Introduction to Special Issue on Immigrant Families

This Special Issue is dedicated to examining immigrant families’ dynamics across generations and over time, in the context of global migration and transnationalism. The manuscripts included in the issue explore the multidimensional experience of immigration from the perspective of family science. Reflecting the diversity of contemporary immigrants, the manuscripts selected for the issue spotlight immigrant families that represent different countries of origin, migration experiences, socioeconomic characteristics, length of residency in the host country, and varied resources and vulnerabilities. Research-based manuscripts explore changing intergenerational relationships, parenting practices, parent-child conflicts, acculturation and family adaptation, transnational migration, and immigrants’ views of home later in life.

Martha I. Zapata Roblyer, Mayra Y. Bámaca–Colbert, Sasha M. Rojas, and Richard C. Cervantes examine parent-child conflict in Latino families using parallel dual frames of reference and attention to cultural and generational gaps. Their findings can inform the development of comprehensive models of parent-child conflict and can be of use to family life educators.

Chinwe Onwujuba, Loren D. Marks, and Olena Nesteruk’s article contributes to the literature on Nigerian immigrant parenting practices and attitudes by exploring the process of acculturation and integration of the two value systems. The study highlights cultural strengths of this population and explains the challenges they experience raising children in a new context.

Vappu Tyyskä explores teen-parent relationships, solidarity and resiliency among Sri Lankan Tamil families in Canada. This manuscript touches upon different areas of intergenerational negotiation, explores gender differences and parental expectations as well as cohort differences based on the age at immigration.

Joanna Wu and Christy L. Lleras’s article describes a longitudinal examination of the second generation immigrant youth’s outcomes, with a focus on family characteristics and neighborhood context. With some gender and ethnic variation, family embeddedness during adolescence influences key education and work outcomes during the transition to adulthood.

Juyoung Jang, Veronica Deenanath, and Catherine A. Solheim focus on U.S.-Mexican transnational families and psychological distress of having a family member in the United States. The articles takes into account family and community contexts and highlights different impacts of having migrating family members in the U.S. for married adults and adolescents in Mexican families.

Olena Nesteruk and Christine A. Price’s article focuses on the understudied population of long-term immigrants in middle and later life. Guided by the life course perspective, these authors explore immigrants’ changing attachments, views of home, and aging in their adoptive
country. Researchers call for further study of immigration as a complex multi-dimensional process that unfolds over one’s life course, with a focus on the intersection of aging, immigration, and ethnicity.

We hope that this selection of articles will provide family scholars with inspiration to advance research on diverse immigrant families and equip practitioners with knowledge necessary for culturally sensitive models of practice.

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