

Glossary of Immigration-Related Terms

Acculturation: A bilinear process occurring with respect to both the new and the heritage culture.

Acculturative stress: Stressful life events thought to be associated with the acculturation process.

Adultification (or parentification): Occurs when children or adolescents prematurely take on mature adult or parental roles, possibly before they are emotionally or developmentally ready.

Assimilation: Refers to a particular type of acculturation that involves adopting the new culture while simultaneously letting go of attachment to the heritage culture.

Assimilation ideology: Belief that the best approach to managing differences across cultures is for immigrants and other minority groups to assimilate to a dominant culture. Assimilation toward the common norms and rules is the desired end state. Eliminating ethnic group boundaries thereby eliminates intergroup prejudice.

Assistive technology: Refers to any rehabilitative device for individuals with disabilities.

Asylum seekers: Individuals who travel to the United States on their own and apply for asylum, which they may or may not be granted. These individuals arrive in the United States via student, tourist, and business visas or may be unauthorized. Asylum seekers apply to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security in the hope that they will be approved for refugee status based on their previous, often traumatic, experiences prior to migration.

Authoritarianism: A form of social organization characterized by submission to authority. In politics, an authoritarian government is one in which political authority is concentrated in a small group of political elite, typically unelected by the people (but not necessarily), who possess exclusive, mostly unaccountable, and arbitrary power. Authoritarianism differs from totalitarianism in that social and economic institutions exist that are not under the government's control.

Aversive racism: Refers to a theory proposed by Gaertner and Dovidio (1986) based on the idea that evaluations of racial/ethnic minorities are characterized by a conflict between Whites' endorsement of egalitarian values and their unacknowledged negative attitudes toward racial/ethnic outgroups.

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Behavioral acculturation: The extent of immigrants' or foreign-born individuals' participation in their culture of origin and/or new culture.

Bilingual Education: Any form of education in which academic content is taught in two languages (usually a native and a secondary language), with varying amounts of each language used in accordance with the program model.

Children of immigrants: Parents are immigrants; it includes both first- and second-generation immigrant children and adolescents (used interchangeably with immigrant origin; see *Children of Immigration* by C. Suárez-Orozco & M. Suárez-Orozco, 2001, for rationale).

Clinician bias: Failure to take culture into consideration when attempting to service the mental health needs of individuals outside of clinician's own culture.

Collectivism: Any philosophic, political, economic, or social outlook that emphasizes the interdependence of every human in some collective group and the priority of group goals over individual goals.

Culture: Culture has been described as the embodiment of a worldview through learned and transmitted beliefs, values, and practices, including religious and spiritual traditions. Inherent in this definition is the acknowledgment that all individuals are cultural beings and have a cultural, ethnic, and racial heritage. It also encompasses a way of living informed by the historical, economic, ecological, and political forces on a group. Culture is fluid and dynamic, with cultural universal phenomena and culturally specific or relative constructs. (See *APA Guidelines on multicultural education, training, research, practice, and organizational change for psychologists, 2003*).

Culture-bound syndrome: Any combination of psychological or somatic symptoms that are only considered a recognizable disease by a particular culture or society.

Culture brokering: When children of foreign-born parents act as an aid for their parents to help them with culture and language of a new society (e.g., doctor appointments, parent-teacher conferences, financial and legal situations).

Cultural identity (also known as **ethnic identity**): Immigrants' or foreign-born individuals' sense of belonging to, positive regard for, and pride in their native culture.

Curandero: Traditional folk healer in Latin America who works to cure physical and spiritual illness.

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Conservatism: Political or social philosophy based on the disposition to preserve or restore what is established and traditional and to limit change.

Day laborer: Any worker who is hired but only paid one day at a time, with no agreement between employer and employee that future work/pay will be available.

Discrimination: Unfair treatment of a person, racial group, minority, etc.; action based on prejudice.

Diversity immigrant visa: Also known as the Green Card Lottery. Congressionally mandated lottery program for receiving a U.S. Permanent Resident Card.

Downward assimilation: Process of assimilating or integrating into a new culture that results in foreign individuals finding themselves in a poor community.

Ecology: The study of the relationships between living organisms and their environment.

Employment-based immigration: Situations in which individuals migrate from their country of origin to seek employment. This can apply to those who cannot find work in their country of origin, as well as highly skilled individuals who are sought after by companies outside their country of origin.

Ethnicity: The acceptance of the group mores and practices of one's culture of origin and the concomitant sense of belonging. Individuals may have multiple ethnic identities that operate with different salience at different times. See (*APA Guidelines on multicultural education, training, research, practice, and organizational change for psychologists*, 2003).

Essentialism: Belief system in which "races" are considered distinct entities with immutable biological differences.

Family preference system: Refers to a replacement system for simple "quotas" of visas distributed to immigrants from various regions. This system places immigrants into different groups called "preferences," which are based on their relationship with U.S. citizens, and each of these groups is allotted a certain number of visas that can then be distributed to those who qualify.

Fictive kin: Kinship that is not based in genetics or marriage.

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First generation: Born abroad to non-U.S. citizen parents [used interchangeably in the literature with foreign-born and immigrant. Immigrant is the generic term of choice in this report unless referring to others' research or making a distinction between generations].

Some researchers distinguish between several subcategories, as each has distinct acculturative, linguistic, and educational advantages and challenges (see Rumbaut, 2004, for details). Few studies provide this level of analysis, however, and these categories are generally subsumed under the first generation:

- 1.75 generation (born abroad, arriving prior to school age)
- 1.5 generation (born abroad, arriving after school age but prior to adolescence)
- 1.25 generation (arriving after adolescence but before adulthood)

Foreign-born: Born abroad to non-U.S. citizen parents (used interchangeably in the literature with first generation and immigrant).

Full immersion or native-language education: Any form of education in which academic content is taught only in one language.

Gender-based asylum claims: Refers to requests for asylum (see Asylum Seekers) based on violence related to one's own gender. For example, women may request asylum in an effort to escape female genital mutilation, rape, forced marriage, domestic violence, sexual slavery, and many other acts of violence committed against them because of their gender.

Green card: A U.S. Permanent Resident Card (USCIS Form I-551), formerly an Alien Registration Card or Alien Registration Receipt Card (INS Form I-151), is an identification card attesting to the permanent resident status of an alien in the United States. It is known informally as a green card because it had been green in color from 1946 to 1964, and it reverted to that color again in May 2010.

Human capital: Competences, knowledge, and personality attributes embodied in the ability to perform labor that produces economic value; attributes gained through education and experience (A. Sullivan & Sheffrin, 2003).

Humanitarian relief: Material or logistical aid presented in response to an event that represents a critical threat to the health, safety, security, and well-being of a particular community or region.

Imam: Title of various Muslim leaders, frequently the spiritual leader of a mosque or a particular Muslim community.

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Immigrant health paradox: Also referred to as epidemiological paradox or Latino paradox. Pattern of research findings that indicate that first-generation immigrants demonstrate the best performance on a variety of physical/behavioral/and educational outcomes, followed by a decline in subsequent generations.

Immigrant: Born abroad to non-U.S. citizen parents [used interchangeably in the literature with first generation and foreign-born].

Immigrant-origin: Includes both first- and second-generation immigrant children and adolescents with immigrant parent(s).

Implicit Association Test (IAT): A social psychological measure meant to gauge the strength of an individual's automatic association between two or more concepts.

Legal permanent residence: A noncitizen of the United States authorized to live, work, and study in the United States permanently. These individuals are holders of what is commonly referred to as the "green card."

Microaggression: Aggressive behavior between different cultures or races in the form of subtle, nonaggressive actions.

Migrant worker: Can refer to (a) individuals who work outside their country of origin or (b) individuals who migrate within a country to pursue work, such as seasonal employment.

Minority stress: Chronic social stress that results from stigmatization from being part of a minority group.

Mixed status: Some members of the family are authorized/documented while some are not (Fix & Zimmerman, 2001).

Multicultural ideology: Belief that all cultures should retain their basic cultural norms, style, and language within a greater cultural framework. Individuals learn to adapt to other cultures. In multicultural models, an appreciation for group differences reduces prejudice and enhances self-esteem.

National identity: Immigrants' or foreign-born individuals' sense of belonging to a new society.

Naturalized citizen: A foreign-born individual who has become a U.S. citizen by fulfilling requirements set forth in the Immigration and Nationality Act, including, in most cases, having resided in the United States for at least 5 years.

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Newcomer: First-generation immigrants arriving within the last 4 years.

Prejudice: Unreasonable feelings, opinions, or attitudes, especially of a hostile nature, with regard to a racial, religious, or national group.

Protective factors: Conditions in families and communities that, when present, increase the health and well-being of children and families. These attributes serve as buffers, helping parents find resources, supports, or coping strategies that allow them to parent effectively, even under stress (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2011).

Race: The category to which others assign individuals on the basis of physical characteristics, such as skin color or hair type, and the generalizations and stereotypes made as a result. Thus, “people are treated or studied as though they belong to biologically defined racial groups on the basis of such characteristics” (see: APA Guidelines on multicultural education, training, research, practice, and organizational change for psychologists, 2003).

Racial profiling: Authority figures use race or ethnicity as a basis for deciding whether or not to enforce laws or regulations.

Racism: The belief that some races are inherently superior (physically, intellectually, or culturally) to others and therefore have a right to dominate them.

Reactive identification: Immigrants or foreign-born individuals who embrace their cultural identity (from country of origin) while rejecting the new culture, after having been rejected by it.

Refugee: A person outside of his or her habitual residence who has a well-founded fear of persecution because of race, religion, nationality, or membership in a particular social group or political opinion and who is unable or unwilling to avail himself/herself of the protection of that country or return there for fear of protection (APA, 2010c).

Refugee status: A legal status granted by the United States to refugee adults and children admitted for permanent resettlement. These individuals receive social, English-language, and job-placement services during the initial 4–8 months in the country through a system of voluntary agencies and with funding from the Office for Refugee Resettlement, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

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Second generation: Born in the United States of foreign-born parent(s). Currently, all second-generation immigrant adults and children are citizens as mandated by the 14th Amendment (1868).

Selective assimilation: Assimilation to a new country in which foreign-born individuals maintain their native culture in strong ethnic enclaves but successfully participate in the new culture as well, particularly economically.

Social dominance orientation: A measurable personality trait that indicates the amount of preference an individual has for hierarchy in any society.

Social justice perspective: Psychological treatment that is rooted in the belief that all people have a right to equitable treatment and a fair allocation of societal resources including decision making. To this end, social justice addresses issues of oppression, privilege, and social inequities. Psychologists committed to such a perspective direct efforts toward making society a better place for all by challenging systemic inequalities.

Third-generation: U.S. citizen of immigrant grandparent(s).

Somatization disorder: A psychiatric diagnosis given to patients who present physical symptoms that have no underlying physical cause.

Undocumented: Individuals without legal authorization who reside in the country. These individuals are not U.S. citizens, do not hold current visas, and have not been permitted admission under a specific set of rules for longer-term residence and work permits (Passel & Cohn, 2009) [interchangeable term is undocumented; legal but pejorative term is illegal].

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) H1-B program: Used by U.S. businesses to employ foreign workers in specialty occupations that require theoretical or technical expertise in specialized fields, such as scientists, engineers, or computer programmers; capped annually at low numbers by country.

U-VISA in the Violence Against Women Act II (VAWA II): The VAWA II created a new type of nonimmigrant visa known as the U-VISA. To be eligible for this “U” visa, the applicant must have suffered “substantial physical or mental abuse” because of a variety of crimes, including domestic abuse and involuntary servitude. The applicant must have information relating to this crime that would be of assistance to law enforcement in investigating or prosecuting it. There is an annual limit of 10,000 U visas. U visa holders are work authorized and able to apply for adjustment of status after 3 years. One of the eligibility requirements is that a self-petitioner must demonstrate he/she is a person of good moral character. A VAWA-based self-petition will be denied or revoked if the record contains evidence to establish that the self-petitioner lacks good moral character. The inquiry into good moral

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character focuses on the 3 years immediately preceding the filing of the self-petition, but the adjudicating officer may investigate the self-petitioner's character beyond the 3-year period when there is reason to believe the self-petitioner may not have been a person of good moral character during that time. A self-petitioner's claim of good moral character is evaluated on a case-by-case basis, taking into account the provisions of section 101(f) of the act and the standards of the average citizen in the community. Other provisions in the VAWA II allow people who have adjusted status under it to apply for naturalization in 3 rather than in 5 years.

Visa: A document (or in many cases a stamp in a passport) showing that a person is authorized to enter a territory. Typically a visa is attached to several conditions, such as the territory it applies to, and the dates for which it is valid. A visa does not generally give a noncitizen any rights, including a right to enter a country or remain there. The possession of a visa is not in itself a guarantee of entry into the country that issued it, and a visa can be revoked at any time. The visa process merely enables the host country to verify the identity of the visa applicant before, rather than coincident with, applicant entry. Visas are associated with the request for permission to enter (or exit) a country, and are thus, for some countries, distinct from actual formal permission for an alien to enter and remain in the country.

Xenophobia: Hatred or fear of foreigners or strangers or of their politics or culture.