10

Processes and Pathways of Stigmatization and Destigmatization over Time

Paolo Velásquez, Maureen A. Eger, Heide Castañeda,
Christian S. Czymara, Elisabeth Ivarsflaten,
Rahsaan Maxwell, Dina Okamoto, and Rima Wilkes

Abstract

This chapter advances a theoretical framework to understand within- and between-country variation in the level of stigmatization experienced by immigrant groups and their descendants over time. Since processes of stigmatization and destigmatization may unfold over generations, it is imperative for research to adopt a longer time horizon to identify the factors that lead to the emergence, persistence, and/or dissipation of stigma. Expanding the time frame of analysis to decades (or even centuries) requires an explicit focus on the experiences of groups rather than individuals. Based on the observation that the labeling of some groups as "migrants" does not always follow from actual histories of immigration, this framework treats "migrant" as a social category. To guide future empirical research, this chapter introduces two analytical models. The first identifies the factors and processes responsible for stigmatization or destigmatization over time. The second presents five ideal-typical pathways that immigrants and their descendants may experience in relation to stigma: non-emergence, increase, reinforcement, reduction, and status reversal.

Introduction

This chapter synthesizes a week of intense conversations among scholars from two broadly defined fields: stigma and migration. Our goal was to examine and scrutinize the processes of stigmatization and destigmatization in the context of immigration-generated diversity, with a particular focus on the emergence, persistence, and dissipation of stigma *over time*. Inherent in conceptualizations of stigma is the notion that a group's experience with stigma may change over

time. The length of this time horizon is never made explicit, but in practice, empirical studies on stigma processes tend to focus on variation in experiences within individuals' lifespan. In this chapter, we argue that a significantly longer view is merited when applying a stigma framework to the phenomenon of immigration and resulting ethnic and racial diversity.

There are a number of reasons why this is necessary. First, the label of "migrant" is not only applied to immigrants who reside in a country different from the country where they were born but may also be applied to individuals who are native-born with no personal history of immigration. For example, children of immigrants are sometimes labeled as "second-generation migrants" and grandchildren as "third-generation migrants." Sometimes people with a specific race or ethnicity are labeled as having a "migrant background" despite having never immigrated. In this way, stigma is transmitted through generations.

Second, while immigrants are, by definition, individuals who reside outside their country of birth, they are also members of ethnic and racial groups, which to varying extents characterize destination countries and their existing social hierarchies. The status of these groups within these societies may fluctuate over decades and centuries, and this has implications for the level of stigma immigrants from different ethnic and racial groups face at any given point in time.

Third, there is little evidence that, on average, peoples' attitudes toward immigrants fundamentally change over time (Kustov et al. 2021), even if they move to an urban center where people have more cosmopolitan attitudes (Maxwell 2019). Instead, research shows that adults' attitudes toward immigrants and immigration are more strongly linked to immigrant presence during one's formative adolescent years than the contemporary demographic context in adulthood (Eger et al. 2022). This implies that neither native-born reactions to immigration nor the level of stigma a migrant group experiences is likely to change dramatically without cohort replacement (i.e., due to demographic processes, the replacement of older generations by new generations who happen to hold different attitudes) (e.g., Gorodzeisky 2021). Even then, research shows that cohort replacement is not a guarantee of less prejudice (Forman and Lewis 2015).

Fourth, as discussed elsewhere in this volume (e.g., Hatzenbuehler, this volume), unequal power relations are necessary for both the emergence and persistence of stigma (Link and Phelan 2001) and social policies (or their absence) that may create or amplify stigma (Link and Hatzenbuehler 2016). In democratic countries, native-born citizens hold the majority of political power, making immigrants especially vulnerable to structural barriers and institutional effects that persist over long periods of time. In the context of immigration, policies determine not only who may immigrate to a country but also immigrants' and their descendants' economic, social, and political rights (Givens and Luedtke 2005; Helbling et al. 2017). Thus, the stigmatization of individuals and groups labeled as "migrants" is a deeply embedded form of

social exclusion. For this reason, we argue that an extended time horizon is necessary to understand if and how stigmatization and destigmatization occurs. Focusing on a short period of time provides only snapshot of the experiences of a stigmatized group—a strategy that risks ignoring the key factors that lead to the emergence, persistence, and/or dissipation of stigma and account for the different experiences of ethnic and racial minority groups over time.

In this chapter we develop a theoretical framework to advance the goal of explaining between- and within-country variation in levels of stigma experienced by immigrants and their descendants over time. Our focus is on variation in the status of immigrant, ethnic, and racial minority *groups* over long periods of time (e.g., decades and centuries) rather than on individuals' experiences at a specific point in time or even over the duration of a life course (e.g., Earnshaw et al. 2022). A key feature of our approach is that we treat "migrant" as a social category, recognizing that people need not have a personal history of international immigration to be labeled a migrant. Indeed, some immigrants escape the label altogether, by being referred to as "expats" (Kunz 2016), while some native-born are labeled "second- or third-generation migrants."

Our framework includes two analytical models. The first identifies the factors and processes responsible for stigmatization or destigmatization over time. The model begins with immigration to a destination country, where existing social hierarchies trigger labeling processes, determining whether an immigrant group is branded as "migrant" or not. Over time, societal domains, exogenous events, and feedback loops affect the extent to which immigrants and their descendants are subject to separation, stereotyping, status loss, discrimination, and the reinforcement of the "migrant" label.

Our second analytical model identifies five analytical pathways or ideal types that identify the different possible trajectories of groups in relation to stigma: non-emergence, increase, reinforcement, reduction, and status reversal. We also identify when and why we expect the speed of change to be faster or slower. We argue that the absence of stigma, whether due to stigma avoidance or reduction, is conceptually most similar to inclusion not integration. Some groups may be well integrated into society (e.g., high levels of participation in the labor market and knowledge of the language) but still face stigma whereas other groups are not stigmatized regardless of levels of economic and cultural integration. Thus, we do not equate the absence of stigma with immigrants' efforts to "fit in" but instead with the extent to which immigrants and their descendants are accepted and treated as full members of society.

Throughout the chapter, we offer historical or contemporary examples consistent with these five pathways. Most of these examples come from European and North and South American countries, which reflects our expertise. However, the histories of these countries are inextricably linked to colonialism and imperialism, making our discussion to some degree global in scope. Nevertheless, we aim to maintain a high level of abstraction so that this framework can be applied in a variety of future empirical research. We conclude by

identifying challenges and possibilities for future empirical research, which will be important for testing and refining the ideas presented here.

Migration Stigma

Stigma is the co-occurrence of labeling, stereotyping, separation, status loss, and discrimination (Link and Phelan 2001). Applied to the phenomenon of immigration, migration stigma is the co-occurrence of these phenomena in relation to a racial or ethnic group with a history of international migration. The labeling of specific groups as migrants, the first step in stigmatization that initiates the entire process, does not always follow from a contemporary history of immigration. That is, some groups of immigrants, who reside in a country where they were not born, are never regarded as "migrants" while others who were born and raised in a particular country but whose ancestors immigrated are considered "migrants." This label is the first constitutive component of stigmatization, which has implications for stereotyping, separation, status loss, and discrimination. Thus, we contend that without this label, by definition, a group is not stigmatized.

Figure 10.1 depicts a heuristic model of our framework. While we recognize that reasons for immigration stem from both push and pull factors (Lee 1966) as well as feedback loops (O'Brien and Eger 2021), to illustrate immigration as the process of moving to a new country, we depict it as a phenomenon that begins outside of a destination country. When immigrants, motivated by personal reasons or living conditions in the origin country outside of their control, arrive at a destination country (represented by the large box), existing social hierarchies determine whether or not they are labeled "migrants." Over time, immigrants and their descendants interact with and are affected by various domains or arenas (e.g., institutions, media, education, policies, politics, social movements) that may reinforce, reduce, activate, or increase stigma.
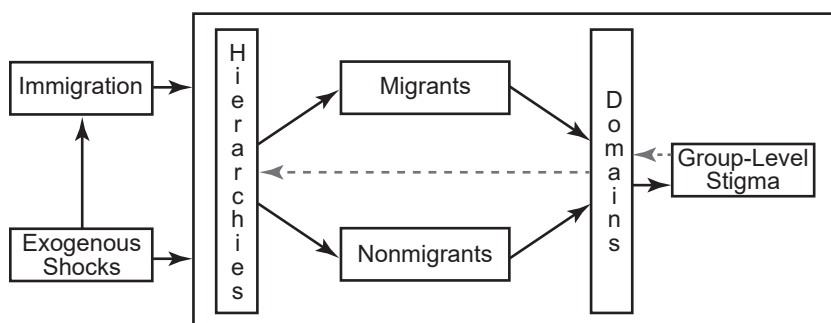

Figure 10.1   Model of stigmatization and destigmatization processes over time. Dashed lines represent possible feedback loops between group-level stigma and domains as well as between domains and hierarchies.

Additionally, other exogenous events such as wars and pandemics may contribute to migration flows and may impact the destination country in a way that is consequential to the level of stigma some immigrants and their descendants face. Exogenous shocks may even impact hierarchies and which groups are labeled migrants without necessarily increasing migratory flows. We discuss each of these elements in greater detail below.

Hierarchies

Why are some groups labeled migrants while others are not? A key component of stigma is that it requires power to stigmatize (Link and Phelan 2001). Thus, those who are in positions of power in a destination country, whether political, social or economic, have the power to stigmatize immigrants. We argue that this process depends on the existing social hierarchies (Sidanius and Pratto 1999:32) in a destination country as well as the global social order, of which origin and destination countries are a part. The most visible and arguably consequential hierarchy an immigrant group faces in a new country is race and ethnicity (e.g., Lentin 2008). Although existing racial and ethnic hierarchies are country specific, they are also embedded in and reflect a global structure shaped by the legacy of colonialism, which spanned hundreds of years in nearly all regions of the world (Go 2018). Consequently, Western Europeans and their descendants tend to sit atop their countries' ethnic and racial hierarchies even where the majority of the native-born population is non-European (e.g., Latin America; see Telles 2014). The label migrant is rarely applied to these immigrant groups (Fechter and Walsh 2010). Where Western Europeans constitute a majority, other Western Europeans (and descendants of Europeans from settler colonies) also tend to avoid the label migrant and are called expatriates or expats instead (Kunz 2020). Typically, members of these groups are included as full members of society when their knowledge of the history, culture, and/or language of the destination country is limited.

Class hierarchies, which are associated with race and ethnicity, also help determine which groups are labeled as migrants (e.g., Castañeda 2015; Fechter and Walsh 2010). As mentioned, immigrant groups from Western European countries (or from countries where a significant proportion of the population is descended from Western Europeans) are least likely to be labeled as migrants. Because these countries are also high-income countries (also related to colonialism), immigrants from these countries may not only avoid the label of migrant but may also enjoy a high status in the destination country (Kunz 2016). Due to their relatively high status in these hierarchies, they arguably face less discrimination in the labor market and have better opportunities for educational attainment and economic mobility, which reinforces their high status. Immigrant groups from lower income countries are more likely to be labeled "migrant" (Saxenian 2000). Although wealthy immigrants from non-Western or lower income countries may face fewer barriers to economic integration

than their less economically well-off counterparts, economic integration nei-ther ensures protection from stigma nor guarantees full inclusion in society (e.g., Maghbouleh 2017; Yeoh and Willis 2005).

The standing of an immigrant group's country of origin in the international world order also influences which groups are stigmatized in a destination coun-try (e.g., Kustov 2019). This status is fundamentally connected to both ethnic and racial hierarchies and economic hierarchies and may change as a conse-quence of conflicts and shifting alliances between countries in the international arena. For instance, immigrants from more powerful countries may benefit from their country's higher status in a destination country whereas immigrants from less powerful countries, who may have similar individual characteris-tics as those from more powerful countries, see their status devalued in the destination country due to their national origin (Kunz 2016; Leonard 2010). For example, within Europe, European Union (EU) immigrants are often dis-tinguished from non-EU immigrants regardless of immigrants' human capital. Thus, as the boundaries of the EU have changed over time, so have possibilities for stigma. War and political conflict may also affect the standing of countries and emigrants from those geographies. An egregious example of stigmatiza-tion was the incarceration and isolation of Japanese immigrants and Americans of Japanese descent during World War II. Further, shifting military and geopo-litical alliances may also influence levels of stigma experienced by groups. For instance, since 2021, the level of stigma experienced by Russian and Ukrainian immigrants has likely shifted and in different directions. Descendants of these immigrant groups potentially face more or less stigma due to the contemporary status of their parents' or grandparents' country of origin. Indeed, hierarchies within and between countries intersect in order to produce various levels of group-level stigma, which may fluctuate over time.

Domains

Over time, immigrants and their descendants, who are either labeled as mi-grants or not, interact with and are affected by different destination country domains or arenas that can either reinforce, reduce, or increase stigma. In this section, we provide an overview of a number of domains that implicate either top-down or bottom-up processes of stigmatization and destigmatization (but note that this is far from an exhaustive list). The former are institutions and social policies, politics, media, and education. The latter are social movements and intergroup contact.

Institutions/Policies

Institutions in destination countries not only determine who may immigrate (Helbling et al. 2020; Schultz et al. 2021) but also play an important role in the experiences of immigrants after arrival. Social policies that impact the lives of

immigrants once in a destination country are often referred to as "integration policies." Despite this moniker, not all policies are designed to facilitate immigrants' full participation in economic, political, or social life, comparable to that enjoyed by native-born. Instead, some policies are designed to limit immigrants' access to particular institutions, such as health care, public education, housing, or the labor market.

Theoretically, these policies may reflect attitudes toward immigrants, as native-born hold considerably more political power. However, policies also create a normative environment that may influence native-born attitudes toward immigrants (Green and Staerklé 2013; Guimond et al. 2013). Although the causal order is unclear, research shows that policies' levels of inclusivity or exclusivity are correlated with public attitudes toward immigrants (Eger and Bohman 2016; Heizmann 2016). Further, the positive relationship between native-born individuals' everyday contact with immigrants and their threat perceptions is stronger in countries with more inclusive social policies (Green et al. 2020). Research also demonstrates that these policy environments are related to outcomes for immigrants, such as health (Juárez et al. 2019) and life satisfaction (Heizmann and Böhnke 2019).

The Migrant Policy Integration Index (MIPEX 2020) tracks and measures policies associated with immigrant integration. By 2019, MIPEX included data from 56 countries across six continents and eight policy dimensions: labor market mobility, family reunion, education, health, political participation, permanent residence, access to nationality, and antidiscrimination. The index scores policy dimensions and countries on a scale of 0–100, based on the level of inclusivity of the policies. Figure 10.2 depicts the average overall score across various groupings of countries. The y-axis shows the quantitative score as well as the qualitative description of the inclusivity of the policies: critically unfavorable (0–20), slightly unfavorable (21–40), halfway favorable (41–59), slightly favorable (60–79), favorable (80–100). The bars in the top panel (a) represent the average score for groups of countries between 2010 and 2019. The average score across the full sample of countries (MIPEX56) is halfway favorable. At the low end, the European Union 13 (EU13), which includes the Eastern European countries which joined the EU after 2004, have on average policies that border what could be described as exclusive. At the high end, the average scores of traditional immigrant destination countries of Australia, Canada, the United States, and New Zealand are slightly favorable in regard to inclusivity. A noteworthy aspect of these scores is how little variation exists in the short time frame of a single decade. The bottom panel (b) in Figure 10.2 illustrates what these policies imply for basic rights, equal opportunities, and a secure future in the destination-country group in 2019. What stands out is that, on average, immigrants do not have the same access to opportunities and resources such as health care and education. Further, policies that help ensure immigrants a "secure future" (e.g., family reunification, permanent residence, and citizenship) are most exclusive in the EU15 countries of Western Europe.
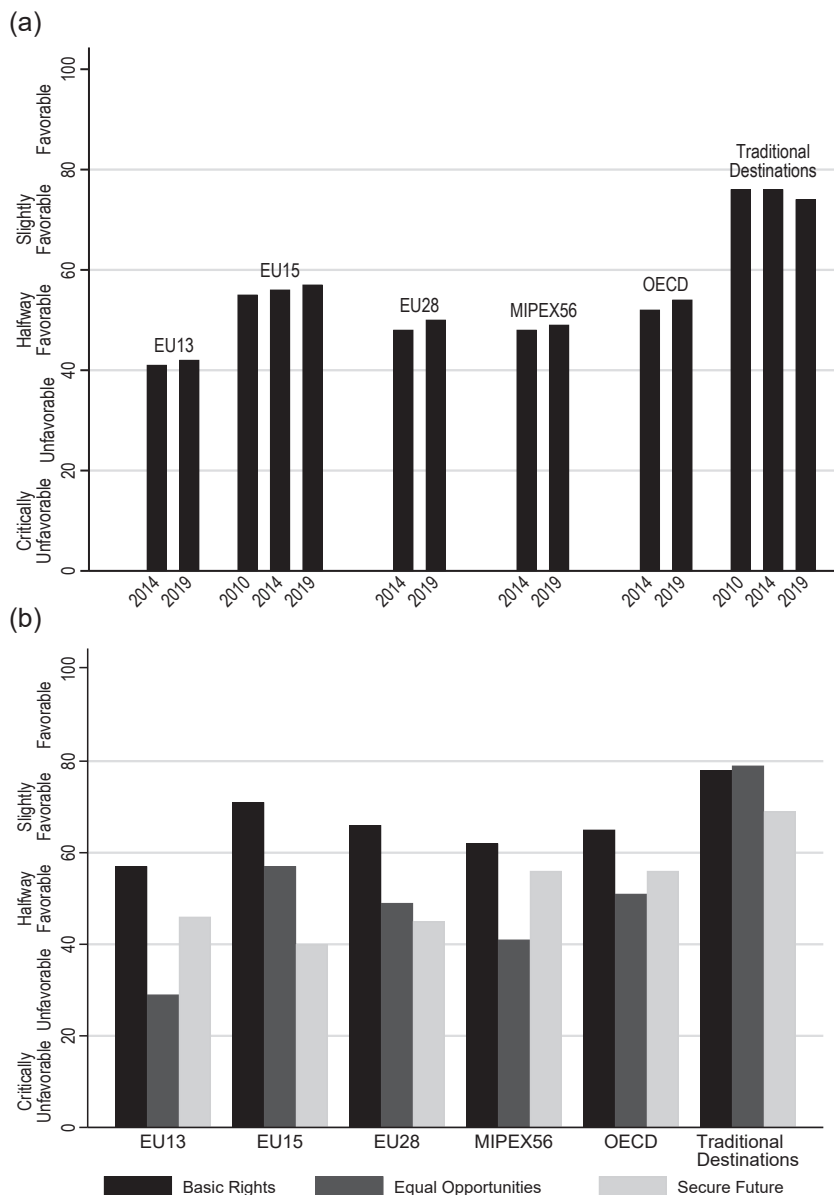
(a)

(b)

Figure 10.2   The inclusivity of immigrant integration policies (MIPEX 2020). The y-axis shows the quantitative score and qualitative description of the inclusivity of the policies: critically unfavorable (0–20), slightly unfavorable (21–40), halfway favorable (41–59), slightly favorable (60–79), favorable (80–100). The bars represent (a) the average overall score across various groupings of countries between 2010 and 2019; and (b) what these policy configurations imply for basic rights, equal opportunities, and a secure future in the destination-country group in 2019.

Politics

Another domain that affects the level of stigmatization experienced by immigrants and their descendants is the political arena. Political backlash to immigration is not a new phenomenon; it emerges even in contexts where immigration is economically beneficial (Tabellini 2020). However, contemporary anti-immigrant parties have made significant electoral gains in recent decades. These parties, often referred to as the radical right or far right, actively label, stereotype, and promote or, at the very least, do not object to discrimination against immigrants and certain ethnic and racial minorities. According to these parties, immigration poses cultural, economic, and political threats to contemporary nation-states (Eger and Valdez 2015, 2019). Their aim is to stop immigration and, in some cases, to deport immigrants and their descendants (Zaslove 2004). Especially in European countries, these parties often target Muslims (Betz 2013).

Mobilizing anti-immigrant sentiment is fundamental to the success of these parties (Arzheimer 2018; Ivarsflaten 2008), and recent decades have seen significant increases in popular support for parties such as France's National Rally, the Freedom Party of Austria, Jobbik in Hungary, the True Finns, and the Sweden Democrats, to name a few. Moreover, in countries like Spain and Germany, where such politics had remained relatively fringe in the post-World War II era, new parties have established themselves as political contenders : In Spain, Vox, and in Germany, the AfD. On the other side of the Atlantic, Donald Trump launched his political career by stigmatizing immigrants from Latin America and continued, as president, to stigmatize other racial and ethnic groups which he claimed came from "shithole countries" (Dawsey 2018). The success of these parties and politicians may, as a consequence, increase stigma. For example, Trump's hostile rhetoric shaped public attitudes toward immigrants (Flores 2018) and affected the day-to-day experiences of targeted groups (Hobbs and Lajevardi 2019). The success of radical right parties and politicians may also shape the positions of mainstream parties (Abou-Chadi and Krause 2020). The exclusionary rhetoric of mainstream political elites is correlated with more negative views of Muslim immigrants among native-born (Czymara 2020b) as well as attitudes toward immigration more generally (Bohman 2011; Schmidt-Catran and Czymara 2023). Further, feedback processes may reinforce social hierarchies within countries and internationally, perpetuating stigma over time.

Media

Mass media plays an important role in informing the general public on immigration related issues and developments (Eberl et al. 2018). Research indicates that newspapers often link immigration to negative frames such as crime and disease (Esses et al. 2013; Harris and Gruenewald 2020) and describe

immigration with metaphors such as flooding (Castañeda and Holmes, this volume; Abascal et al. 2021; El Refaie 2001; Gabrielatos and Baker 2008; Grigorieff et al. 2020). In this way, mass media can contribute to the stigmatization of immigrants. However, experimental evidence suggests that providing factual information counters hostility toward immigrants (Abascal et al. 2021; Grigorieff et al. 2020). This is because, as Lutz and Bitschnau (2022) argue, misperceptions about immigration are ubiquitous in many societies.

Education

Educational institutions are one source of stability and change in stigmatization of migrants. They are intrinsically connected to other domains, but mainly to the state and politics. Schools act as microcosms of their societies at large, where they may function as conferrers of the "official" or dominant values of a given society (Selznick and Steinberg 1979). For instance, Phelan et al. (1995) suggest that the core values of the United States involve tolerance, individualism and equality of respect and opportunity (but not of outcome), and individual initiative. This implies that the role of schools in relation to stigma will partially depend on the core values or "creed" of a given country. This does not mean, however, that stigma against immigrants is absent in countries with such values. For example, the United States also has a long history of nativism and stigmatization of immigrants, including in educational settings as evidenced by episodic controversies over what aspects of American history and literature to include in and exclude from the curriculum.

Within schools and the educational system, the processes of stigmatization and destigmatization are dynamic and involve the interaction of different actors at various levels. At the micro level, intergroup contact has been found to help reduce prejudice (Bohman and Miklikowska 2021; Tropp et al. 2022), as have discussions about political and societal issues with peers (Bohman et al. 2019; Miklikowska et al. 2022) and curricula that addresses racism and xenophobia (Hjerm et al. 2018b). At the macro level, where the state sets the overall educational standards and curricula, what is taught varies on topics related to immigration, racism, and diversity. Indeed, educational institutions cannot be separated from the political milieu in which they are situated, and the content of education or what *can* be taught in educational institutions is influenced by the country's "creed" or democratic tradition. For example, education has been shown to have a stronger positive effect on attitudes toward immigrants and ethnic minorities in countries with a longer history of democracy (Coenders and Scheepers 2003). However, there is considerable variation within regime types, and the political climate of a destination country also influences to what extent education may reduce or reinforce stigma toward immigrants.

Social Movements

Social movements are an arena where immigrants can diffuse or counter stigmatization. Immigrant groups can collectively engage in efforts to express grievances or make claims through organized efforts directed at institutions or political elites (Bloemraad and Voss 2020; Ebert and Okamoto 2015; Voss and Bloemraad 2011). Such efforts can vary depending on a group or movement's particular goals, which can include improving the status of minority groups, influencing policy, or demanding independence. Social movements are not simply a response to the nation-state; they are also shaped by transnational ties as well as international norms and movements, which can provide narratives, elite support, and resources to encourage the state to address historical inequalities and implement state policies as well as to gain recognition or acceptance for stigmatized groups.

The immigrant population in a given country is often heterogeneous, as people come in from a variety of origin countries. This can pose a challenge to mobilization on the basis of immigrant status alone. For example, to address stark inequalities among Asian-origin immigrant groups in the United States, activists, students, and community members in the 1960s—most of whom were of Chinese, Japanese, and Filipino descent—built the pan-ethnic Asian American movement (Okamoto 2014). Despite their national origin, language, cultural, and religious differences, activists emphasized their shared histories and experiences as cheap laborers and unassimilable foreigners without access to citizenship, property, and civil rights, and even entry into the United States. Their efforts mobilized large-scale social movements aimed at dismantling structures of class, gender, and racial oppression (Okamoto and Adem, this volume; Mora and Okamoto 2020a; Okamoto 2003).

Both the political rights and legal status of immigrants add challenges to pro-immigration social movements. Noncitizen immigrants rarely have the right to vote or stand for office, which fundamentally limits their political voice in democracies (Bloemraad and Voss 2020). Thus, pro-immigrant movements must inspire citizens to support movement goals, including the extension of rights to immigrant populations. Research indicates that the success of particular frames varies (Voss et al. 2020) and that the struggle for recognition and inclusion by immigrants and their descendants depends largely on a destination country's notions of what it means to be a "good immigrant" (Hackl 2022). Still, research also shows that pro-immigrant social movement activity can shift public opinion (Branton et al. 2015), opening up opportunities for rights and inclusion.

Immigration

Immigration itself does not necessarily drive attitudes toward it; instead, perceptions of the size of immigrant out-groups are often more closely associated with

anti-immigrant sentiment (Pottie-Sherman and Wilkes 2017). Nevertheless, new immigration has the potential to sharpen ethnic boundaries, making the label "migrant" for a particular group stickier. Long-term immigrant replenishment is the process of ongoing immigration from one country to another (see Jiménez 2008). For example, Mexican immigration to the United States has been commonplace for at least a century, increasing rapidly after 1965. As of 2019, approximately 24% of all immigrants in the United States were born in Mexico (Gonzalez-Barrera 2021), making it the largest immigrant group. Migration flows from Mexico to the United States have been constant due to their close geographic proximity, historic ties, and previous national borders. Continual Mexican immigration contributes to a rigidity in ethnic boundaries which has since disappeared for European immigrants and their descendants who no longer experience immigrant replenishment (Jiménez 2008).

Instead of bolstering ethnic boundaries, new immigration from a different origin country or region could instead reduce stigma among older immigrant groups in the destination country. This happens by contrasting the already settled immigrant groups and their descendants with the newly arrived ones, who are often perceived as more different. For example, research shows that Germans, Dutch, Swedes, and Danes prefer to grant citizenship to non-EU immigrant groups that are perceived as more culturally similar to them (i.e., non-Muslim) (Hedegaard and Larsen 2022). Similar findings come from a study of Americans, who tend to prefer immigration from neighboring Mexico as opposed to Iraq (Hainmueller and Hopkins 2015). Taken together, these results suggest that patterns of immigration and perceived cultural similarity vis-à-vis a group perceived as more culturally dissimilar may contribute to destigmatization and stigmatization processes over time. Because our focus is on explaining stigmatization and destigmatization, Figure 10.1 intentionally depicts immigration as a phenomenon that originates outside of a destination country. However, there is also likely a feedback effect connecting levels of stigmatization within a destination country to future immigration flows.

Exogenous and "Big" Events

Exogenous events (e.g., a war, natural disaster, extreme weather related to climate change or terrorism) increase possibilities not only for increased immigration but also the stigmatization or destigmatization of particular immigrant, racial, and ethnic groups. However, an increase in immigration is not necessary to increase the stigmatization of specific groups of immigrants and their descendants. For example, the events of September 11, 2001, set in motion the stigmatization of individuals with a Middle Eastern background throughout Western countries, not just in the United States. Similarly, the COVID-19 pandemic affected Asian-born immigrants and their descendants (e.g., Wu et al. 2021).

So-called big events—something "that touches deep sentiments, that seems to raise fundamental questions about relations, and that awakens strong

feelings of identification with one's racial group" (Blumer 1958:6)—are another source of change in processes of stigmatization and destigmatization. When these events occur, the abstract identity of a specific out-group, in this case the relevant group labeled as migrants, is collectively reassessed, and people with greater power, prestige, and authority play larger roles in this process. Exogeneous and big events impact the portrayal of specific immigrant groups in media narratives and political rhetoric and may influence other destination country's domains such as domestic and foreign policies, which may in turn reinforce or change the level of stigma a group faces (e.g., Maghbouleh 2017; O'Brien and Eger 2021; Wu et al. 2021). For example, there are clear differences in the ways in which refugees fleeing the wars in the Middle East in 2015–2016 were perceived (Czymara and Schmidt-Catran 2017; Holmes and Castañeda 2016) and therefore treated (Frey 2020) compared to those who have fled Ukraine since 2014 (Roman et al. 2021).

Five Analytical Pathways of Stigmatization and Destigmatization

To summarize, when immigrants arrive at a destination country, existing social hierarchies determine whether or not they are labeled as "migrants." This sorting process, which culminates in the label of "migrant" or the absence of it, sets the stage for experiences across various domains in a country, which have implications for the extent to which groups are subject to separation, stereotyping, status loss, and discrimination. Stigma experiences may generate feedback effects, influencing, for example, politics and media narratives, policies including ones governing immigration, and, subsequently, social hierarchies within countries and internationally.

Migration stigma, therefore, should be understood to be on a continuous scale varying in magnitude and susceptible to change over time. The absence of group-level stigma would mean the absence of the label "migrant," stereotyping, status loss, and discrimination—put simply: full inclusion. We emphasize that inclusion does not necessarily depend on immigrants' economic or cultural integration. For example, some immigrant groups and their descendants may be relatively economically successful yet still face discrimination, whereas other groups that are not culturally integrated (e.g., lack of language skills) may not face any stigma.

In Figure 10.3, we identify the five ideal-typical pathways that immigrants and their descendants may experience over time. These pathways reflect the *theoretically possible experiences* of groups and should not be mistaken as groups themselves. This means that any given group may experience more than one pathway over time. Further, we emphasize that these pathways are not linear, as the status of groups may fluctuate. Relatedly, our conception of time is social, or "qualitative and not purely quantitative" (Sorokin and Merton 1937:623). For example, the period of arrival in a new country differs
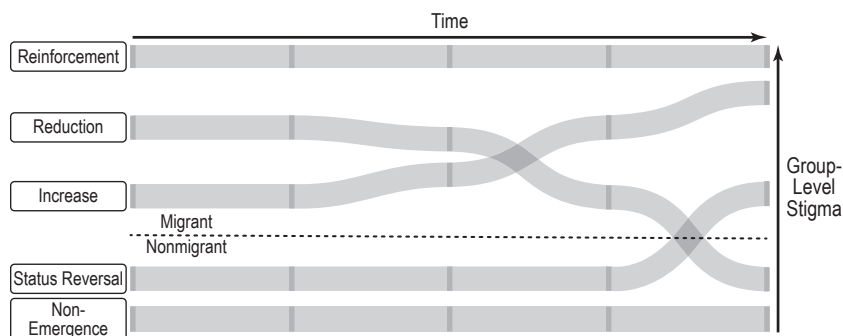
Figure 10.3 Five analytical pathways over time. Non-emergence: due to existing hierarchies, an immigrant group and their descendants are not labeled "migrants" and therefore are not stigmatized. Status reversal: an immigrant group is not initially stigmatized, but due to an exogenous shock or big event, the group is labeled as "migrants" and experiences stigmatization. Increase: an immigrant group and their descendants are labeled as "migrants," and, due to a combination of factors, the level of stigma experienced by members of the group increases over time. Reduction: Due to a combination of factors, an immigrant group and their descendants labeled "migrants" experience less stigma over time, culminating in full inclusion by the native-born majority. Reinforcement: an immigrant group and their descendants are labeled "migrants," and the level of stigma experienced by members of the group persists over time because of a combination of factors.

for groups and, due to within-country variation in domains over time, changes in the experiences of immigrants and their descendants differ between historical periods. Thus, we refrain from using specific time intervals (e.g., 10, 50, or 100 years).

The top three pathways reflect different experiences of stigma for groups labeled "migrant" that may increase, decrease, or remain stable over time. These three pathways should not necessarily be understood as a rank order of stigma. The pathway at the top, reinforcement, need not be the highest level of stigma in a society but could instead be associated with a lower level that remains stable over time. For instance, some immigrant groups might experience an increase in stigma, or even a reduction, and still encounter more stigma than another group whose stigma is reinforced across various domains throughout the same time period. The pathway at the very bottom, non-emergence, is the absence of stigma. Just above non-emergence is the fifth and arguably rarest pathway: status reversal. We discuss each ideal-typical pathway in greater detail below.

Non-Emergence

Some immigrant groups in a destination country are never stigmatized as migrants. While these groups may be seen as different, this distinction does not

develop into the label "migrant," thereby precipitating negative stereotyping, separation, status loss and discrimination (i.e., the other constitutive components of stigma; see Link and Phelan 2001). As a consequence, stigma does not impede members of these groups from participating fully in civic and economic life. One possible reason for the absence of migration stigma is power. It takes power to stigmatize and if an immigrant group arrives with economic and symbolic power (such as educational credentials or wealth), then it is theoretically less likely that this group will be labeled as "migrants" and face further stigma. Another possible explanation for the absence of stigma has to do with the status of an origin country in the international arena (i.e., holding a particular passport). If immigrants come to a high-income and/or democratic country from another high-income and/or democratic country, they are arguably less susceptible to negative stereotyping and othering. A third reason implicates global racial and ethnic hierarchies, legacies of imperialism and colonialism. Immigrant groups with specific phenotypes and/or national-origin cultures may also benefit from positive stereotypes that advantage them, for example in the labor market, even compared to some native-born. However, it is worth mentioning that some immigrant groups are heterogeneous in regard to race and religion. Thus, individuals from a particular immigrant group may escape being labeled "migrant" and further stigmatization when nationality is salient but not in circumstances when race or religion is salient.

Reinforcement

Due to existing hierarchies, some immigrant groups are stigmatized on arrival. While stigma may dissipate over time (see below), experiences across societal domains and feedback processes may reinforce the label of "migrant," meaning that some immigrant groups and their descendants experience stigmatization over long periods of time. For example, for centuries, Roma have experienced marginalization, pervasive stereotyping, everyday discrimination, and institutional exclusion in European countries (e.g., Creţan et al. 2022). Multilevel stigmatization and powerful feedback effects over centuries have certainly contributed to persistent and extreme inequality. However, recent research indicates that even wealthy Roma face vehement stigmatization and that "the long-term group stigmatization of Roma" works to reinforce the "dominant perception of Roma as inferior, regardless of their individual or family characteristics, or their housing and economic circumstances" (Creţan and Powell 2018:425).

Specific domains, such as the media, contribute to the stereotyping of groups (e.g., criminals, aggressive, lazy, etc.) and therefore the reinforcement of stigma over time. During the 2015 "migration crisis," the European press often portrayed refugees as dangerous outsiders (Georgiou and Zaborowski 2017), a trope long used to characterize Middle Eastern men as violent (Said 1979). Newspapers in Scandinavia also played a role in reinforcing the

perceived negative consequences of the arrival of refugees by focusing less on humanitarian aspects of the crisis over time (Hovden et al. 2018).

One implication of the reinforcement of stigma is that new immigrants from a "migrant" group are effectively stigmatized pre-arrival, which may be consequential for experiences of discrimination as well as identity. For instance, due to racial hierarchies in the United States, Caribbean immigrants racialized as black are susceptible to stigma based on migration and race, which may even manifest in their descendants' identities. Research shows that the children of Caribbean immigrants who identify as black Americans are more likely to perceive higher levels of discrimination and fewer opportunities than those identifying as West Indians (Waters 1994). Other research shows that black Caribbean immigrants may appeal to their ethnicity as a way to distance themselves from "blackness" which is considered to be more stigmatizing (Foner 2001).

Increase

An increase in stigma refers to heightened status loss and greater discrimination faced by immigrant groups. Immigrant groups labeled as "migrants" already satisfy one component of stigma (Link and Phelan 2001), that is, being labeled. We contend that separation, or identification of "us" and "them" follows. When this happens, the dominant cultural beliefs in a destination country may lead to stereotyping, or the association of undesirable characteristics with a specific "migrant" group. Increases in stigma stem from both experiences with a country's domains as well as exogenous or big events. Indeed, dramatic events, including increasing immigration, provide opportunities for an increase in stigma, as those in power across various domestic domains may seize the moment to create new narratives about immigrant groups, new and old.

Stereotypes may be reinforced or amplified by mass media, for example when television news on crime depicts ethnic minority perpetrators in a more threatening manner (Jacobs 2017). Such reporting is more prevalent in tabloid or commercial outlets that tend to frame immigration as related to criminality (Greussing and Boomgaarden 2017), lower security (Kovář 2020, 2022), and greater uncertainty (Gottlob and Boomgaarden 2020). Similarly, immigration news in commercial television tends to be somewhat more sensational (Jacobs et al. 2016).

Such reporting can lead to an increase in stigmatization, including discrimination and exclusion. A growing body of literature links such media reporting to public attitudes toward immigration and immigrants, demonstrating that mass media reporting can increase support for anti-immigrant parties (Boomgaarden and Vliegenthart 2007) and negatively influence attitudes toward immigration (Czymara and Dochow 2018; Meltzer et al. 2021; Schlueter and Davidov 2013; Van Klingeren et al. 2015). Moreover, media effects are target specific: minority groups that are usually depicted in a negative way in the media are

also evaluated least positively by the public (Meeusen and Jacobs 2017), making them susceptible to both labor market (e.g., Åslund and Rooth 2005) and everyday discrimination (e.g., Wu et al. 2021).

Status Reversal

Status reversal is probably the rarest of analytical pathways, occurring when an immigrant group not initially stigmatized is, at a later point in time, labeled "migrant" and experiences the other components of stigma. Arguably, this would most likely occur after an exogenous shock or big event, for example a war or terrorist attack that changes public opinion and mobilizes antipathy toward a particular group. In all other ways, status reversal is similar to the analytical pathway of increasing stigma, though it could have additional negative consequences associated with the experience of status loss and new fears about the future.

Reduction

The reduction of stigma occurs when certain groups are increasingly included as full members of society and treated with dignity and respect. Thus, destigmatization refers to a process by which low-status groups gain recognition and worth (Okamoto and Adem, this volume). Immigration scholars have typically focused on the ways in which immigrants integrate socioeconomically into a destination country's society, and therefore rely on indicators such as income, education, and occupational status. But even if immigrants are integrating into society based on these measures, such that they are achieving parity with native-born, this does not necessarily mean that immigrants as a group are not stigmatized. Some immigrant groups outperform natives socioeconomically, yet still face stereotyping, prejudice, and discrimination, suggesting that destigmatization means gaining a type of "cultural membership" (Kymlicka 1995) that goes beyond, for example, labor market integration.

One way in which the reduction of stigma is possible is through the development of pro-immigration attitudes among the native-born and ethnic majority population. As discussed above, mass media can play a key role in how immigrants are perceived and therefore treated by native-born and ethnic majorities. Prior research suggests that positive media framing can lead to more positive attitudes: exposure to positive content about immigrants in the news is associated with more openness toward immigration (Meltzer et al. 2021) and decreases the importance that natives assign to immigration as a problem (Van Klingeren et al. 2015). Further, immigrants and their descendants may play an active role in shifting attitudes by mobilizing for recognition, respect, and rights (Bloemraad and Voss 2020; Okamoto 2003, 2014).

For groups labeled as "migrants," processes of destigmatization are typically long. This is, in part, due to the attitudes and beliefs of native-born and ethnic

majorities, which can be resistant to change. Research suggests that immigration attitudes, like many other social and political attitudes, are formed during the so-called impressionable years and not necessarily related to conditions in adulthood (e.g., Eger et al. 2022). Increasingly, the scholarly consensus is that immigration attitudes are sticky and resistant to change across the life course (Kustov et al. 2021). While there is evidence that adults may become more positive or negative toward immigrants in response to dramatic events (e.g., Hangartner et al. 2019), events that make immigration salient may also amplify preexisting attitudes, making political behavior consistent with either pro- or anti-immigration attitudes more likely (Eger and Olzak 2023). Taken together, attitudinal research implies that native-born and ethnic majority contributions to destigmatization is a lengthy process that unfolds over generations.

From immigrants' point of view, reduction in stigma can also be seen through the lens of resiliency, or the capacity to respond positively despite challenges to well-being. This represents a strengths-based approach to understanding the experience of groups facing stigma as opposed to the more common focus on deficits and negative consequences for stigmatized groups. Resiliency is frequently thought of as an individual-level characteristic that is developed to increase one's ability to cope or persist in the face of adversity; thus, a criticism of an emphasis on resiliency is that it takes the focus off structural obstacles and natives' treatment of immigrants and attributes immigrants' experiences entirely to their own efforts. Still, thinking about resiliency as a group-level trait can be useful for understanding processes that can combat stigma, such as the development of social capital and other strengths.

Shifting the focus from the consequences of stigma to processes that overcome stigma allows us to reconsider what the absence of stigma, and thus the absence of the label "migrant," may entail. We have already argued that full destigmatization means inclusion, which goes beyond integration. One may also think of destigmatization as increasing the capacity of immigrants and their families to flourish. Willen et al. (2021) understand flourishing as an active, dynamic pursuit that is deeply informed both by people's sociopolitical position and by the environments in which they live, which includes the presence or absence of stigma. In developing new strategies to promote the flourishing of immigrants and their descendants, we might envision new discourses and systems that value dignity and well-being.

Speeds of Change

We identified two speeds at which change in stigma is possible: incremental and rapid. An incremental or slow change in stigma is mostly related to destigmatization, largely due to stigma being deeply embedded in institutions that are slow to change by design, making large-scale reform a rather lengthy process. Instead, institutions tend to evolve at the margins through political contestation and social change (Conran and Thelen 2016). As stigmatized immigrant

groups fight for their rights and for full membership in society, institutions may not immediately respond to efforts for full inclusion. There is a tug of war between the stratum in positions of power and immigrant groups who often do not wield the necessary power or resources in order to sway public opinion or how their group is viewed. Arguably, for immigrant groups to shed stigma, some degree of integration is necessary. That process, of course, is moderated by existing social hierarchies, making some groups' paths easier and others' more challenging. For groups lower in the hierarchy, more evidence of integration is likely required as proof of worthiness for full inclusion. Thus, processes of destigmatization may unfold over generations, and even though certain immigrant groups are eventually considered fully integrated into a society, they can still experience some degree of stigma.

A rapid change in stigma is likely to be associated with an increase rather than a decrease due to the slow nature of destigmatization. These rapid changes in the reconfiguration of the abstract group identity are more likely a result from sudden events which accelerate social change (e.g., Wu et al. 2021). These catalyst events can be analytically distinguished into two categories, although they work in tandem. We can classify them as endogenous or occurring within the destination country's more dynamic domains (politics and media) (Flores 2018; Hobbs and Lajevardi 2019), or as exogenous, which occur outside a country's borders such as environmental disasters due to climate change, economic crises, and violent political conflicts resulting in a migration influx (e.g., Czymara and Schmidt-Catran 2017).

A rapid change in destigmatization is rare but theoretically may occur when a dramatic event puts a group in an entirely different light or another immigrant group and their descendants experience a surge in stigma, changing how the former group is perceived and treated. It is also theoretically possible for groups to experience an incremental increase in stigma. For example, a specific immigrant group and its descendants could face greater stigmatization due to "constant replenishment" of immigrants or increased immigration from the same country or region (e.g., Jiménez 2008).

Challenges and Future Directions for Studying Stigmatization and Destigmatization over Time

How can we study stigma processes over time? One way is to use panel survey data to measure the experiences of both the stigmatized and stigmatizers over time. For example, the Norwegian Citizen Panel (NCP) is a research purpose online panel recruited randomly from the Norwegian Population Registry and owned by the University of Bergen. This panel has enabled longitudinal and survey experimental research since 2013 resulting in a number of important publications and new insights into questions relevant to the study of immigration-generated diversity. For instance, several studies have used this data to

examine attitudinal consequences of a refugee influx from people fleeing wars in Syria, Afghanistan, and Iraq in 2015/2016. Since the NCP traces attitudes over time, the panel contained a baseline measure prior to this event, which is essential for identifying and estimating causal effects. Since data collection has continued long after the event, the panel also contributes to studies of the duration of effects. One study using this data identified a causal effect in exclusionary direction of the influx of refugees to Norway in 2015 on both measures of attitudes to the social rights of refugees and general evaluation of immigration. The exclusionary response lasted for a considerable period of time but reverted to baseline after 1.5–2 years (Nordø and Ivarsflaten 2022). Another study found that attaining more education had a small but statistically significant effect on more positive attitudes toward immigrants and that individuals with a university education did not react as strongly to this migration crisis as those with lower levels of education (Velásquez and Eger 2022).

Collecting longitudinal survey data is expensive and requires research funding with a long time horizon and/or an investment in research infrastructure by universities. It is difficult to foresee when an event that has the potential to change attitudes will occur. It also remains to be seen if any platforms for collection of survey data can be maintained for long enough to register changes in underlying norms, attitudes, and values that scholarship suggests happen more gradually. Nevertheless, there is great potential for using such platforms to study attitudinal change in the wake of, for example, a change in law or social policy. For the study of stigma in the context of immigration-generated diversity, it is important to note that currently there is a gap in research infrastructures in Europe that makes reliable, representative survey-based studies of people without a migrant background much easier to conduct than survey-based studies of people with migrant backgrounds or ethnic and racial minorities. However, a good example of the latter is the Children of Immigrants Longitudinal Survey in Four European Countries (CILS4EU) which includes both ethnic majority and ethnic minority participants, but oversamples immigrants and the children of immigrants. Recent analyses of these data shed light on differences in the experiences the ethnic majority and immigrants and their descendants, such as life satisfaction (Henkens et al. 2022), mental health (Mood et al. 2017), and political participation (Dollmann 2021).

Scholars have also recently started to examine social media (e.g., Koytak and Celik 2022), textbooks (e.g., Kotowski 2013; Louie and Wilkes 2018), and other kinds of documentary data to understand the discourse and narratives used to describe and portray immigrants and immigration, key contributors to the stigmatization process. Using computational methods, including topic modeling and sentiment analysis, to examine decades or even centuries of data can help us to further understand when and how immigrants are stigmatized in public documents and by political officials (e.g., Card et al. 2022). Such methods are far less expensive than longitudinal panel data, but of course answer

different questions related to processes of stigmatization. Data sources must be harmonized over time, which could be a challenge.

Conclusion

We have argued that adopting a longer time horizon means we can better explain the experiences of immigrants and their descendants. This analytical strategy also means that we can better understand stigma, specifically processes of stigmatization and destigmatization that unfold over generations. We also contend that expanding the time period of analysis to include the experiences of groups, rather than individuals, over many decades and even centuries allows us to consider more explicitly intergroup processes in the medium and longer term. This approach does not negate the experiences of individuals (within groups) and individual-level processes in the shorter term. Rather we argue that individuals' experiences at any one point are shaped by levels of stigma faced by immigrant groups and their descendants, and that group-level stigma may change over time.

This chapter makes at least two original contributions. We identified five ideal-type pathways that immigrants and their descendants may experience over time. In doing so, we provide a general immigration–stigma theoretical framework to guide future research that seeks to explain the presence or absence of stigma and why levels of migrant stigma experienced by specific immigrant groups and their descendants vary within and between countries over time. We have also theorized that the status of groups is due to various factors, including the different hierarchies that exist in destination countries and internationally, exogenous events that catalyze strong reactions to migration, endogenous domains that reinforce or reduce the stigmatization of certain migrant groups, and the status in the international arena of sending countries vis-à-vis the destination countries. We believe this framework contributes to both the fields of migration and stigma, while bridging a gap between the two.

First, in migration research, the concept of stigma tends to be used or used superficially to identify a group facing interpersonal prejudice and discrimination that impedes integration, an important concept in sociological and political science scholarship related to immigration. Applying a stigma framework to international migration makes clear that immigrant integration is orthogonal to the concept of stigma. Some immigrant groups and/or their descendants may be integrated economically (labor market), socioculturally (participation in social and cultural life), and politically (civic participation and citizenship) but still stigmatized as "migrants" and set apart as outsiders. Other immigrant groups may not be well integrated on one or more of those dimensions but not stigmatized as such. Based on this observation, we have argued that the absence of stigma is conceptually closer to *inclusion* rather than integration. In practice, full inclusion likely requires both an appreciation of diversity

(Hjerm et al. 2019) and recognition/acceptance that that immigrants and their descendants contribute to a shared national identity (Ivarsflaten and Sniderman 2022:4). This is a much different metric than integration, and this distinction requires scholarly attention going forward.

Research on stigma also has implications for how scholars of migration see the role of prejudice and discrimination in society. Scholars of stigma contend that "keeping people down, keeping people in and keeping people away" (i.e., exploitation and domination, norm enforcement and disease avoidance) serve psychological, societal, and biological functions (Phelan et al. 2008:365). An implication of the notion that stigma is functional (Pachankis and Wang, this volume) is that migration stigma is a durable societal-level feature, though who counts as a "migrant" and which groups are stigmatized may change over time.

Second, it is for this reason that we believe the field of stigma research should also benefit from applying our analytical framework to the study of stigma in the context of immigration-generated diversity. Previous research on stigma has focused mainly on experiences within the life course, examining the implications of stigma on, for example, mental illness, stress, and life chances. Adopting a longer-term perspective that focuses on the experiences of groups has the potential to clarify the causes of stigmatization and destigmatization processes and their consequences for the status of groups. Indeed, by taking a longer view, we are better suited to identify the specific causes underlying the different trajectories of immigrant groups—and therefore the experience of individuals within those groups—over time. In addition, the notion of stigma as functional may become even more apparent if the same immigrant groups diverge in their experiences with stigma in different regions or destination countries. Such a finding would suggest that it is not about the characteristics of specific immigrant groups per se, but the role/function they play in the destination country. Insights gleaned from future research of this type could change our theoretical understanding of stigma and its application to other stigmatized groups (e.g., long-term changes in attitudes toward people with mental illness) beyond international immigrants.

While we see clear benefits of adopting our framework, we acknowledge that empirical research is needed to test and further refine our propositions. We also note that in advancing our analytical framework, we have mostly relied on scholarship on the North American and European contexts. In addition to investigating migration stigma within countries over time, the fields of immigration and stigma scholarship would benefit from comparing how these processes operate in all parts of the world. Research that makes use of global variation in immigration, hierarchies, domains, exogeneous events and their interaction should provide a fuller understanding of stigma in the context of immigration-generated diversity.

Migration Stigma

Understanding Prejudice, Discrimination, and Exclusion

Edited by: Lawrence H. Yang, Maureen A. Eger, Bruce G. Link

Citation:

The MIT Press