THEMATIC ARTICLES – IDENTITY, INTEGRATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Immigrant Integration: Acculturation and Social Integration

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Abstract. This article tackles the concept of "immigrant integration" as it is analyzed by different authors in the international migration field. In this article, I will use the terms "refugee" and "immigrant" as equivalent to each other due to the interchangeable character of these concepts throughout the integration literature. First, the article brings into discussion the definitional and conceptual battle around the concept of immigrant "integration", and second, it will describe and analyze cultural and social integration with their presupposing processes.

Key words: *immigrant, refugee, acculturation, integration*

What is immigrant integration?

The literature surrounding the immigrants' reception into host society is to some extent characterized by contradictory positions, a diversity of definitions, and conceptual puzzlement. Throughout immigration studies, researchers use different concepts and definitions to express the same type of process which embodies the "consequences of immigration."[1] Following Adrian Favell, researchers use various terms, which differ in their clarity: they are "vaguer" concepts like, "absorption"[2], "accommodation", "toleration", "adaptation"[3] or "adaption."[4] Favell argues that

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[1] Adrian Favell, "Integration nations: the nation-state and research on immigrants in Western Europe, The multicultural challenge", *Comparative Social Research* 22, Elsevier Science (2003): 13-42.

[2] S.N. Eisenstadt, *The absorption of immigrants* (Greenwood Press, 1975), 11-12.

[3] Rainer Baubock, Agnes Heller, Aristide R, Zolberg, *The challenge of diversity. Integration and pluralism in societies of immigration* (European Centre Vienna Averbury, 1996)

some are "too technically precise" like "incorporation" which, in the end will be "swallowed" by integration, or "too descriptive" which do not reveal any political intervention like "assimilation" or "acculturation."[5]

By looking through studies dealing with immigrant integration, one becomes aware of the fact that there is no satisfactory core definition of the concept of "integration" despite what Favell called "numerous national and cross-national projects."[6] What can be noticed is that researchers are referring to this term using expressions like "a strange term"[7], "a difficult to define concept"[8], "a treacherous metaphor"[9], "a long and winding road"[10] or phrases like "the entire subject is a miasma, a minefield, which one would be well advised to be wary to enter."[11]

Regarding the definitional battle, some use integration as an umbrella term that subordinates other dominant concepts like assimilation and multiculturalism.[12] Others see it as an end in itself[13] while some view it as one type of adaptation[14], and still more may see it as the middle-way between assimilation and multiculturalism.[15] Moreover, the literature on immigrant integration is sometimes confusing because researchers use the same terms to refer to different processes

[4] Rivka Weiss Bar-Yosef. "Desocialization and resocialization: The adjustment process of immigrants"*, International Migration Review* 2, No. 3 (1968): 27-45, pp. 29

[5] Favell, "Integration nations: the nation-state and research on immigrants in Western Europe, The multicultural challenge", 15

[6] Idem 6

[7] Christina Boswell, *European Migration Policies in Flux. Changing Patterns of Inclusion and Exclusion* (The Royal Institute of International Affairs, Blackwell, 2003)

[8] Favell, "Integration nations: the nation-state and research on immigrants in Western Europe, The multicultural challenge", 15

[9] Banton (2001) in Adrian Favell, *Assimilation/Integration, in Immigration and Asylum: From 1900 to the Present* (edited by Matthew Gibney and Randall Hansen, Santa Barbara, CA: Clio, 2005); available at http://www.sscnet.ucla.edu/soc/faculty/favell/Clio.htm)

[10] Kloosterman et al. (1998) in Favell, "Integration nations: the nation-state and research on immigrants in Western Europe, The multicultural challenge"

[11] Apthorpe, in Peter Quentin Reinsch, *Measuring Immigrant Integration. Diversity in a Dutch City* (Netherlands School for Social and Economic Policy Research (AWSB), 2000)

[12] Boswell, "European Migration Policies in Flux. Changing Patterns of Inclusion and Exclusion" 75, Favell, "Integration nations: the nation-state and research on immigrants in Western Europe, The multicultural challenge", 15

[13] Andreas Kamm, the Director of the Danish Refugee Council, 2006

[14] Baubock, Heller, Zolberg, "The challenge of diversity. Integration and pluralism in societies of immigration"

[15] Boswell, "European Migration Policies in Flux. Changing Patterns of Inclusion and Exclusion" 75

that deal with immigrants' reception. For example, they use "integration" and "assimilation" as being the same and one term: "European research continues to treat 'integration' and 'assimilation' as nearly identical. The 'well integrated' migrant is the one who has assimilated functionally into ways of speaking, thinking, and behaving in the host society."[16] The constant definitional battle and the lack of criteria for measuring this process, make this term even blurrier than it is.

Short history of the term

The Chicago School of Urban Sociology popularized the term "integration" together with "assimilation" in the early twentieth century before becoming familiar terms in public policy debates about consequences of immigration. These two concepts have been mostly developed in the USA (assimilation) and Western Europe (integration) and both refer to "the process of settlement, interaction with the host society and social change that follows immigration."[17] But due to the powerful critiques brought to assimilation, and since "assimilation" is perceived as "undesirable"[18] or a "negative term"[19], integration is the preferred term in Western Europe, even though in practice some Western European countries tacitly advocate for assimilation (like Denmark).

Comparing other terms like "adaptation", "incorporation", "assimilation", or "acculturation" with the one of integration, Favell argues that neither of these concepts comprises the "social engineering of integration." Integration is viewed, in his perspective, "an ideal end-goal for society as a whole" which, "on paper looks extremely difficult and improbable" because this definition implies "the construction of a successful, well-functioning, multi-cultural or multi-racial society."[20] Christina Boswell takes into consideration the "difficult and

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[16] Carl-Ulrik Schierup and Aleksandra Ålund, "Introduction. From 'birds of passage' to ethnic minorities" in *Will they still be dancing? Integration and ethnic transformation among Yugoslav immigrants in Scandinavia* (Umeå: University of Umeå, 1986)

[17] Favell , "Assimilation/Integration, in Immigration and Asylum: From 1900 to the Present", 1

[18] Belinda-Ann Steen, *Varieties of the Tamil Refugee Experience in Denmark and England*, (Minority Studies, University of Copenhagen, The Danish Centre for Human Rights Copenhagen, Copenhagen 1993)

[19] Favell , "Assimilation/Integration, in Immigration and Asylum: From 1900 to the Present", 1

[20] Favell, "Integration nations: the nation-state and research on immigrants in Western Europe, The multicultural challenge", 15-16

improbable"[21] characteristic, arguing that the receiving societies are characterized by national and ideological variations as how far immigrants are expected to adapt to the receiving society. Therefore, in some cases, integration can take the shape of assimilation, multiculturalism or segregation. In the next section I will focus the discussion on the two dimensions of integration I am dealing with in this article: cultural integration or acculturation and social integration.

Dimensions of integration

Researchers measure integration in the host society through four dimensions: cultural, social, economic and political. These are the classical dimensions of integration, which in Boswell's terms gather all aspects of an immigrant's life[22]:

Cultural (knowledge of the host country's language, some understanding of its society and respect for its basic norms)

Social (insertion into education and welfare systems)

Economic (access to the labor market, employment)

Political (is equated with the final stage of integration - the right to vote and to stand for election, usually acquired through naturalization).

These four classical dimensions of integration have been developed by Rinus Pennix under a typology of migrant integration policies based on inclusion or exclusion which centers on the concept of "citizenship." In his view, in order to understand the European countries' present integration policies and their differences, we need to answer one question: "how basic democratic values can and should be combined with the two essentials of any integration policy: cultural and religious diversity on the one hand and socio-economic equality on the other?"[23] Consequently, Pennix develops three dimensions of citizenship, which, in his terms, can be used in the national and local analyses of integration, and can also

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[21] Boswell, "European Migration Policies in Flux. Changing Patterns of Inclusion and Exclusion", 75

[22] Idem 21

[23] Baubock (1994); Baubock et al. (1996); Brubacker (1989, 1992); Hammer (1990); Kymlicka (1995); Soysal (1994); Young (1990) in Rinus Penninx, "Integration of migrants. Economic, social, cultural and political dimensions", *Background paper for the European Population Forum 2004, Population Challenges and Policy Responses* (12-14 January, Geneva, 2007), 7; available at: www.unece.org/ead/pau/ epf/penninx.pdf

be used to construct typologies/ideal types of integration policies[24]:

Legal/political = "whether immigrants are regarded as full-fledged members of the political community"; it refers to the immigrants' political rights and duties, if they (easily or not) acquire national citizenship and access to the formal political system, to the secure residence rights they have or not have.

Socio/economic = described by social and economic rights, irrespective of citizenship: industrial rights and rights related to institutionalized facilities in the socio-economic sphere (the same rights as indigenous workers, access to unemployment benefits and insurance, social security facilities – social housing, social assistance, welfare, care facilities

Cultural-religious rights = do immigrants "have (equal) rights to organize and manifest themselves as cultural, ethnic or religious groups?"
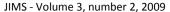
In his perspective, if we attribute at least two qualities to each dimension (for example positive quality (+) which means policy support for that dimension or negative quality (-) which means negative support for that dimension) we can create a typology, which he calls "ideal types", of possible forms of integration policies.

Therefore, he makes a difference in integration policies based on their inclusive or exclusive character. He argues that the inclusive policies are those which grant at least legal/political rights to the newcomers. Further on, his analytical frame suggests that if states grant both legal/political and socio/economic rights, but do not grant the right to cultural/religious expression then, the outcome of their policy is defined as assimilation. For example, Denmark is considered to have an inclusive policy toward immigrants based on assimilation. Denmark grants both legal/political and socio/economic rights, but does not grant the right to cultural/religious expression. In contrast, Sweden grants both legal/political and socio/economic rights and also the right to cultural/religious expression which translated into multiculturalism.

Cultural integration or Acculturation

The most basic definition of acculturation or cultural integration is that in

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[24] Penninx ,"Integration of migrants. Economic, social, cultural and political dimensions", 7

this subprocess immigrants experience cultural change.[25] In Alba and Nee's review of Gordon's work, acculturation is defined as "the minority group's adoption of the cultural patterns of the host society"[26], a subprocess that comes first and is also, in Gordon's view, inevitable. Milton Gordon described acculturation as when members of an ethnic group begin to take on the cultural elements of the receiving society: language, style of dress, diet, religion, values, and taste of music.

According to Charles Jaret this subprocess is characterized by a transitional stage in which immigrants adopt the elements of the new culture, while preserving elements from their own/old culture.[27] Hence, there are intrinsic and extrinsic cultural traits.[28] The intrinsic cultural traits are those that are "vital ingredients of the group's cultural heritage" – religion and musical traits, while the extrinsic traits are "the products of the historical vicissitudes of the group's adjustment to the local environment", meaning that the minority group is more ready to surrender them as they become less central to group identity.[29] The supposition is that in time, while the assimilation process advances, the immigrants will abandon their intrinsic cultural traits.

Another important point is supported by Rinus Pennix who argues that the most important two elements of the cultural-religious domain are language acquisition and religious manifestation in the public sphere.[30] In his view, compared to multicultural ideologies like Great Britain, Sweden and The Netherlands, the homogenous countries like France, Germany, Austria, Denmark, do not create many premises for cultural or religious manifestations in the public sphere. In this assimilationist model, the society's culture is taken as "given" and the newcomers are expected to adapt at least to the public institutions of the host society.

Summarizing the process of acculturation, Milton Gordon characterizes it as "minor modifications in cuisine, recreational patterns, place names, speech,

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[25] Charles Jaret, *Contemporary racial and ethnic relations* (Harper Collins College Publishers, 1995), 360

[26] Richard Alba and Nee, Victor, "Rethinking assimilation theory for a new era of immigration", *International Migration Review*, 31, Special Issue: "Immigrant Adaptation and Native-Born Responses in the Making of Americans", (1997): 826-874, p. 827

[27] Jaret, "Contemporary racial and ethnic relations", 360

[28] Milton Gordon, 1964, in Alba and Nee "Rethinking assimilation theory for a new era of immigration", 827

[29] Alba and Nee, "Rethinking assimilation theory for a new era of immigration", 829

[30] Penninx ,"Integration of migrants. Economic, social, cultural and political dimensions", 10

residential architecture, sources of artistic inspiration and perhaps few other areas" or a process of "change at the margins" process, which could take place in an isolated form, without being followed by other forms of assimilation.[31] Moreover, other social science theorists argue that, even if first generation immigrants acculturate fairly quickly, they will never adjust completely to the new country of settlement, thus, assimilation will never occur in their case.[32]

One of the first steps toward immigrants' and refugees' acculturation is learning the language of the host society. In the next part I will present the advantages of learning it as well as the barriers that hamper language acquisition.

a) Language acquisition

One of the most important elements toward integration is the acquisition of the receiving society's language. Language acquisition is a part of the cultural domain of citizenship[33] or acculturation.

The language of the destination country is a prerequisite for successful integration in every other aspect.[34] Chiswick, Lee and Miller also argue that language skills are one of the most important aspects for immigrant inclusion into the labor market. For example, proficiency in the destination language has been shown, from an economical perspective, to be an important determinant of earnings among immigrants in Australia, Canada, Germany, Israel and the United States.[35]

Arnold Rose also considers the link between cultural, social and economical integration arguing that language is a prerequisite for social contacts and employment in the receiving society. She emphasizes the indispensability of the destination language knowledge in every aspect of the immigrant's life: "for understanding work orders, following safety rules, expressing oneself to the employer and to fellow workers, knowledge of language is essential; so it is for talking to neighbors, making acquaintances, claiming rights from the authorities

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[31] Gordon (1964:100) in Alba and Nee, "Rethinking assimilation theory for a new era of immigration", 830

[32] Mary C Waters, Tomas R. Jimenes, "Assessing immigrant assimilation: new empirical and theoretical challenges", *Annual Review of Sociology* 31(2005): 1051-125

[33] Penninx ,"Integration of migrants. Economic, social, cultural and political dimensions", 10

[34] Ministry of Interior, *The integration of foreigners in the Danish Society. The Think Thank on integration in Denmark* (2001): 8

[35] Barry R. Chiswick, Lee Yew Liang, Paul W Miller, "Immigrants' Language Skills and Visa Category"**,** *International Migration Review* 40, (2006): 419–450, p. 1

and seeking advantage of recreational opportunities (including radio and TV)."[36]

But all these above mentioned theories regarding language acquisition, which, in my perspective are written from the host society's point of view, are obstructed by subjective elements that refugees and immigrants encounter when they must learn the host society's language.

b) *The main five barriers in language acquisition*

Chiswick et al. argue about five important aspects that place a major importance on the refugees'/immigrants' acquisition of the destination country's language: the time spent in the host society, the immigrant's education, the age at the time of immigration, the linguistic distance and the geographical distance.[37]

As regards to the time spent in the host society they posit that "destination-language skills are greater the longer the duration in the host country and among the better educated."[38] This theory is completed by the variable "exposure" which is measured through three dimensions: exposure prior to migration, time units of exposure in the destination country and the intensity of exposure per unit of time in the destination country.[39]

A problematic aspect of learning the language of the destination country is, what Husted et al.[40] identified, the "small-area-languages" which is only spoken on a very limited territory and to which not many have access to. For example, the Danish language is only spoken by six million people in the world and exposure to Danish language is quite reduced in Europe and other countries.

Another theory regarding language acquisition is that the highly educated refugees/immigrants are generally used to language structure, and, through their work, have come in contact with other languages and cultures

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[36] Arnold, M. Rose, *Migrants in Europe. Problems of acceptance and adjustment* (The University of Minnesota Press, 1969): 71

[37] Barry R. Chiswick, Lee Yew Liang, Paul W Miller, "Immigrants' Language Skills and Visa Category", 420

[38] Idem 43

[39] Barry R. Chiswick, Lee Yew Liang, Paul W Miller, "Immigrants' Language Skills and Visa Category", 424

[40] Husted, Leif, Helena Skyt Nielsen, Michael Rosholm, Nina Smith, "Employment and wage assimilation of male first-generation immigrants in Denmark", *International Journal of Manpower*, Bradford 22 (2001): 2

(through schools, training, tourism, reading), thus learning the destination country's language is easier.[41] I will add that knowledge of other foreign languages eases the learning of the destination country language.

Husted et al. also bring into discussion the length of the refugees' expected stay as having a major importance on language acquisition. When the length of expected stay is short, refugees/immigrants might not invest in language acquisition or other human capital in the country of destination.[42]

Moreover, Chiswick et al. contend that language acquisition varies within the "geographic distance"[43] between the destination country and the country of origin. They posit, in accordance with Messina and Lahav that the greater the distance between them, the lower the expectations of return migration and the greater the investments in destination-specific skills[44], including language acquisition. When we speak of refugees, this statement holds true because refugees are expected to stay put in the receiving country. They cannot choose between host safe countries because "asylum is a necessity and not a luxury"[45] and they cannot go back to their home countries. Therefore, in my perspective, refugees are investing a bigger amount of their resources in the destination country than other types of immigrants.

Moreover, efficiency in the destination country's language is also measured through the "linguistic distance" between the immigrant's mother tongue and the language of the host society.

Regarding the age at the time of immigration, Chiswick et al. argue that immigration at an older age is associated with lower proficiency in the language of the destination country.[46] Consequently, I will add that immigration at a young age is associated with higher proficiency in the language of the destination country and this aspect is not dependent on the immigrants'

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[41] Rose, "Migrants in Europe. Problems of acceptance and adjustment", 37

[42] Leif Husted, Helena Skyt Nielsen, Michael Rosholm, Nina Smith, "Employment and wage assimilation of male first-generation immigrants in Denmark", *International Journal of Manpower*, Bradford 22 (2001): 39, p. 3

[43] Barry R. Chiswick, Lee Yew Liang, Paul W Miller, "Immigrants' Language Skills and Visa Category", 423

[44] Anthony M. Messina and Gallya Lahav, *The migration reader: Exploring Politics and Policies* (Lynne Rienner Publishers Inc. 2006): 16-17

[45] A.G., Romanian refugee in Denmark

[46] Barry R. Chiswick, Lee Yew Liang, Paul W Miller, "Immigrants' Language Skills and Visa Category", 424

education level.

Waters and Jimenez bring into discussion the "three-generation model of language assimilation"[47] which I find relevant to mention. According to this model, the first generation of immigrants makes some progress in learning the language of the destination country, but remains dominant in their native tongue; the second generation is bilingual; and the third generation speaks only the language of the destination country. Thus, complete assimilation will never occur in the case of first generation refugees/immigrants.

c) Cultural factors in integration

Researchers also differ in their opinions to what importance we should give to cultural factors in the process of integration.

William Bernard argues that the cultural considerations and thus the culture type is not a major factor in integration because there is no cultural, national or racial superiority in the field of integration.[48] In contrast, Arnold Rose argues that the similarity of cultures between the country of emigration and the country of immigration along with the openness of the society and the degree of attachment immigrants feel to their home country[49] are of major importance in the integration process. Schwartz also argues that "integration problems" appear mostly due to traditions in a culture.[50]

A reconciling opinion on this issue is brought by Schierup and Ålund who argue that different groups respond to their immigrant situation in different ways because they arrive in the destination country with different socio-cultural backgrounds and cognitive frames of reference.[51] Thus, integration is not a group phenomenon, but there is variation and different adaptation patterns depending on the individual immigrant and his/her human capital which the receiving society should take into consideration.

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[47] Mary C Waters, Tomas R. Jimenes, "Assessing immigrant assimilation: new empirical and theoretical challenges", 110

[48] William S. Bernard, "The integration of Immigrants in the United States", *International Migration Review* 1 (1967): 23-33, p. 29

[49] Rose, "Migrants in Europe. Problems of acceptance and adjustment", 33

[50] Jonathan Schwartz, "On the representation of immigrants in Denmark: retrospective" in Røgilds, Flemming (ed), *Every cloud has a Silver Lining. Lectures on everyday life, cultural production and race* (Copenhagen: Akademisk Forlag 1990): 48

[51] Carl-Ulrik Schierup and Aleksandra Ålund. "Introduction. From 'birds of passage' to ethnic minorities", 15

Structural assimilation

What comes to complete the process of acculturation, is in Gordon's terms, structural assimilation, defined as the entrance of a minority group "into the social cliques, organizations, institutional activities and general civic life" of the society.[52]

For Milton Gordon structural assimilation occurs in two stages. The first stage of this subprocess presupposes activities that create friendships and personal associations, frequent home visiting, common worship and shared recreational activities among people of different racial-ethnic groups. According to Gordon, in this stage, the racial-ethnic groups already in the "social mainstream" co-mingle in the same residential neighborhoods and become a part of the same primary groups as: social clubs, religious congregations, friendship networks, and (through intermarriage) kinship groups."[53]

The second stage of structural assimilation is described by Gordon when the newcomers become a full-fledged citizen by participating in "activities of the general civic life which involve earning a living, carrying out political responsibilities, and engaging in the instrumental affairs of the larger community."[54] This means that immigrants should make use of their opportunities to become full-fledged citizens by participating in the political and occupational fields and by using the facilities and institutions accessible to the entire general public (parks, hospitals, school, theatres). This is what Boswell describes to be social integration: insertion into education and welfare systems[55].

Moreover, Pedraza-Bailey sees structural assimilation as "full integration of the immigrants and their descendants into the major institutions of the society (educational, occupational, political) and into the social cliques and clubs that lead to intimate primary relationships, including intermarriage" or "taken up and incorporated."[56]

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[52] Gordon (1961: 248) in Jaret, "Contemporary racial and ethnic relations", 360

[53] Jaret, "Contemporary racial and ethnic relations", 360-361

[54] Idem 58

[55] Boswell, "European Migration Policies in Flux. Changing Patterns of Inclusion and Exclusion", 75

[56] Silvia Pedraza-Bailey, "Immigrant research: A conceptual Map", *Social Science History*, 15 (1990): 43-67, p. 45-46

The first stage of structural assimilation or social integration

The first stage of structural assimilation presupposes activities that create friendships and personal associations, frequent home visiting, common worship and shared recreational activities among people of different racial-ethnic groups.[57] Because I am focused on individual and not group integration, I will take Schierup and Alund's theory and use it at the individual and not the group level. They state that different groups respond to their immigrant situation in different ways because they arrive in the destination country with different socio-cultural backgrounds and cognitive frames of reference.[58] Conversely, I argue that individual refugees and immigrants respond differently to their immigrant situation due to their different socio-cultural backgrounds and cognitive frames of reference. Therefore, one of the main concepts of this section is the refugees' /immigrants' human capital.

a) *Human capital*

A central aspect that immigrants bring along with them in the receiving society and is vital in their integration is their human capital. Human capital, Bourdieu notes, is formed by economic, cultural, social and symbolic capital. In short, economic capital is described as the material goods, knowledge and skills of an individual; the cultural capital refers to the individual's pattern of norms and values, while social capital addresses the individual's contacts and ties within influential others.[59] Another type of capital is the symbolic capital which "exists in the eyes of the others." With the symbolic capital the other types of human capitals are recognized as legitimate.[60]

In social sciences, the opinions regarding the importance of human capital in the immigrants' integration are dichotomized. Some researchers affirm that the human capital an immigrant possesses and brings with him/her in the new

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[57]Gordon (1961: 248) in Jaret, "Contemporary racial and ethnic relations", 361

[58] Carl-Ulrik Schierup and Aleksandra Ålund, "Introduction. From 'birds of passage' to ethnic minorities",

[59] Reinsch, "Measuring Immigrant Integration. Diversity in a Dutch City"

[60] Bourdieu (1990: 134-135) and Caglar (1994) in Bulent Diken. "Strangers in Denmark – In between

underrepresentation and overvisualisation", in *The multicultural neighbourhood*, Nævnet for Etnisk Ligestiling

1997): 68.

settlement is an important factor toward a successful integration, some argue that the immigrant's previous education and skills are insignificant. Chiswick contends that human capital which consists of "schooling, professional qualifications, language proficiency, and the like" facilitates the incorporation of immigrants.[61]

In contrast, Zimmermann et al.[62] and Rachel Friedberg[63] argue that this pre-immigration characteristic – the education in the country of origin or the economic capital – is not, in all cases, considered important in the immigrants' integration in the host country.

In order to create a better integration path for first generation migrants, Zimmermann et al. propose that policy makers should create different integration policies for both men and women where a broad focus should be on strengthening the post-immigration educational policies, like the recognition of their education or its actualization with the new labor market requirements.[64] The immigrants' self-identification perspective emphasizes the subjective experiences of integration in contrast to other researches, which define integration from the receiving societies' point of view.

b) Education

An aspect that Lerner et al. bring into discussion is that the educational resources immigrants/refugees bring along with them are less valued in the host society[65], therefore they are more vulnerable to labor market discrimination.

In the first stage of their arrival, immigrants differ from natives in

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[61] in Caroline B Bretell and, James F. Hollifield, *Migration theory. Talking across disciplines*, (Routledge, 2000): 16)

[62] Laura Zimmermann, Klaus F Zimmermann, Amelie Constant, "Ethnic Self-Identification of first Generation Immigrants", *International Migration Review* 41(Fall 2007): 769-781

[63] Rachel M. Friedberg. "You Can't Take It with You? Immigrant Assimilation and the Portability of Human Capital", *Journal of Labor Economics* 18 (2000): 221-251

[64] Laura Zimmermann, Klaus F Zimmermann, Amelie Constant, "Ethnic Self-Identification of first Generation Immigrants", 11

[65] Miri, Lerner, Gila Menahem, Robert D. Hisrich, "Does government matter? The impact of occupational retraining, gender and ethnicity on immigrant's incorporation", *Journal of Small Businesses and Enterprise development* 12 (2006): 192-210, p. 194

demographic and skill levels.[66] First, the natives' skill level differs from the refugees'/immigrants' in "school quality." Rachel Friedberg argues that usually immigrants from developed countries can return to and use their education acquired abroad since the education in developed countries is associated with higher quality than education in developing countries, thus they can easily integrate. He continues the comparison between natives and immigrants, evidencing that natives have country-specific skills and information that immigrants lack at the time of their arrival which, at least in the beginning, makes their integration arduous.

Second, human capital acquired abroad sometimes differs in its "compatibility" with the skills required in the host society. This "compatibility" of human capital can be surpassed when the country of origin and the destination country are close in terms of "economic development, industrial and occupational structures, institutional settings, and so forth" (Friedberg, 2000: 6).

Friedberg also emphasizes that integration is a process that entails time, arguing that the host country-specific knowledge can be acquired and improved as more time is spent in the host society.

Facing this situation, refugees and immigrants go through a "cognitive disorganization"[67] situation, which creates an emotional disequilibrium exemplified by frustrations, feelings of insecurity and anxiety: "the migrant may be said to live through the process of migration in an unstructured, incompletely defined field and cannot be sure how his various aspirations and expectations can be realized."[68]

For example, in Denmark, the moment when the issues of the refugees' educational backgrounds have started to be taken into consideration in the Danish immigration discourse was 1998 once with the report of the Danish Refugee Council on the Assessment and Recognition of Refugee's Qualifications in the European Community that meant to stimulate reflection and action toward this subject. In the summary of this report, the Danish Refugee Council argued that the refugees' education and recognition of their studies "have not yet, as a rule, given rise to political discussions" even though immigrants' education has been one of

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[66] Friedberg, "You Can't Take It with You? Immigrant Assimilation and the Portability of Human Capital", 3
[67] Bar-Yosef, "Desocialization and resocialization: The adjustment process of immigrants", 34
[68] S.N. Eisenstadt, "The absorption of immigrants", 6

the most important factors toward their success in the labor market.[69] Despite the alarm signals drawn by the Danish Refugee Council, which mentioned that an unsuccessful transferability of the refugees' educational background in the destination country will hamper the refugees' road toward integration, today's attitude toward the refugees' educational backgrounds is still not taken into consideration.

c) *Vocational training*

One way to align the refugees' education with the receiving country's labor market requirements are the vocational trainings.

Vocational trainings are a part of the structural assimilation and are a successful strategy to include refugees and immigrants into the labor market. They represent, along with learning the host society's language, the first step to enter "the social cliques, organizations, institutional activities and general civic life" of the society.[70] The vocational trainings, along with language training, can provide the basis for cultural, social and economic integration.

Vocational training is described by Arnold Rose as regular courses offered by a country (by both Government and private firms) for all citizens or special courses designed for immigrants that last for a period of three to eight months. During that time workers receive an allowance.[71] In the Danish integration, vocational training, in conjunction with the immigrants' higher education is jointly defined as "vocational qualifying education."[72]

For example, in Denmark, vocational training have two targets with two different methods of action: the unskilled immigrants who lack a previous qualification in whose case vocational training append an extra education or offer education and practice within a fieldwork from the ground up which they use in their future economical integration, and the skilled immigrants. Usually, the skilled immigrants need an "up-date of their education in order to be able to compete for a job."[73]

Speaking of immigrants with relatively high human capital imported from

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[69]. Humelgaard et al. in Klaus F Zimmermann, *European Migration. What do we know?* (Oxford University Press
2005), 75

[70] Gordon (1961) in Jaret, "Contemporary racial and ethnic relations", 360

[71] Rose, "Migrants in Europe. Problems of acceptance and adjustment", 66

[72] Think Thank on integration in Denmark (August 2001), 9

[73] Idem 77

the society of origin, Friedberg contends that the retraining programs are an important step toward the "adaptability and transferability"[74] of the immigrant's human capital to the host society, moreover, toward their "self-actualization."[75] In their view, adaptability and transferability is what makes the difference between more or less successful immigrants.

Immigrants can bring their human capital acquired abroad or they can build it all domestically by enrolling in education institutions in the destination country (Friedberg, 2003:6). Following this statement, Zimmermann et al. arrive, through their research on German immigrants, at the conclusion that both types of immigrants who have no education or have acquired higher education in Germany feel more attached to Germany and are more likely to identify themselves as integrated.[76] Therefore, they consider that any kind of investment in the country of destination creates a powerful bond between immigrants and the host society.

Husted et al.[77], in accordance with Zimmermann[78] note, referring to the Danish immigration context, that "having a formal education, either vocational or theoretical, improves the employment probability considerably for immigrants as well as for Danes." In agreement with the above researchers, Lerner et al. emphasize the importance of occupational training in the immigrants' integration: "participating in programs that improve human capital, such as occupational retraining, contributes to increasing the probability of finding a job, achieving a higher occupational status and improving the economic benefits (salaries) of immigrants from their positions."[79]

But despite the numerous vocational courses offered to refugees and immigrants with high level qualifications, quite a high number still end up in unskilled jobs.[80] This is because they do not get formal recognition of their

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[74] Friedberg., "You Can't Take It with You? Immigrant Assimilation and the Portability of Human Capital"

[75] Pedraza-Bailey, "Immigrant research: A conceptual Map"

[76] Zimmermann, Klaus F Zimmermann, Amelie Constant, "Ethnic Self-Identification of first Generation
Immigrants", 777

[77] Leif Husted, Helena Skyt Nielsen, Michael Rosholm, Nina Smith. "Employment and wage assimilation of male first-generation immigrants in Denmark", 7

[78] Zimmermann, "European Migration. What do we know?", 78

[79] Lerner, Gila Menahem, Robert D. Hisrich. "Does government matter? The impact of occupational retraining,
gender and ethnicity on immigrant's incorporation", 194

[80] Think Thank on integration in Denmark (August 2001), 11

education and their education is not transferable or adaptable to the new labor market requirements. The Think Thank on integration in Denmark recognizes that a successful integration is not accomplished only when the immigrants' employment rate rises to the level of Danes, but when foreigners maintain jobs that are equivalent to their education.[81]

d) Consequences of vocational training – networking

Referring to the immigrants in Israel, Lerner et al. bring into discussion an important aspect of these vocational training: "networking"[82] or "a reference person."[83] According to Zimmermann et al., "participating in the programs may have provided these immigrants with opportunities to interact with representatives of the host society's agencies on a regular basis, and to acquire know-how and wider their networks with immigrants from other republics (given that typically they tend to socialize with their own co-ethnics."[84] Together with family and friends, these "local ties, old associational membership or the partly institutionalized party bosses and influential voluntary associations"[85] are seen as necessary steps in the immigrants' adjustment to the new set of mores they must internalize.

The opposite perspective is brought by Diken who, defining social capital as networks and relationships, argues that most of the immigrants in Denmark have a severe deficit because even if immigrants/refugees have access to their dense ethnic enclaves, most of them do not have access to Danish networks.[86]

Conclusions

I consider that the concept of "immigrant" is an umbrella term that encloses the many types of migrants that exist: refugees, economical migrants, internally displaced people, and so on. Therefore, in this article I have used the terms "refugee" and "immigrant" as being the same because the literature on

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[81] Idem 85

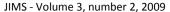[82] Lerner, Gila Menahem, Robert D. Hisrich. "Does government matter? The impact of occupational retraining,
gender and ethnicity on immigrant's incorporation"

[83] Zimmermann, "European Migration. What do we know?", 78

[84] Zimmermann, "European Migration. What do we know?", 206

[85] Bar-Yosef, "Desocialization and resocialization: The adjustment process of immigrants", 39

[86] Diken, "Strangers in Denmark – In between underrepresentation and overvisualisation", 67

integration rarely deals with a certain group of migrants in particular. My only objection to this approach is that refugees need a particular attention compared to other types of migrants, as refugees are people who have dealt with many physical and psychical injustices and they need special treatment in their integration.

The cultural and social integration are the first steps toward integration when we speak of refugees. This article has tried to expose the different perspectives on integration as this concept is seen as a "difficult to define concept" throughout the migration literature. There are many definitions and many interpretations of this term that is why sometimes it is difficult to grasp, analyze and generalize.

Second, the article moved the discussion further and deeper into the cultural and social dimensions of migration, trying to reveal the many aspects that these separate processes presuppose. The language is the first step toward cultural integration. Often, language is associated with cultural integration. Usually, language acquisition is seen as unproblematic. But barriers in acquiring the language like the linguistic distance between the refugees'/immigrants' native language and the language of the receiving country, the exposure to the language of the refuge country, the age of the immigrants' at the time of emigration, the education of the immigrants', the geographic distance between the country of origin and the destination country are often overlooked by researchers. Many researches present the objective point of view on integration, without taking into consideration the subjective point of view, more exactly, the one of the immigrants' themselves.

The human capital is of utmost importance in the immigrants' integration. The problem is that this baggage is ignored by most of the representatives in the destination countries. Refugees and immigrants represent a massive amount of human capital from which we should all benefit. States should be aware of each immigrant's education and training and instead of thinking about them in stereotypes, they should take advantage of the human capital and educational background immigrants bring along with them. Thus, we should also take into consideration the immigrants' human capital, not only on paper, but also in practice.

Moreover, we should do more studies and find out the barriers of integration from the point of view of the immigrants themselves. There are a multitude of studies which present integration from a macro perspective. We

should also ground our findings into the micro perspective from where the real solutions arise: "We need more studies to compare a small number of immigrant experiences in depth along a couple of key variables – what Robert Merton called "theories of the middle range."[87]

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[87] Pedraza-Bailey, "Immigrant research: A conceptual Map", 61

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