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## Migration Stigma An Introduction

Lawrence H. Yang, Maureen A. Eger, and Bruce G. Link

International migration and societal reactions to it constitute some of the most important issues of the contemporary era. This does not mean that migration itself is a recent phenomenon. Throughout history, humans have crossed geographic and political boundaries for economic, social, and political reasons. In the modern era, international migrants are defined as individuals who reside outside of their country of birth. Myriad factors motivate individuals to migrate: economic opportunity, family reunification, war, or persecution as well as instability brought on by climate change, economic recession, political turmoil, and pandemics. Although the reasons why people migrate vary considerably, growing skepticism toward immigration is evident worldwide. Indeed, nationalist rhetoric and the politicization of immigration have increased in recent decades, spurring political unrest, racial and ethnic conflict, and the scapegoating and inhumane treatment of immigrants. Persistent global trends, such as climate change, suggest that immigration and its consequences will continue if not increase in coming years. Thus, it is imperative to understand the interplay of societal reactions to immigration and the patterns of exclusion or inclusion among immigrants and their descendants.

This volume is a concerted effort to improve the analysis of international migration and its consequences for individuals and societies. It is the result of converging ideas and efforts. From one perspective, in the wake of crises at the southern European and United States borders, Lawrence Yang began to question whether current research approaches were up to the task of understanding contemporary challenges let alone solving them. His field is the scientific study of stigma, which has been defined as the co-occurrence of labeling, stereotyping, separation, status loss, and discrimination in the context of power differentials (Link and Phelan 2001). Yang's work utilizes a culturally grounded lens to examine stigma as a circumstance that naturally drew him to the issue of stigma experienced by migrants (Yang et al. 2007, 2014). Given how crises in Europe and the United States have played out, it seemed obvious to Yang

that immigrants and their descendants were being subjected to a full array of stigma processes. Yet researchers from the field of stigma had not fully taken up the phenomenon of international migration—which involves macro-social forces, such as colonialism, that span countries and generations, intergroup and interpersonal interactions across various domains within countries as well as the psychological experiences of individuals—as a focus of study. Moreover, it seemed to Yang that absent from scholarship on the causes, trends, and consequences of international migration was any critical engagement with the concept of stigma.

Simultaneously, as described in the Preface, the Ernst Strüngmann Forum assessed a pressing need in research to develop a Forum that addressed stigma: its origins, how it manifests cross-culturally as well as potential processes of destigmatization. Thus, in November 2018, Julia Lupp, director of the Ernst Strüngmann Forum, approached Lawrence Yang to begin a discussion that ultimately led to the convening of this Forum, intended to advance a potentially transformative new application of the concept of stigma in the analysis of immigration-related processes. Their discussion quickly grew to include Bruce Link, a renowned stigma expert (Link and Phelan 2001), who helped formulate an initial proposal, which identified that while much more was understood about the impact of stigma on health, very little was known about the processes of stigma in relation to immigration. In the critique of this initial proposal, the lack of a migration perspective became evident; a nuanced understanding of international migration would be required to illuminate what benefits a “collision” between these two fields (i.e., migration and stigma research) might yield. Thus, Yang and Link recruited immigration expert Maureen Eger to join in the preparation of the proposal.

Over the next few months, a series of virtual meetings helped us develop a cogent proposal. In the beginning, we provided overviews of our respective fields, even assigning each other background homework. Given migration scholars’ long-standing attention to research questions related to prejudice, discrimination, and exclusion, the initial questions that immediately emerged were: Isn’t there already a field that addresses these issues? What, if anything, could be useful about incorporating the stigma framework with migration research? We quickly realized that despite some overlap in our fields of research (e.g., the analysis of prejudice and discrimination), there was little critical or comparative engagement between the fields, primarily due to the use of different concepts and theories. For example, one of the seminal accounts of prejudice consistently used by migration scholars is group threat theory (Blumer 1958), whereas stigma scholars regularly employ Link and Phelan’s conceptual work on stigma (Link and Phelan 2001). We wondered if the analytical challenges facing our respective fields might be overcome with increased engagement between them. We pondered what we might learn from each other if we kept talking. So, we did. Ultimately, our discussions yielded three observations that underscored the need for a Forum:

1. Stigma associated with international migration exists, though arguably varies within and between societies.
2. Conceptual and analytical frameworks are lacking to guide research on “migration stigma.”
3. Without a greater understanding of the phenomenon, our ability as societies to confront the multitude of challenges that arise from it is severely limited.

Based on these discussions, we outlined key areas of inquiry, proposed additional migration experts, Irena Kogan and Christian Albrekt Larsen, as members of the Program Advisory Committee, and submitted a proposal to the Ernst Strüngmann Forum. The Program Advisory Committee met in Frankfurt, Germany (February 27–29, 2020), where it became clear that although the stigmatization of (some) international migrants has long been recognized to occur, comprehensive conceptual and analytical frameworks to guide research was lacking. Thus, the Forum offered an invaluable opportunity to explore commonalities, understand differences, and develop an integrated framework capable of supporting future cross-disciplinary research between the fields of stigma and international migration. We also hoped that the creation of a new field, migration stigma, might produce novel knowledge that would better inform pragmatic economic, educational, health, and other social policy responses to alleviate the stigma faced by immigrant groups and to help facilitate their full participation and inclusion into societies worldwide.

Following delays brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic, the 32nd Ernst Strüngmann Forum, entitled “Stigma Processes in the Context of Migration-Generated Diversity,” took place from June 5–10, 2022, in Frankfurt, Germany. The Forum brought together researchers from the (im)migration and stigma fields to scrutinize the relationships between stigma and international migration and to explore the linkages that underpin stigma in the context of immigration-generated diversity at multiple levels (e.g., interpersonal, intrapersonal, structural) and through multiple perspectives (e.g., social, cultural, economic, historical, political).

To advance these goals, scholars were assigned to one of four working groups which reflected the areas of inquiry previously identified as essential for unpacking and advancing understanding of migration stigma (detailed below). This book synthesizes the intense conversations among scholars from two different fields and introduces the concept of migration stigma to help generate new understandings of the complex challenges facing immigrants, their descendants, and contemporary societies. Forum participants worked together to identify gaps in knowledge and interrogate taken-for-granted assumptions in their fields. They listened, debated, and engaged across disciplinary, theoretical, and methodological boundaries. They put forth novel ideas and digested critical feedback on the fly. The resulting discussions were both intellectually exhausting and exhilarating. The emergent insights and new ideas and

analytical tools developed through these discussions are captured in the resulting group reports (see Chapters 2, 5, 8, and 10). We are excited to share these new ideas and analytical tools and hope they will inspire future empirical research to expand our collective knowledge.

## Overview of Chapters

It is important to note that at the Forum, the working groups used the term “migrant” in different ways. Group 1 highlighted the role of movement in its understanding of the term, while Group 3 used the language of existing social policies. Group 2 showed that “migrant” may be an objective or subjective category or identity, while Group 4 concluded that the term “migrant” can be a stigmatizing label. In different chapters, the term “migrant” is used objectively to describe individuals who have crossed international borders as well as to refer to the children of immigrants. Sometimes it is used in multiple ways. These inconsistencies reflect the actual discussions and provide starting points for future study, theorizing, and empirical research.

As stigma is the co-occurrence of labeling, stereotyping, separation, status loss, and discrimination in the context of power differentials (Link and Phelan 2001), we define “migration stigma” as *the co-occurrence of these phenomena in relation to a racial or ethnic group with a history of international migration*. Contributions in this volume (a) contemplate how migration stigma, so defined, affects areas such as health, financial well-being, and social cohesion; (b) identify the multilevel and temporal processes underlying migration stigma; and (c) propose social, economic, and policy frameworks to address its harmful consequences. Below, we provide an overview of the four focal areas of inquiry and the chapters that contributed to intensive discussions of them.

### **Group 1: How Are Stigma Processes Related to Different Aspects of Migration-Generated Diversity?**

The core ambition of Group 1, moderated by Bruce Link, was to achieve a conceptual mapping of the terms prejudice and stigma as they are used in the research literature focused on migration and on stigma. The group sought to identify overlap, detect differences, but most importantly to find points of insight that might emerge from considering the two fields together. The product that emerged (Blasco et al., Chapter 2, this volume) serves to inform readers regarding concepts, theories, and frameworks that might be useful to scholars working at the intersection of these two fields.

To inform stigma researchers of core terminology in the migration field, Blasco et al. review distinctions among immigration, emigration, and migration. Pushing somewhat deeper, they identify the centrality of movement, noting that both the movement of people across borders as well as the movement

of borders around stationary people create circumstances of relevance for the new field of migration-related stigma to address.

In considering differences between concepts of prejudice and stigma, Blasco et al. drew on the background paper by Bohman et al. (Chapter 3, this volume), which compared Link and Phelan's (2001) conceptualization of stigma to Blumer's (1958) threat theory. Bohman et al. noted overlap but also key differences between theories. For example, the stigma framework includes a broad set of interrelated concepts (including labeling, stereotyping, othering, devaluing, and discriminating in a circumstance of power differentiations), and group threat theory focuses on a majority group's defense of their position in a country's social hierarchy resulting in prejudice and other forms of exclusion.

Noting that stigma researchers had developed multiple concepts and measures to assess circumstances that are subject to stigmatization, Blasco et al. engaged in the task of developing a "stigma tool kit" that investigators seeking to understand migration-related stigma more deeply might use in future research. In their report, Blasco et al. (Chapter 2, this volume) provide definitions of each concept along with references that identify the origin of each measure. To facilitate the use of the identified "tools," Blasco et al. also offer suggestions about how the measures might be used to study migration-related stigma and note that for stigma measures to be used effectively, they need to be adapted to multiple cultural contexts. In keeping with this reality, the group invoked the conceptual framework developed by Yang et al. (2007), which instructs investigators to identify "what matters most" to actors in local contexts to identify the content of any measures they might use. The advice is to identify what is crucial in any local context for being regarded as a whole person worthy of full participation in social activities and to then focus the content of any stigma measures on whatever that is.

While the tool kit was conceptualized as something the stigma field might bring to the migration literature, the group was also quick to recognize that whether and to what extent stigma might matter depended heavily on the nature and circumstances of the human movement that the migration entailed: Who was moving, from where to where, and how much, if any, threat would the majority group in the destination country perceive in any movement that occurred? This kind of specification is obviously important for understanding the particulars of any migration experience, but the insights provided also delivered a critical lesson to stigma researchers in terms of the need to specify the conditions under which stigma is likely to arise in any circumstance.

Two background papers contributed to the group's discussion and deeply underscored some of its general conclusions. As mentioned above, in their comparison of "group threat theory" (Blumer 1958) and "conceptualizing stigma" (Link and Phelan 2001), Bohman et al. (Chapter 3, this volume) explore the possibility and value of comparing core works from the two research traditions. In addition, they provide a strong example of how work in each research tradition might be advanced when issues are considered through the

lens of the other research tradition. Further, Bohman et al. emphasize the critical importance of the threat experienced by the destination country's majority population, in keeping with the group's goal of specifying the conditions under which prejudice and discrimination are operative.

Pachankis and Wang (Chapter 4, this volume) examine the issue of "intersectionality," underscoring the need to understand multiple status configurations to capture the full stigma experience of migrants. An ostensibly similar migration from one place to another could be substantially different for groups such as different LGBTQ populations, social classes, or people with different race and ethnic identities. Pachankis and Wang equipped the group with a language to understand some of these complexities and emphasized the need to specify the conditions under which migration stigma is likely affect the lives of people who migrate.

## **Group 2: Migration, Stigma, and Lived Experiences: A Conceptual Framework for Centering Lived Experiences**

The overarching aim of this discussion group, led by Tomás Jiménez, was to examine the daily lived experiences that occur among migrant groups and communities in a destination country. Group 2 was distinct from other groups in that it focused on how differences in "everyday lived experiences" between groups contribute to stigma as well as processes of resilience and social cohesion. The "lived experience" of groups refers to the everyday engagements that take place in a local world where one's standing as a "respected person" is continuously defined, sought, or lost. From the outset, the group identified that the lived experience of being in a migrant group had yet to be fully conceptualized while considering processes of stigma as well as migration. The group thus sought to center the intersection of lived experiences of migrants in the context of macro-social forces that powerfully shape the everyday experience of migrants—both at the macro (i.e., institutions and policies) and meso levels (i.e., interactions with more proximal institutional actors). The purpose of this focus was to highlight stigma processes confronted by migrant groups and the response mechanisms that are evoked to counteract stigma.

In a first orienting framework, García et al. (Chapter 5, this volume) articulate how lived experiences of stigma among "migrant groups" are shaped in interaction with two large-scale societal forces:

1. Institutional mechanisms comprised of economic, immigration, education, and welfare systems determine access to resources (e.g., work opportunities) and shape migrant groups' experiences of stigma in the structural realm.
2. Salient categories or statuses (e.g., ethnicity, religion, and language) associated with migrant groups interface with the destination country's

preexisting social class and racial hierarchies; this interface then shapes the extent to which the immigrant group is welcomed (or not).

García et al. relate these two macro-social forces to the migrant groups' subjective perception of their group identity as "migrants," thus situating the lived experience of stigma as being influenced by, as well as reciprocally influencing, these macro-social forces.

García et al. consider how meso-level institutions (e.g., officials in school or housing agencies) are experienced in the everyday life of migrants. These meso-level institutions and actors can be of the type that are more desired by people in their lives (e.g., those that enable educational and work opportunities) or can take the form of institutions where contact is undesired and coercive power and stigma is brought to bear on migrants (e.g., contact with immigration control and the associated stigma of being "undocumented"). The circumstances by which individuals from migrant groups encounter these institutions are shaped by institutions' recognition (or labeling) of individuals as belonging to a migrant group. Here, García et al. view the very act of being identified as belonging to the migrant social group as shaping and constraining the lived experience.

In their contribution, Kogan et al. (Chapter 6, this volume) illuminate these dynamics by examining short-term consequences of migrants' discriminatory experiences in German public schools (i.e., a meso-level institution), with a focus on how self-reported discrimination is associated with different trajectories in the German education and training system. Importantly, as identified by this working group, some meso-level institutions that exist on behalf of migrant groups (e.g., ethnicity-based rights groups) could also buffer the lived experience of stigma at the level of organizations.

Finally, García et al. formulate a typology of the lived experience of stigma among migrants and their response to it, expanding on how stigma operates to include within-individual (i.e., when an individual internalizes negative views about their own migrant group) as well as between-individual experiences (i.e., when discrimination is expressed between receiving group and migrant group members). Migrants are not merely passive recipients of stigma; they actively respond to it. One major contribution from the group was an expansive classification of the potential range of responses to stigma: this can include internalizing the stigma of being identified as a migrant group member, "doing nothing" by giving up efforts in accordance with a stereotyped characteristic, or resisting stigma (e.g., by taking denigrating labels and embracing them to create new and positive meanings).

In addition to analyzing how stigma occurs, Castañeda and Holmes (Chapter 7, this volume) helped the group focus on "responses" to stigma by illustrating immigrant youths' active responses to stigma by embracing, renegotiating, or navigating its narratives. Concepts in their chapter contributed to the working group report itself, which identified the effects that these strategies have on

the stigma itself, in that responses to stigma at the individual and group levels can shape the salience of the stigma itself across multiple life domains. The lived experience of stigma, therefore, impacts important life outcomes such as health, access to educational, housing, and employment opportunities.

### **Group 3: How Are Stigma Processes Reflected in Policies That Impact Migrants? How Do Policies That Impact Migrants Amplify and/or Mitigate Stigma Processes?**

The overarching goal of Group 3, moderated by Christian Albrekt Larsen, was to theorize about relationships among stigma processes and social policies. Focus was thus both on the potential impact of stigma on macro-level structures as well as how institutions and policies affect the stigmatization of immigrants. A background paper by Hatzenbuehler (Chapter 9, this volume) laid the foundation for discussion by synthesizing recent research from the stigma field on what he calls “structural stigma,” or “societal-level conditions, cultural norms, and institutional policies that constrain the opportunities, resources, and well-being of the stigmatized” (Hatzenbuehler and Link 2014:2). The key insight is that policies have the capacity (a) to mitigate stigma and improve outcomes for individuals or (b) to amplify stigma and generate worse outcomes for the stigmatized. Sometimes policies that are aimed at stigma reduction may have harmful, unintended consequences, thus suggesting that the interplay between macro-level structures and individual outcomes is not always straightforward.

In the report of the group’s discussions, Misra et al. (Chapter 8, this volume) relied on comparative analytical tools and applied abstract typologies from the field of comparative social policy to understand stigma in the context of immigration-generated diversity. The result is sweeping in scope. To consider how stigma processes are embedded in policies affecting immigrants, Misra et al. theorized about the ways in which national policy narratives and frames shape types of policies. For instance, they considered how ideal typical approaches to the incorporation of immigrants (assimilationist, integrationist, and multiculturalist regimes) strengthen or weaken the social and economic boundaries between native-born and foreign-born. Further, they considered the stigmatizing potential of specific policy types (targeted, universal, mainstream, and antidiscrimination) and their theoretical impact on immigrants’ rights, opportunities, and outcomes. Misra et al. point out that the relationship between policies and outcomes are dynamic, affecting immigrants and natives alike. Indeed, policy feedback effects may reinforce existing policies that are stigmatizing, may generate demands for change and policy reform, or contribute to backlash and polarization.

A clear tension raised by Misra et al. is the unresolved issue of whether policies that draw attention to inequalities due to minority status are necessary for the reduction of inequality or whether such policies only reinforce boundaries between majority and minority groups. They explain the potential trade-offs

of these approaches in the stigmatization of immigrants and their descendants but concede that this remains an open question, requiring future empirical inquiry. Results from analyses that test these propositions would contribute much to our knowledge of stigma and would also speak to ongoing debates in many countries about how best to combat inequality stemming from the differential treatment, whether historic or contemporary, of racial and ethnic minority groups.

#### **Group 4: Processes and Pathways of Stigmatization and Destigmatization over Time**

Led by Maureen Eger, this discussion group aspired to incorporate insights gleaned from other groups' discussions of key concepts and micro- and macro-level processes and to apply a longer-term temporal lens to the analysis of migration stigma. The group began with the observation that the experiences of immigrant groups vary both between and within societies. Through a discussion of historical and contemporary examples, they identified key commonalities and differences related to group outcomes and trajectories over time.

In looking for conceptual overlap between the fields of international migration and stigma they sought to clarify what stigmatization and destigmatization means in the context of immigration-generated diversity over prolonged periods of time. The group determined that the absence of stigma is conceptually more similar to "inclusion" than "integration." Some groups may be well integrated into society (i.e., high employment rates, speak the national language) but still face stigma, whereas other groups may never be stigmatized regardless of levels of economic and cultural integration.

In their discussions, Velásquez et al. (Chapter 10, this volume) focused on abstract processes and mechanisms capable of accounting for the trajectories of groups over longer periods of time (i.e., multiple generations). Here, the contribution by Okamoto and Adem (Chapter 12, this volume) was especially helpful. Focusing on destigmatization, which involves changing the cultural constructions of what it means to be a stigmatized group, Okamoto and Adem provide a sociological account of how patterns of interactions within specific societal domains may reduce the stigma that immigrants and their descendants face over time.

Three important insights emerged (see Velásquez et al., Chapter 10, this volume):

1. The labeling of some groups as "migrants" but not others does not always follow from actual histories of immigration, and without this label, a group is not stigmatized.
2. Understanding processes of stigmatization and destigmatization requires that we adopt a longer time horizon than stigma researchers typically do.

3. To analyze stigma over significantly longer periods of time (i.e., decades and centuries), we must think about the stigmatization of groups rather than individuals.

To expand, first, some groups of immigrants, who reside in a country where they were not born, are never truly regarded as migrants, whereas others who were born and raised in a country but whose ancestors immigrated are still considered migrants, sometimes for generations (i.e., second- and third-generation immigrants). Thus, the label “migrant” is the first constitutive component of stigmatization and has further implications for stereotyping, separation, status loss, and discrimination. Without this label, by definition, a group is not stigmatized. Second, adopting a longer-term view allows us to understand better the experiences of immigrants as well as their descendants, who are sometimes still erroneously referred to as migrants, despite no personal history of immigration. A longer time horizon puts us in a position to analyze stigma over time, specifically processes of stigmatization and destigmatization, which may unfold over generations. Velásquez et al. argue that this approach makes the identification of specific causes underlying the different trajectories of stigma that immigrant groups face more likely. Third, expanding the time span of analysis necessitates an explicit focus on experiences of racial and ethnic minority groups rather than individuals. This focus on groups does not negate the experiences of individuals (within groups) and individual-level processes in the short term. Instead, Velásquez et al. contend that the personal experiences of individuals at any one point in time depend to a large extent on levels of stigma faced by immigrant groups and their descendants.

Based on these three insights, Velásquez et al. developed two analytical models. They provide a framework for understanding why particular immigrant groups are labeled migrants while others are not. They argue that existing social hierarchies in a destination country trigger a sorting process which influences the extent to which immigrants and their descendants are subject to separation, stereotyping, status loss, and discrimination. Over time various societal domains, exogenous events, and feedback loops affect the levels of stigma experienced by the minority group. In addition, they identify five ideal-type pathways that immigrants and their descendants may experience over time: non-emergence, status reversal, stigma increase, stigma reduction, and stigma reinforcement.

Taken together, Velásquez et al. provide an abstract framework for understanding migration stigma over time. They conclude that a stigma lens will enhance the analysis of reactions to immigration and the experiences of immigrants and their descendants. Moreover, they see benefits of adopting this analytical framework for stigma research more generally. Previous research on stigma has focused mainly on experiences within the life course, but a longer-term perspective that treats stigma as a group-level feature has the potential to elucidate the causes of stigmatization and destigmatization, shedding light on

the status of groups over time. Accordingly, empirical tests of the models developed by Velásquez et al. could change theoretical understanding of stigma and its application to other stigmatized groups and conditions.

### **From Phenomenon to Concept to Field of Inquiry**

Through the invited papers and in-depth discussions within and between working groups at this Forum, a new concept emerged—migration stigma—that holds the potential of integrating research from two fields to create a new area of inquiry. As detailed above, the chapters in this volume make theoretical and analytical contributions that provide a roadmap for future empirical research. Taken together, four key contributions stand out.

#### **Insights Can Be Gained by Integrating Stigma and Migration Research Traditions**

By integrating these two fields, we have constructed new ways of conceptualizing and analyzing the phenomenon of migration stigma. Specifically, we bring new analytic power via a multicomponent stigma framework to the multilevel phenomenon of migration, creating a greatly deepened perspective that researchers can use to broaden understanding of migration stigma. Analysis of how stigma processes are manifest in the macro- and meso-level causes of and responses to migration—and how these factors shape the micro level, lived experience of stigma—offers new insights into this phenomenon.

While the discussions in each group advance this endeavour, Blasco et al. (Chapter 2, this volume) provide a way to map prejudice and stigma concepts, drawn from both fields, which will enhance the lens by which future questions about migration stigma may be pursued. By advancing thinking around the role of macro-level forces and societal-level domains in the stigmatization of some immigrant groups and their descendants over decades and even centuries, Velásquez et al. (Chapter 10, this volume) provide a way to account for the emergence, persistence, and dissipation of stigma over a prolonged time span.

#### **Concepts from the Migration Field Help Specify Whether and to What Extent Stigma Is Experienced**

While the conceptualization of stigma carries some significant value for understanding the experience of immigrants and their descendants, the conditions of migration, as explicated by migration researchers, reveal when and how strongly stigma may be expressed and experienced. Extant concepts from the stigma field are suggestive with respect to the intensity of stigmatization (e.g., how sticky the labels are, how strong the stereotypes are, how powerful the distinctions between “us” and “them” are). Although these concepts bring to

light some aspects of the severity of the stigma experience, migration-related issues strongly underscore the need for greater clarity. To understand stigma, we need to know who is moving, what caused them to move, what conditions are present where they move, and the nature of any (perceived) threat experienced by citizens and residents in destination countries. All this is obviously important for understanding migration stigma, but a more generic contribution is there for stigma researchers to absorb. It is critical, in any situation, to conceptualize and identify the circumstances that turn stigma on and off.

This insight emerged in multiple groups. The construction of a stigma tool kit by Blasco et al. (Chapter 2, this volume) stimulated discussion as to when concepts would be applicable and when they would not. García et al. (Chapter 5, this volume) conceptualized the capacity to resist stigma, thereby specifying circumstances that might turn off stigma processes. Misra et al. (Chapter 8, this volume) identified types of policies that would amplify stigma or reduce its impact. By adopting a longer time horizon that focuses on groups' trajectories over time, the analytical framework in Velásquez et al. (Chapter 10, this volume) identifies that some immigrant groups and their native-born descendants are labeled "migrants" and subject to further stigmatization whereas other immigrant groups are not.

### **Reciprocal Connections between Macro-Level Structures and Lived Experience Can Be Identified**

A multilevel, comparative, and temporal approach to examining migration stigma helps elucidate how macro-level forces affect individuals' experiences of stigma and, reciprocally, how the lived experience of migrants can, over time, shape macro-level forces. For example, policy frameworks and related policy types reflect a country's ideological and bureaucratic approach to immigration. They also affect the roles, rights, and opportunities of immigrants and their family members who (do and do not) live there. Over time, these lived experiences (in particular, organized efforts, such as individual and group advocacy) may contribute to feedback processes for policies governing immigration and the inclusion of immigrants and their families in national institutions, such as the welfare state (e.g., Eger et al. 2020). In other words, the very macro-level forces that affect the lives of immigrants may, in some cases, be self-reinforcing or, in other circumstances, altered by immigrants' and others' actions over time.

While each discussion group addressed these points, Misra et al. (Chapter 8, this volume) gave particular attention to how social policies reflect stigma processes and how policies, in turn, contribute to the amplification or reduction of stigma facing immigrants and their descendants. In addition, García et al. (Chapter 5, this volume) center the complex interplay of the lived experiences of immigrants in the context of macro-level and meso-level institutions

and explain how individual-level experiences and responses reciprocally shape community- and country-level policies, institutions, and settings.

### **Promising Approaches to Mitigate Stigma through Policy and Intervention**

Our conceptualization of migration stigma and the accompanying analytical models presented in this volume provide new and enhanced opportunities to measure, explain, and understand stigma associated with international migration across societies and over time. This is an essential first step in the path to developing pragmatic social, educational, health, and economic policies as well as other interventions to reduce migration stigma experienced by immigrant groups and their descendants.

### **Conclusion**

This Forum facilitated dialogue among scholars from two distinct fields: immigration and stigma. Although both examine the causes and consequences of prejudice, discrimination, and exclusion, prior to the Forum, engagement between these fields was virtually nonexistent. A common reason why scholars in different fields do not engage with each other is because those fields do not cross disciplinary boundaries. However, that was not the case in this situation. Indeed, both fields are multidisciplinary, with contributions from across the social sciences. Therefore, and especially given these two fields' overlapping concern with prejudice, discrimination, and exclusion, it may seem surprising that it required a Forum to initiate this dialogue. However, the vast majority of previous research investigating phenomena related to immigration did not adopt the lens of stigma, and previous scholarship using a stigma framework tended not to focus on immigration. Further, migration researchers typically examine phenomena related to immigration separately and thus employ a variety of theoretical frameworks to explain distinct reactions to immigration and specific experiences of immigrants. In contrast, stigma researchers use a theoretical lens that sees prejudice, discrimination, and exclusion as elements of one multifaceted phenomenon.

Over the course of a week, we introduced our respective fields to each other, comparing concepts, theories, research practices, insights, and conclusions. In doing so, our respective strengths came to light as did the myriad ways that our distinct fields contribute important knowledge about the world. However, this process also forced us to grapple with limitations in our fields and acknowledge that despite our best efforts, we still lack understanding. These intensive conversations ultimately led us to introduce and develop the concept of migration stigma as well as new analytical tools, which we believe will improve the

examination and understanding of the challenges which face immigrants, their descendants, and contemporary multiethnic and multiracial societies.

To be clear, this volume does not merely apply the concept of stigma to a new group, immigrants, nor does it repackage immigration research as stigma research. It is a novel, rigorous attempt to push the boundaries of *both* fields so that they intersect in ways that will overcome limitations in scientific knowledge about *both* stigma and immigration. While we claim to have taken a substantial step forward, we remain humbled by what is left to be done:

- Many new ideas require further development.
- Theoretical propositions regarding when, why, and how migration stigma emerges need to be tested with empirical research.
- Enacted policies must be evaluated with respect to consequences for migration stigma.
- Strategies for managing or resisting stigmatization require further consideration.
- Identifying the reasons why levels of migration stigma change or do not change over long periods of time (i.e., generations, decades, even centuries) requires investing in both long-term data collection and innovative use of historical data sources.

In summary, we hope to have provided a new concept and analytical tools that can be deployed to advance knowledge in the new and wide-open field of migration stigma. We are excited by the possibility that this new field of inquiry will one day be in a position to propose evidence-based social, economic, health, educational, and other policy solutions to address the harmful consequences of migration stigma.

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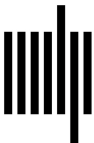
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