



# Patterns of relations between immigrants and host societies

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## Abstract

This paper provides an overview of migration and cultural diversity across seven countries in three major geographical regions. It describes the evolution of acculturation theory, models and research. Next, the paper briefly reviews the developments in the application of social psychological theory to the study of immigration and intergroup relations and illustrates the convergence of these approaches across ten studies. Finally, it makes recommendations for the course of future research. Specifically it recommends to clearly distinguish between cultural heritage and cultural identity, to take transnational contacts into account in models of acculturation, and to examine the concepts of pluralism and creolization as outcomes of culturally heterogeneous host societies.

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## 1. Introduction

Globalization, migration and increasing cultural diversity within nations have resulted in a growing need to understand and enhance intercultural relations in plural societies. This volume examines these issues in the international arena, bringing together leading social and cross-cultural psychologists whose contemporary research spans seven

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countries. The purpose of this special issue on relations between immigrants and host societies is to highlight current trends and new advances in the study of acculturation and intergroup relations. To accomplish this, the introductory paper provides an overview of migration and cultural diversity across three major geographical regions; describes the evolution of acculturation theory, models and research; briefly reviews the developments in the application of social psychology theory to the study of immigration and intergroup relations; illustrates the convergence of these two approaches across the ten papers that follow; and makes recommendations for the course of future research.

## 2. Migration and cultural diversity in the 21 century

It is now estimated that there are almost 191 million international migrants on a world-wide basis. Europe currently hosts the largest number (64 million); however, relative to the total population, Oceania (15%) and North America (13%) are world leaders (United Nations, 2005). This volume draws together research from seven countries in these three migration regions, and brief synopses of their immigration trends and issues are presented in the following sections.

### 2.1. *Western Europe*

#### 2.1.1. *Germany*

Germany has a moderate level of immigration—9% of its 83 million population. Nevertheless, the immigration rates to Germany of approximately 650,000 per annum were amongst the highest in Europe at the close of the twentieth century (Berry et al., 2006). Approximately, 27% of Germany's migrants originate from other established European Union countries (e.g., Italy, Greece, Poland, and Austria) with approximately 24% Turks and 14% former Yugoslavs. Although Zick, Wagner, Van Dick, and Petzel (2001) reported a preference for assimilation among German nationals, others have suggested that segregation is explicitly encouraged (Brubaker, 2001).

#### 2.1.2. *The Netherlands*

Sixteen million people live in the Netherlands, and 10% of these were born elsewhere. The ethnic origin of the population is primarily Dutch (81%) with Dutch citizens from Surinam and the Antilles and migrants from Turkey, Morocco, and the former Yugoslavia being the largest overseas-born groups. Since 1973, the Netherlands has pursued a relatively restrictive immigration policy based primarily on family unification rather than skilled labor. Officially, the government endorses policies aimed at integrating immigrants while preserving cultural identity; however, surveys show that the attitudes of the Dutch towards immigrants have become more negative in recent years (Arends-Toth & van de Vijver, 2003) and that there is a growing preference for assimilation (van Oudenhoven, Prins, & Buunk, 1998).

#### 2.1.3. *Italy*

Over the last two decades Italy has moved from a country of emigration to a country of immigration. It is estimated that there are now 2.8 million immigrants amongst its 58 million population, making Italy (ranked equally with Spain and Great Britain) the third

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