed above. Transnational migration of peoples cannot be understood in isolation as it pertains to each nation state. It needs to be understood and explained from a global perspective. Such is our intention in this volume: To provide our readers with a current snapshot of the societal transformations taking place in Scandinavia, North America, Australia, Japan, and other parts of the world.

The 11 case studies portrayed in the volume describe the societal inequities and challenges related to inclusion, integration, and education of multiethnic people living in “two homes.” At the same time, the studies elucidate how these transformations can create opportunities to develop intercultural societies that effectively utilize diverse human capital and collective knowledge.

The contributions highlighted in these case studies aim at positively integrate culturally diverse families, children, and adolescents into schools and societies. Our authors represent various social fields (sociology, education, anthropology) and they are native to the country they write about. Their “emic” analysis ensures that their knowledge is authentic and prevents second-hand interpretation of the reality in their respective

countries. The lessons that we learn provide an invaluable contribution to academic debate, researchers, graduate students, and practitioners who are interested in learning about the challenges and solutions related to migration.

Mariella Espinoza-Herold
Rina Manuela Contini
Editors

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Mexican Immigrants Integration in the Midwest: A Case Study

Antonio V. Menéndez Alarcón

ABSTRACT

This chapter examines the patterns of immigrants' integration in a state of the Midwest of the United States, Indiana, which has experienced a growth of more than 250% of the foreign-born population in the last 20 years. The study, based on in-depth interviews and document analysis, examines the ways that immigrants blend into mainstream society in everyday life and in social interactions, as well as the obstacles they encounter in this process. The study reveals the cultural changes in the host culture as a result of the large number of immigrants who have established their residence in this state, the dichotomies that emerge between "natives" and "newcomers." It also shows that immigrants stay connected to their country of origin through electronic media (in particular television and computers) and how this technology affects the process of integration. Finally, the study demonstrates that there is a process of segmented assimilation and variations in the immigrants' sense of identity according to their socioeconomic status and ethnic background.

Keywords: Integration; cultural identity; Midwest; prejudice; discrimination; segmented assimilation

Brief Background

The United States has been considered since the beginning a country of immigration. The different waves of immigration brought people to the United States from all over the world. From the mid of the 20th century to the present the larger number of immigrants went to the United States from Latin America. The largest proportion of Latin Americans in the United States is from Mexico. In the second decade of the 21st century, immigrants of Mexican origin constitute about two-thirds (34 million) of the total number of immigrants from Latin America. There is an estimate of 12.2 million Mexican immigrants (first-generation immigrants) in the United States in 2015. The number of people born in Mexico but living in the United States has been relatively constant since 2007 (Ng, José, Salgado, & Serrano, 2016).

The flow of Mexican immigrants to the United States has been steadily growing for the last half of the 20th century, but in the beginning of the 21st century it was impacted by the economic crisis of 2008, as well as the passing of anti-immigrant laws in several states directed mostly at undocumented immigrants, including Arizona, Alabama, Georgia, Indiana, South Carolina, and Tennessee. It is estimated that close to 60% of Mexican immigrants are unauthorized immigrants; therefore, they were the most impacted by these laws. Furthermore, from 2008 to the present there has been an increase in the number of undocumented immigrants (Massey, 2013).

Many sectors for different reasons consider important to revise the present immigration laws, which are considered obsolete, to address the multiple issues related to immigration and integration. As a result, in April 2013 the Senate passed a bipartisan comprehensive immigration reform: “The Border Security, Economic Opportunity, and Immigration Modernization Act.” However, this new law was never brought to a vote in the House of Representatives, controlled by republicans.

The partisans of the law suggest that comprehensive immigration reform would create a better system of checks and balances in the immigration system, would provide undocumented immigrants with a legal way to earn citizenship and try to solve the humanitarian dilemma of the 12 million undocumented immigrants as well as the related issue of law enforcement (American Immigration Council, 2016).

The opponents argue that the bill passed in the senate is in fact an amnesty bill that does not address the real issues of America's immigration challenges, imposes high costs on taxpayers, increases government expending, and merely encourages additional illegal immigration ([About News, 2016](#); [Heritage Foundation, 2016](#)).

Given that the bill was not going anywhere in the House, the Obama administration issued on June 15, 2012, an executive order to halt deportation of young people (DREAM Act – Development, Relief and Education for Alien Minors Act). In the following section, we address briefly some of the key contributions of Mexican immigrants to U.S. Economy and society.

CONTRIBUTION OF IMMIGRANTS FROM MEXICAN ORIGIN TO THE ECONOMY

According the recent study sponsored by the BBVA, the Mexican immigrants are essential to the U.S. economy, contributing about 4% to GDP and considering second- and third-generation Mexicans, their contribution rises to 8%. Mexican immigrants predominantly work in construction, tourism, and manufacturing, but in GDP terms, “they contribute the most to the agricultural sector, construction, and accommodation and food services.” Indeed, Mexican immigrants contribute to about 18% of U.S. GDP in agriculture forestry and fishing, 13.4% to the construction sector, and about 11.7% to the accommodation and food services sector's output ([Ng et al., 2016](#)).

Furthermore, the large majority of Mexican immigrants fill jobs that Americans cannot or will not fill, mostly at the low ends of the skill spectrum. Immigrants also raise demand for goods as well as the supply, and do not take jobs or lower the pay rate. As [Griswold \(2002\)](#) demonstrates, during the boom of the 1990s, the national unemployment rate fell below 4% and real wages rose up the income scale during a time of relatively high immigration. These immigrants also contribute to the Mexican economy. Mexican immigrants' remittances to Mexico reached US\$24791.7 million in 2015 ([Ng et al., 2016](#)).

CONTRIBUTION TO U.S. CULTURE AND SOCIETY

Mexican Americans have made significant contributions to virtually every aspect of American culture and society. For instance, influencing U.S. cooking and eating habits. In addition, most