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ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

STRENGTHENING THE INTEGRATION OF MIGRANTS IN SOCIETY



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Introduction

Migration is a phenomenon that has existed for all of human history. People have continuously been moving from one place to live in the other. In the past few decennia, with the rise of globalization, the opportunities for migration itself have multiplied tremendously. Now migration is a defining characteristic of our interconnected world. Furthermore, with the ongoing conflicts, of which examples are what is happening in Gaza and Ukraine, migration is a more relevant topic than ever. Immigration, more specifically, is a hot topic these days in many countries. The Dutch cabinet for instance fell apart because of discourse about immigration. Other European countries are also heavily debating and discussing this topic. Moreover, a few countries such as Sweden and Italy have recently decided to tighten policies on the immigrants they let in.

Alongside the conversations about migration, it is also essential to talk about the complementary aspect of it, namely the integration of migrants in society. Once one has immigrated to a country they must also integrate into their host country. This is important so that there is unity within a country and it is also necessary to prevent social- and economic



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segregation. For successful integration, cooperation between the migrants and host societies is imperative. Both parties must equally participate in the challenging but rewarding undertaking of integration and strive for collective prosperity. If integration is done properly it can boost the overall state of a country for instance in regards to their economy. Sadly, many countries are struggling with regulating and balancing immigration. This in turn leads to immigration not benefitting but rather harming them. Therefore countries must work on strengthening the integration of migrants into society to uncover immigration's full potential.

Definition of Key Terms

Immigration

Moving to another country to become a resident or citizen of that country. The reasoning behind this decision varies tremendously per individual.

Emigration

Leaving your birth/home country to permanently live in another country. This is done for a plethora of reasons (push- and pull factors), which differ per emigrant.

Diaspora

The spread of a group of people that have left their homeland and are now scattered in other regions across the globe. However, these people are still connected with their cultural and ethnic identity.

Integration

A two-way process in which the country hosting the migrants has to create a pleasant environment for the immigrants to be able to assimilate into their society. Furthermore, the immigrants have to commit to adjusting to the norms of their host country and they also need to assimilate in other ways.

Social Capital

The connections, social networks, and relationships immigrants build up in their host country. These things provide the support, resources, and opportunities the immigrant will get in this country. Social capital is extremely important as it is an indicator of how well an immigrant will be able to integrate and assimilate into their new communities.

Xenophobia

The fear or disapproval of foreigners and immigrants. It involves negative and discriminatory behavior toward people merely based on their cultural background, ethnicity, and nationality.

Multiculturalism

The presence of many cultures and ethnic groups coexisting in an area peacefully and harmoniously creates a balance and it also creates a dynamic society.



Push factors

Negative factors that motivate people to leave their country and move to another country. Push factors are the cause of emigration.

Pull factors

Positive factors incite individuals and families to live in a certain country. These factors are the cause of immigration.

Family Reunification

The process of bringing family members who live in different countries together after they have been separated for some time. It is one of the many purposes and reasons for migration.

Host country

The country in which an immigrant is planning to settle and establish residence or already has.

Refugees

People that have not become immigrants voluntarily but rather have been forced to flee their homes, due to the conditions in their home country. These circumstances can connect to war, persecution, or violence in general.

General Overview

Types of migration

Every migrant has their own reason for moving, therefore there are many forms of migration. People might migrate to pursue higher education at a good university. Another reason for migration is seeing that there is a better quality of life in another country. Such instances are referred to as pull factors, which attract people to a new country. Some people however do not voluntarily leave their country. Take for example someone who is migrating for safety reasons because there is an ongoing war in their home country. Or perhaps they are trying to escape a natural disaster. They could also possibly be trying to escape persecution and the discrimination they faced due to factors such as race, gender, and sexuality. In these cases, there is a reference to push factors as people are forced to leave their home country. So migration is a multifaceted and complex concept.



The effects of immigration and emigration

Migration has an impact on a much larger and more significant level than one would think at first. This is because migration does not only affect the migrant but also the migrant's family, their friends, their neighborhood, their community, and at large society as a whole. These effects can be very positive. The more people there are in a country, the more people there are that can work, and the more people who work, the more the economy of that country will grow. This is when immigration is well-regulated and taken care of. When that is not the case immigration can have negative effects such as strain on the job market, housing issues, social tension between ethnic groups, security concerns, and economic disparities.

The effects of migration – which in this case is emigration- on the country that people leave are very different. Those countries deal with brain drain for instance. This word refers to the phenomenon of a country losing people, who are intelligent and can help with the development of that country, to emigration. Emigration also leads to the reduction of the labor force making it harder to build new infrastructure. This also hinders the growth of a country.

There are positive consequences of emigration for the home country, such as global networks that are built up and the cultural exchange that takes place between the host- and home countries of the emigrants.

Statistics on global migration

The following statistics with the corresponding graphs from the PEW Research Center visualize what global migration entails:

Europe has the most international immigrants. This is mainly due to their migration policies, how well-developed they are, the need for labor workers, and their quality of life. All of these factors combined have led to an estimated 86.7 million international migrants living in Europe in 2020 as stated by the IOM. That number has only grown since then, but in a more stagnant manner due to new policies and regulations that are more restrictive.

Of all countries, the United States of America has by far the most international migrants. They are followed by Germany in second place with a gap of 34.8 million migrants.

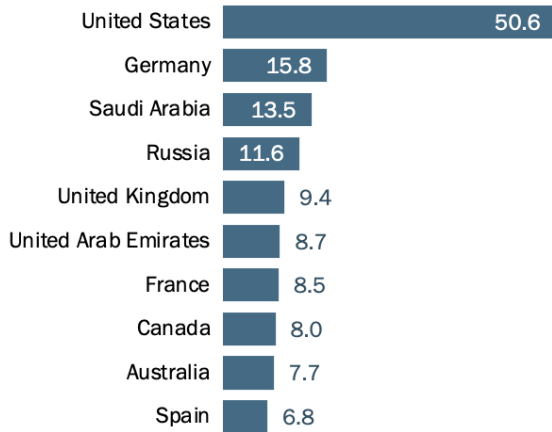
India has consistently had the most emigrants for quite some years and has been at the top for more than a hundred years. They therefore have the biggest diaspora of all countries. Syria is also in the top five, even though it is not a very big country. The main cause for emigration there is mostly war.

India has also been the country to receive the most remittances. This means that Indian migrants send the most money back home. To be precise in 2021 the amount of remittances sent to India was 89 billion dollars.



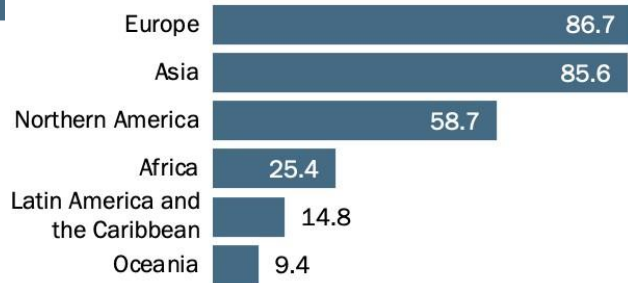
The U.S. has more international migrants than any other nation

Number of international migrants per country, in millions, 2020



Europe and Asia were home to the most international migrants in 2020

International migrant population in ___, in millions

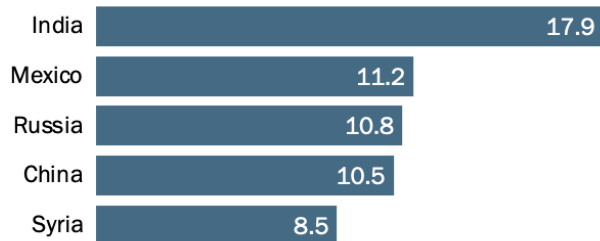


Source: Pew Research Center analysis of United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs 2020 International Migrant Stock data.

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India was the top origin country of emigrants living around the world in 2020

Country of origin of international migrants, in millions

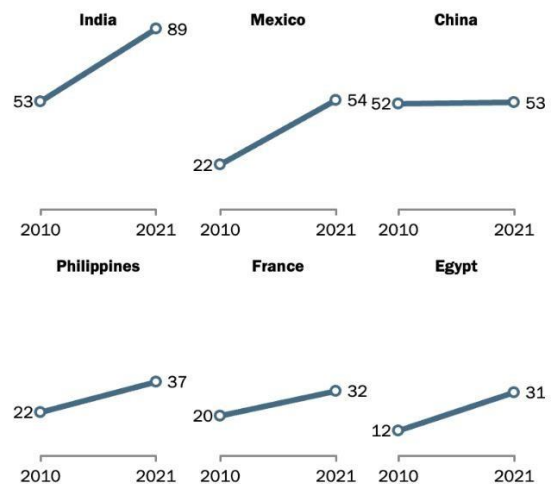


Note: Top five countries are shown. Source: Pew Research Center Analysis of United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs 2020 International Migrant Stock data.

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Between 2010 and 2021, international remittances to five of the top six receiving countries grew

Remittance inflows in billions of nominal U.S. dollars



Note: The six countries shown received the most remittances in 2021. Source: The World Bank and KNOMAD Migration and Remittances Data, Inward Remittances as of November 2022.

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Major Parties Involved

There is a plethora of stakeholders involved in helping migrants integrate and assimilate into their host societies. This is because the issue is present on a global scale. The main parties that have made significant contributions are the following.



International Organization of Immigration (IOM)

The IOM is an inter-governmental organization that has members from a total of 171 countries and is thus very global. This organization makes suggestions for and advises on matters concerning migration. It also provides services such as assistance with travel arrangements, building the capacity of institutions to manage migration more effectively, helping vulnerable groups of migrants for instance displaced communities, and collecting and analyzing data on migration trends.

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)

This UN organization commits itself to helping immigrants who need to migrate due to persecution and war that are taking place in their home country. In other words, the UNHCR tries to save and protect refugees. This organization works in 135 countries.

Migration Policy Institute (MPI)

This is an institute that does extensive research on existing policies on migration. They analyze the effectiveness of the immigration and integration policies that are implemented in North America and Europe and then they come up with their own policy suggestions.

European Migration Network (EMN)

The EMN is an organization within the European Union that consists of a group of experts on the topic of migration. These experts do research and put together objective information regarding immigration policies and issues that are arising concerning migration.

Canada

Canada provides extensive settlement services for immigrants. On top of that, they have policies and laws that prioritize the interests of immigrants. Moreover, since 2010 Canada has been leading a full-fledged program for immigrants called the Canadian Immigrant Integration Program or CIIP in short. This program helps immigrants understand what life is like in Canada before they set foot in that host country. The combination of these three integration boosters allows for a smooth assimilation and integration process for the immigrants into their new society.

Finland

Finland has always been known as an amazing destination for immigrants amongst the other Scandinavian countries. The main reason for this is that the standards of life are exemplary in those countries. When it comes to the integration of immigrants Finland



provides comprehensive information for the immigrants but also gives the people on the side of the hosting country clear and concise guidelines which they need to follow when helping immigrants. For both parties, all relevant information is to be found on websites, online portals, and other digital platforms.

Portugal

Portugal confronts discrimination in serious ways as they have many strong policies put in place. Portugal is also deemed to have one of the most favorable policies for reunification worldwide according to the Migration Integration Policy Index (MIPEX). Furthermore, immigrants who have not legally registered can and may also apply for jobs. If they find a job, they can then immediately request residency. All in all, Portugal is a very flexible country when it comes down to hosting immigrants.

The Netherlands

The Netherlands is an accommodating host country for immigrants, as the majority of Dutch people are comfortable speaking English and as they friendly offer help when needed. Furthermore, the Netherlands has many organizations that offer language and integration courses. To become a citizen you have to pass language tests, which include listening, speaking, writing, and reading Dutch but you also have to pass a civic integration test which tests your ability to properly respond to certain situations that occur in the daily life of a Dutch citizen. After making and these exams immigrants are ready to thrive in Dutch society. Interestingly though, the country that had an adequate integration process has also faced problems because of immigration, as a few months ago the Dutch cabinet fell apart because they had discourse on restricting immigration.

The United States of America

The USA is a prime example of a multicultural country because everyone who lives there has a unique ethnic background and embraces it. That's why many organizations from the civil society represent certain communities and speak up for those communities when injustice is served. An example of such an organization is the American Immigration Lawyers Association (AILA). There are also many charities that dedicate their time to helping immigrants who are facing problems. Such charities are the Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service, the Asylum Access, the American Immigration Council, and The American Civil Liberties Union, Most of these charities and organizations provide legal help.



Timeline of Events

Date	Description of the event
December 14, 1950	The creation of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) was a reaction to the refugee crisis that emerged after World War Two.
December 5, 1951	The International Organization for Migration (IOM) was established to help the millions of displaced people due to the Second World War.
June 25, 2007	The formation of the European Integration Fund (EIF) by the European Union (EU).
2010	The full-fledged launch of the Canadian Immigrant Integration Program (CIIP).
December 17, 2018	The United Nations (UN) General Assembly affirmed the Global Compact of Refugees.
December 19, 2018	The signing of the Global Compact of Migration (GCM) was a non-binding treaty signed by 152 countries.
July 7, 2023	The Dutch cabinet fell after not being able to agree on topics relating to immigrants.
December 20, 2023	The European Parliament and European Council agreed on reforming the European Union's migration and asylum system.

Previous attempts to solve the issue

Guest Worker Programs in Germany

In the past, Germany has had some guest worker programs. These recruitments for labor needed in the country were temporary offers, meaning that after the needed labor was finished the guest workers had to return to their home country. While the intention was clear, the outcome did not align with what the German recruiters had expected. This is because when it was time for the guest workers to leave Germany they did not. Many of them already had children. Some of the workers were now married to German people, and others brought their families from their home country along with them. The possibility of the workers settling long-term was not taken into consideration beforehand which made it very difficult to deal with this unexpected overflowing migration on the spot. The same problem with guest workers has occurred in other countries as well. Examples of such countries are France and the Netherlands.

Assimilation Policies in France

France has a long history of immigration. France expected all of these immigrants to seamlessly integrate into society and completely assimilate, but they failed to realize that each immigrant is different and that a simplistic one-size-fits approach to helping them become part of French society does not work. On top of that they expected the immigrants to put in all of the effort, as they didn't adjust enough as a host country to the needs and wants of the immigrants. This all has led to tension between the two groups of people, and xenophobia. It has also led to quite significant economic disparities and social segregation. Now that the government has realized that its approach to dealing with immigration is wrong it is too late as the gap between the group of immigrants and other residents is big. This can be seen by looking at the riots that have taken place in recent years.

Open-door Policy in Sweden

Sweden has had an open-door approach to immigration for quite some time now. What this policy entails is that Sweden is very lenient and thus not restrictive with receiving immigrants. While this seems like a lovely idea in reality it causes a multitude of problems. First and foremost, strain is put on the housing and infrastructure of the country as a lot of new people are coming into the country but not enough new houses and other amenities are being built. The job market becomes very competitive which could potentially cause a decline in available workplaces. All in all, Sweden is not fully equipped to deal with that many immigrants as they do not have the capacity to efficiently help immigrants. Therefore in recent years, there has been quite some backlash from the people but also a few political parties on immigration and they propose that the immigration to Sweden should be tightened.

Possible Solutions

There are many ways to better the integration of immigrants into society, as it is a multi-layered and faceted issue. This issue can be dealt with on an individual level, but it can also be tackled on a local or even on a communal level. It is also possible to look at it from a holistic and thus global viewpoint. So here are three possible solutions.

Integration strategies for employment

Employment is something that many immigrants struggle with. This is due to multiple factors, such as but not limited to: unfamiliarity with their host country's local job market, under- and overqualification, not having any social networks, and difficulty in the recognition of foreign diplomas and certificates. However, it is crucial for immigrants to be able to get a job, as it will help them get around and be self-sufficient. Furthermore, the host country will

also benefit from the immigrants having a job as this will bring more money into circulation and therefore boost the economy. For all of these reasons, it is of high importance that not only the government but also civil society and the job market intervene to help immigrants get ready, find, and apply for a job. This can be achieved by creating programs in which all that is taken care of, as stated by many studies of which *Safe Employment Integration of Recent Immigrants and Refugees* by SpringerLink is one.

Social cohesion programs

Leaving behind everything one is familiar with to go and settle in a new society is very overwhelming for immigrants. Moving to another country is usually an enormous cultural shift as well which adds to the difficulty of integration. Therefore it is imperative that the host society arranges some kind of social cohesion programs, as they will help: reduce social isolation; build a sense of community; enhance cultural understanding; promote civic participation; build trust in institutions such as government and health-care providers and lastly create a sense of belonging.

Language and culture competence courses

It is crucial to be able to speak the language of one's host country as not being able to do so becomes a hurdle that makes integrating and assimilating into society very difficult. For the same reason, it is also of extreme importance to understand the culture of the new society the immigrant is part of now. So language and cultural competence courses and lessons should be available and encouraged for immigrants. These courses will help the immigrants to communicate effectively, pursue education and jobs, engage with community, become independent, adjust to the society's norms and values, and to be able to resolve conflicts. Language and cultural competence courses are very popular in the Netherlands. They have helped that country make integration easier for immigrants, and with that, the Netherlands has been able to make itself a very diverse but unified country as said before in this research report.

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