

MIGRATION NARRATIVES: FROM INTEGRATION TO INCORPORATION

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Received 28 September 2022; Accepted 2 December 2022

Abstract:

This article delimitates from the narratives depicting migration – especially under its irregular form – and migrants as a „problem” to be solved; instead, it focuses on the need to integrate migrants and on assessing their input in the overall development of today’s Union, conceived both as an impressive labour market and as a supranational society. It is emphasized the analytical confusion caused by the multitude of terms and positions regarding the ideal-type relations imagined in the literature between migrants and host societies, and it proposes surmounting the paradigmatic incommensurability by gathering these various approaches under the umbrella of the concept of incorporation that will prove useful for providing a unitary framework for conducting fruitful debates and analysis about how to better integrate migrants and strengthen their role in their new communities.

Key words: incorporation; integration; migration; migration policy; societal impact

JEL classification: F22

1. INTRODUCTION

At the beginning of 2021, there were 23.7 million non-EU citizens living in the EU, which meant about 5.3% of the Union’s population (Eurostat 2022), an increasing trend that has been additionally augmented by the Ukrainian crisis which brought more than 7 million refugees, recorded in Europe at the end of August 2022 (UNHCR 2022). There is no solid analysis in order to predict when and how will end the current refugee crisis; nevertheless, the longer it takes, the bigger the chances for a larger part of the Ukrainian refugees currently registered for Temporary Protection or similar national protection schemes in Europe (almost 4 million in late August 2022) to become interested in a medium and even long-term residence on the EU’s territory, raising the figures of regular migrants interested in a job and a life within EU. The attractiveness of this space comes, firstly, from the early history of the European Union, specifically from the 1951 European Coal and Steel Community and the following 1957 European Economic Community and European Atomic Energy Community; secondly, it comes from the empirical observations from those decades indicating that the common market and the free movement of goods, at the beginning, and – later – of persons, capital and services, led towards the spread of a mere state economic cooperation in a restricted area, towards a genuine political and social integration of societies, facing what neofunctionalist accounts referred to as the spillover effect (Lindberg 1963, Haas 1968).

An objective research of the migration realm is usually hampered by factors such as: (a) the predominance of the so-called “receiving country bias” or “destination country perspective”, blind to any origin country influences on what migration is caused by, is supported by or generates at its turn; (b) the focus on the economic effects of migration, downsizing the importance of socio-cultural or political implications; (c) the unsettled definitions of migration or boundaries between internal and international migration; (d) the differences and also the connections between migration and mobility or between regular and irregular migration; (e) the overheard voice of state or intergovernmental actors, in the detriment of other stakeholders of the migration process; (f) the

incommensurability of the paradigms options of the analysts, with large theoretical and methodological implications, etc. (de Haas 2014, IOM 2019).

Considering that in recent years, especially in the context of different types of crises that have contributed to the growth of regular and irregular migration, the research in this field has experienced significant improvement in both quantitative and qualitative terms, this article delimitates itself from the narratives depicting migration – mainly under its irregular form – and migrants as a „problem” to be solved; instead, I focus on the need to integrate migrants and on assessing their input in the overall development of today’s Union, conceived both as an impressive labour market and as a supranational society. The research question of my approach is connected to the analytical confusion caused by the multitude of terms and positions regarding the ideal-type relations imagined in the literature between migrants and host societies: can it be conceived a solution for surmounting the paradigmatic incommensurability by gathering these various approaches under the umbrella of a single concept? The originality of this article rests in the concept of *incorporation* that I propose as a catch-all version for the various „integration of migrants” narratives and that I argue that will prove useful by providing a unitary framework for conducting fruitful debates and analyses within a common agreed methodology and concept operationalization schemes. In this respect, in this article, I will firstly present the existing theoretical framework and the place of studies on incorporation/integration of migrants, with brief examples from the EU and some member states; afterwards, I analyse the wide spectrum of the integration discourses and I explain and develop the utility of using the valences of the incorporation concept.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Aware that there is no widely accepted definition of migration (IOM 2019), I use Tsuda et al. (2015, p. 19) understanding of the term which does not refer to either internal or seasonal migration, but only to “the movement of people across significant *sociocultural, political, or environmental boundaries* that involves uprooting and *long-term relocation*”. Complementary to this, I argue “three major dimensions to define migration: a change in residence, a shift in employment and a shift in social relations. In general, the first dimension – a change of residence – is the main criterion used” (Piché 2013b, p. 143). Therefore, using de Haas (2021, p. 31) terms, human mobility should be seen as “people’s capability (freedom) to choose where to live – including the option to stay – rather than the act of moving itself”; in this light, the option to stay is connected to the so-called perceived opportunity structures in the host society and becomes extremely relevant for this analysis.

Migration studies can be depicted as an interdisciplinary study area (Brettell and Hollifield 2015; Pisarevskaya et al. 2019), with inputs from economics, sociology, geography, history, anthropology, and political sciences, to name just the main existing analytical approaches. However, the authors with a socio-political background find it puzzling that none of the aforementioned disciplines benefits from a strong capacity to classify the theoretical frameworks used in their analysis; it is even less surprising, therefore, to find the same situation in the migration studies undertaken in the socio-political area.

As the aim of this article is not to clarify the taxonomy of general theoretical approaches to migration, I will mention, for the theoretical purposes only, the contribution of Victor Piché (2013a), the author of one of the most comprehensive figures that summarize the theoretical framework on migration, in terms of: (a) travel patterns; (b) analytical levels; and (c) types of factors influencing /influenced by migration, including the time variable for both host society and individual migrants (Piché 2013a, p. 50).

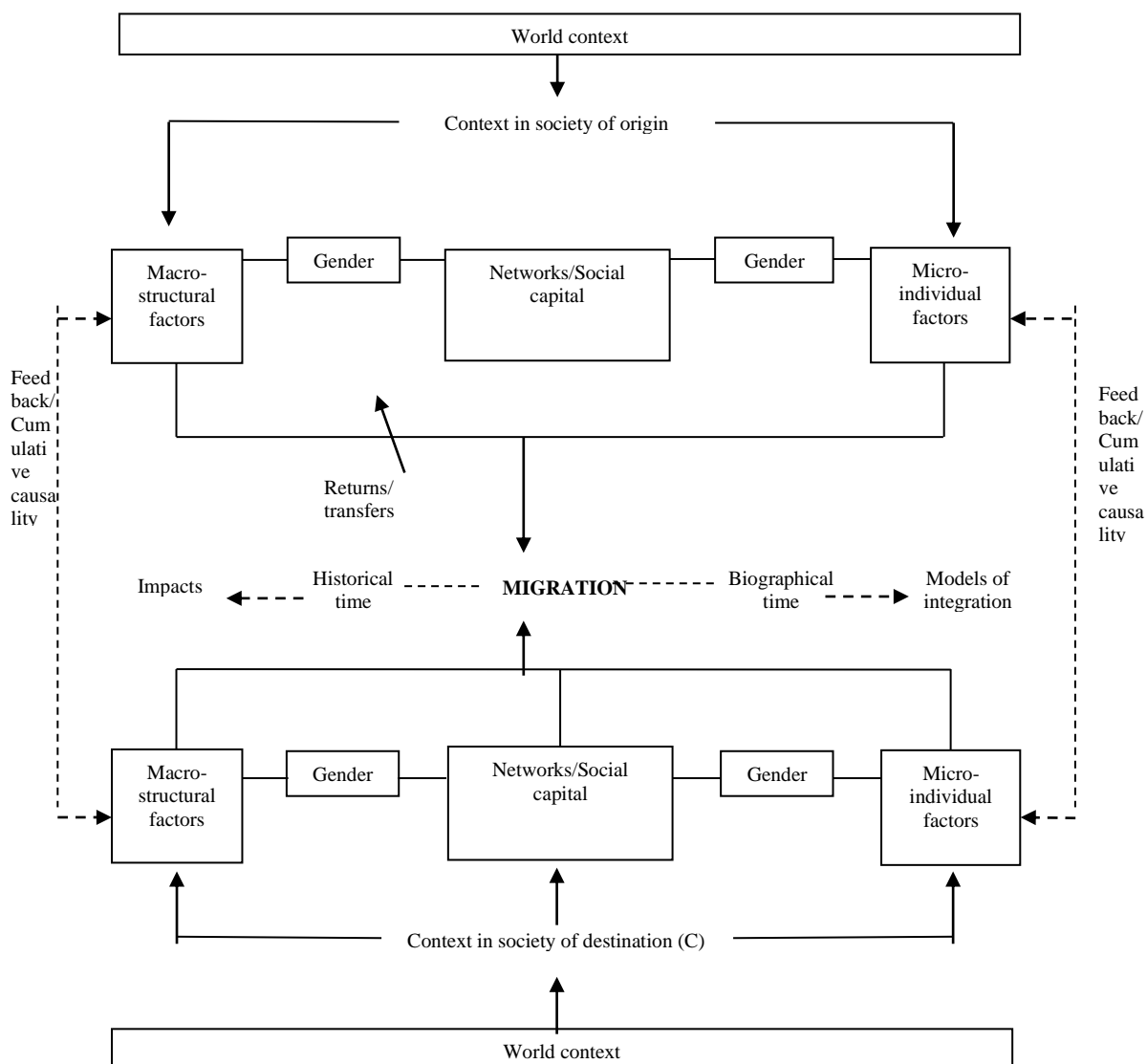


Figure no. 1. Conceptual framework for studying factors of migration and integration

Source: Adaptation after Piché 2013a, p. 50

As one can observe from Figure no. 1, when referring to the factors that can explain migration, the international migration theories are usually placed in three large (sometimes overlapping) categories. *Macro-structural theories* (see Akin Mabogunje, Michael Burawoy or Saskia Sassen in Piché 2013b) underline the general, usually the push and pull, determinants of the migration phenomenon. Many of them are limited to the voluntary labour migration and to the economic circumstances (poor wages or labour shortages in the origin country, respectively favourable context on the labour market in the receiving country) that influence migration patterns, being blind to the intervening factors that cannot explain why migration occurs only in some cases, despite the same push or pull characteristics being present in multiple situations, but without generating any migratory effect or without altering the already existing migration patterns. *Micro-individual theories* (see Larry Sjaastad, Everett Lee, Wilbur Zelinski or Alan Simmons in Piché 2013b) stress the importance of each actor's rational choice to migrate after a cost-benefit analysis of the discrepancies between the origin and destination countries in terms of needs, interests and possibilities to obtain them, as well as on the opportunities and threats likely to intervene in this

process. *Meso theories* (see Oded Stark or Douglas Massey in Piché 2013b), based on the networks significance, built a bridge between the narrow focus of the previous categories and acknowledge the influence of the intricate relations existing between the origin and the destination countries. Additionally, they also explain the complex, not only economic, relations migrants have with their home or diaspora communities, factors that facilitate some migration flows to the detriment of others (Boswell 2002, Piché 2013a, Piché 2013b, Brettell and Hollifield 2015). As one can see above, little to none attention is paid specifically to the integration of migrants, despite the fact that Piché's contribution is one of the most valuable in this area of studies.

One should mention here an example of irrelevant contributions connected to those migration theoretical classifications that claim to offer an exhaustive picture of the realm, even if they are based on a single criterion. For example, an European Commission's document, even if it stipulates the importance of the analytical level, basically it refers only to the major migration determinants, and the result is almost irrelevant for the aims of a classification: while the neoclassical and new economics categories comply with the criterion, the migration systems and the networks focus on the actors involved in the migration process and the procedural aspects; similarly, the segmented labour market deals here with the characteristics of the host market, while the world system and mobility transition (see also Kurekova 2011, Piché 2013b) are interested in the general and/or particular state development processes; in the end, completely disrupted in this taxonomy, there is the policy item, which, obviously, does not subscribe to the (unclear) aims of the European Commission's classification (European Commission, N.d.).

Relevant input for our discussion can be found in peculiar researches that investigate only several segments from Piché's scheme. For example, related to the "context in the society of destination", another classification within the analytic academic literature focused on the subject, emphasises the management of the migration processes undertaken by state actors (Piché 2013b) and differentiates between three distinct types, as Hollifield and Wong (2015) propose. The first category is centred around the normative notion of the *control* states should/could have in setting the entry or exit rules, and around concepts as interests, economic forces (the pull and push thesis, or demand and supply of labour force), receiving countries' benefits and costs, etc. (see also Song 2018). The second category is centred on core notions of *security* and *sovereignty*, on which states are fundamentally based and which they seek to preserve against the migration challenge. However, different International Relations schools of thought offered only few answers to this security dilemma, as it was not perceived as a major research theme in the field; therefore, rather a declaration of good intentions at the global level, the subject remains contained within the national borders (neo/realist accounts, but also liberal ones – see Rösch and Lebow 2018; Hafner 2016), security being seen either as a lonely actor enterprise and a matter of preserving national identity, or as a legal subject surpassed by migration market-oriented analyses. The third category encompasses the debates around *incorporation* of migrants and this article is deeply connected to its content, as it will be further detailed.

But, before analysing the explanatory aspects of the concept of incorporation, it is also necessary to review the main "on the ground" measures taken at the regional and national level in order to integrate migrants. There are situations when the theoretical consolidation of a field is influenced by the empirical developments (for example, the case of European integration theories that constantly adapted to the unexpected evolution of the Union); it could also be the case for this segment of migration policies and one should investigate this possibility.

I support a more nuanced perception of migrants that goes beyond their picture as individuals seeking utility maximisation after a reified scale of preferences, not affected by a bounded rationality (Bendor 2020), subjects of push and pull factors. Therefore, my approach does not fall within the standard neoclassical theory (European Commission n.d.), because I do not consider that (a) an invisible hand can determine a stable balance on the labour market, that (b) migration is strictly a personal decision or that (c) only economic considerations matter; I rather incline towards its new economics variant, open to the community or group aspect of migration, which determines more complex decisions, both in terms of the number of decision makers and

aspects involved, as the preferences and perceptions are constantly evolving due to information and communication.

Hence, for the aims of this article, I will not focus here on an analysis of the effectiveness of the EU migration policies in terms of incorporation options, from two reasons. Firstly, because I intend to develop a separate academic contribution on the subject, as a clarification point in a sector that started to theoretically question too little, taking for granting various practical demonstrations that lack a sound conceptual basis; secondly, because there are other contributions starting to address this topic (Ion, Florian, Mocanu 2022), contributions that analyse EU's legal framework on regular and irregular migration and underline the lack of concrete supranational attributes in this sector (TFEU 2007, art. 79; see also Guild 2013; SVR Research Unit and MPI Europe 2019 for various policies regulating types of migration). For example, the latest two well-known measures dealing with migrant integration – the New Pact on Migration and Asylum, and the Action plan on Integration and Inclusion 2021-2027 – merely transfer the issue at the national level (where reside the actual competences in this intergovernmentalist sector), limiting themselves at a collection of best-practice examples (see European Commission 2020a, European Commission 2020b).

Given this not encouraging image of the support that can come from the European level, one would be tempted to resort to national policy research. Things are quite complex here too and I will briefly refer to a national level example, arguing for the inadequate character of the current stage of elaboration of some national strategies and implementation plans: the Romanian 2021 strategy framing the internal policy in this sector (Government of Romania 2021a), a document with a baroque structure and several areas that require massive revisions, such as the definition of the migration process or the vision on the integration of migrants necessity. In the table below, analysing the corollary document of the strategy, i.e. the 2021-2022 Action Plan (Government of Romania 2021b), I have selected only one specific objective and some directions of action to indicate that both the formulation of the results and the establishment of monitoring indicators are irrelevant for the stated purpose of these documents.

Table no. 1. Selective presentation of specific objectives and directions of action from the Action Plan for the period 2021 - 2022 for the implementation of the National Strategy on Immigration for the period 2021 – 2024

Specific objective (SO)	SO result	Action directions (AD)	AD results	Monitoring indicator for AD
B.4) Strengthening the mechanism of social integration of persons who have acquired a form of protection in Romania and of those with legal residence	Active participation of foreigners who have acquired a form of protection and of those with legal residence in the economic, social and cultural life of the Romanian society	B.4.4) Promoting education for social inclusion by adapting the legal framework to the specific needs of migrant students and removing obstacles to the participation of third-country nationals in pre-school and school education by adapting to their specific needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The legal framework adapted to social inclusion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No. of proposals to revise and complete the legal framework
		B.4.6) Strengthen the mechanisms for coordination, monitoring and evaluation of integration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High-performance integration mechanism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No. of indicators set to assess the integration process
		B.4.7) Implement practical tools at European level in the field of integration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High-performance integration mechanism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No. of Romanian language descriptors developed according to the European Framework of Reference for Language Learning No. of e-learning teaching materials

Source: Government of Romania 2021b

The previous table is illustrative by itself and no further explanation is needed to emphasize the obvious lack of vision of the creators of this strategy and the lack of any clear measure pointing towards the integration of migrants. Therefore, we must return to the conceptual analysis and propose solutions – such as the use of the *incorporation* concept – for better studies that not only theoretically strengthen this field, but also have practical applicability, producing qualitative change in the lives of both migrants and their host societies.

3. MIGRATION: A VULNERABILITY OR AN OPPORTUNITY?

The societal impact of migration has been intensively studied, the used theoretical frameworks belonging to several broad groups that bear various labels. For example, Hollifield and Wong (2015, pp. 258-265) refer to liberal theoretical, neo-Malthusian, Marxist or Durkheimian approaches that depict migration in various tones underlying its benefits for both host societies and migrants, or, on the contrary, the threats or vulnerabilities this phenomenon induces. In my view, the neo-Malthusian and Marxist approaches on migration can be seen either as niche analyses, or as new case studies supporting the same old ideas that societal resources and jobs are limited or, respectively, that migrants can be seen as another mean to foster class conflict and speed up the coagulation of a working class; both approaches see migration as an additional pressure and both lack in depth analyses oriented towards understanding its causes, processes and effects, or providing solutions contributing to the incorporation of migrants. On the other hand, the first and the last mentioned approaches are, by far, the most present in the literature and in the public space. The so-called liberal theoretical approach (Hafner 2016) claims that market-based economies will successfully deal with migrant flows, selecting the skilled ones and succeeding to assimilate them in maximum two generations. The studies usually mention the successful version of the US experience with migrant flows, simultaneously ignoring that the US did not excel in a wide-spread egalitarian treatment of migrants (Hollifield and Wong 2015) and that Europe had at its turn various – in time and space – answers to migration, some of them belonging to the best practice sections. The last group of theories, labelled as “Durkheimian”, stress the alienation feeling that can be associated with the presence of migrants which can determine anti-immigrant attitudes and behaviours derived from both economic/material and identity connected causes: labour skills differences and dropping wages; lack of “intergroup relations”; change in the share of the electoral base of several parties; pressures on educational, health and social services; lack of data and certitude about the current number of migrants and future expectations; stereotypical images of migrants such as the “Muslim terrorist” threat; etc. In brief, the feelings of alienation and frustration of domestic workers will be blamed on immigrants, while parties - usually from the far right spectrum - will take advantage of this, with debates about the rights and place of immigrants in the host societies.

The liberal and the Durkheimian approaches have, from my point of view, the most numerous implications at the level of public policies in the field of migration, whether it is about unresolved issues (the liberal vision of a non-interventionist *laissez faire, laissez passer* in regarding the incorporation of migrants) or about the exacerbation of anti-migration attitudes (the Durkheimian case). As one can see, the reluctance of the authorities and citizens of the host states to migration issues is easy to understand, given the exogenous impact of migration on domestic representation and identity structures: a new demographic structure, new needs, new representation structures, new collective representations in terms of ethnic, racial, religious and socio-economic stratification. I believe that one should overcome this question, and to ask ourselves another: but what is the added value that migrants bring to societies and destination states?

From this starting point, supporting an affirmative answer detailed below, one can discuss in more detail about the differences and connections between economic, social and political sectors and, afterwards, about the incorporation aspect.

Migrants’ various *inputs* within the receiving societies is often neglected, minimized or considered their duty for being “let in”; when they do exist, the analysis are reified in cost-benefits

approaches, deprived from a larger interdependent and community-based perspective. In the literature, one refers to these inputs – by far in a deep need of being more visible, assumed and credited – as “*contributions*” (material or non-material) and they can be classified as: sociocultural, civic-political and economic (IOM 2019; IOM 2021). The *sociocultural contributions* are the most penetrating (new types of food, appreciating different performances in arts and entertainment industry, enjoying sports) and, however, the less visible. The *civic-political contributions*, generally circumscribed at international level, are determined by the legislative framework of the host country and the societal structure, varying a lot, even if they are strong incentives to better integrate migrants and strengthen their role in the new communities. The *economic contributions* are by far the most analysed, both for the receiving and origin countries and both in positive and negatives tones; in fact, they are considered rather implications than contributions, when focused on the altering the work opportunities for native population. For the destination countries, the identified contributions usually refer to alleviating sectoral or general labour deficits, either for low or for high-skilled sectors. Even if one refers to the low-profile jobs not wanted by natives (but, when occupied, allowing the same natives to better perform in high-skilled jobs, as was the case with the Italian or Polish women freed from domestic activities due to migrants) or to high-skilled sectors such as the medical one, where personnel from Central and Eastern Europe contributed to alleviate the Western deficit (though creating a new one in their origin countries), the reality is that in many countries several economic sectors (healthcare, medicine, ICT, etc.) are entirely supported through migration or intra-EU mobility input (IOM 2019). Nevertheless, migrants’ potential to be innovative and entrepreneurial actors is hindered not only by populist discourses or improper media coverage (negative portrayals which also led to an amplification of the anti-immigration feelings), but also by inadequate domestic legislative frameworks not able to empower the newcomers and support them to start new business, to invest, invent and innovate. Moreover, legal migrants should not be seen – even from this labour oriented perspective – as mere workers, but also as entrepreneurs and investors, as before said, as taxpayers, consumers and savers, but also as students, various economic contributions that support the destination countries (Piché 2013b, IOM 2019, 162-178).

4. A CONCEPTUAL REFINEMENT: THE INCORPORATION PERSPECTIVE

The above mentioned inputs, as an effect of the contacts established between migrants and the destination points, are variously presented by the receiving states and societies: inclusion, incorporation, integration, acculturation, adaptation, assimilation, etc. In fact, after a careful operationalization of the terms in the form advanced by IOM (2019, pp. 189-190; 341 - 343), one sees that the content differences emerge from:

(1) the explicit state policies on migrants:

- *assimilation*, a process where a group is melted through all its distinctive features within the characteristics of the majority group; assimilation implies few involvements of the host society and huge identity costs for the migrants;
- *multiculturalism*, (assimilation’s antonym) where migrants’ cultural patterns are entirely preserved, fact that generates, nevertheless, a low sense of belongingness and favours social exclusion;
- *and integration*, where the newcomers become a specific active part of the receiving societies, with socio-cultural, political and economic implications for both sides). It would be the third way between assimilation and multiculturalism, or, as it was stated, between diversity and unity, “a two-way process of mutual adaptation between migrants and the societies in which they live” (IOM 2019, 190).

One can conceive these three models on a continuum line, bordered by assimilation and, respectively, multiculturalism, while integration would occupy the central part, being rather an umbrella of various integration models put into practice by different states.

IOM in its World Migration Report differentiates between these categories, accordingly to the adaptation of migrants and accommodation provided by the host societies, but refers to them as “inclusion models”. In my view, these are in fact incorporation types, considering the neutrality of the term, as well as the deep connections between integration and inclusion.

Table no. 1. IOMs inclusion models

Inclusion model	Degree of adaptation by migrants	Degree of accommodation by society	Examples of policies	
Assimilation	High	Low	White Australia policy, 1901– 1966	Restricting “non- white” immigration and assimilating “white” immigrants
Multiculturalism	Low	High	Canada, multiculturalism policy, 1971– present	Recognizing that “multiculturalism reflects the cultural and racial diversity of Canadian society”
Integration	Medium	Medium	European Union Action Plan on the Integration of Third-Country Nationals, 2016	Considering integration as a “dynamic two-way process”

Source: Adaptation after IOM 2019, p. 189. The references mentioned in the original table include documents issued by National Museum Australia, Government of Canada, European Commission or other scholar works.

(2) the real capabilities of states to manage migration and provide predictable results, beyond what is politically declared in point 1 above (for example, some intended integration measures might lead to assimilation effects or to social exclusion);

(3) the usual contacts between migrants and receiving societies, with results dependent on migrants as individuals, on their communities of support and on the features of new destination societies (see *acculturation*, which imply cultural transfers between interacting groups, especially from the dominant to the minority one, but not exclusively; or *adaptation* which implies a selective, usually not core related, change of cultural patterns in order to be compatible with the receiving society context; and *inclusion* - corollary of the integration concept, revealing an assumed process for both migrants and host societies, with a sense of belongingness in aspects of education, political representation, labour, social or financial security programmes).

Sometimes, the different usage of the terms and the awareness of their various significance does not seem to be the main interest of the analysts. For example, a contribution of Fernandez-Macias and de la Iglesia (2018) keeps attention for several interesting ideas. First, for mentioning the Classical Assimilation Model, developed and largely applied in the US in the second half of the last century, where the basic assumption was that immigrants faced an unstoppable, natural, linear, sometimes uneven (Alba and Nee 1997), and irreversible assimilation process, diluting as persons and cultural background within the societal structures of the country of destination. Largely used in the analyses on the labour market, it led to simplistic explanations that linked the migrants' outcomes and wages deficit only to their lower level of human capital. Second, Fernandez-Macias and de la Iglesia (2018) mention the Segmented Assimilation Approach, a more nuanced explanatory framework that links the success of the assimilation process not only to the individual characteristics of the migrant, but also to the social capital of its group/community, and to the specific features of the host society, factors that can speed up or impede the assimilation. This segmented assimilation model has a larger explanatory power, as incorporation/assimilation is not considered to be automatic, but dependent to various exogenous and endogenous factors such as the structure of the host society and the social and human capital of the migrants, conditions that can lag or hamper the assimilation process in a post-industrial society that keeps them “trapped in an endless cycle of poverty and discrimination” (Hollifield and Wong 2015, p. 263). Even if the segmented assimilation model resembles other discussions about integration or inclusion, the analysts do not underline these overlapping of senses and/or coverage of these concepts.

5. CONCLUSIONS

As it can be seen from the previous section, there are countless narratives about the existing models or the ones that should exist in the interaction between migrants and host societies. From my point of view, several aspects should be clarified here:

1. The need of a more evident statement that not all host societies prefer the same relationship model with migrants. The list of stakeholders of the migration process is large (migrants – as individuals or groups; authorities placed at different jurisdictional level – international, national, local; civil society; citizens, etc.) and, therefore, the outcomes of their discussions vary a lot. Hence, the ideas of "inclusion" and "integration" can be operationalized extremely differently, which is why comparative analyses are difficult to undertake, without this common conceptual basis[1]. Thus, if one proposes and uses the concept of incorporation as a catch-all variant, neutral from a value point of view (more or less compatibility with the host society, for example), it will be easier for us to have these comparative macro-analyses between different models of relation with migrants.

2. The detailed operationalization of the various items that can be included under the incorporation umbrella must be continued in order to capture their explanatory values and allow more refined and accurate analyses. A starting point here could be the previous scheme proposed by the IOM (presented in Table no. 2), with the mentions that instead of „inclusion models” there would be „incorporation models” and that the list could be completed with intermediate models. Such an approach is compatible with the framework proposed by Piché (2013a), building future research on what he called meso-theoretical contributions, but also on the segmented assimilation model.

Indeed, related to the previous points, the distinction must be assumed between a politically desirable speech (in which one uses the concept of integration, although its operationalization is delicate, as we saw) and a politically fair one, in which the decision-makers of the host societies clearly explain what incorporation model they prefer and what kind of relationship do they see with migrants. Thus, the benefits of such an approach transcend the level of more accurate theoretical and analytical dimensions, having a practical correspondent in the lives of the citizens of the respective states and, of course, in the lives of the migrant newcomers, aware of what is required and expected from them. We must not forget that the integration of a migrant into the fabric of the host society is a process that involves both parties, so that there matter, on the one hand, the characteristics of migrants as individuals – education level, age, gender, competencies, etc. – and the societal networks they are part of, and, on the other, the political, economic and societal context of the receiving state. Therefore, before using the complex term of „integration”, a first step is to use the *incorporation* umbrella, providing a unitary framework for conducting fruitful debates and analyses within a common agreed methodology and concept operationalization schemes.

ENDNOTE

[1]. For example, currently, despite the legitimacy of the process (better new or re-shaped migrant integration policies), the attempts to measure the inclusion outcomes, as they are known in the literature, are facing significant procedural challenges. Some of the most used indicators include: employment (and various rights associated, such as decent working conditions, interdiction of compulsory work, right to establish trade unions, etc.), labour market mobility, compatibility between skills and work, education, language proficiency, health, access to medical services, housing access and conditions, family reunion and child protection, perceived discrimination, anti-discrimination measures, sense of belonging, political participation, acquisition of nationality, permanent residence, etc. (IOM 2019, Migrant Integration Policy Index 2020, OECD Indicators of immigrant integration 2021). Used to allow comparative analyses among destination countries, the results are often debatable as the meaning of inclusion, as well as the aim of the related policies (leaning towards assimilation or, contrary, multiculturalism, for example), vary among the selected study cases (IOM 2019, 191).

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