Home-No-Home:
Academic Immigrants in the Fields of Communication

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Academic immigrants compromise a significant number of scholars from the departments of communication, media, and related disciplines. This article gives voice to some of the stories shared by 81 of them during in-depth interviews. They discuss childhood experiences that predisposed them to the possibility of immigration, and the various personal, professional, and political motivations for such a change. The sense of living a double life and a complicated relationship with the concept of home characterized many of their narratives. However, they also perceive their "otherness" as a source of strength that impacts their scholarship and makes unique contributions to our disciplines. The article concludes with advocacy for a greater appreciation of our academic immigrant colleagues' roles and advocates for assisting them to develop a stronger sense of belonging.

Keywords: alien, citizen, contribution, home, immigrants, integration, institution, otherness, scholarship

> "Wasn't that the definition of home? Not where you are from, but where you are wanted?"
> —Verghese, 2010, p. 95

More than a quarter of the full-time faculty in my School of Communication and Information at Rutgers University are academic immigrants. This includes me. At the College of Mass Communication and Media Arts at Southern Illinois University, my previous institution, they numbered close to a fifth of the full-time faculty. What is the proportion at your department, school, or college?

Academic immigrants in departments of communication, media, journalism, information, and related disciplines comprise a significant part of full-time faculty in the United States and beyond, yet they rarely receive the attention they deserve for their unique contributions. Given my academic transition some 14 years ago from a career in Israel, to a host country—the United States—I became particularly interested in this topic—personally as well as intellectually. I embarked originally on a "me-search" to understand it better but gradually became intrigued by broader questions: What prepares academics to make such life-altering decisions? What motivates immigration? How well do academic immigrants integrate into host institutions and community cultures? What are the processes in which they feel "othered?" What challenges

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do they encounter in having their feet in different worlds simultaneously? How do they maintain relationships with their home country? What value stemming from their foreignness do they perceive to bring to their institutions? Do they expect to go back "home?" What is considered "home?"

These and many more questions comprised the basis for my in-depth interviews (with Institutional Review Board authorization) with 81 academics in our field for about two years (2019–2020). Most interviews were held face to face during the annual meetings of the International Communication Association and the Association of Education in Journalism and Mass Communication. Others took place in coffee shops, some during visits to institutional offices, and several were completed online as we entered the early phase of the COVID-19 pandemic. Of the 81 interviewees, 49 identified as females and 32 as males. They were diverse in age, race, ethnicity, religion, and country of origin—as well as academic seniority—but all had earned a doctorate along the way. They left 37 countries (Argentina, Australia, Barbados, Belgium, Brazil, Bulgaria, Cameron, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Germany, Hong Kong, India, Israel, Iran, Ireland, Italy, Jordan, Finland, France, Greece, South Korea, Kuwait, Mexico, New Zealand, Nigeria, Norway, Pakistan, Portugal, Puerto Rico, Romania, Russia, Rwanda, Sweden, the United Kingdom, and the United States). They moved to 11 different countries (Belgium, Canada, Czech Republic, Israel, Netherland, New Zealand, Portugal, Singapore, Sweden, the United Kingdom, and the United States). The United States was by far the most common host country in my study—58 of my interviewees immigrated there.

The interviews lasted between one to two hours and were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim. Interviewees received the transcripts and were allowed to edit out information that in retrospect they regretted sharing, as well as information they were concerned might reveal their identities. They were also allowed to propose pseudonyms that reflected their cultural backgrounds. This was particularly important to ensure that the interviewees' anonymity was protected and to facilitate intimate and sincere conversations on many sensitive issues. Many experienced the interview as a meaningful form of self-reflection. Three of my interviewees (who moved from India to the United States) expressed it colorfully. Mayur wrote in an email following the interview: "I want to thank you for giving me this opportunity of self-discovery. It allowed me to not only open up on these issues but also encounter some self-exploration questions that I hadn't before in this way." Other expressions included, "It has a healing effect on me" (Mina); and "It made me think about so many things. Things that lurk under the surface but seldom come to the fore" (Rumia). I often engaged in a reciprocal conversation, sharing my experiences where appropriate, which was sincere as well as proven to be an effective strategy for creating trust and a dialogical interactional relationship: Two immigrants in conversation, sharing experiences and discovering commonalities and differences.

The life history transcripts were analyzed by keywords and themes, using NVivo software, as well as by reading and rereading the interviews, a customary practice in qualitative analysis. What follows are selective findings that focus on some aspects of the immigration experience (additional aspects see Lemish, 2022). What I hope to accomplish is to elevate our colleagues' voices, not through theorizing or embedding them in the vast existing literature on immigration, diasporic communities, or hyphenated identities, but for their voices to be heard as if part of an informal conversation: in the coffee corner in your department, in the institution's cafeteria, or in a conference room waiting for a session to begin. Let us get to know them better and appreciate them as colleagues through the retelling of their narratives.

Roots and Routes

It is interesting to note that academics do not seem to choose immigration randomly. Many interviewees had a childhood experience that exposed them to cultures and languages other than their own. Some have moved a lot during childhood, which they believe prepared them to pick up and move later in life. For example, Amanda (United Kingdom to the United States) shared:

I moved a lot as a child. My father [. . .] often got posted to various places around the UK. So, I went to about 12 different schools. So, I think, that's what made me interested in communication. Because across the UK there are very different ways of communicating. Different accents, different traditions [. . .] that was kind of an interesting upbringing. And one that, I suppose, made me less daunted by the idea that we'd just jump up and move.

Similarly, Maya (Israel to the United Kingdom) related:

My father worked for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, so when I was 5 years old, we were relocated first to Istanbul for two years, and then moved again to Brussels for two years, and then we returned to Israel [. . .] I had a lot of moving. I was a nomad [. . .] I think that when I moved to London, it was obviously a very momentous thing in my life. But I think there was something about me having been almost 'trained' to, you know, land on my feet. Try to learn the codes, the cultural codes, quite quickly, as well as the language.

Other interviewees traveled the world for vacations during their childhood, acquired foreign languages, or had international visitors hosted in their homes. Lauren (the United States to Canada), for example, shared stories of her family vacations growing up:

England, Europe, learning different languages . . . it's all—I mean, it's why I was eager to leave [a Midwest U.S. city] . . . Because I knew there was more out there in the world. I think that when you're not exposed at a young age, you don't necessarily know that. So, I was super eager. I was ready to pick up and move. That's the truth of it.

And Eva (Brazil to Sweden) related similar curiosity for different experiences: "We traveled most inside the country. But I think it was very much like a cultural thing, knowing different places, different cultures."

Growing up in cosmopolitan environments also cultivated a predisposition to immigration as shared by Rumia (India to the United States):

I think where I was born and the way I grew up really had a pretty strong impact on how I view who I am in the world, and my relationship to difference and exploring—or my interest and curiosity in people from different cultures. I was born and grew up in New Delhi, and because it's a capital city, and given the kinds of schools I went to, I was exposed growing up to people from many different places. [. . .] So for me, I was always interested in the world. And I think that did shape what happened to me later in life.

Various traditional media had a memorable place in the stories shared by my interviewees. For example, Lars (the United States to Singapore), reminisced:

> One of my earlier memories in this context is, my dad had an issue of *National Geographic* called "The British Way." It was a history of the British Empire. And three, four nights a week, we would go through the same issue, and we would talk about history and culture of England.

Antonio (Puerto Rico to mainland United States) recalled:

> In my years as a middle school and high school student, I delivered an English-language newspaper in my hometown. And in that hour of walking and delivering the newspaper door to door, I read it from front to cover. [. . .] So that helped me keep a view of the world that was a bit different.

And Meena (India to the United States) shared these memories:

> From an early age I heard stories of Europe and grew up with all the knick-knacks they [parents] brought back as well as albums full of photos of their travels through Western Europe [. . .]. So, it was an opening to, I suppose, an international world. Through their stories, through their photographs.

For Xiao (China to the United States) it was the old-fashioned radio that opened his eyes to the world:

> I was in a school that places a lot of emphasis on the study of foreign languages [. . .] and we were encouraged to listen to shortwave radio, to the BBC and the Voice of America . . . so everybody had a shortwave radio and we listened to these international radio broadcasts.

These varying childhood experiences offer a predisposition and openness to uproot, explore difference, and seek change. They may also be at the heart of many academic immigrants' scholarly curiosity and inner drive. With similar experiences shared by many of the interviewees, they seemed to have accepted immigration as a sensible life change, mostly born out of choice for a variety of personal, professional, and political reasons, oftentimes for the three—what I coin as the three Ps (Lemish, 2022). The *personal reasons* include following a partner, looking for a fresh start after a painful divorce, and escaping a toxic relationship or oppressive family dynamics. These personal reasons were often entangled with *professional reasons* such as an attractive job offer upon completion of a PhD, the prospect of a higher salary, improved working conditions, inviting research opportunities, and a better quality of life more generally. These were particularly the dominant theme in the stories of immigrants from Asia to the United States, where the moves were perceived as desirable by family members and society at large and accepted with great pride. The concept of the "American Dream" was very much alive in their stories. This was less apparent from immigrants in countries with strong national identities such as Israel, where a move away was tainted with a sense of betrayal, or Canada, whose immigrants brought with them a cynical view of the U.S.'s political system and ideologies, which they considered inferior.

The *political reasons* for immigration include an inhospitable environment for gay members, changing political configurations, gender inequalities, constant armed conflict, and security issues. The potential implications of Brexit appeared as a push-away motivation in several immigration stories, as was Thatcherism for older interviewees. In contrast, the election of Barack Obama as president was perceived as a pull of hope to help cement a decision to immigrate to the United States at the time. Whatever the motivations for immigrating, my interviewees described their transitions as a consequence of deliberate thinking, choice, and in many ways, privileged opportunity.

Inward and Outward

Once in the new host country, whether for a few years or many, our academic immigrant colleagues settle into a life characterized by the tension of two conflicting vectors: inwards integration (i.e., cultural maintenance, transmission to children and family, and community consolidation) and outward integration into their new institutional surroundings and host society at large. This tension seems to never cease, even after decades of life in a host country, and in many ways becomes a distinctive feature of their existence. Linguistic challenges; common questions about accent; the familiar "where are you from" questions; encountering "black holes" in corridor conversations about culture, politics, sports, and trivia; saying "the wrong thing" as a result of cultural insensitivity—are constant reminders of "otherness."

While this is shared by immigrants more generally and is not unique to academics, my focus is on the inward and outward integration processes within academic institutions and implications for a sense of home and belonging. While the ideals of diversity, equity, and inclusion are not necessarily shared across the United States, not to mention globally, they were very much on the mind of most interviewees, who were lamenting their longing for a sense of holistic home, where inward and outward were integrated, where they felt "whole."

By no means were my interviewees' experiences homogenous. Many variables impacted their sense of belonging: the circumstances of their immigration, whether they had married/partnered with a member of the host society, the country (and in the case of the United States, the specific state) they were living in, institutional policies, colleagues they encountered, and naturally, their personality characteristics. It is possible to group their stories of institutional integration into the following typology of the relationships around the concept of "home."

Home and Home: Double Lives

This was the most common narrative expressed in the interviews, comprising some 80% of my interviewees. They played the expected roles within their departments. They identified themselves by their home-country citizenship: "I am English and living in New York." "I am a Brazilian living in Sweden." "I am a New Zealander living in the UK." "I am an Indian with a permanent residency in the US." Constantinos (Greece to the United States) expressed a sentiment shared by many: "I'm very happy that I'm here, but I'll always consider myself Greek. Nothing is going to change that—[. . .] It's the homeland." Similarly, Avi (Israel to the United States) expressed his strong attachment: "I feel I am very attached to Israel. You know, it's the most beautiful country in the world. And I still like the people." Others accepted that while

their identity is clearly linked to their homeland, they were developing a second one toward their host country: Cristina (Brazil to Portugal), for example, explained: "I am hybrid. I explain that I have a layered identity. I moved here when I was 21. So, most of my adult life has been here." And Nadya (Bulgaria to the United States): "I still, if you asked me how I see myself, it would be as a Bulgarian citizen. But I am also heavily invested in the U.S. It's not my country of citizenship, but it is my home."

Interestingly enough, only a few interviewees used a hyphenated identity, and all were among those immigrating to the United States, where such use is common among second-generation immigrant families (e.g., Juan identified as Mexican American; Hassan as Iranian American; Ning as Chinese American; Jae-Joon as Korean American), emphasizing their original identity first and the adopted one second.

No-Home: Alien

In contrast to interviewees who managed their double-life sensibilities, these few interviewees believe that they never found a home in their institutions, they are not appreciated, they have always been treated suspiciously as "others," or their opinions are dismissed or considered marginal. They mostly learn to accept it as the price to pay for the benefits of their immigration story (for any of the three P reasons) but live in a constant state of longing for a sense of belonging. Hey Jin (South Korea to the United States) shared:

> I don't have a desire to integrate. No, not at all. I don't know about the culture, and I'm not interested to know. I feel very alien. [. . .] Of course, there are pros and cons of working here versus there. After comparing these pros and cons, I made a decision and I'm here. But I have a dream that I want to, you know, be faculty there. [. . .] I am Korean. I am not American. I can never be an American. I don't think I will ever get rid of this Korean accent. I hate when people call me [a mispronunciation of name] . . . I always fix the pronunciation of my name. Because I am Korean. And that's my name.

Similarly, Mina (India to the United States) told me:

> It was a very emotional day for me when I physically had to return my Indian passport . . . very sad day for me. So even though everybody was saying, "Congratulations on becoming a U.S. citizen," I didn't take it as a congratulation. I felt like, "I'm doing this for my husband, I'm doing this for my family." [. . .] I would have still wished to go back to India.

No Home: Citizens of the World

Finally, about a dozen interviewees suggested that as academics intellectual life replaces the desire for home, providing an anchor of existence that "place" may offer others. They see themselves as citizens of the world of thought, detached from the constraints of geographical boundaries. They would pick up, leave for a new challenge, and believe they would land easily on their feet anywhere in academia. Cosmas (Nigeria to the United States) captured that sense when he shared a Nigerian saying: "Wherever you go is your home."

Meena (India to the United States) said:

> I identify as a citizen of the world. I do not have any loyalty to an artificial construct called a nation-state. [. . .] What is more important to me are people who I can identify with and share a worldview with.

Anna (Cyprus/Greece to the United Kingdom) became very emotional when discussing her torn identity. She said:

> My core identity, I don't think I would define it based on nationality. [. . .] Of course, I'm Greek, I'm Cypriot, you know, I'm European. I would never say I'm British. But again, I'm a citizen of the world. I'm a socialist. An internationalist, all of these things.

Other interviewees explained that national identity is arbitrary (Lars, the United States to Singapore) and that the earth is their home, rather than their nation (Xiao, China to the United States). They brought up ideological perspectives, such as the view by Florence (the United States to Canada):

> I started to really see myself as a citizen of the world more than an American [. . .]. I've always felt that country borders are highly problematic [. . .] nationalism, exceptionalism, xenophobia, just so many problems. And I never really saw myself as an American first when I was traveling the world. I saw myself as a person, you know, who was relating to other people in the world.

A few explained the benefits of detaching from an identity anchored to a particular construct. For example, Doina (Romania to the United States):

> In some sort of a weird way, I liked my status when I had no status. [. . .] It was a neither here nor there situation that was not convenient administratively and perhaps less than convenient financially but was a sort of a strange freedom of thinking and freedom to invent your own ways of doing things in its uniqueness [. . .]. And I have always considered myself a citizen of the world.

And Okeke (Rwanda to the United States): "I tend to define myself as a multicultural person, having a chance to travel a lot you kind of develop like a different software in your mind." Eddy (France to Israel):

> I knew I would enjoy being a foreigner, you know, in-between. [. . .] I want to remain in between. I want to enjoy the possibility of moving from one place to the other. [. . .] I travel all the time. And for me, it's amazing.

How does the relationship to a sense of "home" impact not only the lived experience of these academic immigrants but also what they bring to the table with them? This is the question I was particularly interested in.

The Personal Is Intellectual

The double-life existence that characterizes the majority of my interviewees with an identity detached from place comes with a host of personal and professional challenges as well as assets (Lemish, 2022). Here, I would like to focus specifically on the contributions this lived experience brings to scholarship in the various fields of communication. As these colleagues facilitate international networks of scholars, increase access to scholarship published in a variety of languages, foster cross-cultural collaborations, seek research funding from international sources, and graduate students from around the world, they are also approaching our fields with diverse perspectives and theoretical groundings.

I was always fascinated by how the inner processing of self-identity, wondering, and psychic struggles were worked out through academic investigation. I believe that academics, like myself, often study topics for which they have an emotional or mental need to explore, a reworking of trauma, pleasure, or unresolved yearning. "The personal is political is intellectual" is an expression I adopted from Angharad Valdivia (1999) a long time ago, and it serves me well here, too (p. 159). A colleague of mine, who is an adamant news consumer, studies news, and another one loves soap operas and investigates those. My career path followed my awakening of a feminist sensibility as I became a mother and followed the growth of our three children. Through the years, I also noticed how my students used papers to work through personal issues. In my gender classes, for example, I had students struggling with eating disorders write papers on gender representations in the media and the development of a negative body image, on the role of the Internet in coming out as gay or queer, or integrating as an immigrant to a host country.

Thus, it was no surprise that being an academic immigrant was highlighted in many interviews as a force fueling intellectual inquiry. This tendency illustrates the centrality of autobiographical research, as has been argued persuasively by Gouldner (1970) among others. Mona (Kuwait to the United States) expressed it this way:

> There are many reasons to be proud of being Arab and the social progress of the last few decades. But I thought, "Okay, I'm going to have to do something about this." [. . .] You have to use the scientific method and rely on previous literature. But like, you know, me-search is one of the terms that I was taught to use, it's almost, like, you select the questions that make the most sense to you.

And Griet (Belgium to the United States) simply said:

> I was not so much getting away from Belgium as trying to embrace a new culture and trying to figure that out. And what I like about it is that I can then also translate it into my work. [. . .] your personal experience feeds into your research in new ways, and the other way around. And I really enjoy that very much.

Anna (Cyprus/Greece to the United Kingdom) shared:

It's like there's no coincidence at all that I'm interested in studying migration. So, I think there are a lot of qualities of being an outsider. [. . .] I'm absolutely confident that, you know, there is a reason I do this work. I think the fact that it is so close to my heart and with everything that has to do with me.

The most obvious expression of this drive is the preference for research projects focusing on the home country. A Chinese immigrant is studying Chinese media. A Nigerian immigrant is studying Nigerian social networks. An Italian immigrant is studying Italian neofascist movements. A Colombian immigrant is studying Latin American social movements. An Israeli immigrant is studying media in conflict zones. An Indian immigrant is studying Bollywood. An immigrant from Cameroon is studying Black diasporas. Immigrant scholars have connections, language skills, familiarity with the culture, and the motivation to stay connected to their home countries. Their projects have tremendous value in expanding our disciplines, dismantling the U.S.-centric dominance of academia, and enriching our views and knowledge of the world outside our own "place." They potentially also have implications for media activism that many of my interviewees were engaged in censorship, disinformation, media ownership, social movements, or representations.

For several of the interviewees, this is also about giving back to their home countries, as expressed by Demetrios (Greece to the United States):

Part of the reason I went back [on a research project] was to see whether I could do things in Greece that would in some minor way make me feel at least that I was doing something to contribute back to Greece, and maybe addressing some issues that had to do with the economic crisis and its effects.

Similarly, Violeta (Chile to the United States) said:

It's my identity. I want to help my kin. I feel like I wouldn't be here if it weren't for my primary education. I am connected to Chile in all of those many ways [. . .] I'm very engaged and trying to contribute.

The unique contribution of immigrant academics does not end with their focus on their home countries—but more generally opens our fields to alternate ways of thinking and studying. Savitri (India to the United States) explained:

Being a diasporic intellectual has constantly shaped the questions I ask, the issues I deal with, and the kinds of interventions that I want to make. I don't think that immigration has just been about the fact of moving, but it has shaped my scholarly life in profound ways.

Similarly, Smita (India to the United States) shared:

> This outsiderness that I felt, you know, as a young woman, became fuel for me to do research. Why did I feel like an outsider? What was going on? And words like patriarchy, how is that wedded to ideas of nationhood? How women's sexuality becomes a symbol or the emblem of the nation. All of these things started making sense to me. So my roots [. . .] but also the feelings of alienation. [. . .] So these crevices and spaces between one's political identity, one's native cultural identity, became fodder for me to do my research.

More specifically, many immigrant academics have a special interest in transitions and cultural diversity. George (Romania to the United States) explained how his migration impacted that interest: "I was interested in research on the impact of moving from one culture to another. On the issues related to cultural shock." Juan (Mexico to the United States) also focused on transitions: "You know, if you had asked me four or five years ago how I define it, I would say I'm interested in transnational issues. And so, my work deals with things that move across borders. Either media or people." Evan (Belgium to multiple European countries) treasured the benefit of being flexible:

> Apparently, I have the ability to enter into other people's worlds. Which I think is a key research skill. And I've been lucky enough not to get locked into particular nation-states, which does allow me to travel, but not in a physical, but in a mental, intellectual way. [. . .] I am simply lucky that I can find stories all over the world.

The unique ability to bridge different theoretical traditions and perspectives also enriched research initiatives, as Anne (Canada to the United Kingdom) related:

> So, the thing was, I was the only person in my school [in the UK] who was doing feminist research. [. . .] So, I was already kind of a bit of an outsider in the field because Americans didn't really do the British stuff, and the British didn't really do the American stuff. So, I felt like I was a bit of a bridge for some people. You know, bringing them together. So, I kind of tried to make a virtue of that [editing a feminist scholarship collection].

Several interviewees highlighted the advantage of an outsider's comparative perspective on the relationship between universalism and particularism in our disciplines.

Eddy (France to Israel):

> It's really connected to my research in a deep way. [. . .] I think the uniqueness of being an outsider is that you always compare. You're always aware of the singular character of any kind of national data you examine. You consider, "It's happening this way. Is it because it is Israel? Or it's something global?"

The dominant theme in my participants' narratives related to the "personal is intellectual" focus on diversity and inclusion. The value of these contributions cannot be overstated given the intellectual and political reckoning characterizing our fields, associations, journals, and institutions. There are many examples to illustrate this quality in academic immigrants: Mayur (India to the United States) said: "Issues

like diversity and inclusion are more personal to me. That it's not something that I just learn because somebody said we should care about this. You know, it's something that I had to kind of work through." Similarly, Meena (India to the United States): "My research has always been other-oriented because of the fact that I do not fit in, and I didn't feel a need to study myself."

Otherness, and moving from one country to another, requires rethinking the meaning of "race" as a lived social construction which stimulated scholarly initiatives as well. Leo Yin (China to the United States) explained: "I thought about this [my identity] often. I never figured it out. I am now much more cautious about the question of race and racism [. . .] and the extent that I began to study scholarship in communication related to race." Mina (India to the United States) said:

> Certainly, being an immigrant is what highly shaped my research in what I picked to do [. . .] because I got a clear sense of race after coming to the US. Until then, I never thought about race much. I thought a lot about gender. When I came to the US, I was clearly—I could see the racial dynamics, and so it was kind of important for me to understand, [. . .] so, my work was very much shaped by that experience in the choice of topic and so on. What I studied.

Similarly, Jae-Joon (South Korea to the United States):

> I study discrimination and inequality in many aspects. One of my questions still comes from my story, being an immigrant, being an Asian, being a Korean, being a first-generation immigrant, and being a man. I think this motivates me, about the inequality side of it. I'm really concerned about multicultural identity issues, and economic disparity. [. . .] The fact that I'm a very outsider, an immigrant, actually allows me to see this kind of unique environment. That stuff, a perspective that not anyone can see.

A perspective that others cannot see seems key to the contributions that academic immigrants are offering to the fields of communication in both scholarship as well as teaching (see also Lemish, 2022).

Concluding Note

In reviewing the hundreds of transcript pages from the 81 interviewees, I was struck by the richness of their narratives. It was quite a challenge to choose just a few relevant quotes and yet for them to serve as representative exemplars. There is so much there. This article barely touches on the many additional aspects of this exploration and the nuances of difference: gender, culture, location, institution, seniority, personality, personal circumstances, and the like. I was only able to paint some of the issues with broad brush strokes, prioritizing the voices of interviewees over my interpretation and analysis.

I also reflected on how many interviewees I knew beforehand (even if very superficially). It caused me to wonder whether over the years of international networking if I somehow gravitated toward other immigrants—and that it was not just coincidental. Many interviewees also shared that they bonded with

other immigrants, not necessarily from the same background, feeling a sense of solidarity in similar experiences and sensibilities.

Finally, when I consider the contributions of our academic immigrant colleagues, I am also reflecting on my career-long efforts to advocate for the study of populations and issues that are not necessarily WEIRD-focused (Western, Educated, Industrialized, Rich, Democratic; Lemish & Jordan, 2022). A large portion of our research leaves much to be desired in terms of generalizability to broad parts of the globe. Nevertheless, there is an assumption of universality. Studies from countries outside of the Western world—and notably outside the United States—are "case studies" and authors are reluctant to put the country in the title because of concern over lower citation rates. At the same time, U.S.-based research is largely perceived as universal (see discussion of feminist principles of journal editing, Lemish, 2021). As scholars, we are embedded in our societies and institutions, and we study the familiar and the accessible. It also means that we may be unfamiliar even with the ways our implicit biases shape the questions we ask, as we do not know what we do not know.

I am very much aware that in the contemporary political moment of the strengthening of nationalistic movements in many parts of the world, the challenges to internationalizing the academy are many. This reality is conflated in schools and departments of communication and media with the dramatic developments in our disciplines, the eroding trust of the public in the news media, and the pervasive dissemination of disinformation and misinformation. We are witnessing the consequences in the academy as well, providing a fertile ground for silencing nonconventional voices, strangling differences, and marginalizing otherness. I believe that the academic immigrants among us, the "outsiders," infuse our work with different ways of thinking, asking questions, and doing research. They challenge us to reveal our implicit biases and preferences. They enrich our personal lives. They contribute to making us better scholars, and better humans. As I have argued elsewhere (Lemish, 2022), we can do better by addressing their needs for supportive peer networks; celebrating their diverse cultural contributions; acknowledging their experience of living a "double-life"; and implementing other strategies of inclusiveness.

Let academic immigrants find more welcoming homes in our midst, where our differences are our strengths.

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