Introduction
Claudia Sadowski-Smith

in New Immigrant Whiteness: Race, Neoliberalism, and Post-Soviet Migration to the United States

The Introduction lays out the book’s focus on representations of migration from the former USSR to the United States—in TV shows, memoirs, fiction, and interviews—as responses to the global extension of neoliberalism and as contributions to scholarship on immigration and whiteness. By examining post-Soviet immigrants’ participation in diverse forms of human movement, the book adds a focus on the importance of legal status for accessing segmented US citizenship rights to the prevailing emphasis on the significance of collective group characteristics for immigrant adaptation and transnationalism. The New Immigrant Whiteness explores the emergence of discourses associating post-Soviet migrants with a pan-European whiteness that place them in explicit contrast to nonwhite populations even before their arrival in the United States. The book also examines representations of undocumented post-Soviet migration, analyzes post-USSR immigrants’ attitudes toward immigration from Mexico, and explores parallels between post-USSR and Asian immigrants who are similarly associated with the American immigrant dream of upward mobility. As the book renders members of the post-Soviet diaspora less exceptional from other contemporary arrivals, it creates an agenda for comparative work that addresses ongoing changes in the US ethnoracial hierarchy.
Highly Skilled and Marriage Migrants in Arizona
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This chapter discusses the results of my interviews with post-USSR immigrants in Phoenix, Arizona, which place male-dominated highly skilled and female-dominated marriage migration in the context of scholarship on adaptation and return migration. The two migratory forms have been spurred by the interests of US men in creating monoracial families and by the immense growth in the number of contingent academic positions at US institutions of higher learning. Their differential legal status upon arrival provides post-Soviet marriage and highly skilled migrants with divergent access to economic, social, and cultural forms of US citizenship, community building, and opportunities for return. Highly skilled migrants create middle-class lives, appear less interested in participating in a coethnic community, and maintain limited physical transnational connections, while marriage migrants face downward mobility and dependency, experience greater difficulty connecting to other post-Soviet migrants, and more often consider returning. While they are immediately provided with membership in their husbands’ middle-class lives, the globalized form of US whiteness that marriage migrants are assigned even before they leave their countries of origin creates heightened expectations of their complete assimilation to a middle-class whiteness at the cost of their and often their children’s bicultural and transnational identities.

The Post-Soviet Diaspora on Transnational Reality TV
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This chapter examines Lifetime’s short-lived Russian Dolls and ABC’s Dancing with the Stars, a widely watched US reality TV show. Both shows exemplify the emergence of narratives that associate the post-
Soviet diaspora with idealized accounts of turn of the twentieth century European immigrant adaptation and upward mobility. While they focus on 1.5 generation immigrant participants, many of whom likely came to the United States as religious refugees, the two shows consistently represent their emerging collective “Russian” identity as just another ethnicized version of pan-European whiteness. Post-Soviet migrant cast members are portrayed as following in the footsteps of idealized and homogenized early European migrants, and they are set in firm opposition to Latina/os. The chapter also examines media commentary surrounding the two shows, interviews with participants, their social media posts, and their participation in a Ukrainian TV show where their identity is differently constructed to highlight migrants’ engagement with growing anti-immigration sentiment and their efforts to establish new collective transnational and diasporic identities, which are not represented on DWTS and Russian Dolls.

The Post-Soviet Diaspora in Comparative Perspective
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This chapter analyzes additional data from my interviews with post-Soviet immigrants and Gary Shteyngart’s novel Super Sad True Love Story (2010) in order to outline connections between post-USSR, Latina/o, and Asian American migration. In the interviews, post-Soviet migrants largely stressed their ambivalence toward laws like Arizona’s 2010 Senate Bill 1070 that target undocumented migration and from which they expected exemption because of their differential modes of entry. Because of their shared status as immigrants or experiences with state surveillance in the USSR or in post-Soviet nations, however, interviewees also expressed empathy with Mexican immigrants as the group most targeted by the law. While these views are reminiscent of turn of the twentieth century European immigrants’ insistence on their differences from nonwhite contemporaries, they also recall eastern European Jewish immigrants’ ambivalence toward or rejection of white supremacy through empathy with African Americans because of their own marginalization in the Russian empire. Set in a dystopian United States that is undergoing similar neoliberal shock therapies as the former Soviet Union, Shteyngart’s novel draws attention to parallels between second-generation Russian Jewish immigrants and Asian Americans, who
are similarly associated with upward mobility, while Latina/os and African Americans are considered losers in the neoliberal era.

Conclusion
Claudia Sadowski-Smith

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The Conclusion explores how whiteness continues to function as a privileged racial identity that provides exemption from racial profiling and that is regularly mobilized in the service of white supremacy and white nationalism, even as the immigrant myth of bootstrapism is becoming disconnected from accounts of turn of the century European immigrants’ ascendance to a pan-European white identity and expanded to other immigrant groups. This chapter calls for more inclusive struggles for migrant citizenship rights based on connections—rather than stark divisions—between the post-Soviet diaspora and other migrants that place whiteness among other racial formations, in order to decenter its persisting centrality as a US founding mythology despite significant domestic and global changes. Coalitions across ethnic, national, and legal status will be needed to address increasingly explicit and encompassing anti-immigration discourses and policies in the United States.