

THE PSYCHOLOGICAL EFFECTS OF CURRENT IMMIGRATION POLICY AND SENTIMENT

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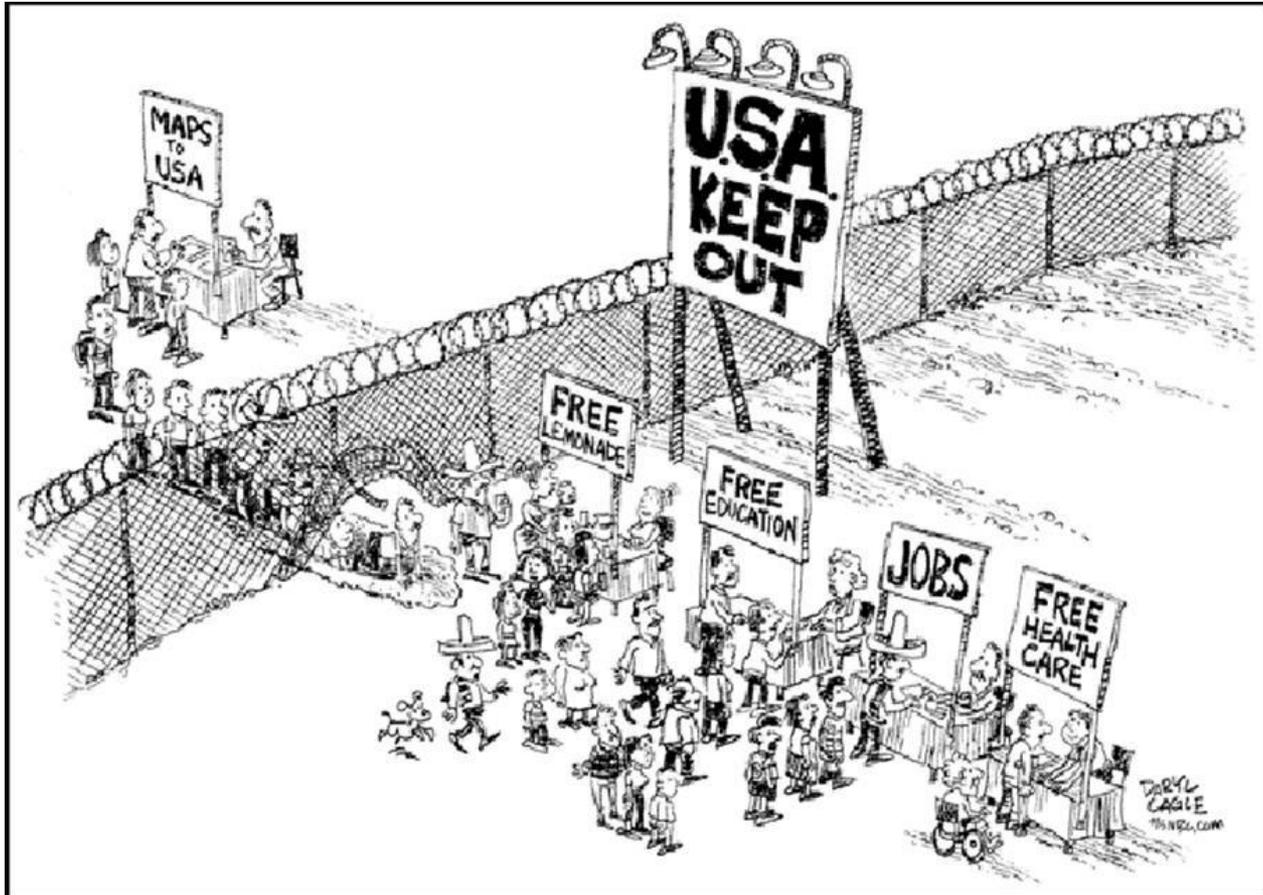
Pre-Migration Context

- Consider reasons for why people migrate (e.g. family reunification, parental employment, education, poverty, war, persecution, environmental disaster)
- Nature of the pre-migration context—access to family and peer support
- Separation from family (e.g. grandparents, relatives) and friends
- Separation from familiar social, cultural and linguistic context
- Hope for a better future for family and for oneself

Post-Migration Context

- Importance of migration for whole family and for oneself
- Optimism co-exists with sense of disorientation and sometimes disillusion
- Xenophobia, anti-immigrant sentiment, racism
- Immigration policy in flux: “Muslim ban” on travel, and ending of DACA as examples; Living with the unknown

Prevailing Stereotype



“Illegal immigration” overwhelming the nation

Stampedes



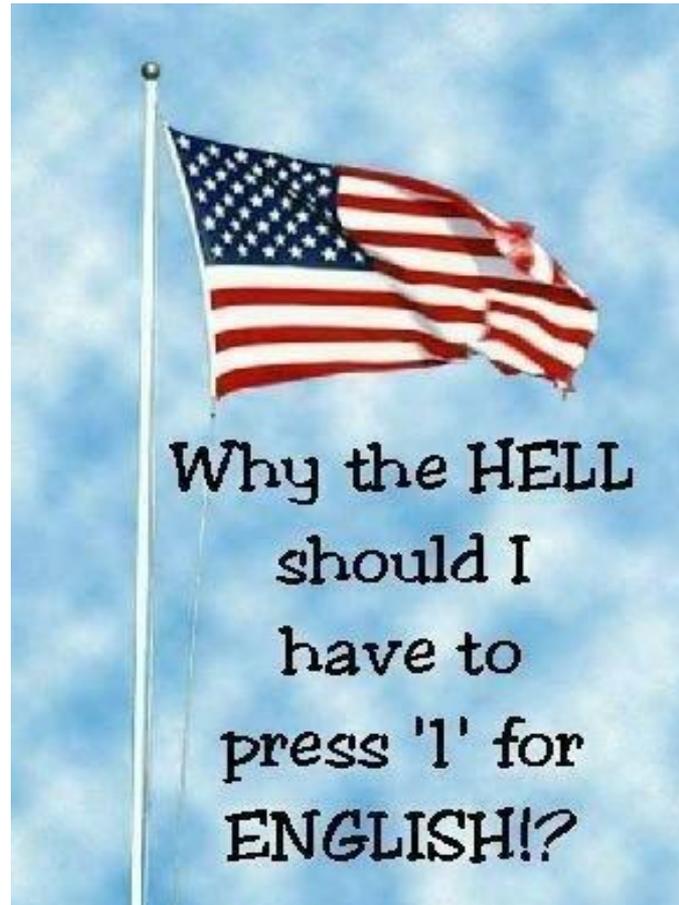
Taking our jobs



They are frightening



They force us to change our lives



Recognizing language shift in current political climate

- Language used to describe immigrants under current federal administration: “rapists”; “criminals”; “threatening”
- “Domestic terrorists”—referring to American Indians/Native Americans and allies protesting the Dakota Access Pipeline
- Re-framing language as a prelude to fascism, white supremacy, slavery, and genocide
- The internalization of stereotypes

Acculturative Stress

- Stressful events/appraisal of events related to the acculturation experience
- Linked to psychological outcomes
- Discrimination is a component of acculturative stress
- Immigrants of color experience higher levels
- Uncertainty of immigration policy and deportation
- Stress of having to hide one's ethnic identity

Presenting Problems in Clinical and Educational Contexts

- Most immigrants adapt well to their new living circumstances.
- Studies suggest that 1st generation immigrants may experience **less psychological distress** compared to 2nd generation immigrants (Alegría et al., 2006). This is even more heightened in current context.
- It's possible that their psychological distress is going **unnoticed**.
- Many of the mental health problems particular to the immigrant experience can be linked to **acculturation, discrimination and trauma**.
- Fear of deportation heightened since Trump's election; Deportation as the presenting problem.

Acculturation-Based Presenting Problems

- Changes in gender roles
- Intergenerational conflicts



Trauma-Based Presenting Problems

- Migratory trauma
 - Pre-migration
 - Migration
 - Post-migration
- Interpersonal violence



Discrimination- & Racism-Based Presenting Problems

- Discrimination
- Profiling and Deportation



Poster by Ester Hernandez against SB 1070

RACE AND TRAUMA: Examples in U.S.

- Native American genocide
- African slavery
- Japanese Internment Camps of WWII
- Racial profiling and violence
- Deportation
- Anti-immigrant sentiment and racism
- Anti-Muslim sentiment and discrimination
- Anti-Semitism

Impact of Racism

- Racism related to physical health problems (high blood pressure, premature births)
- Racism related to mental health problems (depression, anxiety, substance abuse, suicidal behavior, and family conflicts)
- Racism affects identity

Impact of Discrimination

- Contribute to atmosphere of fear and anxiety and compromise in sense of safety
- Overt and subtle or aversive forms of racism both have detrimental effects, possibly even more for second generation
- Feeling of “second class” person
- Lack of sense of belonging (e.g. perpetual foreigner)
- Decreased use of mental health services

Recommendations

- More safe spaces within and outside of the school and work contexts for dialogue on cultural adjustment, racism, and profiling
- Training for educators and clinicians regarding the impact of migration, stress, and trauma (including racial trauma)
- Increasing access to support through building awareness in school and work communities about emotional well-being and how to access help
- Recognizing the impact of immigration status and policy, and becoming aware of changes in policies
- Engaging in collective efforts—advocacy and activism