# Bridging Borders: Migration and its Vicissitudes

*Gordon Sammut*[1]

## Abstract

This paper considers the phenomenon of migration in terms of the psychological consequences involved in migrant traversing of sociocultural and political borders. The issue of migration is a perennial concern in many countries around the world. This paper locates resistance to migration within evolved socio-cognitive mechanisms that operate at the social psychological level and that bind people in coalitions that compete with other coalitions. In the process, outgroups and outcasts are denigrated, ostracised and excluded. In this reality, the necessity of managing intercultural strife realistically becomes an imperative concern to avoid conflict. The paper elaborates a methodological procedure based on the understanding of social re-presentation processes that further self-interested projects. Whilst this does not offer a panacea for conflict resolution, it serves to identify a path of least resistance for bridging sociocultural borders between distinct groups.

**Keywords:** *social representations; intercultural relations; naive realism; migration; conflict resolution*.

**DOI:** https://doi.org/10.32111/SAS.2022.2.2.5

[1] University of Malta

Email: gordon.sammut@um.edu.mt

## Introduction

On the 31 December 2020, the WHO Country Office in China was informed of a number of patients in the city of Wuhan who had demonstrated an affliction with pneumonia of unknown aetiology. A week later, on the 7 January 2020, Chinese authorities identified the causal agent of the condition as a new type of coronavirus: Covid-19 (WHO, 2020). Over the months that followed, the Covid-19 virus spread wildly and rose to pandemic proportions, wreaking havoc in the lives of billions of human beings across the globe and claiming more than 6 million lives at the time of writing (Johns Hopkins University Coronavirus Resource Centre, 2021: Home - Johns Hopkins Coronavirus Resource Center (jhu.edu) 16/04/2022).

The disruption the pandemic brought about in the everyday lives of countless human beings across the globe was unprecedented, from home-schooled children to teleworking adults and vulnerable elders isolating in their homes. And yet, in the midst of this global calamity that saw the introduction of significant restrictions on movement aimed at helping curb the spread of the virus, the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre [IDMC] in Geneva reported that around 40.5 million new displacements took place during 2020 – the highest figure in a decade – bringing the total number of internally displaced people worldwide to a record of 55 million (IDMC, 2021). IDMC further reported that in 2020, disasters led to over three times more displacements than conflict and violence, but that more than 85 percent of the global figure overall was due to the latter conditions. At the same time, even whilst the pandemic was raging everywhere around the globe, European citizens reported being more concerned about immigration than they were concerned over health (Eurobarometer 93, 2020).

Immigration remains a recurrent and persistently troubling concern for many nations worldwide. It proved to be one of the primary motives for Britain's exit from the European Union [Brexit] when, on the 31 December 2020, millions of Europeans lost their freedom of movement to the United Kingdom (and vice-versa for British citizens in Europe). During the referendum campaign in the UK, anti-immigration sentiment fuelled Brexit support (Andreouli, Greenland & Figgou, 2019). Within the EU, a new pact on migration and asylum published by the European Commission (2020) famously saw Home Affairs Commissioner Ylva Johansson claim that "No one will be satisfied" with the new pact (EU Observer, 2020), due largely to disagreements over 'burden' sharing. In the meantime, during the same period, thousands of African migrants swamped the island of Lampedusa in search of access to European territory, having traversed the Mediterranean Sea in a perilous boat journey that has itself claimed thousands of immigrant lives. In May 2021, Spain deployed its troops to Ceuta when over 8000 migrants, including 1500 minors, crossed from Morocco over a mere two days. In June 2021, Denmark passed a controversial bill allowing it to relocate asylum seekers offshore and outside the EU whilst their applications are reviewed. In Japan, the very same procedure was withdrawn only after the death of a young Sri Lankan woman in an immigrant detention facility. Less than a year later, the UK announced a deal with Rwanda to process asylum seekers on its behalf in April 2022, following a 240% increase in migrants crossing the Channel over the previous 12 months.

These examples are but a snippet of the vast and myriad immigration issues and policing of national and cultural borders worldwide, from the United States' concern with the permeability of its border with Mexico, to China's controversial handling of its Uighur community, Russia's dealings with Ukraine and other countries with whom it shares its border, and countless other immigration issues that regularly dominate the news headlines around the globe. Migration remains everywhere a critical concern. One cannot but wonder: *Why is this so?* Haven't we, as human beings, evolved from nomadic communities that roamed the African savannah in search of fertile pastures? Aren't we all progeny of migrants who roamed and ventured from their place of origin in search of better opportunities? And haven't we all wondered what life would be like if we packed up our bags and moved elsewhere, to where the grass is greener? If migration tendencies are so fundamentally human, why is migration such a universally divisive act?

This paper adopts an overarching view of migration that takes stock of the reality of conflict and its basis in human psychology. It starts by delving into the tendencies that incline individuals towards engaging in coalitions that advance mutual interests but that also serve some at the expense of others (Buhagiar & Sammut, 2020). It proceeds to consider socio-cognitive processes underpinning the formation of social identities that help individuals establish communion and solidarity through processes of inclusion as well as exclusion of undesirable members. It concludes by proposing a detailed methodology for identifying mutually acceptable strategies that serve as building blocks for establishing a common ground (Buhagiar, Mifsud, Brockdorff & Sammut, 2020). Whilst the potential for conflict between migrants and hosts remains a stark possibility in any encounter, an empirically-based strategy for bridging the psychological border of culturally nurtured common sense offers the possibility of pursuing peace in mutually satisfactory ways.

## Factors in Migration

In their seminal work on herding economies, Cohen & Nisbett (1994, 1997) claim that the 'culture of honour' lies behind the highly disparate homicide rates between northern and southern states in the United States. Nisbett & Cohen (1996) claim that southern states of the US developed a culture of honour due to their being settled by herding communities originating from Scotland and Ireland. In these communities, protecting one's territory and possessions from roaming cowboys in search of grazing farmland for their herds was key to economic survival. Consequently, southern states developed a culture of defending themselves and their possessions from marauding cowboys by force, if necessary. Failure to do so would have left them vulnerable to cowboy pillaging of their natural resources, who would simply move on to the next territory when these were depleted, leaving desolated farmers in their wake. The settlers seeming only option was to repel herders' exploitation by making sure that costs outweighed benefits. There is, in essence, no higher cost than human life, so settler communities fell back on this option out of necessity. The culture that took root justifying such drastic measures, centuries down the line, remained in circulation and led to differential homicide rates between the US North and South.

The authors go on to suggest that the hunter-gatherer adaptation in the human species,

which saw our ancestors roam the African savannah in search of nutrition, led to distinct cultural specialisations further down the ancestral line. These were propagated by social institutions, such that some individuals came to benefit from roaming in search of booty, whilst others reaped the benefits of settling and farming produce to satisfy their needs. The Hunter and the Gatherer, therefore, appear to be two distinct potentialities that inhere in the human species and that could, in certain circumstances, be pursued in mutually opposing ways. That is, in given circumstances, some may opt to stay and tend to matters whilst others may pack up and leave in search of better pastures. This basic tendency marks the ebb and flow of migration, both in a phylogenetic as well as in a geographic sense.

Social theorists have long queried the factors that stimulate people to move. The Push-Pull theory of migration (Van Hear, Bakewell & Long, 2018) claims that these factors fall in two classes: (a) unfavourable living conditions that urge people to move on, such as conflict and natural disasters, and (b) attractive living conditions elsewhere, such as good job opportunities, health care, education and other quality of life criteria. The former are deemed *push* factors, whilst the latter are deemed *pull* factors. Both act on the migrant simultaneously, determining when to leave and where to head. Entailed in this decision is a psychological belief that things will be better elsewhere, which involves a dissatisfaction with the current state of affairs rooted in experiences of everyday life, along with expectations of the future rooted in a representation of an imaginary locale. This is captured in the common aphorism: *the grass is greener on the other side*, denoting false expectations of a better alternative that is bound to disappoint and thus not worth the trouble.

Experiences of migration are all too commonly fraught with frustrations. On the one hand, host communities may prove to be less than welcoming. They may be protective of their stock and the ways of life they nurtured over the years. Similar to the settlers guarding against the herders in Cohen & Nisbett's analysis, hosts may resist immigration in a number of ways. They may put in place arduous points-based immigration visas or require hefty investment of capital for golden visas intended to attract only those migrants whose skills and wealth benefit the receiving country. They may also put quotas on the reception of refugees and seek to redistribute migrants claiming asylum to other countries using international exchanges based on socio-economic and political criteria. Asylum seekers may also be placed in definite or indefinite detention camps whilst they await a decision on their fate, which may well be prolonged and which will not necessarily be favourable in the end. More often than not, those who are allowed in are met with an expectation of assimilation (Berry, 2011; Sammut, 2011), requiring them to confine their cultural inclinations to the private domain and to adopt the host culture's ways as their own in public (Moghaddam, 2008; Buhagiar, Sammut, Rochira & Salvatore, 2018). On their part, faced with institutional, social and psychological barriers to integration, many migrants suffer frustrated expectations regarding their new life and the realistic possibilities that accrue from their immigrant status, including a stigmatising perception of themselves as 'Other' in the eyes of their beholders (Howarth, Wagner, Magnusson & Sammut, 2014). In such circumstances, migrants are motivated to band

together in communities that offer both support in navigating an alien cultural environment and solace in recognising one's personal inclinations as valued attributes. In other words, migrant communities offer their members *bonding* social capital (Sammut, 2011), but risk ghettoization if jettisoned by hosts. Whilst many studies have demonstrated the benefits of migrant integration (Berry et al., in press), these can only accrue when host societies offer institutionalised opportunities for *bridging* social capital (Sammut, 2011) that allow migrants to integrate in validated ways and to contribute to the host society in their own right. The populist movements that have swept many Western democracies in recent years and propelled many an anti-immigrant politician to power are testament to the fact that the successful integration of cultural diversity is easier said than done (Kaufmann, 2019).

## Social Cognition, Social Identity and Social Representation

So why is it that the migrant encounter is imbued with the potential for acrimony? Whilst global trade suggests that humans everywhere seem to appreciate positive inter-relations, the importation of cultural practices by migrants generally receives a different reception than that of goods or services. The answer to this question lies in our evolved socio-cognitive mechanisms that at some point during our ancestral past served our forefathers' survival by helping them distinguish friend from foe. In other words, those who were inclined to treat outgroup members as Other, to ostracise them and to restrict cooperative relations with them, fared better than those who opened their hearts and doors to strangers. Consequently, the cautious were more successful in passing on their genetically rooted inclinations to future generations – that is, us. How this might have happened is somewhat obvious, that is, those who cooperated with strangers exposed themselves to potential dangers that those who limited cooperation to the ingroup did not. In Cohen & Nisbett's terms, farmers who allowed herders to graze on their land ended up losing their produce and perishing, whilst those who defended their territory by force lived to tell the tale. In evolutionary terms, caution is a successful strategy.

This basic premise has endowed human cognition with a set of cognitive biases that pave the way for ingroup cohesion and outgroup competition. For instance, we tend to assign individuals to essentialised social groups (Hirschfeld, 1998) using some specific feature, such as skin colour (Howarth, Wagner, Magnusson & Sammut, 2014), to mark them out as individuals of a certain kind (Buhagiar, Sammut, Rochira & Salvatore, 2018). The boundary between ingroup and outgroup extends to our social identities, that is, who we define ourselves as and who we define others to be. The categorization processes implicated in social identification enable our self-worth relative to others, who we hold as different from us in characteristic ways (Hogg, 2016), which is why *we* are better than *them*. Denigrated identities – them – are in this way spoiled or stigmatized (Goffman, 2009).

Our aversion to outside ways extends to our treatment of new ideas, opinions or beliefs, including cultural ways of life. To the extent that these differ markedly from our own, we simply default on a naïve realism bias that see us consider our own beliefs and our own opinions as true and objective, and discrepant ones as biased, subjective or faulty (Ross & Ward,

1996). The treatment of female Muslim attire in many Western countries is a clear example of this. For instance, Burkinis have been banned in many French municipalities since 2016 and those who wear them risk being fined or forcibly removed by the police from public beaches and swimming pools. Little protest, if any, is directed at Catholic nuns wearing similarly modest clerical attire in public. This belies our tendency to view our own ways as plausible, sensible and correct whilst deprecating others' ways as fundamentally ignorant (Sammut & Sartawi, 2012). The policing of psychological boundaries extends to ostracising strategies directed at dissenting ingroup members. Marques, Yzerbyt & Leyens (1988) identified a 'black sheep effect' that resulted in dissenting ingroup members being treated even more harshly than outgroup members. This treatment was historically directed at outcasts, where individuals who challenged the group's hegemony were punished with social banishment and political exile.

What this means to say is that human beings have evolved predispositions for group life in terms of tendencies that protect ingroup cohesion against fragmentation that results from either sharing group resources with outsiders or by incorporating different ideas that challenge established norms. These tendencies preserve the common sense, which groups rely on for their members to act in concert (Sammut & Bauer, 2021). This characteristic is all but trivial. Whilst psychology adopts a clear focus at the individual level of analysis, it is worth bearing in mind that individuals are embedded in social groups that not only report distinct cultural practices, but that in unison pursue political projects that advance their own interests (Sammut, 2011). Many individual achievements are measured relative to others. Profit, for instance, involves the exchange of goods or services at a higher rate than mere costs of production. Somebody pays that difference. Achievements are also typically measured against others. Winning an Olympic medal is an individual feat that involves triumph over many others with similar aspirations. Even educational attainments are beyond the grasp of everyone. Crucially, our interests serve also the purpose of belonging. Etymologically, the term interest denotes being with others. The pursuit of common interests, therefore, entails the pursuit of projects that sustain groupness, which in its turn ensures our very survival through the resources we share with some but not with others by virtue of group membership itself. The bonds that bind group members confer not merely psychological wellbeing, but also social capital that enables its members to survive and thrive (Sammut, 2011).

In essence, human beings everywhere are implicated in pursuits that seek to realise aspirations that involve others, one way or another. When they guard themselves from an Other, individuals do so to protect what belongs to them and, by extension, what they themselves belong to. In other words, the groups they form part of, the resources these groups command and the projects they seek to realise for themselves that sustain their own interests. The preservation of such political projects entails processes of social re-presentation (Chryssides et al., 2009; Sammut & Buhagiar, 2020) that are project serving for the benefit of their constituents. Crucially, this applies to any group that establishes a constituency, in terms of membership, which possibly but not necessarily extends to the establishment of a constitution, a territory, legal jurisdiction, institutions and services, and so on. The point is

that groups self-organise in formal ways to institute themselves and the projects they collectively pursue. In the process, they fabricate social representations (Sammut & Howarth, 2014) that provide them with a common sense of who they are relative to others, and what the purpose of membership is.

There are two critical points to be made here. First, the projects they enact and the social representations they fabricate in the service of their projects may compete or conflict with the social representations or the projects pursued by others. For instance, installing a hydropower plant by building a new dam in Ethiopia conflicts with agricultural projects pursued by Egypt further down the Nile. Israel's occupation of the Golan Heights in pursuit of national defence conflicts with Syria's project of territorial sovereignty. In both cases, the same disputed object may be socially represented in different ways to serve distinct projects being pursued by different groups. In this way, conflicts arise regarding which social representation will prevail and, consequently, whose project will ultimately succeed and whose will fail. Secondly, migration traverses this political border of human sociality. In the act of migration, a migrant resigns participation in one group and assumes a constituent position in another. In the national sense this refers to citizenship and all that formal citizenship entails. It involves access to resources reserved for group members, for instance, education, healthcare, social security and protection. But it also involves realignment with different social representations serving distinct and potentially contrasting national projects. In this new reality, migrants are required to bat for the other side. The act of migration may serve the individual to leave various unpleasant experiences behind. But it also locates the individual within a new social firmament in which the individual's position may not be legitimated as expected. Acculturation allows migrants to learn the rules of a new culture (Berry, 2011), but this in itself does not translate into endorsement of a novel national project for the migrant or consent for an ascribed, possibly pejorative, identity. To go back to the introductory concern of this paper, migration remains everywhere an issue due to the fact that it instantiates a clash of social representations that might strengthen or derail collective longstanding projects that are already unfolding and that predate the migrants' arrival. The question that necessarily ensues is how to reconcile the social, psychological and political challenge precipitated by the migrant(s)' traversing of national and cultural borders.

## Reconciling Projects: Bridging the Cultural Border of Common Sense

The social representations perspective on intercultural reconciliation which I elaborate in this paper sensitises us to one crucial observation – that our life trajectories as human beings are embedded in social relations and in pursuit of some desirable ends. In the case of migration, this holds for both migrants and hosts. The identification of the implicit projects being pursued by individuals in conflicting social relations is imperative and emerges as a necessary first step to any reconciliation effort. Conflict, however, has one peculiar characteristic. That is, it brings groups together in social relations. These may be negative, which is the crux of the problem, but the starting point in the methodological approach to bridging borders I elaborate herein is to mark out what the groups are conflicting over. In representational terms, the object of conflict is the linking pin between contrasting projects.

Once the conflicting issue has been identified, the players need to be quizzed about the projects they are pursuing. This requires the identification of sociocultural groups, which may be different from demographic groups or ethnic groups, who hold a stake in the conflict. Empirical work is then directed at understanding the social representations that sustain the project being pursued by the group, conflicting with another's. In our work on the integration of Muslim Arabs in Malta (Buhagiar, Mifsud, Brockdorff & Sammut, 2020), we investigated the issue of integration with the dominant native Maltese on the one hand, and with the community of Arab migrants on the other. We asked both groups what they thought of integration, and we asked them to justify their perspective for or against. In this qualitative part of the procedure, myriad views emerged. Needless to say, some were in favour of migration and some were against, in both groups. This part of the procedure, however, is focused on understanding what justifies views for and against in each community respectively. This grants insight into the common sense underlying particular positions, however extremist these might be. For instance, in our study, some Maltese as well as some Arab participants expressed themselves in favour of migrant integration. But they did so in their own way by appeal to their own community's understanding of what integration itself entails. Similarly, we some participants from both groups took a position against integration, once again by appeal to their own cultural group's ways of reasoning about the issue (Buhagiar, Sammut, Rochira & Salvatore, 2018). Once we achieved saturation in this part of the procedure, we had various claims of common interest argued according to the respective group's common sense. Within each group there was variability, obviously, but perspectives were still understood even if disagreed with. That is, they still made sense.

We then subjected the range of claims we solicited from both groups to a thematic analysis, grouping similar ones together to identify those claims – both for and against, which had resonance *across* the sociocultural divide. Some claims emerged in only one group, whilst others made similar conclusions supported by different justifications in the different groups. The former were discarded and the latter retained, such that we ended up with a list of statements that were differentially sensible in both groups. We subjected this list of claims to an expert ranking exercise, and retained in the final scale, a derivative of Thurstone scaling, the six most pro- and the six most anti-integration. The result of this second part of the procedure was a twelve-item ecologically validated scale consisting of items pro- and anti-integration (on a scale of -6 to +6), each of which resonated across the intercultural divide.

Subsequently, we administered the scale to both communities in a quantitative survey to measure support for each item in the respective communities. We also asked participants to rate the extent to which they believed the other community were likely to endorse each of the claims. The results were highly insightful. In fact, whilst the Arab community rated item +5 mostly strongly (*"It would be better for society if Maltese and Arabs engage with each other"*; Mean=6.30, sd=1.285) and the Maltese community rated item +2 most strongly ("*As a minimum, there should be no discrimination between Maltese and Arabs*"; Mean=5.35, sd=1.755), it transpired that the difference between ratings of both groups on each item was smallest for item +2, which was also favourably rated by the Arab community

(Mean=6.16; sd=1.374). In other words, anyone expressing this opinion would be the most likely to solicit agreement from *both* groups. In interventionist terms, this item would be the obvious starting point in bridging the intergroup divide given the distance in endorsement between groups was lowest for this item, as detailed.

We also analysed the attributions participants made to the other group. Here we made another startling finding. We found that whilst the Arab attributions to the how strongly the Maltese would endorse each of the items followed the genuine pattern for the Maltese community, that of the Maltese community attributions to the Arabs did not. In other words, the Arab community had a good understanding of the representation of integration amongst the Maltese, but the Maltese did not have a good understanding of the representation of integration amongst the Arabs. It turns out that the Maltese group overestimated Arab endorsement of the anti-integrationist items and underestimated Arab endorsement of the pro-integrationist ones. In other words, the Maltese wrongly thought that the Arabs did not wish to integrate in Malta. This is again another obvious point of intervention. The challenge is not to get the Maltese to wish for more integration, or the Arabs to do the same, but to correct the misperception held by the Maltese of the Arab group's true intentions. In a sense, this task is potentially less difficult to address in practice than that of convincing either community to wish for more peaceful co-existence. The crucial point here, however, is that bridging the intercultural divide requires an effort to empirically identify the point of least resistance, communicate this in distinct ways that are sensible to each group in its respective terms, and move from there gradually to the next point up the scale one step at a time.

The caveat in this procedure is obvious. One or the other community may not wish to progress beyond the point of least discrepancy. In a sense, moving from this agreement towards more integration actualizes a project that some will find objectionable. In similar fashion, one could also move gradually down towards less integration, introducing successively more divisive statements. This is a question for politics to tackle. Insofar as the aspiration is to find a common ground in a situation of intercultural discord, the method elaborated serves to build a sensible bridge across by posing claims that are sure to attract mutual agreement. This task is foundational. One then needs to take things from there, open to the possibility that projects may need to be revised in line with mutually accommodating social representations.

## Conclusion

The issues around migration will not go away. Demographic shifts precipitate cultural changes even if all migration were to halt the world over (Kaufmann, 2019), which in itself is an unrealistic expectation. The challenge of how to manage migration issues remains. The policy debate centres around whether and what kind of migration to allow. The European Union distinguishes between mobility and migration, pursuing intercultural policies within and constraining migration from without. Other locales, such as various cosmopolitan cities around the world, have implemented multicultural policies where different cultural groups coexist side by side and interact successfully in the same setting on a daily basis. The populist threat aspiring to prevent further migration, protect cultural heritage and

assimilate rather than integrate different others, looms large over many societies.

This paper has started by noting that the tendency to mark individuals as ingroup or outgroup is based in our evolutionary past. It went on to review a number of socio-cognitive biases that serve ingroup cohesion, which secures survival in evolutionary terms. It has also noted how this comes at the expense of outgroup derogation. In essence, human cognition is based on the premise of individuals forming coalitions to compete with others in furthering their own self-interested projects. This insight may be less than ideal, but it is what policymakers have to work with. Settling for solutions that satisfy no one is bound to generate further resistance and further discord. In this paper, we have reviewed an empirical procedure that, in such circumstances, serves to identify the common grounds at best or the point of least discord at worst. This is the point where intercultural bridges need to be erected to fabricate new common senses that cross borders to satisfy cultural divergences.

## References

Andreouli, E., Greenland, K., Figgou, L. (2020). Lay discourses about Brexit and prejudice: "Ideological creativity" and its limits in Brexit debates. *European Journal of Social Psychology, 50*, 309– 322.

Berry, J.W. (2011). Integration and multiculturalism: Ways towards social solidarity. *Papers on Social Representations*, *20*(1), 2.1-2.21.

Berry, J.W., Lepshokova, Z., MIRIPS Collaboration, & Grigoryev, D. (in press). How shall we all live together?: Meta-analytical review of the Mutual Intercultural Relations in Plural Societies project. *Applied Psychology: An International Review*. https://doi.org/10.1111/apps.12332 (Member of MIRIPS Collaboration)

Buhagiar, L.J., & Sammut, G. (2020). 'Social Re-presentation for…': An action-oriented formula for intergroup relations research. *Frontiers in Psychology*, : https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2020.00352.

Buhagiar, L.J., Mifsud, R., Brockdorff, N., & Sammut, G. (2020). *A Report on Minority Relations in Malta*. Msida, Malta: University of Malta. ISBN: 978-9918-0-0076-0. : https://doi.org/10.13140/RG.2.2.36136.49923/1

Buhagiar, L.J., Sammut, G., Rochira, A., & Salvatore, S. (2018). There's no such thing as a good Arab: Cultural essentialism and its functions concerning the integration of Arabs in Europe. *Culture & Psychology*, *24*(4), 560-576.

Chryssides, A., Dashtipour, P., Keshet, S., Righi, C., Sammut, G., & Sartawi, M. (2009). We Don't Share! The Social Representation Approach, Enactivism and the Fundamental Incompatibilities Between the Two. *Culture & Psychology, 15*(1), 83-95.

Cohen, D, & Nisbett, R. (1997). Field Experiments Examining the Culture of Honor: The Role of Institutions in Perpetuating Norms about Violence. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 23*(11), 1188-1199

Cohen, D., & Nisbett, R. E. (1994). Self-protection and the culture of honor: Explaining southern violence. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, *20*(5), 551–567.

EU Observer. (2020). Commissioner: No one will like new EU migration pact. EU Observer. https://euobserver.com/migration/149475.

European Commission. (2020). Communication from the Commission on a New Pact on Migration and Asylum. European Commission. Document 52020DC0609.

European Union. (2020). Standard Eurobarometer 93 – Summer 2020 "Public Opinion in the European Union, First Results. European Commission. : https://doi.org/10.2775/460239

Goffman, E. (2009). *Stigma: Notes on the management of spoiled identity*. London, UK: Simon and Schuster.

Hirschfeld, L.A. (1998). Natural Assumptions: Race, essence and taxonomies of human kinds. *Social Research, 65*(2), 331-349.

Hogg, M.A. (2016). Social Identity Theory. In S. McKeown, R. Haji & N. Ferguson (Eds.), *Understanding Peace and Conflict through Social Identity Theory* (pp. 3-17). Peace Psychology Book Series. Cham, Switzerland: Springer.

Howarth, C., Wagner, W., Magnusson, N., & Sammut, G. (2014). 'It's only other people who make me feel black': acculturation, identity and agency in a multicultural community. *Political Psychology, 35*(1), 81-95.

Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre. (2021). *Global Report on Internal Displacement 2021*. Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre. https://internal-displacement.org/global-report/grid2021.

Kaufmann, E. (2019). *Whiteshift: Population, immigration and the future of white majorities.* London, UK: Penguin.

Marques, J. M., Yzerbyt, V. Y., & Leyens, J. P. (1988). The "black sheep effect": Extremity of judgments towards ingroup members as a function of group identification. *European journal of social psychology*, *18*(1), 1-16.

Moghaddam, F.M. (2008). *Multiculturalism and Intergroup Relations: Psychological Implications for Democracy in Global Context*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Nisbett, R. E., & Cohen, D. (1996). *Culture of honor: The psychology of violence in the South.* Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

Ross, L., & Ward, A. (1996). Naive realism in everyday life: Implications for social conflict and misunderstanding. *Values and knowledge* (pp. 103-135). London, UK: Psychology Press.

Sammut, G. (2011). Civic solidarity: the negotiation of identities in modern societies, *Papers on Social Representations, 20*(1), 4.1-4.24.

Sammut, G., & Bauer, M.W. (2021). *The Psychology of Social Influence: Modes and Modalities of shifting common sense*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Sammut, G., & Howarth, C. (2014). Social representations. In T. Teo (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of Critical Psychology* (pp. 1799-1802). New York, NY: Springer.

Sammut, G., & Sartawi, M. (2012). Perspective-taking and the attribution of ignorance. *Journal for the theory of social behavior, 42*(2), 181-200.

Van Hear, N., Bakewell, O., & Long, K. (2018). Push-pull plus: reconsidering the drivers of migration. *Journal of Ethinic and Migration Studies, 44*(6), 927-944.

World Health Organisation. (2020). *Novel Coronavirus (2019-nCoV): Situation Report – 1, 21 January 2020*. World Health Organisation. https://apps.who.int/iris/handle/10665/330760.