Guide to Learning Features

Chapter scenario

After arriving as refugees two years ago, Celine and Johan are relieved to be in Australia. Speaking at a migrant resource centre about their experiences, they both express a sense of freedom and safety. But, they also speak of the painful realities of remaking their lives and communities in a new country. It all started one ordinary day when Celine, who lived in Liberia, left home for work in her clothing and jewellery export and import business, leaving one of her younger children with her mother. That was the day of a military coup. Celine had to flee for safety, as did her husband. They both ended up in refugee camps across the border, and eventually arrived in Australia (three years later), where she was reunited with some of her children. Celine spent her first six months learning English, her third language. She knows enough now to be able to work. But, life has been difficult: the people are different, the

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Chapter Scenario boxes provide illustrative scenarios, based on everyday events from visiting a local health centre to shopping in a supermarket, and challenge you to confront the issues that arise in today's diverse, multicultural society.

Chapter overview

This chapter provides a brief overview of different frameworks and ways in which people have understood settlement and intergroup relations. We include the notion of culture shock (Oberg, 1960) because this continues to be prominent in informing policy and practice in the areas of immigrant settlement. We then explore work in the area of acculturation (introduced in Chapter 3; Redfield, Linton & Herskovits, 1936), which has been central to the development of a social psychology of immigration. Social identity theory (Tajfel, 1982) is also considered, because of its relevance to understanding identity dynamics in the context of intergroup relations. We suggest that this work has been usefully integrated to offer a relational understanding of immigration, settlement and intergroup relations. These approaches are also extended with reference to a critical sociopolitical framework that more explicitly deals with history, colonial relations and collective memory. These notions are central to illuminating the complex ways in which identities and settlement challenges are negotiated. This chapter considers:

- **Transition and settlement processes**
- **Acculturation and identity formation**
- **Power and community-building**

Chapter Overview boxes introduce the key themes found in each chapter, along with a set of core questions to consider as you read.

Key Concept 7.1
Immigrants, sojourners, refugees, asylum seekers

Immigrants are people who have made a relatively free choice to relocate from one country, region or area to another. Theirs is seen as a permanent decision to make their home in a new place. *Sojourners* are people who make a sustained, but time-limited visit to live in another country. For example, the Peace Corps, international students, embassy staff, and more recently those entering countries as 'guest workers' on specific limited-time visa categories can be considered in this category. *Refugees* and *asylum-seekers* are people who have been forced to move from their home countries for reasons such as war, natural disasters, and persecution (UNHCR, 2016). An *asylum-seeker* is an individual who has sought protection and whose claim for refugee status has not yet been determined. Whereas, a *refugee* is someone who has had their displaced status recognized under the 1951 United Nations Convention on the Status of Refugees.

Key Concept boxes provide definitions and accompanying examples on key concepts in social psychology.

Key Theorist 7.2
Edward Said

The literary theorist and public intellectual Edward Said (1935-2003) wrote extensively about the cultural and political (mis)understandings between European and non-European societies. Said was a Palestinian born in a part of Jerusalem under British rule and also lived in Egypt and the United States, which meant he lived with Arabic, English, American Christian and Muslim influences. One of his most well-known books titled *Orientalism* (1978) presented a stinging critique of the ways in which Western imperialists have portrayed and represented 'the East'. Said argued that Western culture has long presented fabricated, exotic and paternalistic images of Asian and Arabic peoples and cultures as a way of justifying European colonial rule and Anglo-American global supremacy. Reflecting on his own experiences of displacement and discrimination, Said wrote extensively about the sense of not belonging and of cultural dislocation. According to Said (1984), powerful nationalisms often create a strong sense of identity or 'we-ness' that sets insiders apart from outsiders. However, beyond this insider-outsider binary there is another much more perilous and often nameless territory of not-belonging or banishment. Exiles are people who have no clear sense of home or belonging, which can occur when people are forced to flee their homeland, but also when certain groups of people are marginalized or de-legitimized within their own country of their birth (e.g. Palestinians, Australian Aboriginals, and other colonized peoples). Although being in a state of exile is often a disorientating and painful experience, Said argues that an exilic consciousness offers a means to retain critical distance from all cultural orthodoxies, and the limiting assumptions about one's own or other cultures. Consequently, the exilic mind can present a degree of freedom of mind and intellect, and is thus also a hopeful concept as it can be drawn on to express our common humanity beyond the superficial barriers of nationality, race, class or creed.

Key Theorist boxes discuss the influence of key theorists in the field.

Research Example 7.1
Experiences of transition

Over the past few years all the authors of this book have been researching people's experiences of transition. Some of this work has considered internal migration (e.g. indigenous footballers moving from rural and remote locations to cities to join football clubs); other work has involved the movement of people from one country to another. Consistent across this work has been the way in which people describe some of their initial experiences following the move to a new place. The accounts of experiences often refer to the changes in the physical landscape, increased traffic, different road rules, different smells, the noise of the city and the different languages spoken. The extract below captures how transition is about gaining new tacit knowledge and learning how things are done around here (see Chapter 3):

They are different but you need to adjust to it, they are great people and you have to understand their language, such as the body language, the expressions, and the tone of their voice. These are not taught at the English course, however over the time you begin to read these symbolic messages and gestures and now you understand what they want to say or what they mean. (Hernandez-Fierro, 2017, p. 50)

With this process can come feelings of difference and exclusion, as well as shared understanding and inclusion.

Research Example boxes highlight the significant contributions that psychological research has made to challenging prejudice, alleviating discrimination and improving the health of our fellow citizens.

Review Exercise

People have many social identities; some are acquired (e.g. dentist, dancer, dog-handler) and some are ascribed (e.g. ethnicity, gender, age). To get you started with the material below, which relates to social categories and identities, try and answer the following questions designed to help you to clarify your own social identities.

- What are some of your social group memberships?
- What does it mean to be a member of those groups?
- What are the disadvantages of a particular social identity?
- What is a privilege associated with a particular social identity?
- In what ways is your group identity defined in relation to other groups? In particular, think about the way you do or do not fit within dominant groupings.
- If you think you do fit into a dominant group, are there any comparisons you make between yourself and people not in this dominant group that confirm your identity?

Review Exercises encourage you to reflect on the ideas discussed in the text and to relate them to your own life.