REVIEW ARTICLE

Immigration Process and Psychosocial Intervention

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Abstract: In this work, we examined the situation of international migration and highlighted the unique psychological and social dimensions of this complex phenomenon. From the perspective of positive view of immigration (entrepreneurial, proactive, etc.), we describe some background and personal factors that expose these people to psychosocial risks. For each factor, we put forward some intervention strategies from psychological theory.

Keywords: International migration; Risk factors; Social exclusion; Inclusion; Psychosocial intervention; Gender perspective.

1. Introduction

Although psychology was incorporated into the study of immigration process later than other social sciences, it has made great progress in theory and research in the past three decades. However, there is still a major challenge ahead of us: linking this study and its results to social policies and specific intervention programs.

In the face of human tragedies that occur every day in Mediterranean waters and refugee camps in Europe and the Middle East, psychology must urgently consider how to help better understand this reality and how to deal with this dramatic humanitarian problem. Similarly, given the increasing human diversity caused by new settlements in many urban environments, psychology should provide migrants with equitable and inclusive integration strategies.

In dealing with this phenomenon, we must avoid overly individualistic and clinical practices, because immigrants are obvious in the psychosocial aspects of their different ecological levels (individuals, groups, organizations, society and communities): emphasizing cultural adaptation, racial prejudice, intercultural relations, social support networks, cultural empowerment, community integration, etc.

In this article, we will deal with the phenomenon of human migration from the perspective of migration, with special emphasis on the psychological structures and theories that help us better understand this

phenomenon and guide psychosocial intervention.

2. Some Notes on the Current Immigration Phenomenon

International migration is a complex phenomenon, involving economic, social, psychological, security and many other aspects, affecting our daily life in an increasingly interconnected world[1]. It is part of the mobility process and is related to significant differences between different regions of the world. As a natural population phenomenon, it is no stranger to any region on the earth, any era or mankind itself, and no nation or country is not the successor or result of large-scale migration. But it is also a right that must ensure that individuals and/or groups can adapt to adverse situations such as hunger, war, persecution or simply the desire to improve living conditions.

According to the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the number of migrants has been gradually increasing and becoming more prominent over the past 15 years. His latest report shows that in 2015, the number of people living in non-birth countries (international migrants) was the highest ever (244 million), although this proportion has remained at about 3% for the past few decades[2].

In recent years, forced migration has played an important role in international migration. We understand this phenomenon as any migration movement with coercive factors, including threats to life and livelihoods for natural or man-made reasons: the movement of refugees and internally displaced persons, as well as those displaced by natural or environmental disasters, chemical or nuclear disasters, famine or development projects.

According to UNHCR's annual report on global trends[3], by the end of 2016, there were an estimated 65.6 million people, including 225,000 refugees, 403,000 internally displaced persons and 28,000 asylum seekers. For the international organization for migration (2017), approximately 7,500 deaths were reported for all victims in 2016 (the worst year for forced migration), and more deaths were reported on all conventional routes (Mediterranean, North and South Africa, Central Africa and Mexico-US borders) than the previous year. In the first six months of 2017 (**Figure 1**), 101,266 immigrants and refugees arrived in Europe by sea, of whom, 2,279 died[1].

Among forced migrants, environmental migrants refer to those who escape natural disasters or are displaced due to poor and deteriorating environmental conditions and seek opportunities for survival or development in other places. Unlike asylum seekers, the security of persons displaced for environmental reasons is not covered by international legislation, which increases their number and protection. UNHCR's report has predicted that 250 million to 1 billion people will leave their homes due to climate change in the next 50 years[3].

In Spain, immigration has been growing from the 1980s to the beginning of the 2008 economic crisis. According to the General Secretariat for Migration and Immigration (SGEI), as of June 30, 2017, the number of foreigners holding valid registration or residence permits was 5,131,591[4]. The five nationalities with the largest number of residents account for nearly half of the total number of foreigners: Romania, Morocco, United Kingdom, Italy and China. The distribution by autonomous region shows that Catalonia, Madrid, Andalucia and Valencia are the four communities with the largest number of foreigners (65.8% of the total). Due to the main economic immigrants, the age group 25-49 years old accounts for about 58%.

With regard to forced migration, the number of people seeking international protection in Spain has been increasing in recent years, reaching 15,755 in 2016[5]. Of these, 6,855 (67 per cent) received favorable decisions, 355 received refugee status and 6,500 received supplementary protection. Of the 1,259,955 applications registered throughout the European Union, this proportion is still only 1 percent. The Spanish government has repeatedly been accused of failing to fulfil its commitments on refugee resettlement and resettlement.
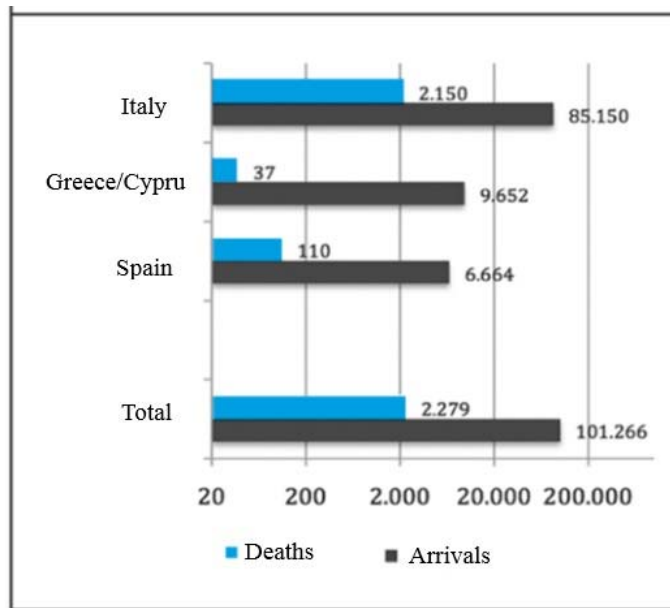
Figure 1. Immigrants arrive in Europe[1].

3. Migration Process and Social Exclusion

When we analyze the phenomenon of migration from the perspective of people, we notice that there are various factors (work, economy, community, psychology, politics, etc.) that affect the final results of migration projects, whether through inclusion or social exclusion.

The current concept of social exclusion goes beyond the only link to poverty and is related to: (1) there are generally unfavorable conditions in education, skills, employment, health, housing, economic resources and so on; (2) reduced access to institutions that allocate these capacities and resources; (3) over time, the reduction of these disadvantages and opportunities still exists. Most immigrants to our country have been in a high social risk situation. In addition, whether black or white, whether Christian or Muslim, whether women or men, their possibility of integration into society is greatly affected. In addition, the early disorientation of settlements, lack of documentation, lack of access to work and/or decent housing, lack of language and possible biological and cultural racism have multiplied the risk of exclusion[6].

This situation is even more serious for asylum seekers. The danger to the lives of forced migrants is an obvious fact, which is due to the inequality experienced by migrants in their migration process: violence in transit countries, illegal border returns, criminalization, restrictive asylum policies, etc.

4. Immigration from a Human Perspective

When we look at immigration from the perspective of immigration, another noteworthy aspect is that the psychosocial dimension of immigration becomes important as a paradigm phenomenon of the psychological process of adapting to the environment. In the face of the pessimistic literature, we would like to emphasize that there is a positive aspect of immigration, which is determined by entrepreneurial ability, management resilience to stressful environments, deployment of cognitive behavior banks aimed at achieving immigration goals, and enriching ourselves through contact with people from other cultures.

However, like any ecological transformation, migration is a period of personal imbalance, which requires profound changes in many key areas to adapt to the new environmental needs. In addition to the suffering of

migrants due to the losses inherent in the migration process, the daily pressure of migrants to adapt to hostile environments can also lead to so-called cultural shock pressure. If these adverse conditions persist over time, Ulysses syndrome or chronic stress syndrome of immigrants may occur[7]. This is not the only negative consequence of increased vulnerability, but depression, alcohol abuse and other substances, prostitution, etc.

In this context, from the perspective of human diversity, psychosocial interventions focus more on the strengths and resources of migrants in their context than on their strengths and weaknesses[8]. Since migration often involves stress, the concept of resilience helps to study migration experiences and corresponding intervention projects. However, the concept of resilience is not as a (negative) feature within an individual, but due to the dynamic interaction between interconnected systems and cumulative protective factors[9].

Psychosocial intervention should provide a working framework that respects individual dignity, culture and ability, taking into account the interaction between individual and environmental factors. Spain's ongoing experience in caring for this group is different. According to the theories of stress, psychological empowerment and social support, the goal of these experiences is not only to improve people's resilience to cope with and overcome difficulties, but also to enable them to actively take control of their own lives: to increase their critical awareness, improve emotional control and decision-making in relation to the research to find solutions to their problems[10].

Like other community interventions for high-risk groups, the form of psychological education workshops has shown to be very efficient, because it can reach more people, based on the self-help paradigm (people in similar situations receive and provide help in the same context), and enable groups to learn knowledge, attitudes and behaviors related to common problems. The implementation of the program includes the holding of participatory learning workshops, which generally include the following: (1) critical knowledge of the environment: linking migration to personal stress; (2) awareness: improving self-concept, self-esteem and self-efficacy; (3) managing emotions; improving decision-making.

Due to their special situation of instability. in Spain, according to international agreements, persons granted refugee status or supplementary protection benefit from the national program implemented by the so-called refugee reception center (CAR), but in cooperation with non-governmental organizations and other public institutions: (1) assistance type (accommodation, life and economic welfare); (2) psychological type (guidance, support, etc.); (3) attention to the workplace, including financing of work settlement projects, vocational training and other projects; (4) cultural and academic training, especially for minors; (5) free health care basically provided by the Red Cross.

5. Immigration and Community Services

One of the most important contextual obstacles to the integration of migrants is to find such obstacles in the context of the host country's set of laws and regulations on rights and conditions for the exercise of those rights. In this regard, we would like to emphasize that if a person cannot obtain citizenship, there will be no citizenship in this society, and according to the Maastricht Treaty, citizenship belongs only to those who have the nationality of EU Member States.

One negative consequence of not enjoying citizenship is the lack of or access to social protection systems (education, health, welfare, etc.), which can lead to social exclusion. In addition, while migrants may have access to these services and resources, there are also psychosocial barriers that contribute to the use and enjoyment of these services and resources or lead to inadequate provision of their socio-cultural characteristics.

These deficits in accessibility to community resources or in the adequacy of the care received therein have

traditionally been associated with the existence of certain deficiencies in migrants: poor language skills, lack of service habits, search for other alternative resources, etc.[8]. In the face of such oppressive practices, we understand that from the perspective of the paradigm of human diversity, these problems are best explained by emphasizing the strategies of dominant groups (or cultures) in order to maintain the privilege of obtaining and enjoying resources. For community services, accessibility and/or adequacy issues will be related to: (1) lack of commitment to human diversity; (2) power inequality in professional user/user relations; (3) the service goal is inconsistent with the user goal; (4) high nursing requirements; (5) nursing practice not suitable for user culture; (4) professionals who lack awareness or are ready to serve new users[11].

To address this discriminatory situation, a series of care models based on cultural competence have been proposed: a consistent set of behaviors, attitudes and policies that exist in a system, organization or professional to enable them to work effectively in a multicultural environment[12]. For professionals, cultural empowerment means[13]: (1) be aware of their prejudice against external groups; (2) understand the user's culture; (3) be able to conduct culturally sensitive assessments and action plans; (4) experience in interacting with users from different cultures.

At the organizational level, cultural empowerment should be based on: (1) attach importance to human diversity; (2) ability to self-assess culturally; (3) be aware of the internal driving force of intercultural interaction; (4) institutionalized cultural knowledge; (5) adapt service delivery to cultural diversity.

These methods are in line with the current view of the process of cultural adaptation, which has traditionally focused only on immigrants. Fair management of intercultural contacts requires the realization of cultural adaptation of host communities at different ecological levels. Since 2007, the FORINTER program has pursued training in migration and diversity management for the human resources of the Andalusian public sector (educational, health, social, legal, etc.) in order to deal with the new composition of all its users under fair and just conditions.

6. Migration, Integration and Social Support Approaches

Many studies have shown that social relations have a beneficial impact on health and well-being, and a significant reduction in social relations has increased people's vulnerability[14]. For immigrants, the set of their social connections: (1) contributes to closer immigration decisions; (2) provides a reference framework for assessing the reality and improves the predictability, stability and sense of control of the new environment; (3) improves access to formal resources; (4) participates in the establishment of a new positive identity; (5) strengthens social participation; (6) promotes community awareness; (7) improves the process of cultural adaptation.

Strong connections (partners, parents, compatriots) play an important role in emotional support and are crucial in the early stages of settlement. Weak ties (friends, social members of the host country, acquaintances, etc.) are powerful social capital forces in the labor market: they provide employment opportunities, interconnection, work cooperation, etc. However, social support is also a buffer against the negative effects of cultural adaptation pressure and prevent emotional disorders such as depression[14]. It helps to meet basic needs, reduce loneliness and despair, and improve mental health. These facts highlight the need for psychological intervention programs based on social support:

(a) Personal level: (1) cultural skills to give and receive support; (2) change attitudes and reduce resistance to support; (3) skills to seek informal support in coping with cultural adaptation pressure.

(b) Dialogue level: a person (volunteer/mentor, etc.) in the host society provides support (tools, material

and/or emotion) to immigrants after receiving training.

(c) Group level: aimed at promoting membership of social groups. It makes new connections possible and enhances their multidimensional nature. Immigrant women's associations or self-help groups are good examples of these programs.

(d) Organizational level: it involves changing the specific environment (health, education, employment, etc.) to achieve support provider scenarios: community mediators in public places, escort services, community services, training materials in different languages, telephone translation services, etc.

(e) Community level: aimed at strengthening community empowerment by improving the availability and use of informal and formal sources of support: support programs for migrant mother, schools for migrant parents, information campaigns on resource community, etc.

7. Integration into Society Through Access to Economic and Employment Relations

Although forced migration has increased in recent years, economic migration is still the protagonist of cross-border flows. However, a considerable part of the population has not achieved one of the main objectives of its immigration project: employment.

The relationship between unemployment, social exclusion or mental health is particularly significant among socially vulnerable groups such as immigrants. Hildegard[15], using the Madrid City Council as a source, pointed out that unemployment was the most common cause of homeless immigrants surveyed (48.3%). The same author described this group as young and middle-aged men, despite the increasing number of women, unaccompanied minors, the elderly and people of retirement age.

In fact, the Spanish labor market has experienced a long process of third-worldization process that can be seen very clearly in the submerged economy. It has a solid national foundation and is enough to attract immigrants from countries with a lower level of development.

Discrimination against migrants in the labor market varies widely. Cachón[16] refers to discrimination: (1) institutional, the interpretation or application of restrictive administrative rules and practices; (2) structural, from the general arrangement of the labor market; (3) in the company itself that manifests itself in multiple ways . If the first two forms of discrimination can be regarded as non-actor discrimination, which is usually not public and not necessarily intentional, the third form of discrimination is individual discrimination against different actors: employers, labor intermediaries, trainers, workers, customers, etc.

Some indicators of this triple discrimination may be: (1) high unemployment rate, temporary and claim rate; (2) departments are highly concentrated, and three quarters of non-community immigrants are concentrated in construction, agriculture, catering and domestic services; (3) they work in the most difficult, dangerous and unstable jobs: in many cases, their wages are lower, their working hours are longer, their specific working conditions are worse than those of Spaniards in the same industry, and so on.

If we specifically analyze unemployment as an indicator of discrimination, we will find that in Spain, the data of the labor force survey (EPA) show that although the unemployment rate of the Spanish population has been rising since the beginning of the economic crisis, the unemployment rate among immigrants is still rising. In the year before the economic crisis (2007), the unemployment rate gap between the two populations was slightly less than 5 percentage points, which rose to about 12 percentage points in 2015[17]. The most marginalized, or affected migrants are: (1) those who are in irregular situation; (2) those who rely on temporary contracts or work in sectors with high fluctuation in terms of employment; (3) those who had linguistic

difficulties, retraining, recognition of titles; or (4) those who have more vulnerable socio-family mattresses.

In order to solve this problem, community organizations are carrying out a series of activities to improve the employability of immigrants through training and employment guidance. Municipal governments and non-governmental organizations working on migration have developed training and employment guidance programs in accordance with local, autonomous region and community intervention strategies. Some of these programs are adopting a personalized approach throughout the guidance and training process, with a high degree of flexibility and constantly adapting to the needs and interests of users. These are the so-called comprehensive and personalized social labor integration routes, taking into account immigration, labor market conditions and local development needs of each region.

In the current situation, we must also take into account the diversity of their customs and values in work or how to find a job, their limited knowledge of the administration and legislation of the labor market, their possible disadvantage in language knowledge, their ignorance of the social work integration network, and so on. Training and employment guidance programs and the professionals who implement them must strive to realize the important values we call cultural competence in order to provide fair, equal and culturally appropriate care for this group.

8. Indigenous Peoples as a Problem

Immigrants eventually settle in dynamic and complex local communities with their own characteristics and historical and cultural heritage. In these community environments, the increase of diversity enables people of different races, ethnic groups and religions to participate in daily interaction and coexistence. In this new context, the results may be very different, as host communities largely see immigration as a threat to their privileges, welfare and cultural identity[10].

The study of inter group relations has found that many problems of cross-cultural coexistence are solved by obtaining resources[18]. In this case, the committee was established within the framework of an asymmetric power relationship: the indigenous population and the non-indigenous population first believe that the existing resources are limited (employment, social welfare, etc.) And that there are other social groups leaving the country (immigrants) competing for these resources. In this context, indigenous peoples have created so-called resource pressures in two ways: (1) perception of threats in the form of zero-sum beliefs: migrants receive resources at the cost of depriving indigenous peoples of their resources; (2) emotional perception of threats in the form of fear and anxiety.

Competition among groups develops with the gradual deterioration of their mutual image. For indigenous peoples, their negative stereotypes (little exercise, laziness, many demands, irresponsibility, lack of integration, etc.) Will help them defend their efforts to lower themselves to the lower position of the labor market and society as a whole. This creates discrimination and hostility among groups.

Some of these psychosocial processes are also reflected in the survey of the Sociology Research Center. In these surveys, a large proportion of respondents believe that immigrants deprive citizens of employment opportunities, abuse social welfare, or have so many Muslims, and their national identity will be diluted. Similarly, the 2012 Larsen report editorial noted that xenophobia, rejection of religious beliefs and widespread intolerance in all areas have increased in Europe[19]. The same author believes that the future prospects are disturbing given the increasing frequency of unrest and harassment of immigrants on the streets or on the Internet.

Other psychosocial processes behind these intergroup relationships need to guide psychological

intervention: overt and subtle prejudice, group relative deprivation, self-fulfilling prophecy (especially in schools), and orientation towards oppressive social dominance of indigenous society; perceived intrusion, perceived threat, etc.

In the face of this situation, which is not conducive to peaceful and rich intercultural coexistence, programs must be developed to strengthen the cultural empowerment of indigenous and non-indigenous peoples. Two strategic aspects need to be considered: (1) actions should target different ecological dimensions, as discrimination exists at all these levels: families, schools, businesses, municipal councils, health centers, communities, etc.; (2) all activities and information should be integrated into a broader strategy: the enhancement and promotion of affirmative human diversity. The objectives of these strategies include:

(1) Promoting contexts in which symmetrical and equal relations can be established between pagans and indigenous people, and allow the two groups to understand each other: their multiple similarities and identities, and pay attention to their differences.

(2) Promoting interdependence: cooperative activities to solve common problems, in which informal and indigenous peoples jointly set goals and carry out activities.

(3) Enhancing the cultural capacity of citizens, professionals and organizations to work in a multicultural context.

(4) Carrying out awareness raising and prejudice reduction campaigns through real information that helps to eliminate rumors and prejudices.

Within the framework of the European integrated communication program (C4i), Spain has established a series of anti-rumor networks in the field of immigration (Getxo, Tenerife, Fuenlabrada, Barcelona, etc.), involving local authorities, institutions, non-governmental organizations and individuals. In Andalusia, the anti-rumor network, promoted by the Directorate General for migration policy coordination, aims to raise social awareness of the positive values of human diversity, combat all forms of racism, xenophobia and any form of discrimination, promote the process of cultural exchange and contribute to the management of human diversity to achieve a united society. Like other networks, anti-rumor actors are emerging across Andalusia among social organizations, immigration experts and those committed to action who want to promote more positive and inclusive attitudes and perceptions of cultural diversity in their environment. As part of this initiative, a manual[20], a practical guide[21] and four videos were prepared as teaching materials for training these anti-rumor officials.

9. Migrant Minors as a Collateral Effect

One of the most striking and worrying issues in the wide range of migration flows is the increasing number of minors traveling without the company of their families or adults caring for them. These boys seem to be part of the family strategy because they believe that minors are less likely to be repatriated than adults. If we associate minors reunited in family migration programs or migrant children born on national territory with this group, we will find a phenomenon that has special social and human interests due to the psychosocial characteristics of this group.

For some time, minors and young immigrants have been regarded as the side effects of migration: the second, marginalized social group, so it is invisible from the perspective of intervention. However, since the 1980s, the myth of the inevitable linear adaptation of immigrant descendants has been completely shattered. The expected and desired assimilation does not occur as assumed. In many cases, the lack of expectations for integration under the same conditions as indigenous peoples has led to the reversal of the process of ethnic

identity and rebellion in response to long-term social injustice.

For minors and young immigrants, the discrimination process is carried out at all ecological levels, emphasizing the importance of the school environment for their psychosocial development. Direct discrimination (contempt, insult, such as "leaving your country", physical attack, etc.) and indirect discrimination (for example, being underestimated by teachers in terms of ability) are common phenomena in schools. The comment on a South American student is an example: "My initial feeling in Spain was very chaotic. I feel terrible, strange and can't sleep. I want to go to my country. Here, as a Latin American, you feel more discriminated against. In class, my classmates sent me immigration notices and so on. In Spanish geography class, when I got there, I knew nothing about Spain. My most forced geography teacher was me."

In this field, intervention programs based on different psychosocial theories can also be designed. For example, the diversification program is a pilot experience in two public schools (primary and secondary) in Andalusia. Address rumors and prejudices about immigrants (and other vulnerable social groups) and improve intercultural coexistence through a participatory approach and systematic cooperation with families, schools and communities[10].

Diaz[22] drew attention to the situation of children and adolescents in the process of forced migration in a literature review. A large number of people show high anxiety due to family problems, discrimination, child labor and early marriage. Therefore, this anxiety is often exacerbated and anxiety problems occur. Therefore, there is an urgent need to develop humanitarian and psychosocial programs, focusing on measures to ensure the protection of this group in different situations, such as countries of origin, refugee camps and host countries.

10. Immigration and Gender

A basic feature of the development of international migration is the increasing role of women, not only because of the large number of displaced women, but also mainly because of its impact on the society, politics, economy and labor of origin and destination. This dual perspective has led to at least two ways to study and understand women migrants: (1) the feminization of immigrants emphasizes the study of this social sector, that is, its relative importance in the overall context of immigrant women, and may or may not lead to feminist analysis; (2) feminists believe that the gender system is the organizational principle of immigrants[23].

From the first perspective, women account for about 48% of the total number of internationally displaced persons[2], and there are significant differences between regions. One fact that has a psychosocial impact on interventions is that an increasing number of transnational families are composed of migrant women who travel alone for economic reasons (rather than family reunification) and leave family members in their countries of origin.

During the crisis, the female population of Spanish immigrants experienced a significant transformation process. According to a study on the employment situation of immigrant women in Spain[24], as of January 2015, about 30% of the foreign female population had been nationalized (only 18% in 2008), which would rise to 41% if only Latin American immigrants were considered. These figures make us realize that not only did these people not return to their countries of origin during the crisis, but most chose to stay and continue their projects of rooting, settlement and personal, family and socio-cultural integration into Spanish society.

A related aspect that needs to be emphasized is the need to break the general stereotypes of this group (people without education or work skills) in Spanish society, because only 2.4% of immigrant women have no education, and the proportion of women with higher education (27%) is similar to that of women in Spain[17]. One depressing consequence of this social representation is the overrepresentation of highly educated immigrant

women in the manual labor sector with little or minimal qualification.

We are faced with a female immigrant who came to Spain to help us make progress at a very critical moment, due to the wave of neoliberalism sweeping the world. These women who, with their diverse families and homes, are an important part of our landscape, and who are integrated into the grass-roots community environment characterized by diversity. However, in order to understand the social and working conditions of immigrant women in Spain and to develop intervention programs, the following factors must be taken into account: (1) social class: foreigner status, non-citizen status; (2) race: different cultures and religions (if any); (3) the gender perspective in a patriarchal society. In this regard, these three factors determine inequality and psychosocial vulnerability, leading to triple discrimination. Therefore, to reverse this situation, it is necessary to promote and encourage public policies for social and employment integration that ensure the social mobility of this group, and with it, the overcoming of the gender, ethnic and social class gaps in our society. Programs based on individual and community empowerment have been very successful in achieving these goals.

11. Conclusion

In the previous paragraphs, we wish to give a brief overview of international migration and highlight the different psychological dimensions of this complex phenomenon. Looking at migration from a positive perspective (entrepreneurial, proactive, ability to make decisions in difficult situations, etc.), the background factors of the migration process itself do expose these people to psychosocial risks. This fact justifies the intervention of psychological professionals, but we must take into account the psychosocial view that in the social context, in the historical reality that people (in this case immigrants) live in interpersonal and inter group networks, their life experiences are not unfamiliar with the events in the surrounding world, and they seek to find the meaning of their lives[25]. In addition, this view involves an integrated approach to individuals, groups, organizations and communities (and related issues) from the different theories and/or models that psychology as a science has been substantiating and validating through the evidence and research results, and that takes into account the importance of subject-context dialectical interaction.

Although this is not covered in this work, we must not forget that social intervention psychology professionals must also be involved in the evaluation of programs for migrant populations and contribute to public policies for this group.

Conflict of interest

The authors believe that there is no economic interest or other relationship with individuals and organizations.

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