



Organising Immigrants' Integration

Practices and Consequences in Labour
Markets and Societies

Edited by
Andreas Diedrich
Barbara Czarniawska

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for ever

the homeland is already far away
filled by themselves and by the fear
they flee into an alien reality
greedily gasping for air
for centuries they have been learning to live pretending
some grow tall like trees
they have given up all doubts and avoid illusions
they go like a hurricane
they reach into the unknown space
for the sweet fruit of the country of destination
the majority
doomed by fate to be separated
or by the hostile blade of the *damning quarrels*
wanders amid adversities
across somebody else's distrustful land
with difficulty hooking their souls and bodies
onto the rungs of the indifferent world
where there is no bread for free
where old orders and rewards do not count
and strange language often hurts the ears
in time
hope slips away

and unanswered questions
become longer and longer
something begins to escape with each breath
while distances and longing increase
memory inertly wanders in a steady rhythm
to the abandoned land
they stay separate
forever
but sometimes the return is obtained
by death

Elżbieta Cichla-Czarniawska, 2022, *Sobowtór chwili* (trans.
B. Czarniawska)

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1

Introduction

Barbara Czarniawska and Andreas Diedrich

This collection assembles studies that draw on a variety of approaches to the timely subject of immigrants' integration into labour markets and societies. Its aim is to make a contribution to migration and integration research in general and management and organisation studies in particular. The authors include both conceptual reasoning and their own fieldwork to address the issues related to the processes of organising integration in practice, and their consequences—for immigrants and for organisers. The contributors are both experienced and younger scholars from various fields of social sciences. In their texts, they play with well-known concepts and ideas, but also introduce new ideas and metaphors, connecting migration and integration phenomena to the trials and tribulations of contemporary organising. Many different voices are heard in the stories told—voices of refugees, immigrants, public officials, private entrepreneurs, managers, and volunteers. Yet they all focus on processes, not on structures; on organising rather than on organisations—because integration may take place within as well as outside formal organisations.

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The collection may serve as a guide for researchers interested in how organising processes shape immigrants' integration. It may also be of use to practitioners involved in supporting the integration of immigrants as part of their daily work.

The featured contributions are divided into three parts. Part One, *Integration, What Is It, and Where Does It Begin?*, presents integration as a hotly debated concept in the social sciences, relating it to other concepts and describing its origins. Part Two, *Integration, Translation, and Change*, presents a variety of activities and initiatives aimed at supporting the integration of immigrants into the labour market and society in different countries. Finally, Part Three, *Integration, When, Where, and How Does It End?*, focuses on consequences of various initiatives and activities and how ideas of integration shift over time.

Part One: Integration—What Is It, and Where Does It Begin?

Immigrant- and refugee integration is a hotly debated concept in many fields of the social sciences (see e.g., Ager & Strang, 2008; Schinkel, 2017, 2018; Grzymala-Kazłowska & Phillimore, 2018; Favell, 2019). Thus, the contributors to the first part of the book introduce the cornerstones of such debates, show how the concept of integration has been translated into different organisational contexts, and encourage the reader to reflect on some of the taken-for-given assumptions surrounding its use.

In Chap. 2, Vedran Omanović and Ann Langley open the black box of integration with a historical overview of the concept. They explore the meaning of integration, comparing it with other concepts such as assimilation or inclusion, and illustrate its uses in organisational practices with the help of a fictional vignette.

In Chap. 3, Yashar Mahmud throws light on integration as a phenomenon by asking when, where and how integration begins. The basis for his reasoning is his ethnographic study of refugees at the time of their arrival in Sweden, in which he shadowed and interviewed refugees and persons involved in organising refugees' arrival. His research made him doubtful

as to the actual beginning of an integration process: Does it start when refugees arrive in the new country of residence, or when they begin to attend a language course? Using Annemarie Mol's (2002) concept of multiplicity, Mahmud suggests that refugee integration has multiple beginnings and meanings.

In Chap. 4, Sara Brorström and Alexander Styhre report their study of the activities of a municipal housing company (MHC) in a marginalised suburb populated mainly by immigrants. The MHC strove to support their tenants by “doing good”, while at the same time acting in the “best interest of the business”. The authors suggest that activities meant to curb segregation and facilitate the removal of the suburb from a list of the most marginalised suburbs in Sweden resulted in the MHC being afforded a crucial role in immigrants’ integration at an early stage after their arrival in the new country. Contrary to the usual case of integration projects aimed at immigrants only, Brorström and Styhre’s example is one where activities usually associated with integration (into the labour market, the housing market and society) are directed at the entire population in a city district. Their chapter well illustrates tensions and ambiguities that emerge when the idea of removing segregation becomes intertwined with ideas of integration.

Part Two: Integration, Translation, and Change

The growing interests and ambitions to support immigrants into employment in the receiving country are also spurring the continuous development of novel models, methods, tools, and practices under the label of “integration support”. Several contributions to the book deal with such organising efforts.

In Chap. 5, Emma Ek Österberg and Patrik Zapata describe how the European policy on Employment Promoting Procurement (EPP) has been translated into practice in a Swedish municipality with the aim of supporting the labour market integration of immigrants. The authors offer interesting comments about EPP, but mainly emphasise the role of local translations when spreading ideas of integration support for immigrants.

Maria Norbäck and María José Zapata Campos, in Chap. 6, have also focused on a novel approach to organising the labour market integration: a bottom-up initiative. They draw on the work of Paolo Freire (1993) and feminist scholars to frame their study and show how alternative practices developed by a women's work cooperative can redefine traditional methods for organising labour market integration of immigrant women. Such alternative practices concerned women with no previous work experience and low levels of formal education, providing them not only with employment, but also with a sense of freedom, self-sufficiency and personal development.

Translation processes are usually characterised by ambiguity, uncertainty, and unintended consequences. Several chapters deal with such unintended consequences of organising integration support activities.

In Chap. 7, Jana Albrecht and Robert Jungmann reconstructed two attempts at creating a more accessible labour market integration for refugees in Berlin. Using a processual framework to analyse the (often conflictual) inter-organisational dynamics typical for such attempts, they introduced the concept of issue-based organisational fields—zones in which the actual meaning of labour market integration is being constructed. It is in such zones that the translation of “accessibility” into practice takes place, its meaning an object of struggles as well as of cooperation between a variety of organisations. The chapter shows how such plural attempts to translate accessibility into practice challenge the refugees in profound ways.

In Chap. 8, Alberto Zanutto, Donatella Greco, and Barbara Poggio discuss the inconsistency in policies and the resulting contradictory rules for the integration of immigrants into the Italian labour market. The inconsistencies and contradictions arise from the two competing institutional logics—one following the demands of the market, and one aimed at the needs and welfare of the community. It is not only the immigrants who need to be integrated—the two logics need to be integrated as well. The modes of such integration differ and are locally developed.

Almina Bešić and Renate Ortlieb, in Chap. 9, highlight the collective and collaborative nature of integration support, drawing on the concept of action nets (Czarniawska, 2008). They use the example of employment integration support provided to refugees arriving in Austria, emphasising

the role of the institutional context and collaboration in such support attempts.

In Chap. 10, Hanna Hellgren explores the role of language requirements when organising a labour market integration project aimed at supporting immigrants into employment. In time, the demand for language skills became a central part of the project, contributing to a changing translation of the basic ideas behind the project, thus shaping its outcome.

In Chap. 11, Andreas Diedrich and Annette Risberg show how hope is instilled in participants in mentoring programmes and internships organised for immigrants that their (unremunerated) participation will lead to future employment opportunities. Such mobilisation is difficult to maintain amidst constant political and organisational changes and resulting ambiguities and tensions. The authors suggest that the opportunities promised by mentoring programmes and internships may thus not materialise soon, and that organising such activities for immigrants may in fact prolong their precarious (un)employment position.

Part Three: Integration—When, Where, and How Does It End?

While in Chap. 3 Mahmud asked where and when integration begins, and several authors also ascribed particular importance to the initial settlement period, the chapters in Part Three draw attention to the time when and place where it is considered to actually end.

In Chap. 12, Marika Franklin, Lucy Taksa, and Fei Guo explore the importance of integration processes in the later stages of immigrants' lives, when elderly immigrants need to interact with and navigate through organisational care systems intended to support "ageing in place". They ask whether integration for older immigrants is sustained, and if so, in what way. They address this question by using a life course perspective to study the efforts of immigrant support organisations in Australia that play a leading role in providing services and activities for those who arrived in the country decades earlier.

In Chap. 13, Orvar Löfgren and Barbara Czarniawska also focus on the immigrant experience over time, and specifically intra-Nordic migration, comparing the different outcomes of migration of Danes and Finns to Sweden.

Sten Jönsson gives his view “from a rocking chair”, that is, from his position as an emeritus professor who has had ample opportunity to watch ideas of integration changing over time, and in different settings, in Chap. 14. He focuses on how formal organisations have coped in the past with integration tasks in times of a crisis.

The book ends with a concluding Chap. 15 by Andreas Diedrich, which summarises the book and its main themes, identifying possible directions for future research.

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Part I

**Integration, What Is It and Where
Does It Begin?**



2

Alternative Perspectives on Immigrant Accommodation to Society: Implications for Organising, the Labour Market, and Workplace Integration

Vedran Omanović and Ann Langley

Introduction

Migrations around the world, whether due to social and economic crises caused by wars and political instability, or due to economic development in countries seeking a new workforce, feed into an ongoing debate among policymakers and researchers about how to best facilitate immigrants' accommodation to host societies, including their establishment in the labour market, which is seen as one of the most important indicators of successful accommodation.

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However, different authors use different terms when exploring and conceptualising migrants' accommodation to a host society, including assimilation (e.g., Gordon, 1964; Alba et al., 1997; Alba & Nee, 1997; Bourhis et al., 1997), integration (e.g., Dijkstra et al., 2001; Ager & Strang, 2008; Schneider & Crul, 2010; Urban, 2018), and inclusion (e.g., Nkomo & Hoobler, 2014; Houtkamp, 2015; Urban, 2018). Some authors also use the notion of acculturation—referring to the process of change that takes place when two ethno-cultural groups come into contact with one another in one society. Berry (1997) described the acculturation process as playing out in multiple possible ways that include integration and assimilation, but also marginalisation and segregation. Bourhis et al. (1997) contrasted dominant host majority acculturation orientations (which may be towards integration, assimilation, segregation, exclusion, individualism) with immigrant community acculturation orientations (integration, assimilation, separation, anomie, individualism) and offered predictions concerning the relational effects of the interaction among these orientations, with certain combinations being more compatible than others. However, other authors have seen acculturation simply as one of the steps in the assimilation process of immigrants into the host society (Gordon, 1964; Alba & Nee, 1997).

Nevertheless, our review of the literature suggests that the most commonly debated and used terms related to the accommodation of immigrants to a host society are assimilation and integration (Schneider & Crul, 2010; see also Chap. 13), while the term *inclusion* has appeared relatively recently. Therefore, it is these three terms that will be in the key focus of our analysis. However, as we will elaborate below, the meanings of these concepts vary, change over time, and are influenced by different interests and perspectives. At the same time, they have important implications for the way in which immigrants might be integrated into the workforce.

In the first part of the chapter, we focus on the constructions of the concepts of assimilation, integration, and inclusion in the literature focusing on the societal level, and on several questions of relevance, such as why and how these notions are defined as they are, and what the implications of these constructions are for (social) accommodation of foreign-born newcomers.

We then present a fictional vignette and draw on this to explore how and with what consequences these three concepts from the societal level of analysis might manifest themselves concretely within organisational-level practices. We refer to recent organisational literature dealing with the management of diversity and socialisation to elaborate on these ideas and point out some of the dilemmas that render immigrant accommodation society an ongoing, and challenging social concern.

Assimilation, Integration, and Inclusion: Origins and Meanings

Assimilation

We find the first appearances of the concept of assimilation in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, where it relates to the creation of “common denominators for immigrant cultures” (Schneider & Crul, 2010, p. 1144). Several authors elaborating on assimilation suggest that this concept is generally based on the assumption that, over time, immigrants will adapt to the host society and become similar to the majority population by adopting the culture, norms, values, and behaviours of the majority population (see, e.g., Gordon, 1964; Berry, 1980; Alba & Nee, 1997; Bourhis et al., 1997; Brubaker, 2001; Ehrkamp, 2006; Urban, 2018). However, views on to what degree immigrants should adapt to the norms, values, and behaviours in the host society, as well as which aspects of adaptation are the most central, and ways of reaching them in order to be “fully assimilated”, vary in the literature.

In his influential 1964 study, Gordon elaborated on seven stages of assimilation based on his analysis of ethnic relationships in the context of the United States. According to Gordon’s (1964) proposed assimilation process, ethnic minorities need to undergo all these steps in order to be completely assimilated into the majority culture, which he identified as White Anglo-Saxon Protestant. According to his model, the assimilation process consists of the following steps: acculturation (i.e., adoption of the “cultural patterns” of the host society, such as language, dress, and

personal values); structural assimilation (participation in majority class, network and institutional arrangements), marital assimilation (inter-marriage), identificational assimilation, attitude reception assimilation (absence of prejudice), behaviour reception assimilation (absence of discrimination), and civil assimilation (absence of value and power conflicts). Critics of this view consider that by viewing accommodation as a one-way change process in which ethnic minorities (e.g., immigrants) must adapt to the host society, any problems of adaptation experienced by immigrants are attributed to the immigrants themselves (e.g., Bourhis et al., 1997; Ehrkamp, 2006).¹

Compared with Gordon (1964), Brubaker (2001) offered a somewhat different and more nuanced view of the concept of assimilation, distinguishing between different meanings of this term, which he qualified as either general and abstract, or specific and organic. The author suggested that in the general and abstract sense, assimilation implies increasing similarity or likeness. To assimilate, in that sense, means to become similar, or to make similar, or to treat as similar. In the specific and organic sense, the central meaning is, as Brubaker (2001) argued, transitive, where assimilation implies not just to become similar, but rather to be completely transformed or absorbed into a substance of its own nature. This latter view shares many similarities with Gordon's (1964) conceptualisation. Thus, while the organic understanding of assimilation is centred on an end state of complete absorption, the abstract understanding of assimilation is, rather, focused on a process of becoming similar, in some respect, to some reference population.

Furthermore, in Brubaker's (2001) elaboration of the different meanings of assimilation, one can also recognise certain analytical and empirical implications for both understanding and studying the concept of assimilation. While the organic meaning, with its biological metaphor of incorporation, understands society as an organism and seems orientated towards an outcome that reflects the degree to which "absorption" has

¹ Bourhis et al. (1997) also noted that colonial history reveals a process opposite to that of assimilation, when the host majority became assimilated into the culture of immigrants (colonisers) who were superior technologically and militarily.

occurred, the abstract meaning has more of a focus on a process associated with becoming similar.

Another difference between earlier and more recent conceptualisations of assimilation is that earlier conceptualisations (e.g., Gordon, 1964) focused mainly on the cultural and social dimensions of immigrants' adaptation and fit into a new cultural and societal context ("common cultural life"), while in later studies of assimilation, as well as policies influenced by assimilation ideology, the concept of assimilation is predominantly centred around domains of socio-economic accommodation. In this later research stream, researchers are mainly focused on measuring the degree of immigrants' (or different immigrant groups') establishment on the labour market. For example, in some studies, researchers assess "successful" assimilation in terms of the degree of adaptation into patterns of economic and social "success" (e.g., Schneider & Crul, 2010), as well as immigrants' socio-economic assimilation in terms of social mobility related to education and income (e.g., Neidert & Farley, 1985).

Also, some authors (Massey & Denton, 1988; Alba et al., 1997) examined and measured "spatial assimilation", which means the residential mobility of members of minority groups into the areas predominantly inhabited by members of the majority group. While Massey and Denton (1988) followed processes of suburbanisation and measured spatial assimilation among Hispanics, Asians, and blacks in the United States, Alba et al.'s (1997) study focused on the mobility of three minority groups in the New York region: German, Italian, and Irish. However, their mobility goes in another direction, into ethnic neighbourhoods, which is assumed to slow the process of migrants' assimilation. Thus, in studies of spatial assimilation, residential mobility is seen as one positive step in the process of migrants' assimilation, since the assumption is that if minorities live in the predominantly majority population residential areas, they will improve their cultural skills, and in that way share in a common cultural life.

To sum up, we can say that what distinguishes the studies discussed above is that in some of them the host society's culture patterns (e.g., norms, values, and behaviours) are treated and seen as static and homogeneous (e.g., Gordon, 1964) while in others (e.g., Alba et al., 1997),

they are seen as dependent on the context, and to some extent not evolving. However, regardless of this difference, the cultural patterns of the host society are used as the baseline for assessing the degree of migrants' assimilation.

Also, it appears that in the general sense, the concept of assimilation, as viewed in the above-mentioned studies, not only normalises the majority population's "common cultural life" but also tends to see it as superior. In consonance with this, immigrants' experiences, norms, values, and behaviours (for some immigrant groups more, for some less) are viewed as inferior and in need of change if immigrants are to live up to the expectations of the non-immigrant majority, as Ehrkamp (2006) illustrated in her study of Turkish immigrants living in Germany. Hence, immigrant accommodation to society, through the lens of the concept of assimilation, implies change largely on one side only. Thus, assimilation can be viewed as a one-way process, regardless of whether minorities are becoming or being absorbed, or being made and treated as similar. In short, the "common cultural life" of the host society (regardless of whether it is treated as something that is unchangeable and stable, or changeable) is the standard, defining the direction and desired result of this type of adaptive process.

Some cultural assimilationist arguments are strongly criticised in parts of the literature, where assimilation is viewed as a mechanism for the exclusion and discrimination of minorities. Indeed, taken to extremes, assimilationist goals have led, in the past, to appalling abuses, such as when First Nation children were separated from their families to be "educated" in residential boarding schools in Canada and the United States in an effort to suppress a distinctive culture and language seen as problematic for mainstream society (Fournier & Crey, 1998). More directly related to the context of immigration, Ehrkamp (2006) pointed out that assimilationist mechanisms and practices (at both societal and organisational levels) sanction certain behaviours but not others, enabling the local majority to (re)establish what is and is not considered "normal". Having studied factors that impact immigrant populations' establishment on the Swedish labour market, Knocke (2000) problematised some employers' job requirements, such as speaking "perfect" Swedish (see also Chap. 10) and/or having "social competence". Knocke (2000) argued

that as long as there is no definition of the concept or of exactly what kind of social competence is needed for a particular job or in a given context, it must be viewed as a constructed myth that serves as one more exclusionary and discriminatory argument.

Integration

Unlike the concept of assimilation, where it is first and foremost immigrants themselves who are held responsible for their failure or success in the process of accommodation to the host society, in the concept of integration, multiple actors and institutions (including immigrants themselves) are viewed as responsible for the processes of acceptable accommodation (e.g., Spencer, 2006, 2011; Ager & Strang, 2008; Berry, 2011; Erdal & Oeppen, 2013; Urban, 2018).

For example, from Berry's (2011) point of view, integration presupposes not only that non-dominant groups adopt the basic values of the larger society, but that at the same time the dominant group must be prepared to adapt national institutions (e.g., education, health and labour) to better meet the needs of all groups living together in the plural society. Urban (2018) used the term *system integration*, which in her interpretation is a process that requires adaptation by immigrants, but also by the host society. Thus, it is a two-way process. However, according to Urban (2018), to make this possible in practice the receiving society must provide access to jobs and services and new residents must be included in social relations.

Spencer (2011) proposed a similar view, arguing that an integration process engages not only immigrants, but also the institutions and people among whom they live, and that ongoing interactions between these actors determine the outcomes of the integration process. Similarly, for Erdal and Oeppen (2013) integration of immigrants is seen as a kind of negotiation process in which different actors negotiate membership in a particular place. However, Spencer (2011) pointed out that different actors do not have the same power to influence how the integration process will unfold and what the final result will be. Thus, it may be argued

that the relationships in such negotiation processes are not always reciprocal and equal but, rather, embedded in unequal power positions.

For their part, Ager and Strang (2008) argued that successful integration is a long-lasting process, which depends on all sectors of society, including public bodies, community and religious leaders, the education system, voluntary organisations, employers, and trade unions. Specifically, in elaborating on integration and its potential for success, they identified four key components or domains of integration. The first domain is labelled markers and means and is related to employment, housing, and education. The second is social connection (e.g., social bridges, social bonds, and social links). The third is related to facilitators, which is understood in terms of the removal of “barriers” to integration, such as language and cultural knowledge, safety, and stability. Finally, the fourth domain is foundation, related to rights and citizenship. This last domain is, from the authors’ viewpoint, particularly challenging, and its implementation varies considerably from society to society. One of the reasons for this is related to the impact of state ideologies on perceptions of immigrants’ accommodation which embed assumptions about human dignity, equality, freedom of cultural choice, justice, security and independence, as well as rights to citizenship, family reunification, and equality in legislation and policies.

Based on the above-mentioned studies, the concept of integration does not imply a one-way adaptation process as we saw with assimilation, but rather a two-way process characterised by accommodation and change, which encompasses both the non-dominant group and the dominant society and its institutions. For example, when Ager and Strang (2008) elaborated on the domain of facilitators, they referred to dimensions such as broad cultural knowledge, which was portrayed as having the potential to enable integration processes and outcomes. This would include not only immigrants’ knowledge of national and local procedures, customs, and facilities, but also, albeit to a lesser extent, non-immigrants’ knowledge of the circumstances and culture of immigrants. At the same time, Ager and Strang’s (2008) descriptions and suggestions sometimes give the impression that the degree of engagement or responsibility between the “majority” and “minority” population is not the same in these processes. For example, in discussing education and its potential to support

integration by removing “barriers” the authors insisted on the importance of institutional support so that immigrants can learn the host-society language, thus avoiding isolation and exclusion (e.g., bullying and racism).

In fact, researchers very rarely focus on all of the domains discussed above at the same time, but rather zoom in on some of them. Some of the most common “markers and measures” of integration to society are related to educational achievements and access to the labour market (e.g., Knocke, 2000; Schneider & Crul, 2010; Cross & Turner, 2013); housing, language and political participation (Spencer, 2006); and impacts of integration policies on integration (Diaz, 1993). Measurements of these indicate whether integration is successful or not. Furthermore, some authors have investigated personal relationships and their dynamics, in the form of changing social networks, as important aspects of social integration in contrast to social separation (e.g., Eve, 2010; Cross & Turner, 2013).

Cross and Turner (2013) examined, for example, the workplace experiences of immigrants living in Ireland, and more specifically their perceptions of fairness in working relationships between employer and employee, which is, from the authors’ perspective, important not only for the immigrant’s labour market integration, but also for their social integration into the host society. In their quantitative study, variables reflecting successful workplace integration included satisfaction with pay and conditions, fairness in treatment, and expectations met (e.g., type of job, level of wages, job and career opportunities), while variables reflecting social integration included whether immigrants socialised mainly with friends from the majority group or with people from their home country, whether they experienced negative attitudes and discrimination outside work, and whether they felt accepted by the majority, as well as the overall sense of well-being working and living in the host country.

Knocke’s (2000) focus was also on the labour market integration of immigrants but, unlike Cross and Turner (2013), she paid attention to factors that negatively affect perspectives and opportunities for immigrants to be integrated into the (Swedish) labour market. These factors are, unlike in other studies reviewed, first and foremost related to the host country’s economic needs and structural labour market conditions. These

are, from Knocke's (2000) point of view, decisive for whether immigrants are integrated, segregated, or discriminated against in the labour market and in their working life. Thus, the underlying assumption in Knocke's (2000) interpretation of the concept of integration is that it should also contain elements of equal treatment, but in addition the provision of the same opportunities to everyone in a society (both the majority population and the minority population), regardless of economic needs and structural labour market conditions in that society.

To sum up, while the underlying assumption of the concept of assimilation is that accommodation should first and foremost impact immigrants, and in that way maintain stability and continuity, especially in regard to core cultural norms, values, and behaviours of the host society, the concept of integration reflects a more nuanced and varied conception of change, where both dominant and non-dominant groups organise their lives and impact each other. In other words, integration processes are characterised by some form of mutual negotiation, despite unequal power positions between the majority and minority groups.

It could also be argued that integration pursued by non-dominant groups is most likely to succeed if the dominant society is open and inclusive in its orientation towards cultural diversity.

Inclusion

As mentioned previously, one of the newer concepts relating to immigrants' accommodation processes is *inclusion*. However, as with assimilation and integration, it is not easy to provide a common definition of this concept.

For Houtkamp (2015), one common characteristic of inclusion is, however, that this concept, in its traditional meaning, entails a degree of adaptation by the majority group (be it a company, a political community, or a society as a whole) in order to accommodate members of the minority. Thus, this traditional view of the concept of inclusion refers to the efforts that a society or an organisation makes to allow minorities to participate. In that sense, the concept of inclusion can be seen as a one-way process, from majority to minority. When we apply this line of reasoning to

immigrants' accommodation, an important aspect of inclusion is that immigrants are incorporated into the host society or into one organisation. In line with this traditional view, in order for this to happen, society needs to show a willingness to accommodate and accept cultural minorities.

Houtkamp's (2015, p. 80) own perspective on inclusion contrasts, however, with what he refers to as the "classical" view in that it implies a two-way relationship, since minorities are, as he argues, also required "to adapt to their country of residence to a certain extent" (e.g., learning the dominant language and respecting, while not necessarily adopting, the values of the majority culture), without resorting to complete forced assimilation. Houtkamp (2015) used the term *national inclusion*, which is defined as a process wherein a nation state facilitates the cultural and linguistic expression of its minorities, whilst minorities in turn adapt to mainstream society. The concept of inclusion in Houtkamp's (2015) interpretation does not, however, only encompass this duality, but also that such a two-way process should be characterised by *feelings of belonging* (among minority groups), and *acceptance* of minorities by the majority group members (government and members of the majority) in institutions and organisations, the judicial system and in society.

A similar view of the concept of inclusion was suggested by Urban (2018). In her opinion, inclusion is a process through which immigrants participate in different parts of society, such as the labour market, housing market, education, health care, welfare systems and so on, and in which individuals feel attached and receive political representation. The concept implies an active and conscious process, both on the part of public authorities and employers, and from newcomers themselves. Urban (2018) contrasted the concept of inclusion with the concept of exclusion, which according to her means that a certain group does not have access to certain rights or resources that everyone else in society normally has (such as access to political influence, and constraints in obtaining adequate education, work, housing and health services).

According to Ruedin and D'Amato (2011), a policy of inclusion should be designed in a way that can be accepted by both the majority and minority cultures. It fits with the specific social-historical context and combines successful participation with a feeling of belonging and acceptance among the minorities.

To sum up, the concept of integration and the newer concept of inclusion are seen as two-way processes. One of the differences between these concepts is that in some way the concept of inclusion places a greater emphasis on the feeling of belongingness and acceptance compared to the concept of integration. However, in the above-mentioned studies, it is not quite clear what belongingness might mean, and what is needed to achieve a feeling of belongingness and acceptance in a host society or organisation. Is it sufficient to acquire basic cultural and linguistic rights, or is there a need for a deeper bond between minorities and the majority? How deep a bond should run between minorities and the majority to create a sense of full inclusion?

Overall, the three perspectives on immigrant accommodation to host societies—assimilation, integration, and inclusion—imply not only different conceptualisations of what successful accommodation might mean, but also different processes by which such accommodation might be achieved. Given the importance of the labour market for the accomplishment of any of these forms of accommodation, it is important to consider how employer recruitment, mentoring, socialisation, and diversity management practices might contribute, or not, to achieving them. In addition, while we have presented the notions of assimilation, integration, and inclusion for the most part with respect to the host society, literature on human resources management and diversity management has in some cases also translated them into organisational contexts, as we will now see. We focus on these notions as embodied in organisational practices.

Organisational Practices Associated with Assimilation, Integration, and Inclusion: A Fictional Vignette

To examine how the approaches of assimilation, integration, and inclusion might manifest themselves in practice, we begin with a fictional vignette. This is a composite construction based on the first author's research over many years on issues of diversity and inclusion, as well as on societal and organisational responses to the current migrant influx to Sweden.

Vignette Version 1

When Soraya lived in her country of origin, Syria, she graduated from the Faculty of Law. After graduating, she worked as a lawyer in a well-known Syrian firm for two years. In 2015, after the outbreak of the war, Soraya came to Country X as a refugee. While waiting a year in a refugee camp for the decision on her asylum application, Soraya began to think about both her future and her employment opportunities in Country X. Her knowledge of the labour market situation there was very limited at that point. Yet Soraya believed, given her prior education and work experience from Syria, that she would find a similar job in Country X in the foreseeable future, especially considering that she had already learned quite a bit of the X language during her year in the refugee camp (on her own initiative and with the help of some humanitarian organisations that organised language courses).

When she was finally granted a residence permit, her encounter with “reality” was, however, rather different from this ideal image. After contacting several institutions dealing with the validation of foreign qualifications, she realised that neither her education nor her work experience from Syria would be recognised in Country X. To become a lawyer, Soraya would have to redo her university education from scratch. Although she could not fully understand the requirement, she was highly motivated to work as a lawyer in Country X and decided to invest five years in a university education to earn a Country X law degree, believing that this would place her in good stead with a future employer.

However, after graduating, she began to have some doubts. Despite an apparently favourable job market, after nearly 50 job applications, she received interview invitations from only two firms. During these interviews, Soraya sensed that while the firms appreciated her qualifications, they were unsure about her social competencies and her lack of “perfect” knowledge of the language. Nevertheless, one of the firms offered her temporary employment for one year. As Soraya realised later, the firm wanted to see whether Soraya would fully fit in by adapting to the firm’s values and norms, and being accepted by other employees, before offering a permanent position. Since she had no other alternatives, needed to support her family and desperately wanted to work as a lawyer, Soraya accepted the position.

Like other new recruits, Soraya was invited to an Induction Days event at which representatives of the firm spoke about the firm’s history, core values, and business goals. New employees also briefly introduced themselves. Of the ten new recruits, only Soraya and one other person had a foreign background. To Soraya’s surprise, at the end of the Induction Days one of the managers informed her and this other employee that the firm was planning to organise a special short training programme for just the two of

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them to help them adapt more quickly to the firm's culture, core values, and norms. Soraya wondered why, if the firm believed they needed this help, there was no parallel training for managers that would favour mutual adjustment and understanding.

Yet the next steps in her adaptation process intensified her belief that if she wanted to be offered a permanent job after the one-year trial period, she must fully conform to the organisational culture, values, and norms and downplay her uniqueness in terms of her previous education and work experience from Syria, in which no one in the firm showed any interest. For example, although they were not unfriendly, she initially found it difficult to develop strong social relations with her new colleagues and with managers, because she did not always understand their jokes, and felt uncomfortable with certain cultural practices (e.g., shaking hands with male colleagues or clients). She realised, however, that in this context, she might need to moderate her visceral reactions in order to become more accepted into the team, as well as work doubly hard to demonstrate that the quality of her work was good as that of others, if not better.

Soraya's story clearly resonates with the experiences of many other immigrants, as documented by others (Tharenou & Kulik, 2020): lack of recognition for prior skills and experience, over-optimistic expectations concerning the ability to gain employment that fully recognises qualifications (even after significant personal investment) and struggles around language and social acceptance that accompany initial entry into the workforce.

The vignette also reflects a view of immigrant accommodation as a process of assimilation, in which the emphasis is on encouraging one-way adaptation to Country X's norms, culture and values, and more specifically to the new organisation into which Soraya has ultimately been hired. Several practices described in the vignette reflect this orientation: a strong insistence on social and linguistic skills as criteria for employment, lack of respect for, or even interest in, her previous training and experience, an implicit threat manifested in the one-year temporary position that failure to conform will be penalised. The firm's investment in a special training programme signals a willingness to help her adapt, but still implies that adaptation will be one-way. Nothing is in place to suggest that the firm is willing to adjust its own practices to adapt to the presence of foreign-born employees, or to learn from them. As described in the

vignette, although sometimes questioning this situation, Soraya reacts to these pressures by showing behaviours that tend to accept and reinforce assimilation. Her strong desire to obtain work that is equal to her skill level pushes her to conform to societal and organisational demands, adopting what Berry (1997) called an “assimilation orientation” that matches the assimilation-orientated practices of the firm. For example, she accepts the need to obtain local qualifications to achieve employment and is clearly concerned to prove herself through the quality of her work so that her employment can be extended. On the other hand, it is not clear from the vignette whether she will achieve the degree of acceptance she needs. The demand to assimilate places new immigrant employees at a disadvantage despite the ostensible emphasis on treating everyone equally regardless of differences, or on what have been called “identity blind” practices (Konrad & Linnehan, 1995; Tharenou & Kulik, 2020).

This begs the question of what might be different in Soraya’s experience in an organisational context characterised by more two-way practices based on a notion of integration. We now reformulate the second half of the vignette shifting the story in a new direction.

Vignette Version 2 (Second Part Only)

During her job search, Soraya, like most of the unemployed in Country X, was registered with the Employment Bureau, where she had meetings with her contact person from time to time. Despite an apparently favourable job market, Soraya had to send nearly 50 job applications before she received her first interview invitations, from two firms. At the first firm, Soraya sensed that while the firm appreciated her qualifications, they were unsure about her social competencies and her lack of “perfect” knowledge of the language. The second firm seemed different. This firm had also been proposed by her contact person at the Employment Bureau, before she sent her job application. On the one hand, Soraya’s contact at the EB considered that Soraya met all the formal requirements for the position advertised, but he also added that this firm had been actively working over a longer period of time to increase diversity within its workforce, and might, he thought, look positively at her job application.

This aroused additional interest from Soraya in this firm, but also some hope that she would finally find a job as a lawyer in Country X. She decided to gather as much information about this firm as possible in order to better prepare her job application, and to be well-prepared for a possible job

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interview. Also, by carefully reading the job advertisement, Soraya's attention was particularly drawn to the wording, where it was emphasised that the firm welcomed applicants from people from diverse backgrounds and identities, including different nationalities and genders.

A few weeks after submitting her job application, Soraya, to her great joy, received an invitation from this firm for a job interview. She found out during the interview that the firm had invited three other candidates to a job interview. However, the recruiting manager also informed her that under the firm's current recruitment policy, if several candidates met the formal requirements for employment, the firm would select a candidate whose socio-demographic and gender identities would further increase diversity within the existing workforce.

As she later learned, this policy, combined with the fact that the firm's business required them to interact with clients in several countries, made her linguistic skills, as well as her previous professional contacts and the networks she had developed with foreign companies, of interest to them. They offered her a position in their international team. Soraya needed to support her family and desperately wanted to work as a lawyer in a job that would value her experience, so she accepted the position.

Like other recruits, Soraya was invited to an Induction Days event at which representatives of the firm spoke about the firm's history, core values, and business goals. Soraya recalls that one of the managers emphasised the following: "Our diversity strengthens us and we try to bring out the best in everyone through dialogue and learning from each other." At the Induction Days, new employees introduced themselves, and presented their own personal backgrounds and skills. As a foreign-born recruit, she was also assigned a personal mentor who had been with the firm for five years. Soraya learned that all the mentors selected had participated in a specially designed mentoring training programme and had also attended diversity training. Most of them applied to become mentors to newcomers with a foreign background.

After a few weeks of working in the firm, Soraya felt that she was much more independent in performing her work tasks, which over time became more complex and involved a higher level of responsibility. From her perspective, her mentor also deserved great credit for facilitating her adjustment to the workplace. She saw their mentorship relationship, in a way, as a mutual learning process, where on the one hand she was aided in adapting to the norms and values of the firm itself, while on the other hand she noticed that her mentor was also willing to learn new ways of doing things and to actively engage in the mentoring relationship.

Yet this mentoring relationship could not fully address all the issues she encountered. For example, Soraya recalls a situation in which she spoke to

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her mentor about her unease with certain clients and co-workers who did not appear to understand or appreciate her religious practices. While the firm had formal policies of accommodation to religious practices (e.g. acceptance of the headscarf that Soraya wears), her clothing tended to set Soraya apart from others, and she suspected that she might not be invited to certain social events, in part for that reason.

Thus, it was initially easier to develop friendships in the workplace with others who shared her ethnic background. She found that despite the firm's ostensible openness to diversity, she still had to work hard to demonstrate her competence, and to develop trusting and friendly relations with her colleagues. This became somewhat easier a few months after her arrival when she was assigned to work in a multidisciplinary team with co-workers on a joint project. It was at this point that she began to feel more appreciated for her skills, and to make stronger connections with others.

In addition, over time, Soraya noticed that a few of the managers did not appear to appreciate the firm's ambition to increase workforce diversity, because this made management more complex. Yet they were, she felt, in the minority, and potential differences of opinion were resolved through dialogue and respect for different opinions.

The revised vignette illustrates a view of immigrant accommodation as a two-way process more orientated towards what we described above as integration. Here, we see a firm that demonstrates explicit policies aimed not only at helping new arrivals to adapt, but also at adapting its own practices in ways that can accommodate to, and even benefit from, the distinctive skills and experiences that immigrants can bring to the firm. This is evident in the recruitment policy, in the identity-conscious induction practices, in the use of mentoring and diversity training programmes, and in the setting up of teamwork practices that encourage social interaction with colleagues on an equal basis. Yet the vignette nevertheless reveals that formal socialisation practices aimed at two-way integration may be limited, for several reasons.

First, certain conditions may need to be met for firms to engage in such practices. These are likely to include operations where there is a need for particular skills that are less easy to acquire from locally born individuals, combined perhaps with a desire to engage in socially responsible practices. This also implies that immigrants who, unlike Soraya, are not

highly educated may have less access to opportunities such as this. Second, even when firms espouse diversity practices that favour integration, these practices cannot eliminate other sources of discrimination, or ensure that foreign-born recruits will necessarily experience their integration process as leading to a sense of inclusion. The vignette points to the difference between formal integration practices and the objective of inclusion when it discusses Soraya's difficulty in making social connections. Her visibility in terms of religious characteristics which are in the minority in the host country underlines her distinctiveness, but not in a way that favours a sense of belonging. This is only possible when she becomes engaged in team-related activities where it is no longer her ethnic origin that sets her apart, but her distinctive skills and experiences.

Indeed, the promotion of a sense of inclusion may depend not only on broad firm policies at the organisational level, but also, and perhaps even more, on the specific practices of individual managers. In an interesting study of diversity management practices, O'Leary and Sandberg (2017) revealed a continuum of four types of managers whose practices enabled increasing levels of inclusion. For example, while the first type of manager (called identity blind) generally ignored differences, and the second type (assimilation managers) tended to use stereotypes to classify employees and sought to correct their perceived deficits, the third type (inclusive differentiation managers) tended to adapt their interaction styles according to perceived needs of different groups, as well as taking into account individual specificities. The final category (equitable transformation managers) showed, in addition, sensitivity to the need to redress inequalities in the workforce. The authors argued, based on assessments of peers, that the last two categories of manager are most likely to promote a sense of inclusion. Janssens and Zanoni (2014, p. 328) further argued that inclusion is only possible when "ethnic minority employees are no longer essentialistically reduced to mere representatives of a stigmatized social group but are approached as 'full' subjects, a key condition for equality". Soraya's position at the end of the vignette begins to point to something like this, but it is clearly not something that is easily acquired.

Beyond the vignette, we believe it is also important to recognise that the discourse and practices promoting integration and inclusion of immigrants (i.e., two-way practices) cannot entirely eliminate the fundamental tensions underpinning immigrant accommodation to host societies. As Spencer (2011) indicated, the power differentials affecting immigrant newcomers are never eliminated and clearly underpin any efforts at negotiated accommodation. Thus, in a study of Hong Kong immigrants to Canada (Hilde & Mills, 2015), government integration discourse that emphasised efforts to help immigrants tended to marginalise the experience of those who struggled to meet the definitions of success it implied. And Romani et al. (2019) showed how well-meaning human resource managers might inadvertently engage in what they called “benevolent discrimination” when integration efforts sustained immigrant employees in lower level positions, while demanding “gratefulness”. Similarly, in a study of refugees joining Austrian organisations with explicit and progressive “inclusive” diversity policies, Ortlieb et al. (2021) referred to “inclusion” as a form of “identity regulation” in which immigrants’ identities were shaped as “good”, “glorious” and “grateful” subjects, limiting the way in which they might understand their experiences, which were often not as perfect or inclusive as the discourse suggested.

Conclusion

The concepts of assimilation, integration and inclusion are undoubtedly useful in reflecting on various dimensions of immigrant accommodation to society, although these concepts also have multiple meanings and have been applied in different ways. In this chapter, we explored these different meanings, and drew on a fictional vignette to examine what they might mean for organising and for immigrant integration into the labour force. We illustrated the kinds of organisational practices associated with each, and pointed out how, despite the fact that societal discourses are moving towards greater emphasis on the notion of inclusion, persistent power differentials almost inevitably influence the degree to which organisations are able to achieve this ideal.

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3

Organising (Refugee) Integration in Sweden: How It Begins

Yashar Mahmud

Saturday, September 12, 2015, was a sunny day, and a day when I left my office to start my field study of refugees coming to Sweden. I went to Stockholm Central Station—a site that I was to visit numerous times in the course of the following three months. From September to November 2015, Stockholm Central Station was a place where hundreds (and sometimes thousands) of refugees were arriving on a daily basis (SOU, 2017). Also in 2015, Sweden was the country that received most refugees per capita among the European Union (EU) member states.¹ After the 2015/2016 peak of refugee arrivals, the “attention has now shifted towards effectively integrating [refugees] into their new societies”

I would like to thank Tommy Jensen for a conversation we had before I started writing this chapter, and the editors of this book for their attentive guidance.

¹Hungary was the EU member state that received the highest number of first-time applicants (Eurostat, 2016). Eventually, however, the hostile attitude towards refugees forced almost all of them to use Hungary just as a “transit”—a country that refugees pass through along the way to their preferred country of asylum.

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(OECD, 2018, p. 3). I wonder, however, if the focus on specific phases in migration and the lives of refugees might limit the understanding of refugees' struggles in their efforts to integrate. Hence, I would like to raise some questions related to the integration of refugees that may not be receiving enough attention.

The integration of refugees is a “complex and gradual [process], comprising distinct but inter-related legal, economic, social, and cultural dimensions, all of which are important for refugees' ability to integrate successfully as fully included members of the host society” (UNHCR Nicosia, 2014, p. 2). Such a process involves many different actors—state agencies (including international meso-level cooperation with agencies in other countries), regional bodies, municipalities, private companies, civil society organisations and individuals. They all have diverse aims, roles and tasks (Selsky & Parker, 2005; Brücker et al., 2019). Also, such a process takes place in a variety of spaces, and takes a long time (OECD, 2006; Konle-Seidl, 2018).

Refugee integration is often discussed on a national (e.g. Sweden) or an international (e.g. EU) level (OECD, 2018). However, the everyday lives of refugees are shaped by the places where, and the times when, they find shelter, home and work; the spaces and times where and when their integration occurs—or does not. Yet the understanding of the beginning(s) of refugee integration seems to be lacking or misconceived in the analyses. A specific focus on certain factors or aspects, such as a language course (Sarmini et al., 2020), education or labour skills training (OECD, 2014), the event of finding a job (Platonova & Urso, 2012; Konle-Seidl, 2018), or acquiring a house (Sprandel, 2018), which are seen as the most important facilitators of a long-term integration of refugees, might create blind spots in the understanding on how refugees “get there”, so to speak. The events I have listed may be important for refugees' integration, but, in my opinion, these moments in time are not those where and when refugee integration begins. Thus, the main aim of this chapter is to explore the *initial stages in refugee integration*, attempting to answer the questions where, when and how does refugee integration begin?

Refugees are mobile by definition (Innes, 2015); but when they are moving from one place to another, they become differently *enacted* (Mol, 2002; see also Diedrich & Styhre, 2008). Following the everyday

practices of organising refugees is thus one way to show that a refugee may be enacted in one way at one site (at one time), while differently at another site (or another time). To describe and interpret the events that took place at Stockholm Central Station at the height of the so-called refugee crisis (autumn of 2015), I use Mol's (2002) concept of *modes of ordering*.² These modes are analytical tools that help to understand not only how refugees were organised, but also how stability in organising is achieved, as the process of enactment is almost always riddled with *tensions* (Mol, 1999, 2002). Developing my arguments, I also draw in diverse strands of Actor-Network Theory, as it permits me to ascribe agency to both humans and nonhumans (Latour, 2005), which will be useful in my analysis.

Modes of Ordering

In her study of care of patients with atherosclerosis, Annemarie Mol (2002) distinguished three main modes of ordering: coordination, distribution and inclusion. Each of these comes with several sub-modes. In what follows, I present them all.

Coordination

Coordination is the mode of ordering, during which tensions between different versions of reality are dealt with by either adding them up, setting up a hierarchy between them, or by correlating them. In this mode, the place (where)—and the time (when)—realities enacted are the same.

As shown in Table 3.1, coordination has two sub-modes: addition and calibration. Addition is further divided into addition ignoring discrepancies³ and addition with hierarchy.

² Ordering (aligning) and coordination are both called organising in the vocabulary of management and organisation studies (Czarniawska, 2016).

³ Mol did not explicitly name her second sub-mode of addition, except to point out that it is “with no worries about discrepancies” (Mol, 2002, p. 84). I understand it as a sub-mode where discrepancies are tolerated or ignored. Hence, I called it “addition ignoring discrepancies”.

Table 3.1 Coordination sub-modes

Sub-modes	Same space?	Same time?	Effects
<i>Addition Ignoring discrepancies</i>	Yes	Yes	Each reality is treated equally; none is given more weight than the other.
<i>With hierarchy</i>	Yes	Yes	Two realities are treated differently; one reality is pacified.
<i>Calibration</i>	Yes	Yes	Two or more realities are made comparable through an additional object(s).

Addition Ignoring Discrepancies

This sub-mode allows different realities to be “added up” with no worry about the tensions (discrepancies). No reality is given more weight than the other, at least for the time being and at that place. Although tensions may arise between different realities, they do not lead to full blown conflicts; the realities can be treated side by side; each “reality” contains a suggestion for action; one needs to start an appropriate process for each of the realities.

Addition with Hierarchy

Setting up a hierarchy between different realities is another way of settling tensions when such occur. In other words, when there are two contradictory realities, one of them is pacified or blackboxed (Latour, 1994). Yet such a process is temporary; a reality can be blackboxed only for a specific moment and in a specific place. The realities are still multiple, and the hierarchy set between them keeps them related.

Calibration

In calibration, different realities are made comparable (or calibrated) with each other through an additional object, which helps to settle tensions. Setting up a common criterion permits one to decide on the plan of action and achieve togetherness in spite of diverging realities (Mol, 2002).

Distribution

Distribution is the mode by which tensions between different versions of reality are solved through spatial and temporal separations. There are four sub-modes of distribution (Table 3.2).

Itinerary

In this sub-mode, each reality is organised within its own local (spatial) site. Although they are separated spatially, a flow is maintained through conversations, observations and indicators, so that the conflicting realities can move between different sites and situations without becoming fragmented.

Indication Criteria

In this sub-mode, different realities are attributed to different situations and plans of action, and each is then dealt with separately. Yet this does not lead to fragmentation, “for the various treatments come together in a central point: the place where the indication criteria are set. This is the place where the object enacted and the practicalities that matter are determined interdependently” (Mol, 2002, p. 16).

Table 3.2 Distribution sub-modes

Sub-modes	Same space?	Same time?	Effects
<i>Itinerary</i>	No	Yes	Incompatible realities are separated spatially; each reality has its own site.
<i>Indication criteria</i>	No	Yes	Incompatible realities are separated through different situations and different plans of action that are decided at a central point.
<i>Conditions of possibility</i>	Yes	No	A potential invention of an object changes the treatment of realities.
<i>Accounting for previous enactments</i>	Yes	No	The new enactment takes into account the previous reality.

Conditions of Possibility

This sub-mode has to do with the fact that what is certain now may change at a later stage in the process. In such a process, there is a tension but not a fragmentation (the collaboration between practices is maintained). One can even say that the old reality is dependent on the future reality (inverse of accounting for previous realities).

Accounting for Previous Realities

In this mode, although temporal separation takes place, the realities are related through having the new reality take into account the previous reality, that is, an enactment of a new reality is dependent on an old reality/old realities.

Inclusion

Inclusion is the mode where the focus is on transitivity and intransitivity between the different realities. Inclusion, as noted in Table 3.3, encompasses multiple spaces and times. Although Mol (2002) did not explicitly say whether there are other sub-modes of inclusion besides mutual inclusion, my reading of her work suggests one more possibility: transitive inclusion. Thus I add another sub-mode of inclusions.

Transitive Inclusion

Transitive inclusion occurs when different realities fit into each other like boxes, or puzzle pieces, creating a coherent puzzle. Each box or piece is a part of something bigger that includes the smaller boxes/pieces.

Table 3.3 Inclusion sub-modes

Sub-modes	Same space?	Same time?	Effects
<i>Transitive inclusion</i>	Yes (spaces)	Yes (times)	Transitive relations between realities
<i>Mutual inclusion</i>	Yes (spaces)	Yes (times)	Intransitive relations between realities

Mutual Inclusion

In a mutual inclusion, there are intransitive relations between realities. Mol's (2002) argument is that if A contains B and B contains C, A does not necessarily contain C. But A and C do not rule out each other and become fragmented, because there is the possibility of mutual inclusion between incompatible realities.

My Study

In what follows, I describe the ways in which I proceeded during my field study. Although I followed refugees throughout a vast geographical space and over a long period of time (across several European countries for five years), in this chapter, I mainly focus on the events that took place at Stockholm Central Station in the autumn of 2015, when, allegedly, one of the largest refugee “waves” since World War II hit Europe⁴ (EU, 2015). It was a period when the “refugee crisis” occurred, and various cities across the EU presented images of the refugees on their streets. In 2015, Sweden received close to 163,000 asylum applications (Parusel, 2017), and most of these arrived during the last four months of the year. As the nation's capital, Stockholm was one of the Swedish cities that welcomed large numbers of refugees; and Stockholm Central Station was the space where most of the newcomers arrived. It was their entry point to Sweden.

During September, October and November 2015, I visited Stockholm Central Station 34 times; each visit lasted 3 to 4 h. I visited the station on working days as well as at the weekends. Most of my visits were during conventional working hours, but some of my visits took place in the early morning when the station opened, and in the late evenings when the last trains arrived. Besides Stockholm Central Station, I visited various other sites in Stockholm to which refugees were taken from the station. These included churches, mosques, accommodation venues (provided by both

⁴Russia's invasion of Ukraine (UN, 2022) on February 24, 2022, resulted in an even larger number of people seeking refuge in other European countries (UNHCR, 2022).

governmental and non-governmental organisations), private homes and offices of public agencies. During that autumn I also visited Malmö Central Station for one day, during which I was able to observe how refugees who arrived from Denmark⁵ (Sweden's southern neighbour) were being organised there.

Although I used a variety of research techniques to generate my field material (see e.g. Borneman & Hammoudi, 2009), I mainly relied on shadowing (“ethnology on the move”—Czarniawska, 2007), and interviewing (Mishler, 1986; Jensen & Sandström, 2016). I shadowed refugees as well as other actors (representatives of public agencies and NGOs, as well as volunteers) who were helping the refugees. I also shadowed refugees who had not registered with the Swedish Migration Agency and were returning to Stockholm Central Station (i.e. those who had arrived in Stockholm during the previous day(s) and weeks, and lacked the financial means to support themselves). My shadowing endeavours were of varying lengths—from 10 to 15 min to 4 h. Then I interviewed refugees, public officials and volunteers both in Stockholm and in Malmö. In total, during those three months, I spent more than 20 h shadowing, and conducted 25 recorded interviews (with around 10 h total length), and about 30 short unrecorded interviews (each no more than a few minutes long).

In what follows, I present brief descriptions of how refugees were being organised during their initial days in Stockholm. Although I focus on the main modes of ordering, in each description, I bring in the sub-modes (sometimes in parentheses) to specify which of them helps explain how the organising is done and how the “hanging togetherness” (Mol, 2002) was achieved.

Organising Refugees in Stockholm

At the height of the refugee crisis in 2015, trains and buses from Malmö—the first city one reaches when entering Sweden from the south, and therefore the city through which many of the refugees passed on arriving

⁵Denmark and Sweden are connected via the Öresund Bridge—a long road and railway bridge-tunnel.

in Sweden in 2015 (SOU, 2017)—brought hundreds (and, sometimes, thousands) of refugees to Stockholm Central Station every day. The pressure on public agencies was huge; the civil society—whose role in refugee integration is crucial (Sunata & Tosun, 2019)—joined the efforts trying to organise the refugees.

As soon as they arrived at Stockholm Central Station, refugees were welcomed by a group of volunteers, consisting of lawyers, medics and interpreters. Each person was attempting to organise refugees in his/her own ways, engaging in practices typical for their profession. So, while lawyers were giving legal advice on asylum procedures in Sweden, medics were conducting general medical checks, and interpreters were helping refugees to communicate with the representatives of the organisations they would like to contact. Each practice enacted the refugees as elements of a different reality (representing a legal issue, a medical issue or a communication issue). Each of these realities was treated side by side within the confines of the station, and the volunteers were able to coordinate (mostly by the addition ignoring discrepancies outlined above) all these different realities so that there was no fragmentation; they all hung together.

Besides meeting individual volunteers, refugees also came across the tents of NGOs, where free food and drinks were distributed. The amounts of food and drinks were limited, however, and there were worries that there might not be enough for everyone. Indeed, shortages occurred after the initial days. One of the reasons was that some refugees came back to the station and visited the NGOs' tents more than once, and for several days. They were returning to Stockholm Central Station because they had not yet registered with the Swedish Migration Agency and, thus, lacked the financial means to support themselves. To achieve a fair distribution, volunteers introduced a system according to which each day a wristband of a different colour was given to the refugees who stepped off the trains. The wristbands served as a means of coordination through calibration, thus helping the NGOs to create order in the distribution of food supplies.

At Stockholm Central Station, there were also representatives of the Swedish Border Police. They were conducting checks on the identity of people they deemed “suspicious”, trying to identify people who might be

lacking the necessary documents and therefore the right to be in Sweden. Quite a few refugees lacked identity documents, and when police officers asked how old they were, some claimed to be 17, despite looking older. Yet in asking refugees who lacked documentation to prove their age (with no parent or legal guardian present), police officers followed the general rule, which states that a person without identity documents is as old as they say they are, not how old they appear to be. In cases where a refugee claimed to be an unaccompanied minor,⁶ the police officers handed them over to the municipal social services, rather than taking them into custody and handing them over to the Swedish Migration Agency, which is the case for those wanting to seek asylum. Such coordination (addition with hierarchy) helps to understand how one reality (an age of 17) is given more weight than the other (older than that, or at least 18 years old)—for that moment and that place. It makes a difference because, while a 17-year-old was handed over to the relevant social services and received certain social benefits, someone 18 years old or older would be detained by the police.

Thus, the representatives of Stockholm Municipality's social services, one of whose tasks is to deal with unaccompanied minors, were also at Stockholm Central Station. Unlike adults or children with parents (or legal guardians), unaccompanied minor refugees were taken to a different venue, where they were subject to special care and treatment. The need for such care and treatment required the agency to separate unaccompanied minors from the other refugees. Through such itinerary distribution, each refugee reality acquired its own site: the unaccompanied minors were treated at one place, while the adults and children with parents or legal guardians present were treated at another place.

The separation among refugees took place not only between unaccompanied minors and other refugees, but also between the unaccompanied minors themselves. As soon as they were brought to the first venue of the relevant social services, the unaccompanied minors were divided into male and female, and those under and over the age of 15. All female unaccompanied minors were accommodated together with the males under the age of 15, while the male unaccompanied minors over the age

⁶An unaccompanied minor is a person who is younger than 18 and has no legal guardian present.

of 15 were taken to another place. Such separations, according to the authorities, were made to protect the younger, and the female, unaccompanied minors from the older males. Despite such separation, the notion of indication criteria suggests that those different realities still hung together, as these separations were decided at a central point, namely one of the venues of the social services.

Although all the unaccompanied minors were initially placed under the care of the relevant municipality's social services, many of them were submitted to a further age scrutiny. Whenever the case officers at the Swedish Migration Agency were suspicious of a refugee's claimed age, they decided to interview her/him and, in some cases, to request a medical assessment of an age (i.e. an MRI scan of the knee joints and X-ray of the wisdom teeth) to determine if the asylum seeker was younger or older than 18 (Radio Sweden, 2016). Yet such tests may take years to carry out (Mostad & Tamsen, 2019), which means that a person who has been originally enacted as an unaccompanied minor will be subject to the pertinent treatment for quite a long time, and might have to change their enactment later on. The decision to further scrutinise (through interviews and medical checks) the age of the asylum seeker has the potential to tilt the scales in favour of the adult refugee reality, and thus overturn the previous temporary settlement between the conflicting realities (claimed and perceived). Such a turn of events will lead the refugees to be enacted as adults, which means losing certain social benefits that they previously had access to and being handed over to the Swedish Migration Agency instead of the social services. Through distribution via conditions of possibility, it is possible to understand how, although in tension, "the unaccompanied minor" and "the adult refugee" realities hang together.

There is no doubt that dealing with refugees is a serious endeavour. A refugee who arrives at Stockholm Central Station might have experienced traumatic events such as slavery, sexual abuse or the loss of a family member (Volkan, 2017; Turner, 2019). On one occasion, a young female refugee from Afghanistan had travelled all the way to Sweden alone (i.e. without any family members accompanying her). Although she had a mother who had come to Sweden more than a year earlier, they had not been in contact for a long time, because she had lost her phone during her journey; the only thing she had with her was her mother's telephone

number written on a piece of paper. When the volunteers at Stockholm Central Station found out more about her case, they treated her with special care; she was enacted as a traumatised refugee. Through distribution via accounting for previous realities, her current reality was enacted by taking into account her previous experiences. She was referred to a medical expert, who was able to assess her mental and physical state and provide more appropriate treatment.

The counselling and care each refugee needs depend on various factors; this is why the lawyers at Stockholm Central Station were giving advice on the Swedish immigration and asylum law. Becoming a refugee often entails separation of families (Chandler et al., 2020); indeed, many refugees arriving at Stockholm Central Station were individual family members. Hence, many of their questions regarding asylum law concerned the time it would take to reunite with their family members who were still in their countries of origin, or somewhere “in transit”.⁷ In such cases, a refugee who was married and had children, for example, was enacted as “a family member”, as they were expected to reunite at some point in the future with the other family members who would also arrive in Sweden (Ostrand, 2015). The notion of transitive inclusion explains such connections between such different refugee realities when, for example, a husband is part of another reality—that of his wife. But there were also intransitive relations between such realities.

In addition to the Swedish Border Police and Stockholm Municipality’s social services, another public sector organisation that was represented at Stockholm Central Station was the Swedish Migration Agency. Its representatives were there to register refugees on the spot and then to transfer them to one of their accommodation venues. The Agency’s representatives registered refugees by filling in their details on pieces of paper and, thus, creating statistics that would help them to plan their activities, and to estimate the resources needed. Yet composing such statistics meant leaving out many details; distinctive individuals became generalised. While thus enacting a statistical refugee reality, the Swedish Migration

⁷“The country through which migratory flows (regular or irregular) move. This is taken to mean the country (or countries), different from the country of origin, through which a [refugee] passes in order to enter a country of destination”—International Organization for Migration.

Agency officials were blackboxing and silencing various other realities. Although various incompatible refugees might have gone through different paths and have had different lives, such statistics brought them together, so that they could all become a part of the same enactment.

Not only persons, but also times—past, present and future—come together in such statistics. Yet an individual refugee is not just a smaller part of a larger whole. Although an individual is part of such statistics, the relation between the individual and the statistics is intransitive (Mol, 2002); they both include one another via mutual inclusion—they are interdependent. The way an individual refugee is treated depends on the reality of the group of refugees that are already in Sweden or projected to arrive. In turn, the group of refugees is also treated depending on the reality of the individual refugee.

Conclusions

Observing how refugees become organised after their arrival at Stockholm Central Station, I sought answers to where, when and how refugee integration begins. After all, some of the practices the refugees go through at the first entry point to a country (a border, an airport, a railway station or bus station) set the course for how they will be treated, and how they will feel during their initial years in that *destination country*.⁸ Thus, a refugee enacted as an unaccompanied minor at a train station will be treated as such either until they grow into adulthood, or a medical test that results in a different enactment is carried out. What occurs at Stockholm Central Station (and immediately after) is important for how a refugee will be integrated in Sweden.

But are these places and times (Stockholm Central Station, the autumn of 2015) the actual beginning of these refugees' integration in Sweden? The practices that refugees go through at Stockholm Central Station, although occurring early in their stay in Sweden, are only one phase in their integration efforts. And although these were the starting points for my research, these practices might not be the beginning of these refugees' integration;

⁸ Destination country refers to a country which attracts asylum seekers.

they might not even be the first organising practices they go through in Sweden. After all, before arriving at Stockholm Central Station, many of the refugees have been at Malmö Central Station where they have gone through various organising practices as well (some of which are the same, or similar to, the ones at Stockholm Central Station). In other words, those refugees that reached Stockholm Central Station did so thanks to the earlier practices (e.g. distributions) they had gone through. And, as the examples in this chapter show, refugee integration often begins before the moment they enter Sweden (such as the Afghan girl whose mother's location was one of the reasons she decided to come all the way to Sweden).

So the beginning of integration might be different for each refugee. For example, it is important to take another look at a case where the lawyers consult the refugees about family reunification. The integration of the family members (those that are in the country of origin or in transit) begins long before they enter Sweden; it begins at the place where they are (in their country of origin, in transit), or when the family member that is in Sweden initiates the process of family reunification.

My point is that refugee integration does not start when a person begins a language course, finds a job or buys an apartment; neither does it begin when they enter Sweden. Refugee integration, as a process, is very individual; it can start at various places (e.g. outside of Sweden, in a country of origin or in transit) and times (e.g. before leaving the country of origin, or while in transit). To put it simply, refugee integration has multiple beginnings.

Hence, to have a more comprehensive view, one needs to look at refugee integration as a flow of chained events that occur at various places (Jensen & Sandström, 2020) and times. Doing so would not only provide a more comprehensive understanding of the organising practices refugees go through, but it would also illuminate certain power struggles and vulnerabilities that refugees face when trying to settle down in a new country (such as in the cases with the statistics enacted by the Swedish Migration Agency officers, or the medical determination of a refugee's age). Most importantly, providing a different understanding of the beginning of refugee integration could have implications for practice and policy, and contribute to a construction of more humane and sustainable refugee integration practices.

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4

“Tough Love”: The Roles Played by Municipal Housing Corporations for Integration of Newly Arrived Immigrants in Vulnerable Neighbourhoods

Sara Brorström and Alexander Styhre

We have to act forcefully and set boundaries for the people who do not behave as they should. But at the same time, we have both a carrot and a stick policy and that is what makes a [municipal] housing corporation so unique. We are here for the long run, at least 100 years, not a lot of other actors have such long-term ambitions. And that makes us genuinely interested in what is going on. (...) We have something that is among the most valuable there is, a place to live, a first-hand rent contract. And we can help the children to get an internship or a job for the summer. We (...) help them find their way around the Swedish society in the Swedish society. Our employees know the names of the children and dogs here, we take care of the neighbourhood. We have a lot of carrots, but also really powerful sticks. If people do not behave, if some kid is careering round on his moped repeatedly, then he is risking his mother's rent contract in the long run.

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(...) that combination, carrot and stick, no other municipal actors have got that. We call it tough love. (District Manager Municipal Housing Corporation)

The aforementioned is an excerpt from an interview with a district manager for the municipal housing corporation (MHC) in a vulnerable neighbourhood in the Swedish city of Gothenburg. It describes how municipal housing corporations operate: they have a duty to provide housing and to help their tenants, but their role is also to educate and to maintain order. They make decisions that help people find a place to live and they are to operate according to business-like principles but with a social responsibility—and the aim of working for the common good. In that role, even if MHCs seem powerful when acting alone, they need to collaborate with other organisations. The role that municipal housing corporations have in Sweden gives them an important role in the integration process of immigrants and this also makes them interesting to investigate further.

According to Swedish policy, newly arrived refugees and their relatives can choose where in Sweden they want to live, provided that they can find housing in that location. Previous studies have shown that this policy can create difficulties for the municipalities when it comes to providing housing, which, in turn, can negatively affect the integration process of newly arrived immigrants (Myrberg, 2017). Interviewees in our study explained that when newly arrived immigrants come to bigger cities, they are likely to end up in what is commonly referred to as vulnerable neighbourhoods, not least because the waiting list for an apartment is the shortest here. Thus, newly arrived immigrants first live in these neighbourhoods, and might only later move to another area. This means that the integration of newly arrived immigrants is often deemed to start and intensify in these vulnerable neighbourhoods (see Grander et al., 2022). The interviewees in this study told us that this is a challenge, for example, in the local schools, where there is a constant flow of new students, which implies that proficiency in the Swedish language can vary greatly among the students.

As we shall see further, MHCs often play an active role in these neighbourhoods in various ways. Over time, Swedish municipal housing

corporations have expanded their services and activities directed towards their tenants’ integration. They help them to find jobs, help out in schools, and organise activities for children and young people. As previous studies have shown that, in practice, integration activities are often connected to housing, employment, and other social activities (Brorström & Diedrich, 2022), the municipal housing corporations frequently play an important role in integration processes and are an important early contact with Swedish society for the immigrants. What differs is that while other integration projects are usually directed towards a specific group of immigrants that need support (e.g. see the validation of foreign skills project described by Diedrich (2013), the “Together for jobs and integration” project explored by Brorström and Diedrich (2022), or the other integration projects described in this volume), the housing corporations in our case target all their tenants in that specific neighbourhood, immigrants and natives alike. However, in practice, as about 50% of the citizens in the neighbourhoods studied are foreign born¹ (City of Gothenburg, 2022), this support to a large degree tends to involve immigrants. One of the interviewees told us that about 97 different nationalities are represented in one of the neighbourhoods studied, and that the segregation does not only involve issues between the natives and the foreign born but is much more complicated than that.

In this chapter, we describe how the housing corporations’ attempts to support the integration of immigrants unfold in practice and how these efforts relate to other activities in vulnerable neighbourhoods. Here, we attempt to discuss this based on interviews with employees at housing corporations, both private and municipal, which operate in two vulnerable neighbourhoods in the city of Gothenburg.

The reason we chose to study Gothenburg is that in its annual budget in 2020, the city council mandated the MHC Framtiden AB to work towards “social inclusion” in the six neighbourhoods of the city that appeared on the police force’s list of vulnerable neighbourhoods. Such neighbourhoods are characterised by low socioeconomic status and a high impact of crime on the local community. People living in these

¹ This number is substantially higher if people born in Sweden but with two parents from another country are included.

neighbourhoods are affected negatively, either directly by crime, or indirectly by insecurity and fear. In 2019, about 500,000 people lived in such neighbourhoods around Sweden, and approximately 1% of them were involved in criminal networks (Hallin & Westerdahl, 2020). The budgetary goals established by the city of Gothenburg stipulated the removal of all these six areas from the list before the end of 2025. However, such attempts to break down segregation have been practised in Swedish cities for a long time, and it has repeatedly been questioned whether segregation can indeed be resolved by policies (Andersson, 2006). Nevertheless, the attempts to solve these problems have been reinforced.

Data Collection

MHC Framtiden consists of a parent company and eight subsidiaries: one development company, five municipal housing companies that own a large share of the building stock in the neighbourhoods, one company that manages public spaces, and one company to manage disturbances within the neighbourhoods. The Framtiden corporation and its subsidiaries belong to what are known as municipally owned corporations (MOCs); these are organisations with an independent corporate status, managed by an executive board appointed by the local government (Voorn, 2022). In Gothenburg, the Framtiden parent company, with its newly appointed chief executive officer (CEO), took the lead and developed a strategy to achieve this ambitious goal of removing all the targeted neighbourhoods from the police force's list before the end of 2025. The strategy document states that Framtiden is to invest about 11 billion Swedish kronor in this project, of which 7 billion are earmarked for new developments and renovations and 4 billion for various projects intended to improve the neighbourhoods. It is argued that removing these neighbourhoods from the list will require new, innovative ways of working, and new forms of collaboration between public, private, and non-profit organisations. The challenges in these areas need to be addressed jointly, across organisational boundaries. If this is done in the right way, all the actors involved will benefit, meaning something of a win-win-situation.

As the year 2025 is still in the future, we focus on the initial phase of these attempts to work and collaborate in new ways.

Our fieldwork was conducted mainly in two neighbourhoods in Gothenburg where private and public housing corporations operate and collaborate with each other, as well as with other actors. In one, a Business Improvement District (BID) organisation has been created and tasked with focusing on the future of the neighbourhood, a goal that goes hand in hand with the work initiated by Framtiden. We have observed three meetings of these collaborating organisations, at which both private and municipal housing corporations were represented as well as local businesses, the police, and the city administration.

A collaborative project was also initiated in the other neighbourhood, with a more clearly defined aim to develop the city in the form of building new housing as well as renovation work, with both private and public organisations engaged. It became clear early on, however, that various social projects were also important in this project. One that was frequently mentioned was the importance of improving the results of the local school, as a good school was often seen as a pre-condition for people who wanted to buy an apartment or house. Our interviewees told us that at some local schools, the number of students who leave with any qualifications is as low as 30%, a situation that is described as catastrophic. We also observed three meetings within the second collaborative project, which helped us to understand the ongoing discussions, and thus formulate questions for the interviews.

In total, we conducted 24 interviews with the representatives of the BID organisation and employees at both private and municipal housing corporations involved in the two collaborations. Further, we interviewed representatives at the headquarters of Framtiden AB to better understand their strategy and the ways they intended to put it into practice. Due to the pandemic, many of the interviews took place through Teams, usually lasting for about one hour. We analysed field notes from observations and transcripts of interviews to identify ways in which the MHCs were expected to work, and the ways these ideas were translated into concrete activities. Our analysis also relied on previous studies, which we present in the next section.

The Role of Municipal Housing Corporations for Integration

The MHCs are a prominent example of municipally owned corporations (MOCs) in Sweden. Such corporations are described as “organizations that have independent corporate status, are majority-owned by municipalities, and typically have extensive legal and managerial autonomy” (Voorn, 2022, p. 2). This autonomy is one reason for their popularity, as it is believed to increase efficiency (Krause & Thiel, 2019). Yet previous research has also expressed concerns about the absence of public values in MOCs and claimed that it must not be taken for granted that MOCs fulfil the municipality’s objectives (Bourdeaux, 2007; Genugten, 2020). Still, the number of MOCs has increased in many countries (Voorn, 2022); in Sweden from 250 in 1965 to 1750 in 2015 (Bergh et al., 2019).

Sweden does not have a social housing system. Instead, MHCs have a duty to provide rental apartments for everybody (Emilsson & Öberg, 2022). They are also seen as important tools to create inclusiveness in cities (Grander, 2017), as they are often engaged in social activities and projects, such as sports activities, helping young people with their homework and providing internships and summer jobs (Grander et al., 2022). But the role of the MHCs is changing, as the 2011 legislation stated that municipal housing corporations are to be “business-like” and to meet profit margins decided by the politicians (Westerdahl, 2021). They are to compete on the same market as private real estate companies, but retain the responsibility for providing affordable housing for citizens. In other words, while actions carried out by the MHCs must be economically justified, their social responsibility objectives remain in place (Grander, 2017). This “hybrid logic” has raised the question of whether MHCs can in fact uphold their social responsibility over time. Hybrid organisations are usually defined as organisations operating at the intersection of the market and the public sector (e.g. see Grossi & Thomasson, 2015), which means that they must take both market and democracy logics into account when acting. They thus have an inbuilt ambiguity that must be addressed in practice (Thomasson, 2009), which makes managing hybrid organisations such as an MHC a notable challenge.

Grander (2017) found three kinds of actions typical for the MHCs that featured in his study. The first consists of establishing a good relationship between the landlords and the tenants, the second consists of projects that help the tenants in various ways, and the third is about establishing housing in general. Grander did not find any signals of decreased social responsibility after the change in legislation; yet another shift—a market adaptation—was identified. Furthermore, a fair amount of scepticism has been levelled at projects focused on strengthening the self-esteem of individuals, and on making improvements for individual households, as they put the responsibility on the individuals (Grander et al., 2022).

The activities undertaken in the vulnerable neighbourhoods are also based on the idea of a shared responsibility for the collaboration across organisational boundaries. After all, integration can be regarded as a wicked problem (Brorström & Diedrich, 2022), which may be impossible to solve, and there is neither one right answer, nor one right solution, but action is required nevertheless (Bebbington & Larrinaga, 2014; Burns & Jollands, 2020).

Scholars have argued that tackling such complex problems demands a bottom-up approach, rather than the usual top-down defining of common goals (Sachs, 2012). Bryson et al. (2021), for example, argued that working together towards creating the common good places high demands on the organisations involved to link their aspirations and capabilities, and in particular on the leadership that transcends organisational boundaries. Kania and Kramer (2011) identified five conditions necessary to achieve a collective impact: a common goal, a shared measurements system, mutually reinforcing activities, frequent and structured communications, and a “backbone” organisation supporting the actions taken. After all, it is well known that co-production is essential for achieving the common good (Ostrom, 1975; Osborne et al., 2013).

The Roles Played by Housing Corporations

As mentioned earlier, in their annual budget for 2020, the city council of Gothenburg commissioned Framtiden to come up with ways to remove the six areas in the city currently on the police list of vulnerable areas. In response, Framtiden quickly drafted and adopted a strategic document with the ambitious goal of achieving this before the end of 2025. Many of our interviewees discussed the strategy in detail, and the very fact that the politicians chose the housing sector as the means to achieve the necessary change. They also described the complex challenges that needed to be tackled. There was not one specific solution to the variety of problems, but many people suggested that the keys were education and employment. Not that improving those two areas would be easy; becoming employable would require the individuals in question to possess a relevant education and Swedish language skills (more on this in Chap. 10), and to abstain from criminal activities. It also opened up a variety of opportunities for activities that could be organised by MHCs to make people employable, while the very complexity of the problems meant that no action would be wrong. The Framtiden corporation was therefore able to run several different employment-promoting projects through its subsidiaries and also to employ people from the vulnerable neighbourhoods in their own organisation. One example is the summer jobs provided to young adults in the neighbourhoods as a means to give them work experience, which was described as important for the opportunity to find another job in the future.

One of our interviewees explained that the MHCs' role differed from that played by the rest of the municipal organisation, including the municipal departments. The MHCs were free within the boundaries of their task to work with different projects of their choice, while the other organisations did not have the same opportunities. This freedom led our interviewees to describe the MHCs as frontline organisations, which "took the lead" and worked differently towards integration and inclusion. At the same time, however, they acknowledged that even though the MHCs had the freedom to initiate projects aimed at supporting people into employment and improving local schools, for example, other

organisations were formally responsible for these activities, and collaboration was indeed necessary. One of our interviewees argued that this was a good thing, but also something of a “cowboy solution”:

Let’s be clear, this is about using a housing corporation (Framtiden) to charge in to solve the biggest social challenge the city has. That is a cowboy solution, but a good one, and innovative. But it might say something.

More precisely, what this says about the municipal organisations is left unsaid, or rather left hanging in the air. An example where Framtiden is “taking the lead” is related to the challenge, brought up by many of those interviewed, of what happens after school hours. There is an intention, and a will, to keep children in school and busy doing activities such as sports. In Sweden, children up to 13 years old have the right to after-school activities (fritids) when their parents are working or studying. In these neighbourhoods, however, the levels of unemployment are so high that most children do not have this right. Therefore, other solutions are sought. One such solution is what Framtiden referred to as “Lights on”, a project that will keep the schools open after school hours. Coordinators for this project are employed to work in the schools and are funded by Framtiden. Some of our interviewees had only positive things to say about the fact that Framtiden was “taking the lead” and making these investments and implied that there is now a need for others to follow. As one of the interviewees from the school department said: “Framtiden invests 11 billion. It’s unthinkable that we can just sit here without also making an investment, and not only financially; we need a plan”. At the same time, other interviewees cautioned that the investment by Framtiden might result in others taking a step back when Framtiden steps forward.

Doing Good and Being Business-like

How to balance the “doing good” with being business-like was something that might have been seen as a challenge beforehand. However, when our interviewees from the housing corporations, both private and public, talked about this balancing of values, it was described as not being

a problem at all because, put simply, what is good for business is also good for the people living there. Similarly—and this is what the organisers referred to above as “tough love”—MHC representatives defended imposing tougher conditions for rental apartment contracts as being “in their (the tenants’) best interest”. Thus, even though the double requirement of reaching financial goals and social sustainability looked difficult on paper, it seemed to give a certain freedom to the practitioners. And being innovative and seeking new solutions came with a boldness that the interviewees described in the following way: it is better to ask for forgiveness afterwards than to ask permission before taking action. This attitude might be one explanation as to why the responsibility to change these neighbourhoods was given to the MHC in the first place. However, taking action and finding solutions was more difficult in some respects than in others. One interviewee gives an example:

The difficult part is about zero tolerance of criminality (which is stated in the strategy); it is super difficult and consists of two different parts. One is about what we can do, in terms of evicting people. The other part is about things like riding mopeds unlawfully; how does that affect the feeling of safety in the neighbourhood? It might never lead to a trial, but we still need to set boundaries.

The example above illustrates an important challenge for the MHCs: how to manage issues for which they do not have a mandate or formal responsibility. These issues usually needed to be managed in collaboration with other actors. We were told that tenants “need to behave” in order to be able to keep their rental contracts. And the interviewees explained that if they were to remove “difficult” tenants, this could create ripple effects, as other tenants would become intimidated by the prospect of losing their contracts and would try their best to adhere to what they deemed to be the proper behaviour. This also gives the housing corporations an educational role. This educational role is interesting from an integration perspective and, as the interviewees pointed out, is a role they are increasingly playing as other societal institutions step away. Many interviewees talked about how these areas are being emptied of social institutions, but one that remains in these neighbourhoods are the

housing corporations. The question is whether they are prepared to play this role. Do they have the competence required? The MHCs might “step in”, yet they are not formally responsible for integration measures. For example, a private housing corporation may employ people to work in the school, yet schools are not their responsibility, and they cannot be held accountable for what goes on there. Nevertheless, the MHCs are involved in many activities to improve the neighbourhoods.

Activities to Improve the Neighbourhoods

Most interviewees shared with us their belief that the goal of removing the neighbourhoods from the police list cannot possibly be met by 2025; it is simply too soon. Nevertheless, they saw the high ambition as positive, as it has symbolic importance that signals courage and the urgency and need to act immediately. In addition to the aforementioned projects aimed at employment and improving school results, investments were made in a lot of other micro-activities. One interviewee from a private housing corporation said that they were currently investing in

a lot of lighting, to try to make [the neighbourhood] brighter with LED lights, to make the lights good and effective, and to remove dark zones. And there is a lot of work going on with pruning trees and bushes. Taking bushes down means that there are no places to hide, if you know what I mean.

Some of the interviewees mentioned the “broken window” method, which means quickly fixing what is broken and, apart from literally fixing broken windows, cleaning graffiti and painting stairwells. One interviewee from a private housing corporation explained this attitude:

Mess creates mess, that’s the way it is. (...) In other words, if there isn’t any garbage on the ground, then you don’t throw garbage on the ground. That’s how it works, and we work a lot with that. That’s a challenge in these neighbourhoods (...) we can never stop; yes, it’s costly to repair broken windows, but we must do it.

In order to know what needs to be repaired, and also create safer neighbourhoods, private and municipal housing corporations collaborate by employing security hosts. Such hosts are expected to report if they see something that needs repairing, as what needs to be fixed is not necessarily reported through the formal system. Those working as security hosts often live in the neighbourhoods and are therefore well known in the community. The interviewees stressed, however, that these hosts must not interfere if they see a crime taking place, or report specific individuals. They must be able to work without being threatened, and they are not part of the police force.

Even though the security hosts are often residents from the areas in question, they are not the ones who decide what kind of investments are needed. One manager argued that, in fact, those who do decide on this do not represent people living in the area:

So, although we leave the area at four thirty, we make decisions about it... We need to realise that, and always think about what is important for the people actually living here. Yet when we have meetings with the tenants, not many of them come. They are probably thinking: "Why should I waste time at this meeting? My issues are not going to be discussed anyway". We really need to find better ways to listen.

One of the interviewees gave an example of soccer fields: if there is a request for a new soccer field, the answer from the housing corporations might be that there is already one in the neighbourhood. Yet the existing soccer field might not be available for many of the young people because of local segregation, preventing different groups of younger people from mixing. Thus, an additional soccer field might be needed. As the interviewee said, "If we are not listening carefully enough, then the tenants do not feel they are being taken seriously".

Another example discussed by the interviewees was the general assumption that the residents of these neighbourhoods do not feel safe. Even when they say that they do feel safe, MHC employees and other nonresidents assume that this is incorrect: "No, you can't feel safe here". However, as mentioned in the quote earlier, it is difficult for an MHC employee to

fully understand tenants' experiences as most of them leave in the afternoon, and only come back the next morning.

Tackling Wicked Problems: Step by Step and in Collaboration

The interviewees all agreed on the importance of collaboration when trying to tackle challenges in the neighbourhoods. An interviewee from a private housing corporation said the following:

It is great that we have this collaboration [with the MHC]; we all know what we are working towards, and we all share the same challenge, even though we might have a different number of apartments here. We share our ideas and solutions, and through collaborating we also get a great network with different kind of actors.

If they act together, they become stronger—not only towards the tenants but also towards other actors with whom they want to communicate and collaborate. Our interviewees acknowledged that there is a risk that collaborations are developed without involving the people living in the area. At the same time, some interviewees from the MHC told us stories of how they have done this in the right way by involving the tenants, and how well this has turned out. One story was about involving children from the local school in the rebuilding of a public square, and how this aroused the interest of the local community. According to the narrator, this also prevented any future damage and interference at the construction site, a win-win situation. Other interviewees made it clear that other initiatives to include the tenants in the business operations of the MHCs often ran into difficulties as they struggled to attract the tenants' interest. One interviewee said self-critically:

They want information. And we give them information through monthly letters. But we cannot only tell them what they should or should not do without giving them a lot of information. We could do better.

There seems to be a willingness among housing company representatives to get closer to the tenants, and to support their integration, but at the same time, these efforts often seem to go hand in hand with a frustration caused by the difficulties in reaching and communicating with them. The new strategy permits the employment of more people within professions that are new, at least within a housing corporation, and there is a belief that this will improve the challenges with regard to segregation and integration, as the practitioners will have more tools and professional skills for reaching out to the tenants, and especially the many immigrants among them.

The interviews and the observations revealed the “wickedness” of the challenges, as various ways of solving problems can often lead to the emergence of other problems, that in turn need solving. An interesting example was brought up during one interview. The collaborating housing companies had agreed to lock the basements in their facilities at a certain time in the afternoon each day to curb drug dealing and stop people simply hanging around there. When all the collaborating partners agreed on this, basements remained closed at night, and drug dealing stopped there. This, however, did not mean the sale of drugs in the neighbourhood stopped. They were simply sold elsewhere in the vicinity. As another interviewee put it, the drug dealers “went down the slope to another area”. Quite often a solution that seems reasonable does not really solve the problem, but simply moves it elsewhere. Yet one of our interviewees claimed that each time they moved a problem, it seemed to become smaller. This, they argued, was an effective way of tackling the problems at hand, even though they never entirely disappeared.

Finally, do all the activities make it easier to get closer to the goal of removing the areas from the police list before the year 2025? It is hard to know and difficult to measure. It also seems that there is a gap between professions as to how to evaluate this; people in the headquarters of housing corporations are interested in the overall statistics, while the people working on the ground, close to the people living there, are not. One interviewee echoed this sentiment by saying that people can never be (only) numbers and projects, and even if a project only attracts one person, it can still be regarded as successful—for that person. And if that single person is saved from a life of crime, that might save society a large amount of money over time. Such results tend, however, to disappear in the overall statistics.

Discussion and Conclusions

So, what is the role played by the MHCs in the process of integration of immigrants living in vulnerable areas in a Swedish city? As the employees work close to the people living in the vulnerable neighbourhoods, it can be claimed that, from an integration perspective, they have a frontline role, not unlike Lipsky's (2010) street-level bureaucrats. It needs to be remembered, however, that what is seen as good for integration is also often seen as good from a business perspective. So far, balancing these two perspectives in practice has seemed unproblematic, perhaps because there seems to be a shared idea of what the challenges and problems are. This shared understanding resulted in attempts to link aspirations and capabilities (Kania & Kramer, 2011), which often took the form of networks and collaborations, for example within the aforementioned BID organisation. During our study we noticed a shared interest among organisations to collaborate across boundaries. Yet the organisations involved have different tasks and interests, which might over time create a mission drift for the collaboration (Brorström & Styhre, 2021). Managing such forms of collaboration thus remains a challenge, and here leadership aspects may become crucial (Bryson et al., 2021). The interviews illustrated that there is a common understanding of the challenges shared by the employees at the private and municipal housing corporations, but this does not include the voices of the tenants, and in particular the newly arrived immigrants living in these neighbourhoods. Making a meaningful effort to include these voices, in the words of one of the interviewees to "truly listen", and to become better at co-producing are considered necessary for creating the common good (Osborne et al., 2013). Including tenants in decision-making processes is a challenge, however.

The MHCs aim of "doing good" while being "business-like" gives them an interesting hybrid role (Thomasson, 2009; Westerdahl, 2021) in integration processes, requiring them in practice to act both in the best interest of the public and in a financially sound manner. This did not

seem to be a problem for the interviewees, but rather a circumstance that allows for all kinds of action. Yet over time this might create a tension between what is good for the neighbourhoods and the people living here in the short run, and what is good in the long run (Brorström, 2021), as it is difficult to know if all the various projects and activities will bring them closer to their overarching goal of removing the vulnerable neighbourhoods from the police list before 2025. It is important to add that, even though the MHCs are afforded the capacity to act, they do not have formal responsibility for all the kinds of organising activities they undertake in practice. This leads to the question of whether this can become an accountability problem in the future. This is likely to be a common problem when tackling challenges as part of collaboration. It may seem obvious that all the actors involved need to assume responsibility, yet formally there may be differences with regard to how and where such responsibility is attributed, which could lead to tensions in the future. In our study, however, the interviewees did not see this as a problem. Instead, they emphasised the need for courageous actions. The representatives of the MHCs described themselves as the ones “taking the lead”, but their ambition to establish responsibility, as well as the strong focus on action, may homogenise the tenants and their needs, when they are in fact heterogeneous. It might be the effect of the fact that the actions at this point are managed top-down, rather than bottom-up, which might be required in the future (Sachs, 2012), if the ambitious goals are to be achieved. This also means that the ways used to include the tenants need to be highlighted and discussed.

Finally, we argue here that the MHCs have a crucial role in the integration process, as for many new arrivals the municipal housing corporations are one of the first and most important points of contact with the Swedish society (see also Brorström & Diedrich, 2022). In this specific case, as the target group for the housing corporations consists of all tenants, the actions thus become intertwined with other issues. However, the housing corporations are afforded much power in the context of the integration of immigrants into Swedish society through the tool of housing and offering immigrants a place to live. As they seem willing to help their tenants—both for the tenants’ sake and for their own economic and financial sake—this means that, for the time being, societal and

economic/financial goals go hand in hand. Yet they also seem to be aware of the need to manage the relations with the tenants more carefully, mainly through listening, communicating, and the creation of common interests. While this is usually seen in a positive light, such forms of organising may also give rise to new challenges, for example, related to the formal accountability.

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Part II

Integration, Translation and Change



5

Procuring for Labour Market Integration

Emma Ek Österberg and Patrik Zapata

The topic of this chapter is a local translation of an international practice and specifically a Swedish translation of EU policy and similar transnational ideas. The practice in question is known as Employment Promoting Procurement (EPP), which is increasingly being used by Swedish municipalities in their work to support the labour market integration of immigrants, and to which ever higher expectations are attached.

EPP has spread rapidly across the Swedish and European municipal sectors in recent years. Public purchases, amounting in Sweden to about SEK 800 billion (EUR 80 billion) annually, are to a growing extent seen locally as an instrument to achieve social aims (The Swedish National Agency for Public Procurement, SNPA, 2020). In this context, EPP means that suppliers of goods and services to a public organisation¹ are

¹ Municipalities are in focus in this chapter.

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required to employ one or more persons who are unemployed or facing barriers in the labour market. For immigrants in the target group, this means an opportunity for jobs they would not otherwise have access to, due to various barriers such as discriminatory recruitment processes, a lack of validated work experience or lack of networks. Through EPP, public contracts have the potential to open a shortcut to employment.

Such use of public contracts is by no means new. Public investments in infrastructure, building projects and other enterprises have long been used to tackle rises in unemployment and market recessions, and to address the needs of specific groups of workers (McCrudden, 2004). Within the EU, the conditions for such political undertakings changed fundamentally with the application of the EU Procurement Directive, which placed the principles of the internal market at the heart of public procurement. In this context, local issues—such as supporting local business communities or creating jobs locally—become problematic. Contemporary EPP must be formed according to this change in the organising principle which means new ways of working locally. Furthermore, the volume of municipal procurement is steadily increasing and with it, the perceived potential to provide social exchange on purchases (Grandia, 2018). The pressure on municipalities to apply EPP and other forms of socially responsible procurement is increasing, due to a strengthened state governance and growth in the number of networks that drive local development work. Such perceived potential is also a part of how EPP is presented and spread over the field of public organising by both policymakers and researchers.

We see EPP as an organisational device used by municipalities in their work to support labour market integration locally. Municipalities in Sweden have always had a key role in labour market integration—not only of immigrants but also of other residents facing barriers in the labour market. Yet in 2010, the responsibility for a two-year establishment programme for newly arrived immigrants was transferred from the municipalities to the Swedish Public Employment Service (SPES). Since then, the municipalities no longer offer programmes for labour market integration specifically aimed at immigrants. Further, since the 1990s, an important principle in Swedish integration policy has been that special measures should be avoided and that immigrants should take part in general labour

market initiatives and have access to the same general welfare as others (the establishment programme for newly arrived immigrants is seen by the national government as a justified exception). EPP follows this principle: the device is assembled and operated locally, at the intersection of labour market policy, social policy, local business policy and sustainable development plans. Its aim is to support individuals who face barriers in the labour market.

While immigrants have been overrepresented in this group for the last few decades, the extent to which they benefit from employment created through procurement is an open question. In this chapter, we address this question by critically exploring conditions for procurement operations, as well as local translations of the EPP idea. Indeed, there are several organisational steps in making these far-reaching ambitions feasible. These steps are essential to the outcome of the process and to the understanding of how, when, and why employment requirements in procurement organise labour market integration, and for whom.

5.1 Integration Policy, Public Organisations, and Public Procurement

Swedish integration policy has long emphasised the importance of municipalities being able to involve local business communities and civil society organisations in joint work for labour market integration of the immigrant population (e.g. Swedish Government 1997, 2009). Not only is such collaboration needed for the emergence of novel, locally adapted initiatives; it is also a prerequisite for various employment-promoting measures (such as workplace training, apprenticeships, or on-the-job language training) and other interventions through which national and local integration policies are implemented. The ability to involve collaborative partners and potential employers has become even more important, as early matching and the acceleration in labour market establishment are increasingly being emphasised, while in-house public work training programmes are declining. Local public actors, not least the municipalities, apply a variety of strategies to attract private actors into

local partnerships, while several state agencies stimulate and support such initiatives, through financial support and knowledge dissemination.

Inspired by transnational ideas and EU policy for *socially responsible public procurement*, one such strategy has been to develop local EPP models. Municipalities in Sweden and elsewhere present these models as novel devices that offer a unique opportunity to involve (or, rather, require the participation of) private companies in labour market integration, as business partners and suppliers to the public. They entail new arenas for matching between contractually required employment opportunities and individuals from prioritised target groups, to which the immigrants belong.

While public contracts can potentially offer opportunities for immigrants to find employment, there are also restrictions on the use of the device, based on the extensive regulations that govern the public procurement practices in far more detail than the regime for private companies. The Public Procurement Act (LOU) and its sister laws (LUF, LUF5, LUK) are based on EU Procurement Directives, and contain detailed rules for the procurement process, together with requirements for all public (and semi-public) organisations to live up to the common principles of the internal market.

In practice, several obstacles have arisen in the wake of this market creation: too extensive and unmanageable regulations, cumbersome administrative procurement procedures and unnecessarily defensive and formalistic contracting organisations, to mention just a few of the perceived problems. To sum up: too much focus on compliance to the law and too little on the actual goal of the procurement.

Several measures have been taken to address these problems in recent years. The procurement directive from 2014 opened the way for legislation to be revised and opted to include further investments in sustainability perspectives. In Sweden, a new agency, the SNPA, was formed, with the task of supporting development work. At the same time, the government launched a national strategy that clarified goals and provided direction to the development work. New ideas and ways of working are being tested and spread through networks (such as the SNPA's "Ambassador Network for Employment Promoting Procurement") and more or less formalised collaborations.

EPP is one of these, but there are plenty of others, such as circular economy procurement, climate-considerate procurement, innovation procurement and green procurement. What these models have in common is that they offer methods for how various goals (most often flagged as “sustainable”) can be integrated in a procurement context (most often gathered under the umbrella of “Sustainable Procurement”).

The EPP is based on the same rationale as all the others, namely that society should use public demand as a lever for sustainability transitions. There are however many ways of doing this in practice, and the different perspectives even risk crowding each other out. As contracting organisations can support the development of the circular economy, promote gender equality, participate in labour market integration, contribute to ethical trade, promote a non-toxic environment, and many more such options, choices must be made about how to assemble and use the device in practice.

5.2 Using Procurement to Promote Employment

One could say that as societal problems are complex, many novel ideas are needed to solve them. There are many labour market tools in Sweden. But when it comes to procurement, it has not been used as a strategic tool in the same way as in other countries. In Paris, for instance, they created 34,000 jobs in a year through procurement alone. And in Barcelona, they make social demands, employment promoting demands, in 80 per cent of the procurements. We are not even close to this in Sweden. And think about all the billions we spend ... so there is huge potential, and we will miss it if we don't do something soon. (Interview, public procurement officer)

As pointed out by the interviewee, “there is huge potential”—a recurring description of the exalted expectations that justify, and bring resources to, the extensive development work at the local level—in Gothenburg and in many other municipalities across the EU. It is easy to see why. The idea of procurement as a labour market-integrating device is

both clear and easy to understand, and thus perceived as attractive. Swedish public procurements amount to more than SEK 800 billion each year (about EUR 80 billion), almost one-fifth of Sweden's GDP. If only a fraction were used to help those who face barriers in the labour market, much could be gained—by individuals and by society.

Employment requirements can be used in public purchases of all types of goods and services: construction work, cleaning services, food, IT systems and support, office supplies, elderly care services or management consulting. This means that while companies supply these goods and services to the public sector, during the contract period they are also required to employ one or more individuals from a particular target group (or at least investigate the possibilities of doing so). The details are negotiated for each contract. Thus, doing business with the public sector becomes conditional on labour market integration efforts. From the perspective of the public sector, the potential of involving private firms that would not otherwise take part in joint employment promoting work is significant.

As a device for labour market integration, procurement not only offers unique opportunities to exploit various business relations for social aims but also entails quite a few challenges. The procurement regulation is designed *to prevent* local business relations from being considered, as its primary purpose is the realisation of the European internal market. A municipality in Sweden can, therefore, not require from providers anything that may restrict the opportunity for companies to compete on equal terms. Furthermore, decisions must be made as to whether other horizontal or secondary objectives are to be included beyond employment and how these can be specified to fit the procurement context (Arrowsmith, 2010).

Devices are not neutral instruments; how they are used shapes the substance of policy in decisive ways. In what follows, we draw on one of the many models that have been developed to enable EPP as an illustration of such local translation. *Social hänsyn i upphandling* (Social Considerations in Procurement) is a device that has been assembled in Gothenburg.

5.3 Social Considerations in Procurement: A Gothenburg Version

Social Considerations in Procurement is a local device developed by the City of Gothenburg that shows how to use employment requirements in procurements, with immigrants as one of the prioritised target groups. It started as a pilot project in 2012 and has gradually become an organisational device which includes a Support Function that facilitates the use of the device by city administrative bodies and companies responsible for procurements in their respective areas, and a Process Description intended to guide action in individual procurements.

The device guides users to introduce actions and choices concerning issues related to employment in the various stages of the procurement process, from early planning to contractual follow-up. The Support Function organises these activities in relation to the responsible purchasing units, for example, suggesting when and how employment requirements can (and should) be set. These suggestions are formulated based on such factors as which industries are assumed suitable, what competences are present in the target group, the size of the contracts, the other potential sustainability requirements, and so forth. The Support Function also offers support to employers by including matchable candidates to assignments and helping to apply for wage subsidies and the like.

The Support Function is based in the Purchasing and Procurement Department, which, together with the Labour Market Administration Department, is responsible for the device's development and implementation. The Function is staffed by two officers, with one focusing on procurement support and the other on the matching/recruitment support. They work in close collaboration, as knowledge of the target group is necessary to prioritise procurements and to formulate requirements and vice versa.

The Process Description element of the device explains how the work is to be carried out in practice, beginning with the analysis of whether employment requirements are appropriate or not, and ending with the selection of suitable candidates in the target group. As employment requirements are contractually based, they entail a mutual obligation.

While the provider is contractually obliged to offer employment to individuals from a particular target group during the contract period, the municipality is obliged to offer suitable candidates. In this way, an arena for matching is created which promotes the labour market integration and helps to develop recruitment support to suppliers to the municipal organisation.

Yet translating these relatively simple ideas into actions requires a rather substantial effort and organising. In Ek Österberg and Zapata (2023), we describe and analyse this kind of work in the City of Gothenburg. We identify four types of actions crucial for how the device was formed, developed, and used in labour market integration.

The first type of action was *prioritising*, by means of which both potential employees and contracts were narrowed down. In Gothenburg, the target group was limited to persons receiving municipal income support, with a special focus on immigrants, young people, and persons with disabilities. The job ready within this target group were specifically focused. An estimate repeatedly cited was that about 3000 of the 10,000 individuals with a long-term reliance on income support are “basically immediately job ready” which makes them “an appropriate recruitment base” (City of Gothenburg, 2015, p. 7). Criteria were also developed for the contracts to determine which would be suitable for employment requirements, such as contract size (preferably large contracts), and type of industry (preferably those with good working conditions).

The second type of action was *demanding*, which involved various techniques for setting employment requirements. This concerned both what demands should be set, and how they should be formulated in the *Special Conditions of Contract*. A dividing line runs between *strict* and *soft* requirements. Strict refers to the number of jobs, and soft to the requirement for a dialogue between the provider and the city about potential employment opportunities. The Gothenburg device initially focused on strict requirements, due to the city’s ambition to prioritise job-ready persons. In time, a stronger economy and declining unemployment rates changed the target group, and the focus accordingly shifted towards dialogue rather than strict requirements, and workplace training and apprenticeships rather than actual employment.

The third kind of action, *matching*, took place when jobs and candidates were brought together, partly by calibrating the fit (between the candidate and the job). To take an example, education could be used to calibrate individuals to the needs of a contractor, and assignments could be specified to match actual competences within the target group. These activities were, however, portrayed as being fairly uncomplicated. The idea was to copy to some degree the procedures of a regular recruitment process. Wage subsidies were not a starting point, but could be actualised as the process continued. The prospects of success in matching played a decisive role in the assessment of which contracts were to be seen as suitable for employment requirements. Thus, matching was also a kind of strategic and analytical activity that both considered the needs and competences of the target group, and took the recruitment needs of local businesses into account.

Early on, there was a consensus about the importance of investing in a special construction and civil engineering education, based on the vast majority of procurements concerned in this area, and that there was a clear need for more educated people in construction and civil engineering. (Final evaluation report, 2015, p. 10)

The fourth category of actions was *measuring and accounting*, by which we mean various attempts to follow up the outcomes and the ways in which these outcomes and social considerations in procurement in general were communicated. The number of procurements in which employment requirements were set and the number of jobs created was reported to the Support Function on an annual basis. After a few years, the purchasing units were also asked to report deviations, that is, procurements in which employment requirements had been set but without the involvement of the Support Function. These were seen as positive effects that had been missed in previous reporting. Other essential parts of the account were the perceived socioeconomic benefit, the calculations of socioeconomic effects and anecdotal evidence of success. Spreading the accounts and, thus, locally anchoring the device was an important part of the Support Function's work. Over time, activities shifted from mainly disseminating reports and calculations of the benefits of setting employment requirements to refining and broadening the uptake of the device.

The device of “Social Considerations in Procurement” as developed in Gothenburg is not unique; similar organisational devices have been designed in other municipalities. However, the Gothenburg officials were pioneers in Sweden, and their device is still considered by national agencies and networks involved in issues of EPP to be leading. It has been a source of inspiration for many other municipalities, and it greatly influenced the national model for employment requirement launched by the SNPA in 2018. Gothenburg has also been appointed one of the ambassadors in a network which aims to develop and disseminate knowledge about public procurement as a labour market device.

5.4 A Hampering Paradox, Shifting Towards Competence Supply and Effects

Despite recurring positive descriptions of the device’s local as well as national impact, our study raises some fundamental questions about procurement as an employment promoting device. There is no doubt that this approach and these ways of organising have spread across municipalities. Also, more employment requirements are set today than previously, in Gothenburg and elsewhere. New matching arenas have been created, whether they result in actual assignments, or in openings for dialogue about such. Still, how these arenas shape the meaning of labour market integration, and how they affect the opportunities for foreign born to benefit from the assignments created is far from clear.

5.4.1 Local Considerations in an International Context

The main implication of local EPP is that it creates an arena where the municipality can match individuals to jobs. This is done with the help of the purchasing power in public contracts. With various kinds of requirements in these contracts, providers of goods and services to the municipality become obliged to offer employment opportunities to individuals in need of assistance on the labour market. Yet several challenges arise from such “local translation”.

Following the EU principle of equal treatment of tenderers, employment requirements cannot be aimed at persons living in a particular municipality. Providers must have the opportunity to recruit any individual from the specified target group, whether these are municipal residents, residents of the neighbouring municipality, or of another country. This means that all jobs created through procurement in one local setting could benefit individuals from another local setting. This is a dilemma for the municipalities, as the device is intended to reduce local unemployment and municipal costs for income support. One way to resolve this dilemma is to encourage suppliers to use the matching service provided by the municipal Support Function when they fulfil their social obligations by offering employment. Making the service attractive to contractors, for example, by offering suitable candidates, is therefore important.

By taking control over the matching activities, the municipalities permit their own priorities to gain impact. In Gothenburg, municipal residents on income support were the main target group, a prioritisation that followed from the initiative being linked not only to goals of social sustainability, but also to financial goals of reducing the cost of income support. Furthermore, the immigrants, young people, and persons with disabilities were at an early stage pinpointed as a special priority in the matching activities, as these persons were seen to face barriers in the labour market. Foreign-born people on income support, especially if they are young, should, given these priorities, have a particularly good chance of receiving help through the model.

However, as the handling of these priorities in the actual matching activities was calibrated through the needs and wishes of the suppliers, they gained little importance in practice, not only because using the municipality's matching support in recruitment was an offer, not an obligation, but also because the municipality was anxious to create "good matches" by offering the best (most suitable) candidates.

5.4.2 The Shift Towards Competence Supply

EPP is promoted, by the SNPA among others, as a win-win-win situation where individuals, businesses, and society all benefit; there are no losers. It is carried by a social argument—the business community needs to take

action and collaborate for social responsibility—but even more by a competence supply argument: the device is a resource for matching and recruitment. It was this emphasis on the competence supply perspective in the rhetoric surrounding EPP that caught our attention. From a procurement perspective, a too burdensome list of requirements means a risk that businesses will refrain from tendering, which may lead to reduced competition. Alternatively, businesses may meet the requirements by increasing prices in their tenders. The final report of the national project emphasises these risks:

Employment requirements should not make it disproportionately difficult for small and medium sized enterprises to participate in a procurement. From a supplier perspective, the project is about pointing out that employment requirements are a good tool for competence supply. (SNPA, 2019, p. 3)

The risks were frequently discussed among the actors in the Gothenburg SNPA. While the officials working with the Support Function in Gothenburg maintained that there was no evidence that competition was hampered or prices in tenders rose, the challenge was to convince the purchasing units across the municipality of EPP's benefits and not see it as risky. The competence supply rhetoric was useful for that purpose.

In view of this shift towards the competence supply perspective, the needs of the individuals in the target group become subordinate to the goal of turning employment requirements into a “good device” for the employers. The foreign-born persons in the target group, who had specific competences needed by the local business community, had a good chance of benefiting from the device. The prospects for job-ready construction workers (foreign-born or not) of finding jobs through EPP in Gothenburg and other municipalities have been good—not because this group is in special need of support, but because their labour is needed. This priority has also meant in practice that men have benefited from the jobs created to a greater extent than women.

On the basis of our study, we cannot be sure if the recruitment's focus on the employer's needs benefits or disadvantages immigrants; such

statistics simply do not exist. However, the fact that the recruitment procedures are organised to resemble ordinary recruitment procedures raises questions based on what we know about the barriers that immigrants face in ordinary recruitment (Cheung et al., 2017). Creating competition between the candidates and allowing the employers to choose who they want to recruit may recreate the same barriers in these new matching arenas.

5.4.3 Effects and Calculated Benefits

The results of EPP appear to be good, judging from various project reports. The final report in Gothenburg from 2015 listed several positive effects. Those have since stabilised; in 2021, significantly more public contracts contained requirements for employment than before the model was launched. Similarly, in the final report of the national project from 2019, it is stated that “the project has developed *effective methods* in the form of a national model for applying employment promoting requirements in public procurement” (p. 28, our italics). It has been also concluded that the partners in the project over the years have “carried out hundreds of procurements with requirements for employment in various forms, which has also led to hundreds, if not thousands, of jobs and internships” (SNPA, 2019, p. 46).

Figures from a 2019 follow-up in Gothenburg also show that a considerable number of jobs have been created through requirements set in procurements. In 2019, 218 job vacancies were reported, most of them in the municipal housing companies. Of these 218 jobs, 140 are reported as deviations from the formalised model. This signals the existence of many local variants of the model in the city’s administrations and companies, which have found their own way to proceed with the task.

At the national level, the SNPA similarly reported positive employment effects. In connection with these, and to further support contracting authorities in their decision making, they offered a “socio-economic calculation model” for assessing the financial gains. The model was developed by a consulting firm. Here is an excerpt:

In a calculation example for a newly arrived individual who gets a job with employment support for twelve months in a public contract, it will be a profit at all levels. In the example, this employment leads to a profit for society of more than SEK 200,000. But everyone makes a profit: the state, the municipality, the region, the winning supplier, and the individual. If 100 newly arrived were to find employment through approximately the same conditions through public procurement, the economic effect on society in one year would be over SEK 20 million. This calculation model can be used to get an indication of the effect of setting employment requirements in procurement even before the procurement is carried out. It can also be used to follow up the effect of a completed procurement with requirements. (SNPA, 2019, p. 31)

The creators of the calculation model claim that there are extensive financial gains to be made, as exemplified by 100 newly arrived being employed. Attempts are currently underway in Gothenburg to calculate the profit of 75 real jobs created through procurement in 2021 by help of the SNPA calculator. While the figures produced are not undisputed, they are seen as a powerful way to show the positive effects and thus to communicate the model more successfully.

We do not really know who finds employment thanks to EPP because reporting and statistics are differentiated only by gender. We do know that significantly more men than women benefitted from the employment created through procurement, but not whether the immigrant population is overrepresented or underrepresented in this group. One reason that they may be overrepresented (or at least not underrepresented) is that they were pointed out as prioritised group. Furthermore, the focus was on the construction sector where procurements are large, and many immigrants may have benefited, as this is an industry that to a large extent employs people from that group. At the same time, because the EPP model is designed to promote employment not only to foreign born but to all unemployed individuals receiving municipal income support, the outcomes for foreign born will likely depend on the composition of the target group as a whole. As this composition changes over time and differs between contexts, there are no clear answers to that question (Lind Ravn et al., 2022).

All in all, EPP benefits the job-ready persons in industries where there is a demand for labour, and those whom the employers find suitable for

assignments. In this way, the device does facilitate matching at the local arena. By using the public contracts as a “door opener”, as one of the officers said, employers who would otherwise have used other recruitment channels are directed towards using the municipality’s matching support. The outcome on employment of the foreign born will depend largely on choices made by the municipal officials (Which procurements are chosen? What kind of requirements are set? Which candidates are selected?) as well as by the employers (How are recruitment processes organised? Which candidate is chosen?). As with many other initiatives for labour market integration, the EPP device is primarily intended for those with the best chances of establishing themselves on the labour market.

One potential effect, which is not discussed to any great extent locally but often pointed out in grey literature, is that public organisations can take the lead and influence other purchasers to take social responsibility. As of today, this effect can be seen in that employment requirements set by the public purchaser are transposed to contracts between contractors and subcontractors. What this means for labour market integration, and for the opportunities for immigrants to find a job, goes beyond what we have studied so far but is well worth investigating further.

5.5 A Device to Handle with Care

As pointed out at the beginning of this chapter, EPP is a municipal device used locally to support labour market integration. The main advantage of using procurements is, from the municipalities’ point of view, the fact that they create new arenas and engage the local business community in their roles as suppliers. While the device, in principle, equips the public purchaser with increasing governing capacity, it is largely practised with great consideration for the local businesses’ conditions and needs. At the same time, competition remains at the centre. As the municipality acts in the role of purchaser, requirements must not be perceived as too burdensome for potential tenderers.

There are no figures showing if immigrants benefit from the use of the device. In this chapter, we have shown that at least three conditions need to be met for this to happen: employment requirements must actually be set by procurers, that they result in actual jobs, and that foreign-born

persons are chosen for the jobs created. Fulfilling only the first of these conditions, which seems to be a common practice in municipalities, might focus priorities on requirement setting, leaving the aim of creating actual jobs through the procurement unanswered. Without follow-ups of the actual jobs created, the whole process becomes nothing more than an administrative procedure.

In the same way that existing models have taken shape, new ones can be re-created in the future. There may be a shift towards social aims, a re-definition of the target group, a re-orientation towards dialogue requirements and internships rather than real jobs, and whatever the municipalities want. The underlying aim of the pilot EPP model that we studied was to formalise it and make it into a model for the whole city.

One thing is certain: the notion of “procuring with social consideration” is an invitation to critical reflection on the performance of the procurement. Asking the question “are we procuring with social consideration?” or even “are we procuring with the social consideration we want?” can serve as a starting point for socially sustainable procurement. In practice, that would mean asking: Does organising by prioritising, demanding, matching, measuring, and accounting work as intended? If not, it will be necessary to reassemble the device.

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6

Emancipation Through Learning at Work: Work Cooperatives for “Unemployable” Immigrant Women

Maria Norbäck and María José Zapata Campos

Introduction

The so-called refugee crisis has revealed the centrality of civil society initiatives helping to build more inclusive societies in terms of housing, education and employment—to mention a few. The challenge presented by the need for social and economic inclusion of foreign-born citizens was accompanied in the last decade by a precarisation of work, and the development of new forms of underemployment such as work platforms, zero hours contracts and temporary work without precedents (Rubery, 2015; Kalleberg & Vallas, 2018; van Doorn & Vijay, 2021).

In this context, it was to be expected that the number of civil society initiatives addressing the challenges associated with migration, settlement, and employment would increase to move towards more inclusive societies (Norbäck & Zapata Campos, 2022). Swedish civil society

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organisations have since the mid-1990s experienced what has been named “a shift from advocacy to service delivery” (Wijkström, 2011). This shift paved the way for new forms of civil society organisations, such as economic associations and work cooperatives, which combine social goals with business models (Pestoff, 2011). Although these not-for-profit organisations usually sell some of their services on the open market (e.g. coffee shops, repair workshops, second-hand stores, and cleaning and gardening services), they also rely on partnerships with public organisations to which they can provide work training and other services. Yet some critics have warned that such civil society organisations can be exploited in the implementation of integration policies, as public organisations may lack knowledge and understanding of the difference between for-profit providers and these civil society organisations. Depending on the context, this exploitation of civil society organisations can result in what Aiken and Bode (2009) call “killing the golden goose” (p. 210); that is, turning non-profit organisations into mere market service providers can destroy the sought-after holistic value. This, in turn, may reduce the rich potential of these organisations to contribute to more inclusive societies.

If public organisations have sufficient knowledge of, and interest in, letting civil society organisations contribute their specific expertise and practices, however, civil society organisations can nurture more human and cooperative forms of organisation than traditional for-profit enterprises (Amin, 2009). They can also provide unique training opportunities for segregated groups, such as immigrant communities (Jones et al., 2019). However, such hybrid organisations will inevitably experience the tensions of combining a market logic with broad social goals (McLean et al., 2015). They can be seen either as an alternative to competitive capitalism or as a means of ameliorating its worst effects (Cato & Raffaelli, 2017). In the worst case, they can reproduce inequalities and social injustice. In the best case, they can develop alternative practices for organising the social and economic inclusion of individuals, which can be emancipatory (Chandra, 2017), by allowing individuals to escape the oppression of standardised methods of education and activation policies. Such more

inclusive and solidarity-focused forms of organising practised by cooperative civil society organisations may help to emancipate segregated and overlooked groups—for example, immigrant women far from the labour market—and provide a means to escape from the oppression of economic dependence or patriarchal structures.

In the Swedish setting, work cooperatives with an aim to create work for people distant from the labour market have existed for decades. These cooperatives traditionally targeted persons with psychological disabilities, or individuals with a history of criminality and drug abuse. Recently, some of these cooperatives have begun targeting other social groups, such as immigrants with low levels of language skills or lacking formal education, supporting them with language and work training. During the last decade, however, new organisations have also been created with a specialised profile and methods targeting specific categories of migrants, such as women far from the labour market with low levels of formal training and language skills.

Among the heterogeneous category of migrants, women experience the most arduous challenges (European Commission, 2018). Migrant women are usually at a higher risk of social exclusion and have fewer job opportunities, as well as family and childcare obligations that can hinder their integration into the labour market, their access to education or local language tuition (Anthias & Lazaridis, 2020). They were invisible for decades in most public policies, but the civil society organisations have started experimenting with new forms of organising women's social and economic inclusion, usually by combining education and work activities. One of the most well-known organisations in Sweden is Yalla Trappan, a women's work cooperative founded in the city of Malmö.

Informed by the study of alternative practices developed by the women's work cooperative Yalla Trappan, this chapter intends to show how these practices redefine traditional methods for organising the labour market integration of immigrant women with no previous work experience and very low levels of formal education and how they deliver not only jobs but also a sense of freedom, self-sufficiency, emancipation, and personal development.

The Pedagogy of the Oppressed and Affective Solidarity

In this chapter, we will draw on the ideas of the Brazilian philosopher and educator Paulo Freire, specifically his writings on the pedagogy of the oppressed, and ideas of affective solidarity put forward by feminist scholars. Freire's ideas of emancipation and education were based on the experience of ineffective, albeit well-meant, techniques of literacy training in Latin America in the 1980s. In his opinion, these techniques were disconnected from the experience of the learners and reproduced Eurocentric and paternalistic models. Freire suggested an alternative “emancipatory education”—a pathway to individual and collective consciousness raising and empowerment of marginalised groups. The basis for such emancipatory education was a cultural interaction between educators and students, achieved through dialogue and co-production of knowledge (Freire, 1985, 1993). It would facilitate critical thinking that brings awareness about the oppressive structures nurturing counter-hegemonic discourses, help to celebrate marginalised social spaces, and depart from the knowledge that individuals bear with them to the learning spaces (Melo, 2019). The emancipatory education is place-situated and open-ended, but such interventions usually take place outside official sites, such as low-income and economically poor neighbourhoods, such as the place where Yalla Trappan was born.

Women's emancipation is also linked to solidarity. Hemmings (2012, p. 148) uses the concept “affective solidarity” and describes it as drawing on a broad range of affects, such as “rage, frustration and the desire for connection” that are “necessary for sustainable feminist politics of transformation”. Affective solidarity is in this way a concept that can help feminist scholars and activists to focus on “the modes of engagement that start from the affective dissonance that feminist politics necessarily begins from”. Within feminist circles, the idea of affective solidarity has been proposed as a way to practise a feminism that is not only aiming at societal and structural change, but that is doing so by highlighting the ethics of solidarity. Vachhani and Pullen (2019, p. 23) call this an “ethico-politics” of feminist resistance and argue that it is a way to move away

from individualised experiences of inequality. Instead, to conceptualise feminist resistance as an inherent collective resistance is to highlight and put forward the organising of solidarity that takes place when discrimination and sexism is being confronted and resisted, together, by women. To talk about solidarity, and to talk about shared experiences and shared feelings of anger and frustration, is to resist the neoliberal rationality to atomise women (Rottenberg, 2018) that makes both inequality and oppression an individual problem that can be solved by individual means.

We now turn to the case of Yalla Trappan, where the notions of pedagogy for the oppressed helped us to make sense of the practices in this women's work cooperative.

Yalla Trappan: A Foreign-Born Women's Work Cooperative

Yalla is Arabic for hurry, while *Trappan* is Swedish for staircase. The cooperative was founded in the Swedish city of Malmö in 2010, with the idea of attracting immigrant women who have no previous formal job experience, who are sometimes illiterate, who have difficulty speaking Swedish, and who have often lived in Sweden for several years without entering the labour market. Many of them live in situations of social and physical isolation in the urban suburbs, a situation that can lead to poor health and depression (Nortvedt et al., 2016). Traditional methods for labour market integration have not succeeded in reaching this group, as these women do not “fit” conventional practices, due to both family duties and a lack of formal education and work experience. The novelty of the Yalla Trappan method is its combination of language education, training in working culture and professional training in three main areas: cooking, cleaning, and sewing. The cooperative runs restaurants and cafés and provides catering services. It also sells cleaning and sewing services. The goal is to revalorise, both socially and economically, the existing knowledge and experience of these women. Thus, Yalla Trappan facilitates a transition towards the general labour market, as well as an expansion of that market in order to incorporate these “unemployable” women. As it is

organised as a cooperative, the principles guiding Yalla Trappan are grounded in democratic participation, empowerment, and the understanding of work as a form of emancipation.

Since 2010, other Yalla Trappan organisations replicating the model have been created in Sweden. In 2019, a project led by Coompanion Sweden (a national umbrella organisation supporting work cooperatives) was carried out in collaboration with Yalla Trappan and with co-funding from the Swedish Agency for Economic and Regional Growth. This project aimed to support the creation of new Yalla Trappan organisations in other geographical settings in the country and was called *Trappa Upp*. It was set up as a learning programme in which immigrant women far from the labour market, often illiterate, participated in a six-month programme, during which they learned and practised cooking, cleaning, and sewing. It is in that context that we met some of the women participating in the programme and recorded their stories.

As a part of a research project focusing on the local government's role in labour market integration of foreign-born people, we studied several initiatives in which civil society organisations collaborated with the local government to create work opportunities for immigrants. One of these collaborations consisted of the replication of the Yalla Trappan model in five other locations in Sweden. During our study, we interviewed the founders of the original Yalla Trappan, the local government officials and local politicians involved, as well as the project managers of the five Trappa Upps. We also observed meetings and other activities in the new Yalla Trappas. In this chapter, however, we focus on the voices of the women participating in the work training in one of the Trappa Upps. We interviewed some of them, while we met others during their weekly online training session (due to the COVID-19 pandemic all activities were done online). In preparation for these online meetings, intended as a focus group interview, we had asked the participating women to take photos of certain things or situations that symbolised their experience with Trappa Upp. We judged this “photo-voice” methodology (Hergenrather et al., 2009) useful to facilitate the conversation and to overcome possible language barriers and cultural differences. The coach, of immigrant background herself, participated in the focus group and facilitated the dialogue between the women and ourselves.

Are Labour Market Integration Programmes Oppressive?

The women told stories of official integration programmes that, far from helping them to integrate into the local society, enforced a feeling of lack of agency, thus reinforcing their helpless position. The standard courses in Swedish as a foreign language (SFI) in which they participated could not meet their needs to learn Swedish; instead, they increased their frustration, their sense of incapacity and passivity, and even led to a deterioration in their health. Most women “are scared to read and write in the beginning, and their hands are shaking”, one Yalla Trappan coach told us. Many of these women felt harassed not only by the SFI teachers, but even by their children and husbands:

I came from [name of country] 8 years ago. My husband was a farmer and I used to help him. I have not been to school before. First time at school here in Sweden, I did not understand anything, I could just look, just look, be silent ... It was like that for six or eight months. I could not understand anything. I just went home, and took medicine, as I had terrible headaches. My husband said, “You’re slow, you don’t understand”, even though he tried to help. I could not read, I could not write. The teacher just wrote things on the board. But I could not understand Swedish, not knowing the alphabet. It was so difficult for me (...) I went back to SFI two times, and again I only listened and looked. Then for 10 months I sat at home, took A-kassa [unemployment support].

Here is one of Yalla Trappan’s coaches’ take on the matter:

Many women are disappointed with the system, so many of them think when they start with us, “here we go again—one more [of these programmes]!” When I met [Name], she looked so angry. (...) Because they thought that this is again the system through which they take money. “They use us to make a living, to get a job, to get money, but nobody cares about us!” All of them are so disappointed.

Although there were many reasons for the disappointment with the language tuition courses as a first encounter with labour market integration, one important reason is the standardisation of a language training service, which does not have the resources to personalise the education according to individual needs. Instead, teaching is standardised, with a teacher that “just writes things on the board” and “tells us to be quiet”. Women are made passive and infantilised in this process.

Remaining silent, “just looking”, seems to be a manifestation of what Paulo Freire called the “culture of silence” (Freire, 1993), in which “remaining dumb” signifies the installation of an oppressive societal and political order. One of the results is that these women believe themselves to be governed by an inescapable destiny, as Hanna Arendt (2009) observed.

As most of the women participating in this programme were housewives, they had to take care of their children, and hence missed many lessons when children were sick; they also found it difficult to concentrate and to spend time on their homework and learning at home. One woman so described this:

My children were sick so often, I could not concentrate on reading (...). After a month I just stayed at home, I could not concentrate to read or learn anything. After one and a half years my case worker said they had to send me to work. And I said, “No, I want to learn Swedish, I want to learn to write, otherwise I will not be able to do it later”. “No, you have to go to work... if you don't, we can't help you, we can not pay more”. I was so angry... I didn't know what to do. I was so frustrated that I just stayed at home. Then I continued to call AF [the employment agency] every day. I started a new Swedish course. I did an exam as I wanted to move forward to the next course, SFI-C, but they said no. I wanted to continue my education in food safety to prepare food, but they said that I had to do a six-month course first. “You people are crazy; I am not learning anything”. I was really angry. I went back again to insist, but they said no and no. So, before my course ended, I just remained home for a month; I was so angry.

The women had to adapt to a rigid system that could not cope with their needs as mothers, their levels of literacy and competences, or their ambitions to educate themselves in certain areas (see also Bucken-Knapp

et al., 2019, who studied Syrian refugees in Sweden). The so-called integration system turned out to be oppressive. This oppressive system created a vicious circle of passivity and silence for the women, who were often suffering from depression and on medication. But repression can be followed by small acts of resistance (Fernández et al., 2017), as seen in the aforementioned quote, where staying at home was a protest, together with attempts to twist the system by jumping into the next course. These silent (and sometimes loud) acts of resistance, however, were often undertaken at the expense of the individual woman, as they seldom created any significant change in the woman's situation, instead perpetuating her isolation.

The finding that integration programmes may function in an oppressive manner is an important one, as only a few studies have shown that the implementation of integration policy may not facilitate, but in fact constrain, the economic and social inclusion of refugees (see Bucken-Knapp et al., 2019). As Bucken-Knapp et al. showed, using the example of Syrian refugees in Sweden, the complexity of the validation processes for educational qualifications and of the related administrative procedures is perceived as a considerable challenge in accessing the labour market. They described serious constraints experienced by refugees due to long waiting periods and insufficiently effective inter-organisational communication. More research is necessary to examine the oppressive dimension of existing labour market integration programmes for certain categories of immigrants.

It must be added that the failure of integration programmes to support certain groups is also related to the wider trend of “activation towards integration” programmes introduced years ago in many countries, including Sweden (Emilsson, 2015; Qvist, 2016). In such activation programmes, the focus is particularly on labour market activities, and the responsibility for integration shifts from policy makers to the recipients of these policies, that is, the immigrants. Thus, integration programmes contribute to constructing immigrants as responsible for their unemployment (Vesterberg, 2015). This is crucial in a societal context where employability is central, and where individuals are seen as responsible for becoming employable and being integrated in society (McQuaid & Lindsay, 2005; Fejes, 2010). Such a shift in responsibility to the

individuals, for example, foreign-born women, often results in self-blame (Bucken-Knapp et al., 2019) and low self-esteem, and has negative psychological and physical consequences. When work is constructed as an obligation rather than a right (Strindlund et al., 2020) and the responsibility shifts from governments to the individual, national programmes end up throwing vulnerable individuals under what becomes an oppressive form of governmentality.

Alternative Practices: Organising Labour Market Integration Through Women Cooperatives

Women who participated in the Yalla Trappan initiative were provided with a space in which they could reflect and express their discontent and frustration. As Freire (1985) argued, literacy is emancipatory; thus, these women not only learned to write and speak Swedish, but also became conscious of the oppression they experienced participating in the traditional language-integration programmes. As Greg Bucken-Knapp et al. (2019) have shown in the case of Syrian refugees in Sweden, gender differences were significant when voicing criticism of validation processes, for example. Male participants were more detailed and extensive in their critique than female participants; even though the women we interviewed were also discontented, they were usually silent during these language tuition courses and other integration activities. It was only after their participation in the alternative Yalla Trappan programme that they articulated critique of the system, a critique that went beyond their own selves. The women were awakened to their own capacity to challenge and even transform the world, as expressed in their claim that all women should participate in this alternative form of organising social and economic inclusion and that no woman should stay at home “like a sweet potato”:

Trappa Upp is a service, while other women just sit at home, like sweet potatoes. More women need to work. I am strong! I need to work! I need

to get my money! I don't need to be at home sleeping and just reporting [to the AF/employment service]. I am tired of that. I have to work! And Trappa Upp helps us to have a much better life, not just sit at home!

The more Trappa Upps, the better. [Society] needs more Trappa Upps!

In contrast to Freire's ideas of emancipation through education, the mainstream education systems often reinforce structures of oppression and violence. As this study showed, this also occurred in some Swedish integration programmes.

The Yalla Trappan way of organising is therefore more than a method for teaching the language: it is a programme for alternative, emancipatory education (Freire, 1985), promoting transformation through collective learning and work. In the same spirit, but building on Arendt's (1958) notion of *vita activa*, Pablo Fernández (2016), who studied work cooperatives in Buenos Aires, argued that if work is to be conceived and lived as political action (and therefore emancipatory, unshackling agency in vulnerable groups such as refugees with little formal education and work experience), it must be open, revelatory, and done together. Such previous work, as well as our study, seems to confirm that the success of such initiatives as Yalla Trappan depends on the redefinition of methods for organising integration through openness, togetherness and revealing of "womanness".

Openness

In Trappa Upp, the project leaders and coaches went well beyond their professional duties, spending much time individualising and supporting the training of each woman according to her specific needs. In contrast to traditional integration methods, in which time is limited and the relationship between trainer and trainee is professional and standardised, these relations were personal, open, and malleable. Patience and endurance were features often attributed to the coaches, as one woman describes:

Many times, I just went home and thought, I cannot do this ... and “what kind of woman is she [the trainer] She’s always on my back!” Ha ha ha ha [but this is how] slowly, slowly I got interested in issues of food safety.

Time in Trappa Upp is also more flexible and open, not restricted to the “paid” work time. When necessary, the dedication of the coaches goes far beyond the remunerated work time. The goal is to help participants learn the language during the course, and the formal relationship between teachers and students turns into a personal relationship. One woman explained:

Here is much better than at school. They can wait for you. You have to talk. “Ah, you cannot talk?” Ok, then they help you to catch up. Perhaps it takes six months, but it works. She [the trainer] has all the patience needed to help us. In the standard system they do not have the same patience, they don’t have it! They just give you papers, and it doesn’t work. Instead, she [the Yalla Trappa coach] shows you that you can read, and she helps me [develop myself]. Before I used to have problems with concentration. Now they are gone. I don’t want to live on welfare. My target was to get a job. Now I have my job!

One of the coaches told us how happy the women were when they started to master the art of reading:

We worked a lot with reading and writing, as there were many who could not read when they started. And they were very proud when they started to read! [laugh]. This woman, a woman who had given birth to seven children, said to me “I love you!” after she made her first presentation, I understood that she was so very happy, so proud of herself that she could read a whole book, something that she had never thought she might be able to do.

In addition, the roles of coaches and participants were open and horizontal rather than rigid and hierarchical. By employing foreign-born women as coaches, and by encouraging the transformation of participants into coaches themselves, the ambiguities of belonging to different worlds, and the broad repertoire of resources such as language and culture (Phillimore et al., 2021), could be turned into a benefit in the learning process.

Togetherness

Throughout the programme, the activities such as learning about food safety, or the use of appropriate cleaning techniques, were done collectively, creating a feeling of togetherness (Sennett, 2012; Fernández, 2016). A combination of openness and togetherness is exemplified in the descriptions of how some of the participants become trainers themselves:

Here I have taught other women. I have helped as a teacher on the house-keeping programme. It felt good. First time around, the women did not understand anything I was saying! But I have learnt how to be a teacher.

In comparison to much of the standard SFI courses in the formal Swedish integration programme, in which the women had participated previously, the Yalla Trappan programme aimed to create a sense of community and togetherness. The idea was to learn together as a group and to create a learning environment in which the women drew on each other's strengths. Togetherness, expressed in women's friendship and sisterhood, become a resource that facilitated learning and competence development:

It is a group dynamic. Everyone helps each other. Some of us have a strong side that can help the other person.

Here it is better, you learn with the practice. We are sisters, we help each other.

Another thing that was different from the SFI classes was that instead of making the participants "silent and dumb", the education and work practice at Yalla Trappan had an assertive effect. In the interviews, we were told how the other women and the coach together created an environment in which the women felt they were free to express themselves, regardless of the level of their language skills. Another visible difference was that the women who didn't want their picture taken at the beginning of the Yalla Trappan programme (to be used for social media events promoting the Yalla Trappan services, for example) after a while became very comfortable being photographed and promoting their work. Talking may appear a mundane thing to those who have always had the

prerogative to talk. Yet, as Steinem (2017, p. 1) reminded us: “If you have more power, remember to listen as much as you talk. And if you have less power, remember to talk as much as you listen. That can be hard when you are used to hiding”.

Revealing “Womanness”

As the women started to talk, they also began to change their perceptions of themselves, and of what they could do. Slowly, the possibility of contributing to and becoming a member of society emerged.

And I began to see (...) that it is possible for me to succeed in this society after all. My place is not just at home, waiting for somebody to get something for me. I can also contribute to this, you can look for help from me too. And I belong in this society as a person.

Built into the Yalla Trappan model was the understanding that women must show solidarity with each other, as even though they all came from different backgrounds, they faced many of the same challenges and problems. The cooperative idea of working together thus became more than an organising principle, and rather a tool for empowerment and solidarity. One foreign-born coach described how she used her difficult experiences to help others:

I have used my own pains to help the other women to develop. Because this was something that pushed me, those things that I went through in my life just because I am a woman. (...) I am proud of these women, because I can see a big change in their lives. And not only in the lives of the women, but also in the lives of their children. They see their mum differently now.

Hemmings (2012) was particularly interested in how feminist movement and practices can enable a move from the experience of a single individual to a collective feminist capacity. Yalla Trappan can be seen as an example of how the experience of being discriminated against—both as a woman and as a dark-skinned foreigner in Sweden—can be acknowledged and used as a resource for solidarity and resistance. The fact that

women shared similar experiences became important. As another of the foreign-born coaches explained:

Another thing was also that we could see that we not only have something in common with Sweden, but that we all have something in common. Because the situation in [my home country] is the same in all countries. (...) of course there are differences, but there are also things that are the same. We have the same problems with taking care of children and work. And we have the same problems with men who think that working at home, doing household work, is a “women thing”. That they help us when they cook and clean and do the laundry! [laugh]//We have the same problems with violence at home: violence at home in Sweden is the same thing as violence at home in Cameroon or Iraq. It is the same pattern. All men want to control their women. It is the same pattern, though some use religion, some use culture, and some use love [laugh]. And [the women] must understand that the use of religion has nothing to do with religion actually, it has much more to do with power. And that it is their right to resist, to say that enough is enough, we must take a step forward. So that is something that we worked with in the beginning.

In agreement with Freire (1993), this woman conveys the message that to become aware of one’s own oppression, and to do it together with others, is empowering.

Conclusion: Valorising Women’s Skills as a Road to Emancipation

Yalla Trappan focuses on the revalorisation of what are traditionally gendered “female” skills: cooking, cleaning, and sewing. These are publicly undervalued skills that many of the participating women master on a domestic level. Drawing from the knowledge that these women feel confident about these skills and transferring them to the learning and working space outside the household strengthens women’s self-esteem and becomes empowering. This strengthening cleared the path for the participants to learn how to read and write, and transformed their domestic practices into professional skills, valuable in the public and professional sphere.

The introduction of women's knowledge into educational and work activities outside the household also implies, beyond the effects on the individuals, the renegotiation of the "professional" and "educational" curriculum, based on the needs and experiences of the learners: the women (Freire, 1985, 1993). This is in contrast to the mainstream educational practices they experienced before, which rather served to maintain the subordination and marginalisation of this minority group. In Yalla Trappan, the language tuition, the content of work training, and the work itself is re-embedded in the experiences of women in their households, and in the neighbourhoods where they live.

By starting with what the women already know and can do, and have some confidence about, the Yalla Trappan project adapts both the language and work training to the participants as people and to their situation in life. Women are encouraged to use their voices and to find voices that have been silenced by teachers, husbands, and children. Ironically, the very tasks that are associated with subordination and inequality—cooking, cleaning, and sewing—and seen as lower-value "female" tasks are what in the Yalla Trappan case are helping women to take their place both in the workplace and in society. These "female" practices are being taken out from the domestic space, in which women were isolated and felt alone, and brought into the public sphere of the workplace. In the setting organised according to cooperative ideas of solidarity, togetherness and openness, women's isolation and silence were broken. They were able to start a collective journey, gradually beginning to see themselves as being more than passive "sweet potatoes", completely reliant on the state and the family.

The Yalla Trappan projects thus enabled three transformations: first, a transformation from atomised individuals, lonely and isolated, into a collective of women who shared the same experiences of oppression, illness, and alienation. Second, there was a transformation of location for such work as cleaning, cooking, and sewing, from the home into the public sphere of the formal workplace. Third, there was a valorisation and monetisation of such work, which turned skills that were previously unrecognised and unpaid into skills that might have value on the labour market (Marçal, 2016).

Critical research on the undervalorisation and ethnicisation (Eastmond, 2011; Ying Zhang, 2013; Vesterberg, 2013; Wikström & Sténs, 2019) of

immigrant labour claims that immigrants often tend to find work in areas that are feminised and ethnicised (such as cleaning and sewing services, as in the case of Yalla Trappan), which, in turn, cements their inferiority on the labour market. Even though we agree with this critique, we still see the transformations described in this chapter as empowering, as the women were able to capitalise on feminine and ethnic skills (Carlbaum, 2022), and through these work activities were not only able to move closer to the labour market but, more importantly, found their voice and their sense of self. After all, the Yalla Trappan method did indeed start from “female” skills that the participants were already familiar with. However, the important issue here is that mastering these skills was not a goal in itself, but rather a means to achieve the much larger goal of empowerment and self-worth and a stepping stone to develop other competences, knowledge, and professional skills beyond them.

The revalorisation of “female” knowledge and skills has also been supported by the use of “tools for conviviality” (Illich, 1973, p. 22). These are tools such as sewing machines, bicycles, or cooking fires, which “foster conviviality to the extent to which they can be easily used, by anybody, as often or as seldom as desired, for the accomplishment of a purpose chosen by the user”. Such tools empower individuals and increase their autonomy and freedom by lowering barriers to produce various things and to work. Such tools thus minimise the need for specific expertise, money, or access on part of the individual. As Bradley (2018, p. 1677) observed, convivial tools are tools that “enable people to satisfy needs with less reliance on the monetised sphere”.

By developing a labour market integration method that relies on convivial tools, and the skills and expertise possessed by many of these women participating in the Yalla Trappa projects, more autonomous and creative relations among people, between people and their environments, and between people and “experts” have been developed. The cultivation of non-capitalist economic relations (Gibson-Graham, 2008), such as care-giving, peer-to-peer learning, self-provisioning, and contributions rather than equivalent exchange, focus on meeting needs to work together rather than making profit, and based on an ethic of sharing in a cooperative rather than as a private property, can be seen as a fundamental feature of the activities in the Yalla Trappan and the Trappa Upp programmes.

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7

Pluralised Attempts to Translate Refugees' Labour Market Integration: Field Dynamics in Two Cases of "Promoting Accessibility" in Berlin

Jana Albrecht and Robert Jungmann

Introduction

In this age of demographic change and workforce shortages, several Western countries aim to foster more accessible labour market integration for refugees. While this sounds rational, reasonable and even humanitarian, in this chapter we point out that organising this "accessibility" sometimes leads to serious, if unintended, problems for refugees. This is because it is neither clear exactly what accessibility means, nor which degree of accessibility is sufficient to secure "stable labour markets".

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Different actors promote different interpretations. Yet it is not only the public discourse, political parties, various administrative bodies or the interplay between them that produce these problematic ambiguities. Our study shows that it is the complications arising from the organisational attempts by heterogeneous organisations to translate the meaning of accessibility in favour of their interests, and the often conflictual interplay between such divergent translations.

We are not the first to focus on such problems. Other scholars analysing inter-organisational relations in the integration of refugees often focus on challenging actors responsible for local initiatives, and their collaboration (Diedrich & Hellgren, 2018; Meyer & Simsa, 2018; Oscarsson & Danielsson, 2018), on the role of employers (e.g. Ortlieb et al., 2021; Risberg & Romani, 2022), or on collaborative relations between public sector organisations only (Maletzky, 2017; Qvist, 2017; Mratschkowski, 2017a; Heimann et al., 2019; Scheibelhofer, 2019; Witkowski et al., 2019; Brorström & Diedrich, 2022), or between sectors (Norbäck & Zapata Campos, 2022). Still other authors explore an isomorphic dynamic in organisational fields (e.g. Mratschkowski, 2017b). Some of these studies follow well-established conceptual frames in organisation and policy studies, focusing on collaborative networks or on homogeneous fields. Others promising to map heterogeneity and introduce a relational perspective usually focus on single types of organisations, such as public service organisations, professional associations or civil society associations and other refugee support organisations (e.g. Bagavos & Kourachanis, 2021; Bontenbal & Lillie, 2021; de Martina, 2021; Nardon et al., 2021; Bešić et al., 2022). We build on this research and claim that the actual production of labour market integration policies is a highly dispersed, relational and recursive process of structuration (Giddens, 1984), taking place in heterogeneous, issue-based organisational fields (Hoffman, 1999; Windeler & Jungmann, 2022). This process consists of intensive and often conflictual acts of translation (Czarniawska & Joerges, 1996; Sahlin & Wedlin, 2008; Diedrich, 2013, 2017; Diedrich & Styhre, 2013).

In what follows, we describe and analyse two cases of translating into practices the goal of turning labour market integration of refugees towards accessibility in Berlin. It must be added that the refugee policy in Germany (and other Western countries, as several chapters in this volume

show) has recently been marked by a paradigm shift guided by labour market considerations. Highly restrictive access to the labour market for asylum seekers is being at least partly replaced by an integration policy that aims to increase their accessibility to the labour market (Aumüller, 2016). The public debate on a more accessible labour market in Germany includes many different aspects, such as the rights of refugees concerning social services and benefits, housing, education and even participation in policymaking. We have noticed that the relations between these aspects continually change. Furthermore, the translation of accessibility into practices takes place under normative pressures from divergent perspectives. Our cases show how heterogeneous organisations, diverse in their goals, practices and structures, translate only certain aspects of accessibility, relevant to their interests and their positioning in the organisational field. We conclude by arguing for an analysis of inter-organisational field dynamics as a form of (re-)producing reflexive modernity.

In the following, we present the main concepts used in our analysis, outline our field study describing two cases of translating accessibility in the practice of refugees' labour market integration in Berlin, and conclude by discussing some generalisable insights.

Translating “Accessibility” in Organisational Fields

We propose to view accessibility as a complex, ambiguous and often conflictual issue. We will study it with the help of the concepts of issue-based organisational fields (Hoffman, 1999) and translation (Czarniawska & Joerges, 1996; Sahlin & Wedlin, 2008; Wæraas & Nielsen, 2016). We do so to analyse the production of labour market integration policies as processes taking place simultaneously in constellations of heterogeneous actors, practices and structures. We describe a process of translating accessibility as a sequence of critical “events having a specifiable beginning and end” (Giddens, 1984, p. 24). These episodes are constituted in a diverse set of competent actors, who recur in the rules and resources of manifold social orders, while enacting learned social practices (Giddens, 1984,

p. 25). Analysing the translation process thus requires a reconstruction of the succession of events, describing social practices, social orders and actors involved. We also extend the classic concept of organisational fields (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983), which focused on the rule-guided, stable and isomorphic nature of inter-organisational relations. Organisational fields need to be treated as a special type of social order, different from, for example, inter-organisational networks or industries (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983, p. 148). Yet, more recent studies have challenged the isomorphic and stable nature of these fields. Hoffman (1999) suggested studying heterogeneous “issue-based fields” that are characterised by conflict-ridden processes, which can be seen as wars among pluralised institutions. In such fields, the constellations of heterogeneous actors try to define what a certain issue actually means.

We choose to see the stabilised and isomorphic “institutional life” of DiMaggio and Powell (1983) and the fluid, conflict-ridden and heterogeneous “institutional war” of Hoffman (1999) as the two ends of a continuum. Actual organisational fields can adopt different states along this continuum. These issue-based fields are instantiated when actors observe and recognise each other as relevant actors for a specific issue or a set of interwoven issues; in consequence, they cannot ignore each other, even if they have completely different, or even conflicting, interpretations (Windeler & Jungmann, 2022).

We studied the translation of the idea of accessibility within the German labour market policy, observing how this idea “travels” through different contexts and social orders (Zilber, 2009). Translation scholars see this process as an interplay between a passive adaptation and an active editing (Sahlin & Wedlin, 2008, p. 220). Within a certain context, the meaning of an idea is changed: “When using the term ‘editing’ we want to emphasise that this recontextualization may change the formulation as well as the meaning and content of experiences and models” (Sahlin & Wedlin, 2008, pp. 225–226). The cause of such a shift in meaning and content is an active re-interpretation that happens when an idea enters a new context.

But it is not only the researchers who observe differences in translation. A re-contextualisation may be actively driven by a constellation of interested and competent actors. Such actors might strategically shape the introduction of an issue and try to edit it, or else propagate its mere

adoption. This is why we speak of reflexivity, to emphasise that competent actors continually monitor external aspects of the situation in which they act, such as the activities of other actors or relevant rules and resources, as well as their inner wants, demands, interests and ways of rationalisation (Giddens, 1984). People concerned with handling issues such as an accessible labour market policy know that they are concerned with problems they will never completely solve, but they try to reformulate and resolve parts of it, while avoiding raising expectations.

Context and Design of the Study

We describe and analyse two cases of translating accessibility into practice resulting from a three-year field study. The study reconstructs change processes in the regulations concerning the refugees' labour market integration in the state of Berlin, Germany, in the years 2015 to 2020. We have conducted participant observations, interviews and document analysis. The two processes described here are the development of job-related language promotion on the one hand and the creation of an overall concept for the integration and participation of refugees in Berlin on the other hand. We chose to reconstruct these cases because they were the most prominent examples of multiple translations of accessibility.

Our analysis has been guided by the idea of theoretical saturation (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). From the end of 2018 to early 2020, 14 qualitative interviews were conducted with employees of various organisations, representatives of the Federal Employment Agency and the Senate Administration for Integration, Labour and Social Affairs—all of whom were involved in the changes regarding labour market integration of refugees in Berlin. We have also participated in conferences, information events and meetings, as well as collected various documents from the field, both documents that are publicly accessible and documents that we have received from our interviewees.

Regulating a more accessible way of integrating refugees into the German labour market after the long summer of migration in 2015 has been an inherently ambiguous endeavour. In theory, this is unavoidable because accessibility is only possible to some degree, not least because

there is no clear-cut definition of the correct balance between accessibility and restriction. In practice, there are also many distinctive but interconnected issues that the debate on an accessible migration society in Germany touches. Concerning the legal situation of refugees' access to the labour market, experts describe an ambiguous and complicated legal-administrative situation for refugees:

From a legal standpoint, there is currently a conflict between significantly facilitating access to the labour market without establishing consistent equality. Potential employees, as well as employers and companies that want to open themselves to the employment of refugees, need an enormous amount of detailed legal and administrative knowledge to provide training or construct an employment relationship. (Aumüller, 2016, p. 14, our translation)

This is due to the presence of many divergent but relevant arguments evoked in debates about a more inclusive labour market. We identified at least five highly relevant arguments strengthening one side or the other. For example, there is an economic argument that points to a shortage of workers in Germany, which is countered by work prohibitions determined by the various legal residence statuses of individuals; the messages signalling to migrants that there are valid reasons to move to Germany, counteracted by evocation of insecurities within the law of residence hindering companies from educating and employing refugees (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD], 2017); as well as an argument formulated by several associations of employers claiming that the migration of skilled labour and that of refugees should be kept separate issues (Bundesvereinigung der Deutschen Arbeitgeberverbände e. V. [BDA], 2019). These arguments are presented simultaneously when judging which degree of accessibility is right and which is wrong. In practice, there do not seem to be any overarching criteria that allow us to judge these arguments or even to order them.

Translating Accessibility in the Field of Labour Market Integration in Berlin

We analyse two distinct cases of translating the vague idea of accessibility within the field of refugees' labour market integration in Berlin, Germany. The translations refer to very different measures of labour market integration and distinct aspects of accessibility. The first case is the creation of job-specific language courses in Berlin since 2015, where access via language is in focus. The second case is the process of producing "Berlin's overall concept of participation and integration of refugees". Different as they are, these two cases exhibit similar processual patterns of pluralised translation attempts in fields. In what follows, we present each translation process by reconstructing a timeline consisting of three distinctive episodes. For every episode we depict the constellations within the field, the translation attempts and we point out the problematic, if (un)intended, consequences such translations have for the accessibility of labour market for refugees.

Job-Related Language Promotion

The extensive refugee immigration since 2015 has led to a reorganisation of language courses in Berlin. Language promotion for migrants is not a new issue; even before 2015, there were rules regulating who could attend which language courses. There was (and still is) a clear procedure for migrants, supported and provided by a few established actors. Yet, there were only a few offers for refugees, and many cases have been resolved differently from case to case. This had to change, due to the growing number of new arrivals in Germany and the general trend of orientating immigration policy more towards accessibility. When these changes came to be introduced, the issue of job-specific language support also became increasingly important.

In the following, we present a description of how the changes regarding the job-specific language courses in Berlin were perceived by our interview partners and described in the documents we analysed. We start by reconstructing the events of 2015, the so called "long summer of migration".

Episode 1: The Long Summer of Migration (2015)

Due to the increased number of refugees, 2015 was described both in interviews and documents as a formative period. A particularly large number¹ of people came to Berlin, which increased the demand for jobs enormously. Many people were desperately looking for work, but the legal regulations were not easy to grasp. There was confusion and uncertainty as to which labour law provisions should be applied and how, and which contact points were responsible. Because of this pressure, most initiatives took the form of voluntary support, organised in informal ways. Individuals and organisations found many ways to help refugees arriving in Germany. Migrant organisations and various employers helped refugees and cared for them, not only by giving them jobs. Some individual actors provided contact with families, access to accommodation and also entry to language courses. As it was uncertain who might participate in the state-financed language courses, many language courses were created voluntarily. There is no doubt that all these actors were trying to facilitate integration and accessibility to the labour market for refugees. However, there were many complaints about confusing formal conditions and too little state support for the labour market integration of refugees.

Constellation within the field. Individual initiatives, migrant organisations and private employers were not established actors in the organisational field of labour market integration. Yet, as there were no well-established state practices, non-official actors were trying to find pragmatic solutions. One of these consisted of language courses for refugees. As language is an important aspect of labour market integration in general, it emerged as a central sub-issue in the field of labour market integration of refugees (see also Chap. 10).

Translation. Support initiatives, churches and companies edited both problems and solutions individually, taking the specificities of the cases into account. In all these translations it was taken for granted that learning the German language quickly would facilitate access to the

¹ According to official data, about 1.1 million people came to Germany in 2015, of whom about 55,000 arrived in Berlin. One of the main reasons for this movement was the civil war in Syria, but others also arrived from Afghanistan, Iraq and several African and non-EU Balkan countries (LAF 2022).

labour market, as language is generally regarded as one of the central integration criteria in society.

(Un)intended consequences. There was no legal assurance for either the refugees or the employers. This led to a multiplicity of administrative procedures and an unpredictability, both when hiring refugees and in everyday work. Still, the lack of German language skills has been seen as one of the greatest obstacles to labour market integration—for employees and employers.

Episode 2: Companies Challenge the Existing Field Regulation (2017/2018)

During these two years, various laws changed the regulation of labour market integration at federal and state levels. In the area of language, it became generally accepted that inferior job-related language skills were a particular obstacle to a successful entry into a career.

At the end of 2017, the “interest group for refugees” complained publicly about the state of language education. This interest group, founded in 2016, is an association of 16 Berlin-based companies, including the pharmaceutical company Bayer AG, Siemens and BVG (Berlin’s public transport provider). This meta-organisation initiated a newspaper article that strongly criticised the conditions of job-specific language training. One of our interview partners described the reaction from the Berlin government thus:

We and a few sponsors were invited to the Senate Chancellery of Berlin. Then a man from the Senate Chancellery stood up (...). He made it very clear to us that the job-specific language courses for trainees had to start now. “And I insist!” he said. (Language course provider, 24 April 2019)²

The government was under pressure and suggested that language schools should offer more job-specific language courses. Indeed, something had moved in this field, mainly due to the influence of this

²All interviews were conducted in German. Relevant passages from the interviews used here were translated into English by ourselves.

meta-organisation. Money was spent to provide job-specific language courses.

Constellation within the field. Some established Berlin companies themselves founded an association to engage in both lobbying for the interests of refugees and to connect the integration of refugees to the general need for skilled labour. They actively intervened in the regulation of the field through their criticisms and demands, challenging state-owned language schools as well as the government itself. Heterogeneous actors from the domain of language education, from politics, and even from the economy became dedicated to the topic of language. As a result, job-specific language emerged as a specification of the general language issue, and as a sub-issue of labour market integration, with its intrinsic aim to provide skilful labour.

Translation. In the meta-organisation's pragmatic interpretation, work-specific language skills are necessary for successful labour market integration, and the latter is necessary in the light of a widely recognised shortage of skilled workers in Germany. The existing general German language courses were not enough, in their opinion. Due to their powerful position in the Berlin economy, they managed to edit the general issue of labour market integration, making job-specific language courses a government issue.

(Un)intended consequences. The Berlin government gave in to the demand of the meta-organisation and offered to provide a large amount of funding for job-specific language courses. These specific language courses would be offered in Berlin to refugees who met certain legal requirements.

Episode 3: Fragmentation on the Supply Side (2019)

After these important changes in translating the issue of labour market integration, the number of language course providers rose rapidly. At first glance, this seemed to denote a positive change in the situation for refugees. Yet one of our interviewees, a refugee worker in Berlin, described the current situation thus:

It is interesting, because there were suddenly not only many people, but also a lot of offers, all over the place. And many offers sounded good at first, but you also want to guarantee the quality of training. But there are many German schools that are simply far from qualified, especially not in the context of professional language courses. [...] Actually, in the past there were always contracts with the language schools, and also quality examination procedures, to check whether these organisations meet the needs of the clients. After all, the state doesn't just want to finance anything, right? But under the pressure everything simply opened up, so the government financed everything. Accordingly, there is a lot of good, but also a lot of bad consequences, when you notice that many sponsors only want to make money, and don't have the qualifications necessary to help the refugees. (Refugee worker, 29 March 2019)

The intervention by the refugee interest group changed the whole issue of language course promotion in Berlin. There was no longer the problem of too few such courses in existence. Due to the broad financing of language courses by the government of Berlin, federal state-owned, established language schools offered job-specific language courses, but so also did many private language providers.

Constellation within the field. The sub-issue of job-specific language courses became relevant to a variety of actors. As a result of the government subsidy, many other language providers besides the established ones have entered the field, creating a somewhat chaotic, spontaneously emerging set of actors. These actors refer to the general economic argument of a widely acknowledged lack of skilled workers in Germany.

Translation. The government of Berlin has translated the language skills problem as requiring as many language courses as possible in a short period of time. Accordingly, it became easy for language schools to receive approval for financing.

(Un)intended consequences. Regarding the organisational field, there has been a kind of fragmentation into different actors with different goals. Due to the large number of language providers, it was easy for both the refugees and the government to lose track. It took a lot of effort to check the language providers and to gain an overview of their offers. The quality of the language courses has often been criticised, and more and

more actors have pleaded for an improved evaluation. At present, the political and administrative actors are in the process of (re-)establishing a new regulatory framework. As the debate about language training is not diminishing, it makes it easier for conservative parties to argue for a reduction in the money spent on language training.

Creating “Berlin’s Overall Concept for the Integration and Participation of Refugees”

In our second example we describe and discuss “Berlin’s overall concept for the integration and participation of refugees”, which resulted from an instruction issued by the Berlin Senate (Senatsverwaltung für Integration, Arbeit und Soziales, 2019). We see it as another sub-issue of a more accessible labour market policy for refugees. The concept was designed to decide how Berlin, as a federal state, should deal strategically with questions of integration and participation in the future, with labour market integration as a major part of this. Various actors have been invited to contribute to this idea. Accessibility has been promoted to the level of strategic orientations, and refugees, migrant organisations, individual initiatives and the wider public were invited to engage in the work with regulatory frameworks and solutions. We consider this last step to be remarkable compared to other policy programmes. In the following, we describe the critical episodes of the creation of this new concept.

Episode 1: The Concept Is Formed (2017)

Berlin has had a “Master Plan for Integration and Security” since 2016 (Berlin Senatskanzlei, 2016). This concept was to be revised for two main reasons. First, the Master Plan was prepared by the previous Berlin government, so the newly elected government felt obliged to present a new version. Second, the Master Plan was to be redesigned, as it was considered incomplete and outdated. As its name suggested, it focused primarily on security issues and contained few mentions of integration and participation. The new concept was therefore to strengthen accessibility

and participation, on a regulatory level. The procedure for developing the concept was finally adopted at the beginning of 2017.

In line with the coalition agreement, and at the instigation of the Senate for Integration, Labour and Social Affairs (SenIAS), the new "Overall Concept for the Integration and Participation of Refugees in Berlin" was launched in the autumn of 2017. The SenIAS oversaw the development of an innovative, highly participatory process design for the content of the overall concept: a complex discussion process, which would result in a draft text that would be put to the vote in the Senate at the end of 2018.

Within the government, employees of the existing administrative departments (not only SenIAS) formed small groups to work out the ideas for the concept development, based on the problems known to be facing refugees. In addition to these internal groups, the series of "Integration in Dialogue" events was launched with the aim of taking stock of refugees' existing problems. The events took place in various districts of Berlin whose inhabitants were invited to contribute criticisms and suggestions. Refugees, initiatives, interested citizens and the wider public took part. The government even provided interpreters for these events.

Among the topics discussed was the labour market integration of refugees. On the agenda were such questions as securing skilled workers, their training and further education, self-employment, qualification, access to the labour market and funding opportunities.

Constellation within the field. The demand for the creation of the concept originated from the Berlin government and was implemented by the SenIAS. The SenIAS appointed experts from the Senate Administrations who were tasked with familiarising themselves with the issue. Additionally, heterogeneous actors from civil society were invited to open Dialogue events to bring in as much heterogeneity into the perspective as possible. A sub-issue of all these discussions was labour market integration.

Translation. The new concept focused strongly on the idea of societal accessibility. The Berlin government attempted to implement this accessibility right from the beginning of the process of creating the concept and defining the integration policy. This left-wing government was well aware that voters expected them to instantiate more accessible ways of integrating refugees. Thus, government agencies approached the general

problem of accessibility by developing the concept in a participatory way. The issue of labour market integration was re-defined as being more participatory in both its content and in the ways of shaping it.

(Un)intended consequences. Administrative agencies problematised the openness of the Dialogue events, arguing for restrictions and creating working groups with selected actors.

Episode 2: Thematic Working Groups and Elaboration of the Concept (2018)

Thematic working groups (TWGs) were formed to work on the topics discussed in the Dialogue events (the groups, however, were very close to the division of tasks of the respective Senate Departments). The following actors were involved in the labour market integration TWG, in addition to the representatives of the administration: representatives of the Federal Employment Agency, the Senate chambers, professional associations, individual initiatives and migrant organisations. These actors met regularly to share the results of their daily work with refugees. The members of the Senate Administration called these actors “external experts”.

Following the Dialogue events, the members of the SenIAS Administration prepared concept proposals for the field of labour market integration. These proposals were presented to the TWG. Together with the other actors, they were to determine in which areas there was still a need for action.

A similar text module was to be created in each TWG, to ensure comparability between all the TWGs and to facilitate the aggregation of the results. The Senate Administration of SenIAS was responsible for the content and organisation of the TWG concerning the labour market (Drunkenmölle & Schnegg, 2018).

Constellation within the field. The sub-issue of labour market integration was negotiated among heterogeneous actors. The administration of the SenIAS selected the members for the TWG, and had already made proposals for the concept. The final version of the concept was also in the hands of the administration of the SenIAS, but it had to be orientated towards the written forms of other TWGs.

Translation. The broad accessibility from Episode 1 was edited into accessibility for certain actors, following a logic of practicability. There were formally defined responsibilities for the written preparation of the concept. Accessibility was thus restricted in the last step of the concept's development and edited in the sense accepted by the administration.

(Un)intended consequences. Working with so many actors was indeed a new task for the Senate's administration. There were often disagreements during the discussions about the selection of the participants, which shows that the translation of the Senate's idea of participatory co-working worked only partially. Some TWG leaders wanted to invite exclusively actors recognised by the administration (chambers, trade unions, associations); a part of the Senate Administration wanted to evade the process completely, not constituting any TWGs at all. Indeed, the TWGs tended to involve only actors who already had established relations with the government.

Episode 3: Problems in Most of the Voluntary and Refugee Organisations Remain (2018–2020)

It was the task of the administration to put the concept down on paper, but the Berlin government, and especially the Senator for Labour, Integration and Social Affairs, had to intervene to make sure that the ideas of participation and accessibility were taken seriously.

At this point, it became clear that the political rationale and the opinions of the executive arm of the administration differed greatly. While politicians clearly wanted the process to be open to as many actors as possible, it meant considerably more work for the administration, and did not fit in with its previous procedures. However, attempts were made in constant discussions to find common ground.

After publication of the concept at the end of 2018, opinions still differed. Still, the concept, and the special approach of the Senate and the administration to its creation, can be regarded as novel. But while the concept of elaboration was described by scholarly evaluators at its public presentation as very innovative (Integration leben, 2018), there were

complaints that mainly well-known players were involved in its development (Drunkenmölle & Schnegg, 2018).

Constellation within the field. The Berlin government repeatedly exerted pressure on its administration to ensure that the idea of accessibility was taken into account during the creation of the concept. The administration, for their part, followed the idea of the feasibility of the concept creation. Accordingly, the government was still seen as the most powerful actor in the field.

Translation. The government insisted on maintaining the idea of participation and accessibility at the core of the concept and wished the concept to be seen by the outside world as participatory. Here, the government's interpretation of accessibility prevailed over that of the administration. The government used its democratic authority to edit the concept in this way, even in the face of administrative concerns.

(Un-)intended consequences. The Senate Administration and the government finalised the concept on their own. The participatory elements were moved into the background in this last step. Finally, the administrations prevailed in their argument, that practical handling the process is more important than including the perspectives of all relevant actors. A conglomerate of well-established and non-established activist groups retroactively published critical statements about the concept and its creation (e.g. Berlin-hilft, 2018). They criticised the fact that the input from the Dialogue events was not implemented seriously enough in the TGWs, at least at the beginning. There were doubts as to how seriously the people concerned were incorporated in the process itself. Critics claimed that the Senate and its Administration had too much say in the choice of topics and actors. In their opinion, such an approach created problems for non-established actors, such as migrant organisations, which were not (yet) integrated into the structure of the field in a way that permitted them to participate. Finally, these critics listed some requests for changes to the concept. Furthermore, there were complaints that the resulting concept was simply a piece of paper. Many agreed with regard to the measures suggested in the concept but pointed out that these suggestions were not binding in practice. Accordingly, the critics demanded that the measures were transformed into laws.

Discussion: Field Dynamics and Their Consequences for the Labour Market Integration of Refugees

The episodes presented here are typical of recent inter-organisational efforts to produce suitable labour market integration for refugees. What is also typical is the fact that the Senate of Berlin and its distinct administrative departments were subject to criticism. The media, scientific organisations, business associations and activist groups continually observe such regulatory agencies nowadays. All these organisations try to influence regulatory processes in their favour, and according to their own definition of what reasonable labour market integration is or should be. Our examples show that it is impossible to understand organisations trying to regulate a more accessible labour market without noticing that their translations of accessibility always come up in relation to others, often conflicting ones. Translating this ambiguous term, therefore, always requires a positioning in dispersed field dynamics, and the use of relevant resources in such positioning. In our first example, the meta-organisation of 16 companies gained legitimacy and a powerful voice because of their central status in other fields. Organisational fields are themselves embedded in a web of relations between fields and other social systems. Within capitalist societies, economic actors can gain relevance in many different fields (Bourdieu, 2005). In our second example, critical non-profit organisations made efforts to gain a voice, but this example also shows that not every actor can succeed. Actors attempting to participate in creating an “overall concept” needed enduring relations with the administrators.

Both examples show that contemporary political and administrative organisations need to deal with a variety of relevant organisations, as they are part of more heterogeneous, conflict-ridden and polycentric inter-organisational landscapes. This growing plurality within the organisational landscape has at least three consequences.

First, heterogeneous organisations try to edit the meaning of accessibility in light of their practical capacities, competencies and strategic interests. Furthermore, it is crucial to place such an “interested editing” against the background of an issue-based field in which certain

translation attempts might find allies or enemies, or might be ignored. Also, a connection to generally established values is important for a successful interpretation. In the case of language promotion, the interest group promoted a pragmatic interpretation, emphasising the basic skills needed to become employed. This group easily found allies in such interpretation, because private education organisations were able to profit from it. They used the general economic argument as well, alluding to a widely acknowledged lack of skilled workers in Germany. In the case of the concept creation, accessibility has been edited as depending on a participatory policy process itself. Access was interpreted not only as access to the labour market, but as access to creating the labour market policy as well. This understanding is linked to the general argument that different kinds of participation strengthen refugees' commitment to social integration. Yet the constellation of actors promoting such an understanding could neither transform the common interpretation of accessibility, nor provide access to all relevant groups, because it failed to convince more established actors to disengage from an interpretation of policy referring to the manageable participation of established organisations driven by political and administrative actors. As both examples show, editing efforts are related to an actor's position within sub-fields dealing with certain aspects of accessibility and certain arguments legitimate in the field.

Second, we need to understand translating as a process that in itself fuels problems for the labour market integration of refugees. The course and effects of translation depend on its historical position within a trajectory of translating—in this case, translation of accessibility. The translators usually do not intend to create problems for refugees, but such unintended consequences of their translations result from their relations to others, and the changes of translations in time. The meta-organisation of 16 companies bundled together legitimacy and resources, forming a coalition with established actors within the field, and thus promoting job-specific language education as a central aspect of accessibility. These efforts, although resulting in a remarkable expansion of the German language programmes, did not include the requirement to evaluate the quality and experience needed to run such programmes. In consequence, a set of new, often inexperienced, programme providers entered the field. After a while it became obvious that these newcomers were endangering

established language course providers, while not providing truly efficient programmes. The problem of a lack of programmes had been transformed into a lack of quality of the programmes. In the case of concept creation, many small and newly founded initiatives were simply out of sight for the established actors that led the process. Furthermore, the image of an inefficient, overly complex and chaotic participatory process de-legitimised the interpretation of accessibility as committing diverse groups to an active production of integration measures.

Third, in their interplay, these intended and unintended consequences created further conflicts in issue-based fields, stabilising their polycentric and heterogeneous nature. This nature of issue-based fields made every attempt to find a solution contingent and open to critique. In both cases, several organisations criticised these outcomes and legitimised their own editing with such criticism. Theories of reflexive modernisation point out different aspects of such an awareness of the contingency of modern institutions as central characteristics of reflexive modernity today (Beck et al., 1994).

We can discern a combination of at least three of these aspects of the reflexive modernity in our cases. Giddens' radical modern imperative, that practices of regulating recent problems "are constantly examined and reformed in the light of incoming information about those very practices" (Giddens, 1990, p. 38), was clearly visible. As could be seen in both cases, there was no definite end to such reflections about changing conditions, actor constellations or the consequences of regulating accessibility, due to the basic uncertainty and instability in contemporary social life. Such a situation calls for continually translating these unstable problems, and the scientific knowledge, acknowledged expertise and information technology are essential sources of legitimating such translation by reference to trusted stocks of knowledge.

At the same time, the "multiplication of valid means of justification leads to a multiplication of claims to knowledge" (Beck et al., 2003, p. 20). It seems that we need to trust, but there are increasingly more directions concerning how, and whom, we can trust. In both cases analysed here, especially when focusing of the actions of the administrators, what Ulrich Beck (1996) referred to as central to problem solving in reflexive democracies has been visible: the multiple directions and ways

in which democratic institutions continuously have to reflect about their own doings. Administrative and political organisations are aware that central demands for transparency, self-reflection and multiple expertise often overwhelm them.

Niklas Luhmann (1997, pp. 891–892) once stated that within reflexive modernity, a multitude of societal descriptions of its own state of affairs stay beside each other and compete, thus illustrating their own contingency. A complex society is thus radicalised by the fact that its plurality and multiplicity is reflected in itself. This observation can be also applied to inter-organisational relations and the attempts to produce measures for a more accessible labour market integration. Diverse interpretations of what accessibility could, should, and practically does mean compete, thereby illustrating their own contingencies. As most of the actors involved are well aware that they live in capitalist, humanist and legalist societies, their overarching arguments do not match, and sometimes even oppose each other, because there cannot be a singular, but only multiple orderings between them.

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8

The Italian Non-model. Integrating Immigrant Labour in Practice

Alberto Zanutto, Donatella Greco,
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Immigration as a Political Issue

Italy is heading towards its third consecutive decade of intense immigration. In these years, many of the institutional distortions that characterise the Italian labour market have intertwined with the integration of immigrants into workplaces. Among these, at least three should be mentioned: (1) a lack of investment in the skills of the employable population; (2) the accompanying phenomenon of the delocalisation of production with low investment in workers' skills; and (3) the reduction of labour-related guarantees in accordance with a neo-liberal model that would like

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employment to be flexible and market-orientated (Antonioli et al., 2011; Cattani & Pedrini, 2021).

In recent decades, the neo-liberal perspective has changed the view of the migration phenomenon in Italy. At the same time, due to its position in the centre of the Mediterranean, Italy has over recent years become a “border interface” (Schmoll, 2006), finding itself at the centre of different migratory currents that also involve different types of migrants for different destination countries. For years, Italian governments have attempted to define and redefine “the solution” to the migration phenomenon, trying to “fix” the problem by considering it as something temporary and contingent. The proposed policy lines have never been defined to include needs related to country of origin, time of arrival, welfare, or access to the labour market, health services or protection for families and minors. The prevailing perspective, particularly since 2000, has been that of “controlling the flow of entry” as a policing and security action. The workforce demands of the economic world are solved through entry quotas, temporary entry visas and a certain tolerance towards irregular entries.

These developments present a clear testimony to the inability of the Italian public administration to manage both the internal demand for workforce and the emergencies arising from the economic cycles. The chronic lack of manpower for the lowest jobs on the occupational scale has always been the factor urging the entry and recall of workers from abroad. This discordance between the actual demand and the political commitment has been clearly visible in discursive practices of the political forces and the media in response to breaking news. After the 2008 crisis, regulated flows have been drastically reduced, forcing immigrants and business networks to rely on other entry channels that are much more difficult to monitor, such as access without a permit, family reunifications and tourist visas. Since then, the failure to match labour supply and demand has become even more evident. Right-wing governments have nurtured the idea of offering more control and more police, while left-wing governments have usually loosened control, supporting services and access to the labour market through funding, among other things, language courses, which were definitively abolished by the populist Lega-M5S government of 2018–2019. The same government also closed ports

and made the access of migrants and their rescue at sea illegal. The public debate has developed in recent years around the narrative that the management of immigrants in Italy was an “organisational disaster” that the right wing wanted to remedy by “closing every border” through the police force.

The result of these failures is certified by the massive presence of immigrants in the poorer segments of the population. It should also be remembered that governments have often acted with contradictory policies. For example, during the Renzi (centre-left) government between 2014 and 2016, job security deteriorated, and agreements were made with Libya to reduce arrivals by sea. At the same time, during the populist government of 2018–2019, the citizenship income measure was launched to support the poorest people, the largest share of whom are immigrants. But despite these and other contradictions, governments have always tried to demonstrate that they favour migration that is necessary for vacant jobs.

This inconsistency in policies and these contradictions in rules for the integration of immigrants reveal two competing institutional logics:¹ one aimed at following the demands of the market, which we define as market-based, and another aimed at the welfare of the community and its needs, which we define as community-based. These two institutional logics are the latent patterns of material practices and values that Italy has built over the decades. As a result, several contradictory practices can be identified in practical solutions adopted during the past decades in both scenarios; solutions that have turned into a constitutive part of immigrants’ labour integration processes.

The discussion presented here is supported by the review of a large volume of secondary data. Documentary material we analysed contained reports and documentation derived from primary data available in academic publications and on government agencies’ websites, official documents on immigrants’ labour integration, journalistic investigations and

¹ Thornton and Ocasio (1999, p. 804) defined institutional logics as “the socially constructed, historical patterns of material practices, assumptions, values, beliefs, and rules by which individuals produce and reproduce their material subsistence, organize time and space, and provide meaning to their social reality”.

court documents related to the Riace case.² All these field materials present an ideal ground for an analysis of the contradictions, inconsistencies and non-linearity of governmental actions. The institutional logic approach has been chosen as a theoretical framework, as it is truly useful in an attempt to understand a complex phenomenon such as the labour integration of migrants.

Institutional Logics and Organisational Practices

As has been shown in many studies, migration to Southern Europe is perhaps the most difficult both to circumscribe and to describe. Apart from a few studies that addressed specific sectors such as farming (Giare et al., 2020), home care (Scrinzi, 2018), construction (Shepherd et al., 2021), manufacturing (Venturini & Villosio, 2017), and self-employment (Lintner, 2018), labour integration studies reveal a dense fabric of plots and relationships that people build in their daily practices which allow them to encounter expected and unexpected situations, where market rules are of little help. With the aim of following immigrants' trajectories, we looked at how people actually cope with constraints experienced in various local settings.

The institutional logics approach is one of several recent approaches that try to bring together macro and micro perspectives to analyse complex organisational situations. This theoretical framework provides an insight that explains how institutions both enable and constrain action (Thornton et al., 2012, p. vi). The concept of institutional logics helps to show that organisations are incrementally constructed according to multiple tracks, which may be linked to political choices, the historical development of welfare and labour systems or the development of local expertise. Collective actors, such as employment agency operators and

² Reference is here made to a particularly successful model of integration implemented in a municipality in the region of Calabria, which was cancelled following a series of accusations brought forward by political figures and followed by actions of the judiciary against the mayor Domenico-Mimmo Lucano.

employers' associations, influence the choices of both policy makers and immigrants, as do the international regulators and the intrinsic complexity of the "migration machine" (Greenwood et al., 2002; Plsek & Wilson, 2001). Some studies have revealed the centrality of rituals and public communication in orientating policy choices (Deephouse & Heugens, 2009). Such contributions offer a dynamic view of integration services, often misleadingly represented as a stable framework. In practice, this framework is incrementally reinforced by elements that support a long-term logic of action (Reay & Hinings, 2009). The simultaneous focus on both the institutional logics and on actual practices, the latter reinforced by, for example, Nicolini et al. (2003), or Gherardi (2016), makes it possible to counterpose the rational choice paradigm with new, relational ways of exploring organisations. As Lounsbury and colleagues have pointed out, such views have paved the way for a stream of research that can be called "a practice-driven institutionalism", which allows researchers to focus on "the collective performance of institutions as grounded in (and therefore inseparable from) the situated, emergent and generative practices that comprise institutions" (Lounsbury et al., 2021, p. 5).

Market- and Community-Based Institutional Logics

As shown in Table 8.1, the actions of the Italian government in the context of the labour market seem to follow on the one hand, a logic according to which enterprises and economic sectors are the indirect regulators of flows and entries into the labour market; and on the other hand, a logic of a solidaristic vision where access to the labour market is only one of the critical aspects of immigration. This second logic, only slightly recognisable in governmental actions, is instead widespread among NGOs, informal groups and local communities.

On a symbolic level, the market logic focuses on the difficulty of finding workers for less qualified positions, and on the need for business organisations to reduce labour costs and rules for the stability of their contracts. The community-based logic, on the other hand, recommends

Table 8.1 Institutional logics for immigrants' integration, adapted from Thornton (2004)

Feature	Market-based integration logic	Community-based integration logic
Economic system	Market capitalism	Welfare capitalism
Effect of symbolic analogy	Market as priority for development	Job priority as priority to better life
Source of identity	Work-based	Community-based
Source of legitimacy	Capital	Human values and solidarity
Source of authority	Enterprise needs, legislation	Personal needs, family needs
Informal mechanism of control	Awareness of local economic sectors and media and political narratives	NGOs, Catholic networks and informal communication about migrants' experiences
Formal mechanism of control	Laws and regulations that make migrants easy to manage (limited police monitoring of compliance with labour contracts)	Welfare, networks of local contact persons, ethnically based networks, parishes, business districts that activate people and resources to support when needed
Organisational form	Market-based, competitive	Ethnic-based associations, civil rights associations, cooperatives, charities, parishes
Investment logic	Workforce for capital	Migrants as opportunities for a better society

following the path of informality and spontaneous solidarity in various social circles such as the Catholic communities, the political Left, and the non-profit sector (Ambrosini, 2011). According to the latter logic, the market is simply a stimulus to look for the best access to an occupation, on the assumption that for social and small-medium enterprises, immigrant workers are a resource, as they will become integrated sooner or later into the local networks in cities and towns. The actual interventions are guided above all by people's needs, and their need to find security and a stable job. The best example of such reasoning is the common event of immigrant women being routed to home care services for the elderly. In

the last 20 years, this route has been particularly used by solidarity circles, which are aware of the strong demand for such services.

Since 2000 there have been two clear channels of access to the labour market in Italy: one linked to sectoral quotas provided by the government from year to year by decree, but clearly insufficient to cope with the complexity of the economic sectors; and the other consisting of circumventing the rules and allowing regularisation if immigrants found any employer in the territory (sometimes real employers were mixed with fictitious employers).³

The alliance between informal networks, word-of-mouth, and the needs of families and businesses fuelled the attempt to circumvent employment regulations, multiplying the ways in which migrants entered Italian territory. Many analyses confirmed that without this massive and confusing entry, it would not have been possible to meet the growing demand for labour in care services and small businesses.

Both these logics have become radicalised in recent years. On the one hand, businesses demanded, and obtained, an increasing flexibilisation of

³The debate in Italy on this issue is always very relevant. It is news in recent weeks that entrepreneurs are calling for increased entry quotas for migrant workers to meet the needs of the domestic market. In recent days, the Minister of Agriculture Francesco Lollobrigida had aired '500,000 regular entry permits available' in two years, while the Minister of the Interior, Matteo Piantedosi, foresees about 100,000 visas for 2023: more than the 82,705 foreseen by the DPCM flows of 2022 but insufficient for businesses. 'At least 205,000 would be needed, of foreign workers. So many were requested by entrepreneurs on the occasion of the flows decree of 2021, the one with 69,700 entries: applications three times the supply,' writes *Repubblica* in a long article dedicated yesterday to untraceable workers and to the difficulties of employers 'forced', according to the Viminale's intentions, to verify before each recruitment the unavailability of Italian residents to occupy that specific position.

Some significant data: 'In agriculture we need 100 thousand workers that we cannot find,' says Romano Magrini from the Coldiretti.

Furthermore, Bankitalia says that 375 thousand new employees are needed to implement the Italian NRRP; Fillea CGIL estimates that in the construction sector alone 90 thousand specialised figures will be needed this year and 150 thousand between now and 2026. Anceferr president Vito Miceli asks for a contract to immediately include the asylum seekers in training on construction sites. The companies qualified by the Italian State Railways (RFI) for the execution of railway works need a thousand more workers, "highly qualified profiles, from carpenters to drivers of railway vehicles on construction sites", who "need very long periods of training, even a year". This shows a lack of qualified workers that has long been denounced by small enterprises throughout Italy. According to Unioncamere-Anpal data, in 2022 these realities reported difficulties in finding 1,406,440 workers, equal to 42.7% of the overall planned recruitments. If the field is narrowed down to the handicraft sector, the number rises to 50.2% , equal to 263,980 unavailable workers (<https://www.tempi.it/migranti-lavoratori-introvabili/>, retrieved in march 2023).

employment contracts; on the other hand, the third sector went through various attempts to make the community-based model profitable and widespread.

Especially interesting is the combination of these logics in terms of actual arrangements. In fact, both logics have always relied on similar practices, which are not always consistent with the two opposing logics. Such hybrid practices make clear the incoherence and inconsistency of the Italian model. To begin with, the institutional logic orientated towards the needs of the market and the capital permits entrepreneurs to support certain welfare practices. At the same time, initiatives consistent with the community-based logic can intertwine with business practices that are helpful to immigrants. This combination has been pursued so extensively that sometimes intervention by the courts has been required to mitigate excesses.

The Community-Based Model: The Riace Ambiguity

Riace is a small Calabrian village of 1825 inhabitants that has become world famous thanks to its model of welcoming migrants, developed in the late 1990s. The beginning of what became known as the *Riace Model* is usually traced back to 1998, when 200 refugees from Kurdistan arrived on the Calabrian coast by boat. The Città Futura Association was created at the same time, to help the newly landed immigrants by hosting them in old or abandoned houses whose owners had emigrated.

Thanks to the innovative model of inclusion developed year on year, Riace was able to apply the SPRAR model for the Calabria Region (the acronym stands for the Protection System for Asylum Seekers and Refugees, which lasted until 2018). The novelty of this event lay in how the community-based logic was adopted by a municipality in a depressed and remote area. The mayor, Mimmo (Domenico) Lucano, activated the system in the municipality, while also gaining some external financing. The system supported micro-entrepreneurial activities in handicrafts, agriculture and eco-tourism, which resulted in jobs for both immigrants

and locals. The Riace Model earned admiration all over the world, as it not only accepted asylum seekers, but also helped them and its own inhabitants to design new life paths. The widespread reception of immigrants in Riace over almost two decades has also revitalised a village that was economically suffering and demographically depopulated. In 2006, Mimmo Lucano was listed by *Fortune* as one of the 50 most influential people in the world.

The main features of the Riace Model as introduced by Lucano were as follows:

1. Local housing resources were used to support widespread reception and mobility of people, in line with suggestions by many scholars (see e.g. Schönfelder & Axhausen, 2003).
2. In order to cover the delays in the arrival of national funding for hosting projects, a kind of virtual currency was created and used in Riace. A special banknote was created and accepted in local economic activities; it was converted into euros as soon as the national funds were disbursed by the national Government.
3. Internships were used to integrate both immigrants and Riace residents into local economic activities, thus providing a new economic and social opportunity for the local citizens, who could benefit from the reception system for asylum seekers.
4. Many immigrants and residents found employment in local workshops, revitalising trades that had faded in previous years, such as ceramics, handloom weaving and wool spinning, but also organising workshops for food conservation, milk processing, baking bread and producing chocolate. An old mill with millstones was restored and provided with modern equipment to produce olive oil. In 2018, a didactic farm was also inaugurated in Riace, where immigrants and locals could together breed animals and cultivate local products with ecologically sustainable methods. In addition, thanks to a loan of €51,000 provided by Banca Etica, several long-abandoned houses were transformed (with the permission of their owners) into tourist

accommodation.⁴ At the same time, ecotourism initiatives were promoted. A new recycling system offered further opportunities for employment.

5. The repopulation of the village also revitalised the local educational circuit: schools at all levels (starting with daycare), recreated classes that had disappeared due to the demographic crisis.

In Riace, the path to work has been opened due to intense activities, which were possible without the presence of companies asking for workers. Amazingly, these activities brought together the few opportunities in the area, and from these few resources a network of relationships that had been lost was reborn.

I always thought that welcoming people into depopulated villages helped to revive a sense of identity. Communities where only natives live are, in my opinion, not an ideal model; there is no growth, no cross-fertilisation in places like these. I have always considered what we have created over the years as something spontaneous and beyond borders. (Mimmo Lucano)⁵

Houses were empty and the local economy was paralysed. (Mimmo Lucano)⁶

In this context, the prevalence of community-based logic is very clear. Mimmo Lucano placed the key to his interventions in the concept of solidarity within a community. The creation of employment opportunities in an abandoned territory was possible because he managed to convince others that the task of a community is to be ready to welcome strangers. This belief probably led him to make some ambiguous arrangements that led to him being accused in 2018 of misappropriating resources for personal gain. Various media enquiries confirmed that these actions were dictated by a largely symbolic approach to rules and

⁴ Banca Etica (Bank Ethics) is an Italian credit institution that aims to operate according to the principles of ethical finance. Its experience is part of The Global Alliance for Banking on Values (GABV), an independent network of major banks that operate worldwide inspired by the principles of ethical finance.

⁵ https://espresso.repubblica.it/attualita/2022/07/04/news/villaggio_globale_riace_ripopolato-356498761/, accessed 2022-07-28.

⁶ <https://thevision.com/attualita/riace-modello-villaggio/>, accessed 2022-07-28.

regulations. His commitment to the community and to the various actions serving to promote the territory and various businesses came first. The following excerpt is from what the judges wrote when they sentenced the former mayor, together with 17 collaborators, to 13 years in prison and a massive €700,000 fine.

[The recordings show a] predatory logic of the public resources coming from the SPRAR, CAS and MSNA projects, increasingly subservient to their personal appetites, often declined in political terms, and satisfied by exploiting to their advantage the system of migrant reception which, from being the primary and appreciable objective of those subsidies, became a convenient screen behind which to conceal the conspicuous embezzlement of public money that they carried out, for exclusively individual ends. (1st Grade Court Sentence)

The judges tried precisely the “arrangements” that the solidaristic logic imposes on those who act in a complex context, which includes the use of public funds. With those funds, the mayor provided opportunities to open workshops and to create social enterprises that would strengthen inclusion and integration in the village. Some of these funds were used to buy an olive oil mill and reopen olive oil production, creating opportunities for the local population and immigrants alike. The tactic was to fill abstract official rules with actual content that was justified by traditional local practices. Even at present, when many public funds have been closed, the reputation of some of the businesses thus created in the village of Riace continues:

They learn about it by word of mouth. Among them are those who have completed their reception projects in the SAI network but don't know where to go. There are also those who are escaping from the violence of their families. An example? Last week a pregnant Nigerian woman arrived here with two children. She came here because she knew they would find an open door, because despite everything we don't leave anyone on the street. (Mimmo Lucano)⁷

⁷<https://www.micromega.net/riace-processo-mimmo-lucano/>, accessed 2022-07-28.

This quote also confirms the institutional logic adopted, and it emphasises that the arrangements to make integration possible still take place in the area. Among these initiatives is the above-mentioned cooperative for the collection of waste for recycling, which is carried out with the help of donkeys as the streets of the village are too narrow to allow cars to pass. In this case, the organisational form is unique, but even this marks a continuing relationship between institutional logics and organisational practices.

To understand the Riace case better, it is important to point out that the creation of inclusive paths was possible because some rules, which govern the management of public funds as well as economic services of general interest, were interpreted in a broad way and/or were not completely observed. Yet it must be emphasised that the purpose was not to act illegally, but to support a system that was understood in terms of its positive effects on immigrants and the local territory. The social and economic development generated by the Riace version of the system has, despite some formal irregularities, embodied the community-based institutional logic through the arrangements that impacted the lives and freedoms of individuals. Those arrangements are supported by a communitarian vision:

It might sound like an exaggeration, but Riace has somehow challenged the capitalist system with the force of irreverence and disrespect. (Mimmo Lucano)⁸

There are still many activities going on in the Global Village of Riace. The textile and carpentry workshops, the social bakery, the Human Rights library and Radio Aut are still active. There is also a food bank that provides each family in need with a weekly shopping voucher, and the medical clinic, where three doctors examine (free of charge) both refugees and residents.

Riace's peculiarity is not only the result of the project and the vision of one person (the mayor) and a small group of his collaborators; it is also a brilliant case of organisational practices that have helped to develop a system of associations and cooperatives which supported the project itself.

⁸ As above.

Gender and Work Integration: A Complex Covenant

Another useful case of labour integration in Italy is that relating to the employment status of immigrant women. In Italy, the majority (52%) of immigrants are women, which translates to 2.6 million women from 198 different countries and territories of the world, particularly from Romania, Albania and Morocco. The percentage of employed women is slightly lower at 42%, similar to the employment rate for Italian women. Employment for more than half of the women is limited to three occupations: domestic helpers, carers and office and commercial cleaners (IDOS, 2021).

This picture confirms the existence of a “hidden” space in which the female labour force is most frequently found. This situation has been further aggravated by the pandemic; reports confirm that women’s difficulties were intensified by structural inequalities, such as horizontal segregation that is particularly widespread in Italy. At the same time, as intersectionality scholars have highlighted (Cho et al., 2013), the employment difficulties of the female workforce are compounded by the difficulties of being immigrants and by working in less visible sectors with low protection contracts.

Women are the workers most involved in processes of labour integration that we have defined as community-based, and this means they are most sought after in informal circuits that respond to the demand for home care, care services and support to businesses. In most cases, their migration route follows two flows: one by sea or across unmanned borders, and the other pseudo-legal one that allows permanent employment relationships to be established. Their first jobs are often exhausting, such as harvesting; then follows a move to urban areas and sectors where service labour is sought, such as in domestic care services and care for the elderly and disabled. In this area, too, the Italian state fails to clearly

define the access processes and temporary contracts, even after recent reforms of employment contracting in a liberalist spirit. But these spaces of underpaid employment do not affect all women workers in the same way. In fact, it has been argued for many years that the slowness and cumbersomeness of the mechanisms for granting residence permits to immigrant women forces them to accept any kind of employment, which in some cases amounts to exploitation and violence.

Most immigrants (men and women) have work experience before leaving their country of origin; their enrolment into the Italian labour market is, in general, characterised by experiences in precarious contexts but for which a higher salary (compared with their national standards) is paid. This scenario is due to various circumstances such as a lack of knowledge of the language or the failure to recognise any qualifications obtained abroad (in particular, outside the borders of the European Union). These circumstances apply particularly often to foreign women who, in Italy, see their employment chances greatly reduced and are directed to specific segments of the job market (Istat, 2018).

According to a survey by Istat (2018), the work and employment paths of immigrants in Italy are characterised by an occupational downgrading, and by a more general entrapment in ethnic networks, which often creates an obstacle to occupational careers. However, the same ethnic networks that often contribute to slowing down the employment of foreigners can, in some circumstances, favour other employment paths, such as entrepreneurial ones. A recent analysis conducted on the trend of foreign companies in Italy disaggregated by gender shows that the entrepreneurial behaviour of immigrant women is still strongly influenced by the ethnic contexts of origin.

Colombelli et al. (2020) analysed the trend of foreign companies in Italy from 2002 to 2013 and observed some elements that allow us to make hypotheses about the behaviour of foreign (especially women) entrepreneurs in Italy. The analyses conducted by the authors suggest that female businesses led by foreign women also have the potential to push other foreign women to create new entrepreneurial initiatives. Through “learning-by-example” mechanisms, individuals learn new skills inspired

by the observation of role models with whom they can identify (Gibson, 2004). According to the role identification theory, however, the degree of similarity between the would-be entrepreneur and the role model matters. The extent to which the role model inspires the would-be entrepreneur depends upon the perceived compatibility between the role model behaviour and their own behavioural opportunities (Slack, 2005). It follows that women entrepreneurs—especially if they come from similar cultural backgrounds—seem to be a source of positive inspiration for other women, who see in them an example and a chance for personal and professional growth and emancipation.

Another aspect highlighted by the research is that foreign women seem more likely to develop strong bonds and connections. Positive testimonies describe success as the result of meeting the right people at the right time. These encounters, which are often connoted by relevant solidarity logics, confirm that there are no pathways and/or programmes that are structured by the reception systems; rather, they are the result of bottom-up actions attentive to the opportunities of the moment.

These situations reveal a complexity that characterises the life of a working woman in Italy, to which are added the burdens of being an immigrant. The presence of informal welfare systems makes it possible to deal with the problems related to the lack of services, but the same informality can lead to non-compliance with labour contracts, not granting time off and the lack of full recognition of welfare rights for immigrant families and their children (Catanzaro & Colombo, 2009). These developments can never be interpreted in one way only. Ambiguous situations are in many cases attractive to women workers who can, for example, move faster in a market with a high demand for labour (Scaglioni & Diodati, 2021). Also, as sometimes happens, women workers can denounce the situation and obtain financial benefits to which they are entitled once they have the security of a work permit. One could say that these irregular practices function as compensation for the many problematic management situations encountered by women in their various insertion pathways (see also Chap. 6).

Final Remarks

As Dalla Zuanna (2013, p. 47) pointed out, it is necessary to “look at the concreteness of the (integration) process because the implicit model of migrant integration in Italy is defined as a mixture of regulations and practices that have been built up over the last twenty years”. The context described confirms the lack of a functioning system of immigration laws, and the absence of a system of procedures that would favour an effective integration of migrant citizens.

It should also be stressed that the lack of an a priori defined integration model in Italy has not entirely prevented the development of some positive examples of immigrants’ integration. Local practices have been the effective response to various situations, as we have seen in the case of Riace and women entrepreneurs. Effective adaptation tactics have had a great impact on immigrants’ labour integration without, however, ever becoming the institutional logic in the country. While policy makers have failed in recent decades to build an effective system for the integration of immigrants, the history and traditions of Italy have in some cases contributed, albeit indirectly, to the establishment of bottom-up integration pathways (especially within the labour market).

Historically, Italy appears very differentiated: a nation that remains strongly rooted in local and regional identities and traditions. While it is true that the majority of immigrants in Italy are located in the productive areas of the country (the north-east and north-west), it is also true that the national production chain is strongly connected to small towns and suburban areas, especially in provinces around large urban centres (Dalla Zuanna, 2013; Di Sciullo, 2020). This aspect has allowed immigrants to be territorially distributed throughout Italy, in some cases even occupying certain remote areas (known as fragile areas, their fragility due to the lack of services and infrastructure and their geographically remote location; Osti & Ventura, 2012).

Italy has been experimenting with the consolidation of the presence of immigrant citizens whose settlement has taken on the character of ethnic polycentrism (Pittau, 1999), taking into consideration different issues and characteristics in different local settings. No wonder that in

such a situation an evident competition between two institutional logics emerges. Yet multiple studies and analyses conducted in recent years have revealed the richness of solutions that, rather than deriving directly from these institutional logics, rely on specific local opportunities that are difficult to reproduce. As seen in the Riace story, and in women's access to various paths to employment and job security, a fundamental role is played by local arrangements and eventually by particularly relevant people who become the "directors" of the various implemented actions.

Such arrangements are presented in Table 8.2, where we attempt to map those organisational practices that put the two logics in dialogue with each other, through a multiplicity of arrangements made by those who pursue these institutional logics as their priority objective. In this

Table 8.2 Arrangements provided at situated organisational practices level for immigrants

Feature	Market-based arrangements	Community-based arrangements
Economic system	Support for workforce and new businesses	Norms and regulations for basic welfare
Effect of symbolic analogy	Promotion for migrants with (west-defined) "good manners"	Economic support, business and skills attainment
Source of identity	Means for housing and family re-unification	Means to support independence and ethnic-based services/businesses
Source of legitimacy	Economic aid	Community support or personal project
Source of authority	Local network and support for integration	Allowing people to be underpaid and accept precarious working contracts
Informal mechanism of control	Informal communication network for jobs, undeclared work	Application for formal solidarity projects, local commitment
Formal mechanism of control	Workaround for norms about working conditions	Formal inconsistent working contracts allowed
Investment motivation	Interest to keep companies' networks competitive and supportive	Interest to allow a soft access, including some segregation (often ethnically based)

way, we hope to present a reliable description of the Italian situation that is typical of the recent decades.

Public discourses and institutional logics fight their battles in the political arena and the media, but locally they are characterised by continuous agreements and arrangements which allow a slow but progressive path for immigrants' integration into the Italian labour system. This obviously does not solve the weaknesses of the inequality structure of the labour system in Italy. Immigrants must go through all the classic routes of entering at the lowest level of rights: they face precariousness, contractual and wage discrimination, and lack of services and welfare. Each person entering the labour market must find some kind of balance that may turn into security and guaranteed rights over time. This final goal is supported both by those actors who support the market-based system and by those who support the community-based logic.

These arrangements are particularly useful in the Italian context because they allow the actors to use the different institutional logics in combination with the organisational context. The organisational practices seem to confirm what has already been indicated by Gherardi (2016), who highlighted the role of "agencement" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1988; Callon, 2007), and "formativeness". These two characteristics of the practices underline the situated nature of actions that take place outside of established models.

These practices in the concept of agencement become a space for learning awareness that allows us to decipher the practice context and understand it from the perspective of labour integration (agency). With the concept of formativeness, we refer to the learning of practices that immigrants perform in "constructing" in turn the conditions for integration. The practices of agencement and formativeness allow different life histories to intertwine with the practices needed to best orientate their own and others' trajectories. It is, therefore, important to study at the same time the institutional logics followed by traditional actors (legislators, business associations, trade unions) and those followed by the enormous constellation of local networks (agencies, families, informal groups and networks, NGOs).

Over the years, and through continuous tinkering, Italy has learned both to cope with the limits of its non-model and to distribute

competitive advantages, in ways that sometimes privilege the fabric of the productive world, and sometimes that of social networks animated by inclusion intentions. In this dialectic, opportunities and constraints are distributed without a precise rule. It is up to immigrant workers to decipher these complexities, as organisational practices may sometimes foster trajectories within the classic entrepreneurial world, while at other times they favour trajectories that intertwine with the third sector and the worlds of solidarity. Yet the overall outcome remains problematic: Italy may continue to hide behind institutional logics (more market vs more solidarity), turning its gaze away from the incremental opportunities of the inclusion system that could guarantee a better programming of the markets and a better response to the needs of the immigrant labour force.

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9

Integrating Recent Refugees into the Labour Market: The Action Net in Austria

Almina Bešić and Renate Ortlieb

Introduction

We welcome with open arms those Ukrainians who have to flee from Putin's bombs, and I am proud of the warm welcome that Europeans have given them. We are mobilising every effort and every euro to support our Eastern Member States – to host and take care of these refugees. We will do this in full solidarity.

This is a statement made by the European Commission's president Ursula von der Leyen on 27 February 2022, shortly after the Russian attack on Ukraine. It shows a sentiment across the European Union (EU) that Ukrainian refugees deserve solidarity and help from their European

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neighbours. Since the start of the Russian invasion, more than seven million Ukrainian refugees have fled the country, mostly to neighbouring EU countries (UNHCR, 2022). A smaller number are moving to other EU countries, including Austria, which is the context country of this book chapter.

Europe is thus the centre of recent refugee movements, described by historians as the largest on the continent after World War II. This leads to questions of an “effective” integration of these people in European societies. Thereby, policy makers and researchers alike consider labour market integration as the crucial piece in the integration puzzle of people settling in a new country (e.g. Dustmann et al., 2017; Brell et al., 2020).

However, refugees face various obstacles when entering host country labour markets. Previous research (see Lee et al., 2020 for an overview) has uncovered and grouped such obstacles operating at the institutional level (including integration policies), the organisational level (including a lack of support measures by public and private institutions) and the individual level (including a lack of necessary language skills). Moreover, besides the political support at the highest echelons of European politics, other actors are crucial in the labour market integration process of newcomers, including public and private support organisations, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), as well as employers (e.g. Ortlieb et al., 2020; Bešić et al., 2022).

Given the importance of employment for refugees, there is surprisingly little knowledge regarding the organisational environment of their labour market integration. This is the starting point of this book chapter. We analyse organisations and organising practices aimed at integrating refugees into the labour market, thereby showing the collective organising through the example of support in Austria. We focus on the wider organisational networks in which the support is embedded. The questions we address include: How is the labour market integration of refugees organised? How does the institutional context influence the organising of integration? How do organisations collaborate towards refugee employment?

We analyse these questions in the context of Austria, an EU country that has historically hosted a large number of people seeking refuge. In addition, the country has well-developed support structures aimed at labour market integration, against the backdrop of an overall restrictive migration and integration policy.

We further address these questions by comparing the developments following the 2015 refugee movements, whereby Austria became one of the few European countries with a large refugee population, as well as the recent movements due to the Ukrainian war. We identify contrasting developments in the integration of refugees since 2015 and in the light of the current movements from Ukraine.

Our theoretical basis is the action net framework developed by Czarniawska (2008), whereby we view refugee labour market integration as a complex action net in which individual and collective actors are connected to each other via certain actions. This action net is constructed and maintained through repeated behaviours, so that previous practices established in the action net are like sediments. In our example, practices that emerged around the refugee arrivals in 2015 serve as an interpretative template that helps to make sense of the arrival of Ukrainian refugees in 2022.

By addressing the organising of refugees as a collective endeavour and contrasting the developments in 2015 and recent movements, we are able to show, firstly, the interconnectedness of various actors in the integration process. Secondly, we show how integration is designed and implemented for diverse groups of refugees in the same context. Thereby, we outline how actors can learn from previous actions. At the same time, we show the cascading impact of the policy environment on refugee integration.

In this book chapter, we define refugees as persons who have crossed a national border to seek refuge and protection due to war, persecution or other circumstances that are life-threatening. This definition includes asylum seekers.

We proceed with an overview of the Austrian context, followed by a presentation of our theoretical background. We then outline the developments in organising refugee integration since 2015 and discuss them in the light of the current movements of people fleeing Ukraine.

The Austrian Context

Austria is an interesting context for studying the organisation of refugee labour market integration for at least two reasons. First, since 2015, a large number of people have applied for asylum in Austria (see Fig. 9.1) and about half of those have been granted asylum (see Fig. 9.2). In

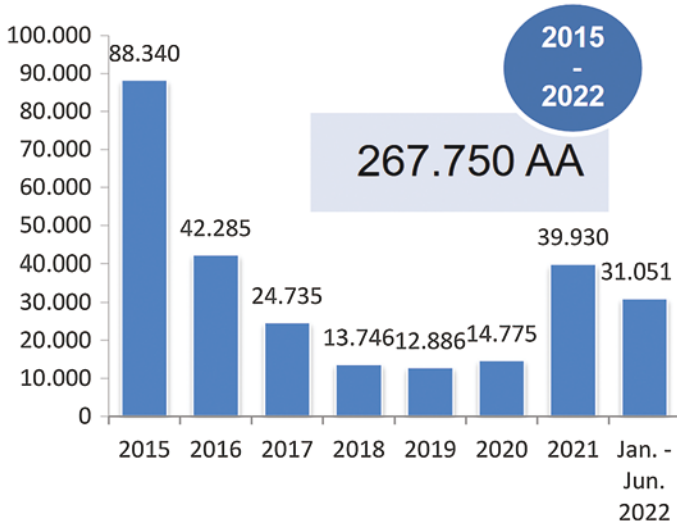


Fig. 9.1 Asylum applicants in Austria January 2015–June 2022. Source: BMI (2022)

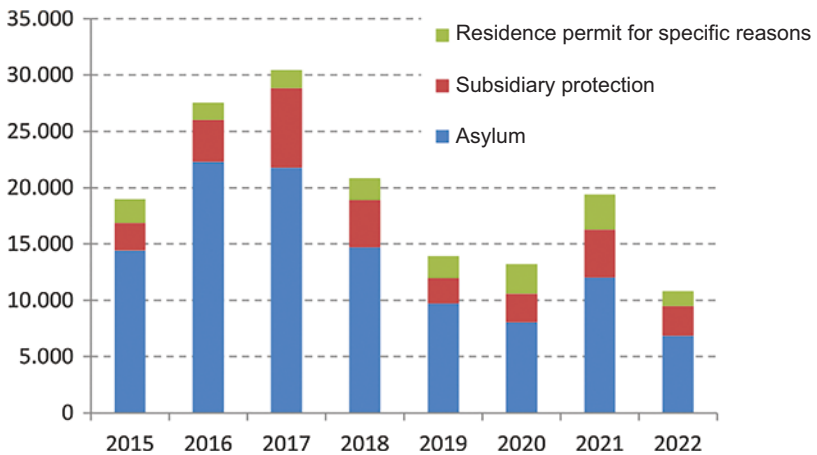


Fig. 9.2 Asylum decisions in Austria January 2015–June 2022. Source: BMI (2022)

addition, since the end of February 2022, almost 82,000 people fleeing Ukraine after the attacks by Russia have officially registered in Austria as seeking protection (as of the end of September 2022; UNHCR, 2022). This number is, however, only an estimate, as there is a high probability that some persons have not (yet) registered as they are located with friends or family, or that those that have registered have in the meantime travelled on or returned to Ukraine. Thus, it remains unclear exactly how many displaced persons remain in Austria and how many of those aim to stay longer (see Expert Council for Integration, 2022).

Second, various initiatives and programmes co-exist, which makes organising difficult. Austria has, since 2017, adapted the integration, and specifically labour market integration, policy towards assimilation (e.g. Bešić et al., 2021, 2022).

In the autumn of 2015, at the height of the refugee crisis, civil society and governmental agencies were quick to help the newcomers. The now famous “welcome culture” (*Willkommenskultur*) supported thousands of people in their first weeks in Austria (Kornberger et al., 2018; Meyer & Simsa, 2018). At the same time, agencies and public, private and non-profit service providers developed an array of measures specifically focusing on asylum seekers and refugees. In the subsequent years, however, the political mood changed. After a national election in 2016, a conservative government came to power with anti-immigration rhetoric (Rheindorf & Wodak, 2018). This had a profound impact on Austrian integration policy, specifically with regard to asylum seekers and refugees. The top priority of the Austrian government was re-focused from a humanitarian response towards a “labour market first” policy and thus the swift integration of refugees into the labour market became a top policy priority for the government (Angerer et al., 2020). This has led to a focus on seeing refugees first and foremost as job seekers, leading to cuts in specific support for these groups.

Labour market integration of refugees is governed by the Integration Act and the Labour Market Integration Act (*Integrationsgesetz and Integrationsjahrgesetz*), both passed in 2017. These acts outline specific integration criteria that immigrants from outside the EU need to fulfil to ensure their participation in Austrian society and its labour market.

Depending on their legal status, refugees need to meet various integration requirements. Recognised refugees (Geneva Convention refugees or those under subsidiary protection) without a job must sign an integration contract and take part in an Integration Year, in which labour market integration is expected to be achieved via various measures focusing on competence as well as job preparation measures (Ortlieb et al., 2020). Asylum seekers can participate in the Integration Year under certain circumstances (e.g. possessing German skills at A1 level, completion of compulsory schooling). In addition to the labour market integration focus, the Integration Year also aims to aid societal integration through components such as the values and orientations courses and language training. Recognised refugees have full access to the Austrian labour market. In contrast, asylum seekers have severely restricted access. Three months after submitting their asylum application, they can engage in seasonal work and harvesting or community services on a minimum wage basis.

The data available allows the cautious assessment that integrating refugees into the labour market takes a similar amount of time in Austria as in other western high-income countries (Brell et al., 2020). The latest official statistics show that of the people who received asylum in Austria between 2015 and 2017 and subsequently registered with the Austrian public employment service (*Arbeitsmarktservice*; AMS) as jobseekers or were in an AMS training programme, around 50 per cent were employed in July 2021 (Auer et al., 2021). The quality of these jobs is mixed, ranging from temporary low-skill jobs paid at the minimum wage to highly qualified positions with above-average salaries or good opportunities for further professional development (Ortlieb & Weiss, 2020).

Although Austria has been undergoing a period of economic growth, labour market integration for refugees remains challenging. The main barriers are institutional, including policies with regard to the recognition of foreign qualifications, as well as origin-based discrimination by employers, refugees' unfamiliarity with the Austrian labour market and their lack of social networks and credentials (Eggenhofer-Rehart et al., 2018; Verwiebe et al., 2019; Ortlieb et al., 2020).

The Action Net of Integrating Refugees into the Labour Market

To better understand how labour market integration of refugees is organised, it is helpful to map the underlying action net. Barbara Czarniawska (2008) proposed the notion of an action net to grasp ongoing organising. Adopting a constructionist perspective in the sense of Berger and Luckmann (1966), she described an action as “an event to which it is possible to attribute purpose or intention” (Czarniawska, 2008, p. 17). Manifold connections among numerous actions then constitute an action net that leads to an organisation—or, more generally speaking, something organised. As this approach highlights the processual, collaborative and flexible nature of organising, as well as the active doing that is necessary to make things happen, it is well suited to study the practical attempts of multiple actors to integrate refugees into the labour market.

In the following paragraphs, we describe the actions and actors collectively involved in the labour market integration of refugees. We start with general aspects that have emerged especially in the years after 2015 and then address the specifics of recent developments responding to the arrival of refugees from Ukraine. Contrasting the events related to the arrival of Ukrainians since spring 2022 with those of the years after 2015, when particularly large numbers of people from Syria, Afghanistan and Iraq arrived in Austria, allows for a better understanding of how an action net of refugee integration can emerge and change.

Figure 9.3 shows the integration action net with the interconnections of different actors and their activities, centred on refugees.

The Austrian government mainly operates through the Austrian Integration Fund (AIF) and the AMS. In addition, the federal states, and in particular the municipalities, have implemented numerous local programmes designed to help refugees find work. The AIF runs regional integration centres, whose main activities include counselling for refugees (and other newcomers), providing language courses (including certification of other institutions providing language training), providing value and orientation courses and managing the Integration Year (in cooperation with the AMS). For those refugees with full labour market access,

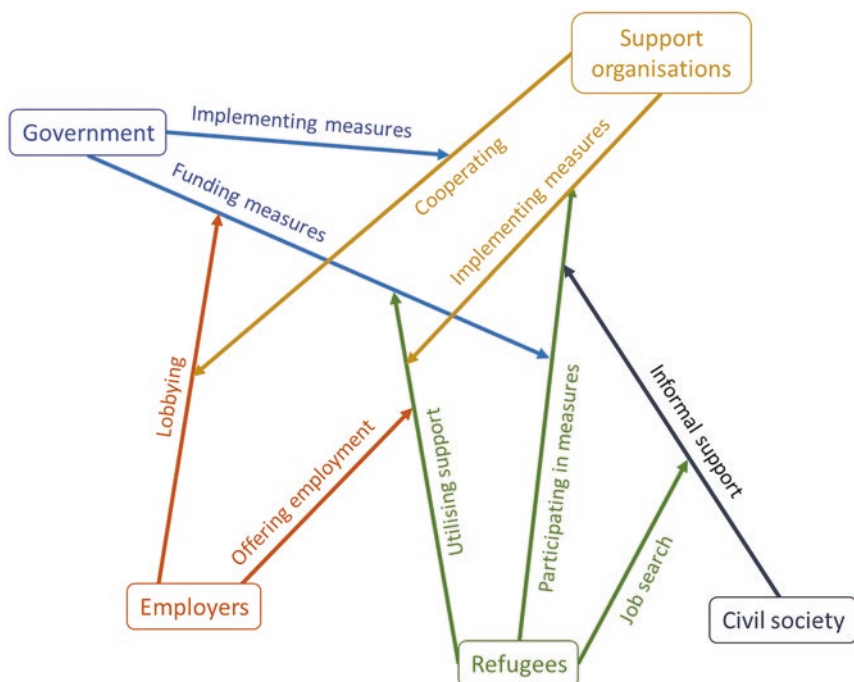


Fig. 9.3 Schematic representation of the action net of integrating refugees into the Austrian labour market

the AMS offers further services such as advice and guidance based on a skills assessment, wage subsidies for employment and qualification measures. AMS officers also decide on the participation in language courses, which are free of charge for the refugees. However, whereas the Austrian government emphasises the need to learn German, and language proficiency is a critical prerequisite for successful labour market integration (Cheng et al., 2021; Ortlieb et al., 2020), budget cuts in 2018 resulted in refugees only being offered free language courses up to A2 level. The refugees themselves must pay for more advanced levels. In addition, AMS teams specialised in counselling immigrants were abolished.

Refugees without jobs and not in education are obliged to register with the AMS. If they do not participate in integration-related measures they face serious consequences, including cuts in welfare and other public services by the AIF and AMS (Konle-Seidl, 2018). They can find a job

through the AMS job board and must prove to the AMS that they regularly apply for jobs with employers.

The AIF and the AMS cooperate with other support institutions, such as NGOs and other private service providers that deliver labour market support measures across the country. Support organisations and volunteers, who advise refugees, help them put together application documents, establish contact with potential employers and sometimes also accompany the refugees to job interviews, play an important role in helping refugees find employment in Austria (Ortlieb & Weiss, 2020; Verwiebe et al., 2019). One reason for this is that many employers have high expectations with regard to formal vocational qualifications and the cultural adaptability of refugees (Eggenhofer-Rehart et al., 2018). Support organisation staff and volunteers can often put in a good word for the refugees with employers and thus build trust (Ortlieb et al., 2021).

Employers are mainly represented via the employers and industry associations and have become more vocal recently (see further). Finally, a crucial pillar for support is the civil society, offering support across various integration domains.

How the Action Net Changed After the Arrival of Refugees from Ukraine

With the arrival of Ukrainian refugees in spring 2022, a new wave of solidarity emerged in Austrian society, accompanied by a strong political focus on labour market integration. Whereas in 2015 the civil society played a major role in the early integration, employers are now much more vocal and various initiatives by employer organisations and companies have emerged that aim at a quick labour market integration of Ukrainian refugees. Thus, we argue that the arrival of Ukrainian refugees has entrenched the labour market focus of the integration policies. We describe this in more detail further.

A major difference between 2015 and 2022 relates to the legal framework. As outlined in the contextual description earlier, the integration of asylum seekers and refugees that came into the country in 2015 is

governed by the two 2017 Integration Acts at the national level. In contrast, EU legislation governs the integration of refugees from Ukraine. For the first time in history, the EU invoked the temporary protection directive allowing Ukrainian citizens that are fleeing the Russian invasion the right to live and work in the EU.¹ This means that under this scheme, those who have been displaced as a result of the Russian invasion do not need to apply for asylum but immediately receive temporary protection status. This status, which allows free access to the labour market, health insurance and the educational system, is initially for one year but can be extended to three years. In addition, the Austrian government promised quick and unbureaucratic solutions for housing, education and employment. The fact that the refugees from Ukraine are allowed to work immediately (with higher minimum wages compared to asylum seekers from 2015) allows for a faster access to the labour market, even if some cannot work fully due to personal reasons or limited job offers.

Politicians and public media have also used a special label to denote Ukrainians: Displaced Persons (*Vertriebene*) instead of Refugees (*Geflüchtete; Flüchtlinge*). This linguistic distinction also made it easier in public discourse to justify unequal treatment of Ukrainians and earlier refugee cohorts. The temporary protection directive had already made this distinction at the EU level, and the Austrian government has followed suit.

Another new trend is the role of employers and employer associations, which are much more present compared to the 2015 refugee movements. The AMS has initiated various information campaigns for Ukrainian citizens focusing on access to the labour market, but also showing connections to other actors in the action net (see Fig. 9.3). The AMS has developed an information website in four languages (Ukrainian, Russian, English and German), with abundant information about labour market access (AMS, 2022). In addition, employers have been especially active with various job portals (e.g. <https://austrianjobs-for-ukraine.at/>) advertising jobs specifically for Ukrainians. This can be connected with their corporate social responsibility efforts (Lee & Szkudlarek, 2021),

¹This is the case for 26 out of 27 EU Member States. Denmark, which holds an opt-out on EU immigration policies, implemented similar protection legislation.

although there is a potential danger of discrimination, as addressing a specific nationality in job ads is against the law.

The civil society again plays a crucial role. While many initiatives were developed quickly, including a scheme where private citizens could register if they wanted to host Ukrainian refugees, a certain “helper fatigue” is already visible, as reported by the media and NGOs involved in refugee support (e.g. ORF, 2022).

A final crucial difference compared to 2015 is the composition of the people coming into the country. The majority of refugees from Ukraine are women with children. The level of education is different, with initial data for Austria showing that Ukrainian refugees have (on average) a mid-level or tertiary education (Dörfler-Bolt et al., 2022). This difference might hamper labour market integration, as these women may be unable to work without childcare or unwilling to take a job that is below their level of qualifications. Finally, in the first months of the war, the majority of refugees wanted to return to Ukraine. While it is uncertain if, how and when this will be feasible, it might affect the refugees’ integration motives in the short and medium terms.

Discussion

In this chapter, we wanted to show that the labour market integration of refugees can be viewed as a complex action net involving multiple levels of governance. It also shows how the activities and relationships evolve over time. Tracing developments over time allowed us to show which factors act as barriers and which act as enablers. Thus, it can be claimed that there is great potential for change, which is actualised: for example, employers are much more vocal in 2022 compared to 2015. Such potential should be considered when designing integration policies.

The example of Austria shows how the importance of different actors also changes over time. This can best be seen in the role of employers in the integration of Ukrainian newcomers in 2022 (who have the right to work) compared to asylum seekers in 2015 and later (who had limited access to the labour market). Such changes reveal the complexity of coordination and cooperation between different actors in the action net of refugees’ labour market integration.

A significant number of the changes can be explained by the political and societal framing of Ukrainians as Europeans; in particular, non-Muslims. This led to complaints about the unequal treatment of refugees from different backgrounds. Yet it is also clear that the Austrian government and civil society have learned a lot from the past, which has enabled them to respond more quickly and effectively to the arrival of Ukrainians. The current labour market situation also plays an important role. In spring 2022, as the result of the pandemic, the shortage of skilled workers was greater than ever before, especially in the healthcare and technology sectors. This is another reason why employers showed a great willingness to hire Ukrainians quickly.

Still, a “labour market first” policy should be looked at critically, as refugees need time to adjust to a new working environment, and other integration domains need to be taken into account. Finally, as has become clearly visible in the varying forms of support from the civil society, the initial wave of solidarity quickly recedes, whereas integration needs to be looked at as an investment over time.

Various questions for further research remain, including issues concerning the labour market integration of persons without a longer-term perspective in the receiving country (expats), as well as the issues of collaboration between various actors involved in the integration process over time. The role of employers is crucial here. While many are willing to employ Ukrainians, the Expert Council for Integration in Austria has revealed a number of potential difficulties, such as the fact that the temporary protection status of Ukrainians makes longer-term investment in them unattractive for companies. As it is uncertain how long the war in Ukraine will last and whether those who are in Austria now will stay longer, ensuring proper integration into the labour market and beyond remains a challenging task.

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10

Speaking Swedish: The Role of Language Skills in an Integration Support Project

Hanna Hellgren

Many efforts were undertaken to support immigrants' integration into the labour market in response to the high influx of refugees to Sweden in 2014–2015. Some of these initiatives were aimed at persons who are ubiquitously described as “low-skilled immigrants”, that is, immigrants with short or no educational backgrounds. Such initiatives consisted of a wide variety of activities, including fast tracks, internship and mentoring programmes, and other forms of workplace-based learning. They also included Swedish for Immigrants (SFI) language courses as an important means to support immigrants into employment during early settlement.

Proficiency in the majority language of the new country of residence has been widely seen as one of the critical conditions for successful integration into the labour market and society (Gazzola et al., 2019; Kusterer & Bernhard-Oettel, 2020; Bešić et al., 2022; Kanas & Kosyakova, 2022). Several scholars have emphasised the positive effects of language training

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and documented language skills on immigrants' employability (Cheung & Hellström, 2017; Månsson & Delander, 2017; Trygged et al., 2021). Other scholars have remained more cautious, arguing that formal requirements for language proficiency are merely symbolic, and it remains highly uncertain whether or not, and if so, how, they increase immigrants' chances of employment (Ek et al., 2021). Yet the positive outlook on language acquisition has been mirrored in an increasing number of labour market programmes combining language training with internship and mentorship, especially for low-skilled immigrants (Febring & Henry, 2022). Nevertheless, the exact meaning of "language skills", and the degree of language skills required for successful integration, tends to differ from one context to another and often remains ambiguous. In this chapter, I draw on a constructionist perspective on skills and competence to explore the role of language requirements in the efforts to organise a labour market integration project aimed at supporting immigrants into employment. More specifically, I illustrate how demands for language skills emerged as part of the project work, and how these ideas, in turn, shaped the outcomes of the project.

One of the main challenges in the early stages of the project was matching participants with employers; that is, finding places for possible internships and employment, often with language skills at the centre of the matching attempts. Even though the collaborative actions of public officials, language educators, internship coordinators and entrepreneurs initially had different goals and interests, language skills emerged as the common denominator in discussions on the possible employment of participants. This agreement was followed by an implementation of language tests during the audition stages, which in turn resulted in a re-categorisation of the group to be targeted. The longitudinal study of these processes (3.5 years) included ethnographic methods, mainly observations (including shadowing), and interviews.

The chapter starts with a short presentation of the study's background, the pervasive assumptions concerning the role of the Swedish language as a condition for employment, and the theoretical perspective used in the study. Thereafter follows the description of the matching process that led to the implementation of language tests for participants. A concluding discussion focuses on the role of language skills as a tool for classification.

What Level of Swedish Is the “Right” One for Employability?

Swedish language skills are increasingly described as necessary for immigrants’ integration in Sweden (see e.g. Rooth & Åslund, 2006; Cheung & Hellström, 2017; Ek et al., 2021). Studies have shown repeatedly that the Swedish labour market reacts positively to immigrants with formal competences and well-developed language skills, and the latter has become a more important criterion for employment in Sweden than in other Western countries (OECD, 2016; Bussi & Pareliussen, 2017; Ek et al., 2020). Studies have also shown that because employers deem immigrant applicants to have lower educational backgrounds and to lack appropriate language skills in comparison with native candidates, they choose persons with the highest level of language skills (Delmi, 2015; Vesterberg, 2016; Irastorza & Bevelander, 2017; Joyce, 2019).

Developing immigrants’ proficiency in the Swedish language has also been the focus of multiple political efforts (Skolinspektionen, 2018; Gren, 2020). The workplace has been seen as a particularly suitable setting for language learning, as it provides the opportunity to both use Swedish in everyday interactions and learn the specific terminology for a particular profession (Prop. 1997/98:16; Prop. 2009/10:60; Prop. 2016/17:175). In actual fact, attempts to combine language learning with workplace-based initiatives are nothing new, and several studies have shown that “successful” integration is often understood as the result of efforts by the labour market *and* the rest of society, including completed SFI courses (Bonfanti & Nordlund, 2012; Bussi & Pareliussen, 2017; Månsson & Delander, 2017).

The value attached to Swedish language skills is mirrored in the status given to Swedish for Immigrants (SFI) language courses as part of the establishment programme organised by the state and the municipalities to support newly arrived refugees into the labour market. The establishment programme is offered to the new arrivals during their first two years in Sweden and consists of mandatory SFI and civic orientation courses, which make up at least half of the time recent immigrants spend on the programme, as well as preparatory employment courses. The state,

through the Public Employment Service (SPES), has the primary responsibility for the initial contact with new arrivals and for the coordination of various activities, while the municipalities are responsible for the delivery of SFI and civic orientation courses.

In addition to the establishment programme, many municipalities see a need for further efforts to support the new arrivals (Statskontoret, 2021), not least because once they complete the programme, many refugees remain unemployed and are transferred to the municipalities for further support, thus requiring additional resources. In supporting immigrants into employment to avoid these costs, municipalities have increasingly become involved in developing and implementing an array of labour market integration initiatives (see e.g. Brorström & Diedrich, 2022), many of which are directed at “low-skilled refugees”, and include some form of language training (see e.g. Diedrich & Hellgren, 2018, 2021; Statskontoret, 2021). These efforts are supported by earlier literature that has argued that language skills are crucial for employability (Gazzola et al., 2019).

Still, Fossati and Liechti (2020) cautioned that employers only see participation in activities supporting entry into the labour market as positive if they themselves have a generally positive attitude regarding employability of immigrants and refugees. In the same vein, Kusterer and Bernhard-Oettel (2020) argued that conceptualisation of immigrants’ employability is often contradictory and based on previous assumptions and stereotypes (see also Diedrich & Styhre, 2013). Spehar (2021), too, showed that individual factors such as language skills are often used to explain employability or lack thereof, at the expense of such explanations as ethnic discrimination and organisational barriers. Such individualising assumptions shift the responsibility for integration from those responsible for developing policies and programmes to those subjected to them (Vesterberg, 2015, 2016). It so happens that the very design of integration initiatives is based on a characterisation of a specific ethnicity or assumption that immigrants do not sufficiently value issues important to native Swedes, such as gender equality or freedom of speech. The workplace is thus not only a site providing access to work but also for teaching “Swedishness” and “Swedish values” (see also Diedrich & Omanović, 2023). Skilful use of language is often seen as a result of successfully

learning such matters. Vesterberg (2015, 2016) also pointed out that the lower the level of formal education of an immigrant, the more proficiency in the majority language becomes that person's main qualification in the labour market.

To sum up, the earlier studies illustrated well how the meaning and purpose of language skills differ relating to employability, and how the requirements for such skills are often unclear. The study I describe in this chapter explores how requirements for language skills emerge as part of a project aimed at supporting recent immigrants into the labour market, shift over time and influence how the project unfolds. To do so, I rely on a constructivist approach and do not view identities, categories and ideas as pre-given or as having a neutral and stable core (Czarniawska, 2014). Among other things, this means that by using words and language, people establish and maintain social relationships, build and preserve societal structures and construct norms, such as those defining the necessary language requirements (Hornscheidt & Landqvist, 2014). Categories and connections created by language and with language influence further organising and, when stabilised, become taken for granted in practice.

A Project for Those Who Are Struggling the Most

In the autumn of 2016, the managing director of the Labour Market and Adult Education Administration (ArbVux) and the chief executive officer (CEO) of a local public housing company, Framtiden AB, signed an agreement concerning a project titled “Welcome to a really important job”, later changed to “Welcome to the Future”. The idea was to match new arrivals in Gothenburg in the years 2014–2015 with opportunities created by retirements and job shortages in the real estate industry. The goal was to make it easier for new arrivals to enter the labour market through activities such as language studies, mentorship and internships in one of the Framtiden Group's companies. This is how the project was presented in an interview with one of the initiative takers:

We will create opportunities, and they will be offered to those who are in the worst position; no bloody checkpoints to show that now we have helped a thousand people ... look how good we are. It is not about us, it is about those who are in the most difficult situation, those who come here with no education at all. We're in a boom, some say, so there's no problem, many say now. But our analyses show that if nothing is done, many people will be without jobs. (Project manager 1, Framtiden AB, 25 June 2018)

The SPES joined the collaboration, with Framtiden AB responsible for leading the Welcome to the Future operations. Relevant district administrations, trade unions and employers were expected to participate in the project in various ways, and a reference group was formed consisting of the representatives of management, unions and district administrators.

The process was to run in four phases: selection, introduction, internship and employment or further education for up to two years. Folkuniversitetet, which provides courses in SFI, vocational Swedish and civic orientation, was also included in the project. The full-time activities during the introductory phase could be followed by continuing SFI and vocational language training if needed during internships. The original plan was to take in 50 newly arrived refugees who held residence permits and lived in apartments owned by Framtiden AB for an internship, twice per year over three years, making 300 participants in three years in total. Each participant was to have a personal employment plan at the end of the project, and the organisers stressed the importance of connecting employers who actually needed to recruit new staff to the project:

Official 1: I really think that is the key issue in all our projects. We look at the individuals and their language development first. Then we build activities based on available jobs.

Official 2: ... they are in a workplace where it is possible to become employed, and they get excited because they know "I can do this; I can get a job here". (ArbVux, 7 August 2018)

The basis of Welcome to the Future was a written agreement, which described the project's phases and the activities included. As for the results, they seemed to be open to several interpretations:

I have not seen it in writing, but interpret it as leading to employment, and serving as a model. I do not think that would work for any target group, but we do not know that yet. At any rate it may not fit our present target group, as they might need longer internships and to learn more Swedish. (Project Coordinator 1, Framtiden AB, 7 May 2019)

Interviews revealed that this vague wording created an opportunity to change the target group, roles, assignments, division of responsibilities and even goals along the way—very pragmatically. Indeed, many changes were needed to address emerging challenges that had not been anticipated.

Emerging Challenges and Responses

The first cohort of participants was due to begin the programme in October 2016. Even before they started, it became clear that the choice of original target group, with its participants limited to people living in Framtiden AB's apartments or in areas where the company owned many apartments, was not feasible. The SPES's guidelines required a selection of participants based on wider criteria, such as age and level of education. New inclusion criteria were set out, stating that the participants who were part of the establishment programme were to be refugees with a short educational background, a willingness to work in the real estate industry and living anywhere in Gothenburg. The participants finally selected ranged from semi-illiterate to highly skilled persons, with most having short educational backgrounds, that is, less than nine years of formal schooling. Such diversity among the group resulted in differences in learning speed, depending on the participants' educational background. Before the intake of the second cohort, the organisers were given more time to map potential participants, which created a group with fewer semi-illiterate persons and more participants "motivated to work in the real estate sector" (according to several interviews).

Furthermore, the Swedish language teachers and the mentors involved in the internships in the first cohort reported that while the participants had good oral language skills, their writing lagged behind. Thus, before the second cohort started their activities, three Swedish classes divided

according to level, a mother tongue support and close follow-up meetings were added to the programme. As quite a few participants needed rehabilitation, a representative from SPES Rehab was included in “participant conferences”, during which the organisers met SPES representatives, language educators and internship coordinators to discuss the personal development of everyone in the project (effects of the internships, language level achieved, vocational skills gained and possible matchings to entrepreneurs).

After cohort 2 ended their programme, further changes took place. The experience with the first two cohorts had shown that semi-illiterate participants struggled to reach the desired language level. As a result, the organisers raised the required education level for participants before the cohort 3 intake.

At the same time, external contractors who were potentially interested in providing internships or employment for participants increasingly made a valid driving licence a requirement for employment. Yet most participants had difficulties coping with the language used in the theoretical test they had to pass to gain their driving licence. The courses provided as part of the programme were subsequently extended to include driving licence theory. Finally, the length of the internship provided as part of the programme was adjusted after participants from the first two cohorts complained that the six-month internship was too long and had a negative effect on their motivation. As a result, the length of the internship was adjusted to flexible three to six months for the third cohort, its length based on participants’ performance and contractors’ requirements profiles.

An Experiment, or a Model for the Future?

When Welcome to the Future started, there were no previous models for such projects to emulate. Thus, before the initiation, the various Framtiden AB companies created their own interpretations of how the project should be organised, for later evaluation of the effects. The idea was that after exchanging experiences and evaluating the advantages and disadvantages of each company’s interpretations, a uniform model could be developed to use in the future.

Three companies in Framtiden AB initially participated in the project: Bostadsbolaget, Familjebostäder and Poseidon. One of the distinctive differences between their interpretations concerned the coordination of mentors' and participants' activities. The companies also looked differently at opportunities for and within the project. In one of the companies, the project was seen as an opportunity to test and implement a new validation method, where supervisors, with the help of profession-specific modules, documented the skills and knowledge of the participants. Another company stopped outsourcing cleaning in favour of hiring participants from the project. There was, however, one issue they all had in common: challenges related to the Swedish language.

Each cohort brought to the fore new problems, which led to constant changes in the programme. At the forefront of most discussions were issues related to levels of language skills, and language demands, considered from both a general and an individual perspective.

We have learned in Welcome to the Future (...) that the lower the level of education one has, the more difficult it is to learn the language, and the language is the key to be able to move forward. We must find a new way, because good as SFI courses are, they are designed for people with secondary school education (...) so we had to create something different. So, we partly re-designed the SFI courses, (...) and also created different levels, where the criterium is not the level of education, but the level of language knowledge. (Official 1, ArbVux, 7 August 2018)

The organisers often presented knowledge of Swedish as one of the key conditions for employment, saying that employers were demanding it. Yet the focus on language clearly complicated the mentor's role in an internship, not to mention the very purpose of internship: was it to teach a language or a job? The mentors said they tried to help the participants with their Swedish studies, and at the same time teach them vocational skills. They did their best to understand and influence the participants' expectations and motivations regarding their future, including further opportunities for employment, but were unable to specify the exact level of the required language skills or to promise employment as an immediate result of gaining such skills.

The better you know the language, the more we can open the world for you. But when the process starts, the participants want to know exactly what the result will be. (...) What is the purpose of this? “Well, you will learn more Swedish and will be able to tell your potential employer”. “But I have done an internship at Familjebostäder and they thought I was very good”. (Mentor 1, Framtiden AB, 9 May 2019)

The level of requirement in language skills and education varied, not least in relation to experience gained, and to future employment. Some participants did their internships in workplaces with lower requirements, as the final result was the possibility of short-term seasonal employment at the end of the programme. Other participants did their internships in workplaces that required a high school education and fluency in Swedish. This variety was a challenge for the real estate companies involved in the project, as some of the participants had both, while others had none.

Thus, the project organisers struggled with uncertainty not only as to the role of language skills, but also as to participants’ different expectations, and an unclear matching process. Both the organisers and the mentors mentioned during the interviews cases of ambiguous information concerning the candidates, and about an overly optimistic view of the target group, leading not only to intense discussions but also to frequent confusion in their relations. The differences in how internships and mentoring activities were organised in the different companies also created irritation, as some participants felt that they were being treated unfairly and were given fewer opportunities for mentoring, or for becoming employed after the project, compared to participants at another company. This created some insecurity among the mentors and the organisers at each company about what exactly was expected of them and what the project was supposed to consist of in the first place.

Speaking and Writing Swedish: A Necessity for a Job?

Two representatives of a contractor and officials from ArbVux, Framtiden AB and the SPES meet for a matching meeting. The contractor presents several opportunities for the participants, including a discount on driving licence training and mentorship. But again, the requirements for language

skills are also stated repeatedly. In the end, one of the contractor's representatives summarises the discussion: "Swedish and a driving licence are a must to get a job at our company, that's it". (Field observation, 14 November 2018)

The matching meetings were crucial to the success or failure of the project, as one of the main challenges for the organisers of Welcome to the Future throughout the project was matching participants with potential employers. These challenges were often discussed in the light of problems related to teaching Swedish, the grades in Swedish courses, and language requirements from various contractors. However, it often remained unclear what level of language skills was required. Sometimes "understanding information and safety regulations" only was described as an adequate level; at other times, "proper" Swedish language skills were considered essential for work integration. One thing was certain: it was important:

If you cannot communicate at a reasonable level, at least you need to absorb information by reading and listening to the teacher ... well, those participants that we have phased out¹ did not develop their language skills at the level we had hoped. (Contractor 1, 17 November 2020)

The lack of potential employers was a recurring topic at various project meetings, including the participants' conferences. Such discussions often concerned discrepancies between the participants' language skills and employers' requirements, or whether the aim of Welcome to the Future should, in fact, be employment or, rather, the provision of internships that included language and vocational training:

In the beginning the focus was on jobs, they must have a job! Today it's no longer like that. Previously it was like that, because these were people who had no education, newcomers with broken Swedish. (...) In time, other goals were set, such as teaching them proper Swedish. (Project coordinator 2, Framtiden AB, 8 April 2019)

¹"Phased out" here refers to those participants who have left the internship programme or have dissolved their employment or training agreement.

Sometimes language skills were also related to the ability to work, but not seen as decisive for the performance of tasks and duties. The project's organisers repeatedly spoke about the requirements of employers for Swedish language skills. They expressed their frustration that even though the work assignments, such as cutting the grass, clearing weeds in flower beds, painting a hallway, or cleaning stairwells, hardly depended on knowing Swedish, employers and contractors set out proficiency in the language as a necessity for employment. At other times, language skills were related to the municipalities' demands on contractors. During my observations of a meeting of the operational management team, I listened to the following discussion on matching the remaining participants in the project:

SPES 1: As from 1 April, we have purchased a training programme in cleaning, three weeks long.

Language educator (LE): Should they [the participants] stay with us then?

SPES 1: Yes, they should. It is fantastic when employers join us, so that we can already act together.

SPES 2: But the basic problem with those who will be trained to clean is the language.

SPES 1: Yes, and that's why they should stay with the LE, because we have to get them up to SFI level C.

SPES 2: Sure, there are lots of cleaning jobs, but if they don't speak the language, it's incredibly difficult to get employers to even show up for an interview.

Framtiden AB: Yes, and many are afraid of getting a fine, because Gothenburg Municipality requires level C in Swedish in its basic job contracts. (Field observation, 14 March 2019)

This excerpt illustrates three points. Firstly, that additional training in cleaning services was deemed conducive to increase the participants'

opportunities for employment. Secondly, even though training in cleaning services was not originally an activity within Welcome to the Future, they continued their language training with the educational services provider connected to Welcome to the Future, as well as remaining as participants in the project. Thirdly, language still seemed to be a challenge, since the language requirements were connected to more formalised criteria, such as those expressed by the municipality. Some participants were subsequently excluded from seeking employment at several public and private workplaces, and these decisions were justified by saying that their language skills did not correspond to the language level required by Municipality of Gothenburg.

The level of language skills required for employment was also a recurring topic in the meetings involving contractors. Notably, the emphasis on learning Swedish was central when contractors interviewed the participants, even though the interviewees were chosen based on the formally approved level of language. These interviews were conducted by two representatives of the contractor and an SPES official. All of them followed approximately the same pattern: they began with a presentation of the company and its offer, and then focused on the requirements for the job. One representative of the contractors reflected on these interviews:

Our basic requirement is quite low. In the first group, we expected to meet people speaking Swedish at level C. It was perhaps a little too ambitious, or too naïve, to think that if somebody has a grade in Swedish that's enough. You probably remember that this first group we met was very weak, it was too early in their SFI course. We couldn't even interview them. (Contractor 1, 17 November 2020)

But even though the participants were later selected for the interviews based on their formal language skills, questions regarding traumatic experiences were used to test the level of their Swedish language skills during the interviews:

Then the contractors asked how and why the participants had come to Sweden, and why they had left their country. When the SPES official later asked for the reason for these intrusive questions, the representative for the

contractor answered that it was to make conversation, and to gain an understanding of the participants' knowledge of Swedish. (Field observation, 26 November 2018)

Thus, notwithstanding the formal language criteria established in the project, the contractors appeared to remain suspicious of the participants' "actual" language skills.

Yet even when participants found employment within, or outside, the real estate sector, there was no certainty that these jobs would be more long-term and sustainable solutions, as my field notes from one observation show:

One of the meeting's participants says that he used his personal contacts in the construction industry, which resulted in two people getting shorter, subsidised jobs as "grovises".² Another participant asks what it means to be a "grovis" and gets the answer that it means to carry rubble from the building, which does not require major language skills, but only a strong physique. (Field observation, 7 May 2019)

After three cohorts participated in *Welcome to the Future*, and after some years of discussions about matching, often with a focus on language skills, the programme was accepted as "an ordinary part of everyday operations" at *Framtiden AB*, but, as is usually the case, not in the way intended; there were fewer participants and mandatory language tests were an integral part of the selection process.

Language Tests: A Pragmatic Solution?

These changes in *Welcome to the Future* reveal several interesting points. To begin with, the requirement for language skills eventually prevailed over the set of formal requirements. The conversations observed revealed many well-intentioned and well-thought-through arguments on these matters but arising from differing interests and goals. The public officials

² Swedish slang for manual workers (old-fashioned).

and the organisers of Welcome to the Future used their resources to help the participants into employment, through training, courses and personal contacts. On the other hand, contractors and employers wanted to employ people they believed would fit well into their company. When checking such a potential fit, they used their experience from standard employment procedures, such as interviewing and formal requirements for language knowledge.

Language proficiency was one of the most frequently discussed challenges when matching and employing low-skilled refugees. Yet the precise level of language skills required remained ambiguous, and therefore open to interpretation. Even though acquisition of language skills was recognised as difficult before the project started, the constant discussions about matching, and varying requirements from employers, forced the programme's organisers to constantly negotiate the terms of language skills. Employers' values, norms and previous hiring practices became a crucial part of the construction of the definition of "language skills". On the other hand, many participants in the project struggled to meet these requirements, confirming Vesterberg's (2016) conclusion that language is a necessary asset for immigrants with short educational backgrounds, if other qualifications are unavailable.

Furthermore, the project's goals of finding employment for the participants brought about a change of definition as to who were "employable" participants. The incorporation of language tests can therefore be viewed as a pragmatic answer to the challenge of language requirements, thus changing the original definition of a target group to one which was closer to being employable. Yet the fact that language tests became a classifying tool for participation in the project could be seen as problematic, as it also contributes to the social exclusion the project originally aimed to overcome. Diedrich et al. (2011) described a similar process of sorting refugees in a way that would meet bureaucratic expectations, with the effect of classifying and valorising refugees according to Swedish norms and standards.

Finally, the study showed that various interpretations of "language skills" can take precedence over formal requirements. Even when a formal requirement for such skills has been established, when this is translated into practices, it can nevertheless lead to different outcomes. Some

people may gain work opportunities even though the requirement has not (yet) been achieved, which can be interpreted as an opportunity to act against discriminatory norms and structures. Yet disregarding formal requirements may also create a risk of discrimination and reinforcement of racist prejudices. Here my study corroborates earlier research by Idevall Hagren (2016) that has shown that the requirement for Swedish language skills for immigrants is often related to discriminatory and racist beliefs that will be further reinforced by attempts to neglect this requirement.

It is important to remember that requirements related to language skills are constructed and reconstructed in the context of social structure, which usually contains both privileges and discriminative practices—intended and unintended. The tendency to treat language skills, or the lack thereof, as an individual issue, and to use language as a normative denominator for employment, makes language a probable tool for discrimination. This was especially visible when the formal requirements for language skills were disregarded in favour of employers' preferences. The ongoing conversations concerning the requirement for Swedish language skills can be seen as a phenomenon typical of contemporary society, of political debate, and of the demands of labour market integration placed on refugees and other immigrants.

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11

Organising the “Labour of Hope”: A Critical Take on the Role of Internships and Mentorships in Supporting Highly Skilled Immigrants into Jobs

Andreas Diedrich and Annette Risberg

Being hopeful may be necessary for something to stay possible, but it is not sufficient grounds for the determination of the future.

—Sara Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion* (2014, p. 185)

Introduction

Highly skilled immigrants in general, and refugees in particular, face countless challenges in their efforts to become integrated into the labour market and included in the workplaces of their new countries of residence (e.g. Essers & Tedmanson, 2014; Romani et al., 2019; Lee et al.,

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2020; Ortlieb et al., 2021; Szkudlarek et al., 2021; Risberg & Romani, 2022; Diedrich & Omanović, 2023). They risk ending up in jobs for which they are overqualified, and rarely have the same opportunities to pursue a career or develop professionally as their native colleagues (Shirmohammadi et al., 2019). It takes them far longer to find employment, which puts them in situations of precarity (Alberti et al., 2013; Moody, 2020). Sweden, like other European countries, is no exception in this regard (Stirling, 2015; Månsson et al., 2018; Eurostat, 2019).

Before the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, unemployment in Sweden was considerably higher among non-native persons (15.1 per cent) than among native persons (4.4 per cent) (Sweden Statistics, 2019). These patterns were reinforced in the wake of the pandemic and are all the more striking as many sectors of the Swedish industry are in dire need of immigrant labour at all educational levels (Migrationsverket, 2020). Additionally, much international research shows that highly skilled immigrants generally make an important economic contribution to the host country (Shirmohammadi et al., 2019).

To break these patterns, the Swedish government and other actors in society are exploring ways to support immigrants' entry into employment shortly after their arrival. This is to benefit from their skills, to better integrate them into society and to avoid high expenditure on social benefits. Thus, municipalities offer language and civic orientation courses. The Swedish Public Employment Service (SPES)¹ coordinates and partially finances integration initiatives and measures which are run by private, public and not-for-profit organisations. These initiatives include validation of prior learning, fast tracks to shortage occupations, vocational training and workplace-based learning, among others (see e.g. Diedrich & Hellgren, 2018). Also, they frequently include mentoring programmes and internships to match immigrants with professionals who can introduce them to local workplaces (Reeves, 2017; Risberg & Romani, 2022) and help them to practise the local language, learn about workplace culture, build a local network or practise newly acquired vocational skills (Diedrich & Omanović, 2023). Internships in particular are

¹ The SPES oversees the Establishment Programme (Etableringsprogrammet) for recently arrived refugees and other immigrants.

widely regarded as successful integration measures (see Delmi, 2015). Yet while the proponents of internships—policy makers, practitioners, decision-makers and scholars—see them as pivotal in facilitating the successful labour market integration of immigrants, existing research points out that internships do not necessarily lead to a job (Franzén & Johansson, 2004; Vesterberg, 2011). Furthermore, it has been shown that it is difficult to attribute a positive labour market outcome to participation in a mentoring or internship programme (Månsson & Delander, 2017). Nevertheless, the organisers of, and participants in, internships and mentoring programmes continue to hope these measures will lead to a job for the participating immigrants.

This chapter builds on existing research to show that the organising of mentoring programmes and internships as part of integration support instils in immigrants the hope that their (unremunerated) participation in these programmes will lead to future employment opportunities. The study suggests that these opportunities may not materialise in the near future and that organising internships and mentoring programmes for immigrants may in fact prolong their precarious (un)employment position.

While mentoring and internship programmes are directed at a wide range of job seekers, in this chapter, we focus on the establishment support for highly skilled immigrants. We describe how mentoring and internships intended to support highly skilled immigrants into jobs are organised, and we also critically examine the consequences of such organising. We provide examples from different sets of our fieldwork involving public, private and not-for-profit organisations. In addition, we draw on previous field studies and other examples found in the popular press and academic literature.

Why Is It Difficult for Highly Skilled Immigrants to Find a Job? Problems and Proposed Solutions

In Sweden, as elsewhere, highly skilled new arrivals risk ending up in jobs for which they are overqualified. They also lack the opportunities to pursue a career or develop their competencies in the same way as their native-born colleagues. These challenges are even more severe in the case of refugees, for whom it takes the longest time to find a (skilled) job in Sweden, compared to other categories of immigrants (e.g. Lundborg & Skedinger, 2016). Furthermore, highly skilled immigrants may suffer from what Dietz et al. (2015) identified as the “skill paradox”. They found that the more highly skilled immigrants are, the more likely they are to have difficulty finding a job at their competence level. Many employers fail to even see highly skilled immigrant job applicants as talent, and therefore do not consider them as potential candidates for an advertised job (Neergaard, 2006; Holgersson et al., 2016). Furthermore, immigrants’ diplomas, training and competencies—commonly referred to as “human capital”—are perceived as being of a lower quality compared to native-born candidates (Crowley-Henry & Al Ariss, 2018). Further, Almeida et al. (2015) pointed out that a person-organisation fit may be more important to some employers than actual qualifications, as the attributes that deviate from a perceived norm (e.g. accent, attire and name) decrease the chances for a job seeker with a foreign background to get the job.

Given the many challenges highly skilled immigrants face, internships and mentoring are described as meaningful elements of tailored support for skilled immigrants (e.g. Malik & Manroop, 2017; Månsson & Delander, 2017). They are considered valuable because they promise to increase the immigrants’ knowledge about organisational values, norms and goals, as well as being an opportunity to build networks and working relationships within the organisation (Mohamed & Leponiemi, 2009) and to practise newly acquired language and professional skills (Wanberg et al., 2003)—all deemed important for finding employment.

Critical scholars argue that studies of internships and mentorships that target immigrants tend to present these as “quick fix” solutions for successful labour market integration (Månsson & Delander, 2017), whereas things are more complicated in practice. Such activities require longer-term goals and activities (Diedrich et al., 2020; Vesterberg, 2011), as well as a fundamental rethinking on the part of employers, who may be unwilling to hire immigrants after a completed mentoring or internship programme because they are perceived as a risk to the organisational normality (Risberg & Romani, 2022).

These findings are at odds with the widespread positive view of mentoring and internship programmes. In Sweden, the organisers of large mentoring or internship programmes in well-known companies and public sector organisations claim that a high percentage of immigrants do find a job after participating in a programme. As revealed in our field studies, undertaken over the past decade, one large Swedish company cited a 70–75% success rate, and a 90% success rate has been claimed to be the result of a nationwide programme run by a not-for-profit organisation. The findings from our studies suggest, however, that all that glitters is not gold: the integration support activities we studied have generally been presented as aiming at job integration, but none of these activities created new jobs, and few succeeded in finding immigrants employment at the right skill level. In several cases, the purported jobs turned out to be further internships or other forms of subsidised or precarious employment. Nevertheless, these activities gave rise to hope: the organisers’ hope of better integration of the immigrants (whatever that meant in a specific context), and the immigrants’ hope of a job, and a better life in some not-too-distant future; hope was everywhere.

Hoping for a Better Future

The significance of hope has been a topic of discussion in the social sciences and humanities, including management and organisation studies (see e.g. Brunsson, 2006), for more than three decades (Anderson, 2002; Berlant, 2011; Ahmed, 2014). In this body of literature, the future is an important concept related to hope, as hope is usually understood as

orientated towards the future. According to the German philosopher Ernst Bloch (1986), hope is an expectation and an intention towards the possibility that still has not materialised. To hope is to dream about the better life that might be possible.

Primarily, everybody lives in the future, because they strive, past things only come later, and as yet genuine present is almost never there at all. The future dimension contains what is feared or what is hoped for; as regards human intention, that is, when it is not thwarted, it contains only what is hoped for. (Bloch, 1986, p. 4)

Social scientists who reason in the same spirit treat hope as something positive and progressive—something that offers a way forward towards a better future, especially when the present seems difficult and rough (e.g. Abusaada & Elshater, 2016; Alacovska, 2018; Allan, 2019). Some would go so far as to say that hope is one of the most important drivers of change (this view is sometimes taken to its extreme in management studies). For example, many people are hoping for a better future when it comes to environmental pollution and climate change. This hope drives entrepreneurs, politicians, concerned citizens and others to develop new concepts, laws, machines and tools to reduce our environmental footprint. Others have argued that hope should also be seen as something negative, as weakening the change, as the thought that the future can and will be better can result in people becoming stuck in an unchanging present, preventing them from overcoming the current challenges and harms (see Berlant, 2011; Ringel, 2021). People who are busy hoping for a better future endure hardships, inequalities or other challenges in the here and now. Berlant (2011) referred to this form of hope as “cruel optimism”, an optimism that does not lead to meaningful, valuable actions in the present (Ringel, 2021).

In employment and labour market research, the notion of hope has been used when studying “un- or under-compensated work carried out in the present, often for experience or exposure, in the hope that future employment opportunities may follow” (Kuehn & Corrigan, 2013, p. 10). Such un- or under-compensated work has been referred to as “hope labour”, which is common in the cultural and creative sectors

(Mackenzie & McKinlay, 2021). Mackenzie and McKinlay concluded that hope labour is the prerogative of those who can afford it and is closely linked to neoliberal discourses. For example, labour politics of activation encourage “informal, impermanent, unpaid and voluntary-led responses to structural problems, transferring risks onto individuals made responsible for the social costs of work and the risks of the fractured labour markets” (Mackenzie & McKinlay, 2021, p. 1842). Alacovska (2018), in her study of how creative workers uphold a hopeful attitude to work despite deteriorating work conditions in a post-socialist country, used the concept of hope and Bloch’s (1986) idea of Not-Yet.² The Not-Yet exists in “anticipation of a future momentum of exhilaration, good life and happiness” (Alacovska, 2018, p. 45). We also find this concept useful, as it further nuances the idea of hope labour.

The concept of hope labour has also been used to describe the precarious situation of un- or underemployed immigrants. Allan (2019), for example, described how immigrants and other un- or under-employed persons in Canada are encouraged to take on voluntary work as a way to increase their human capital, develop appropriate skills and networks, and learn about the local work culture. Many do this in the hope of being employed after the period as a volunteer, although this rarely happened during Allan’s (2019) study. Similarly, in their study of the underemployment of highly skilled immigrants, Risberg and Romani (2022) found that immigrants were expected to take up unpaid internships to build and develop these features and that these immigrants hoped to be employed after the internship period (which rarely happened). In this chapter, we claim that the integration support activities organised for immigrants mainly create hope for a better future, that is, a job: a Not-Yet-Become (see Bloch, 1986).

To describe mentorship and internship activities in the context of the labour market integration support organised for highly skilled immigrants in Sweden, we begin with a brief overview of the Swedish integration support system. In this text, we focus on highly skilled immigrants

²A central concept in Bloch’s (1986) philosophy is the Not-Yet, which has two aspects: the Not-Yet-Conscious (an ideological aspect—something which is not yet discovered) and the Not-Yet-Become (a material aspect—something which needs to be activated).

in general, not only refugees, although immigrants with a refugee background frequently appeared among the participants. One of the programmes studied was directed specifically at highly skilled refugees, the other two were framed more generally as supporting highly skilled immigrants. Also, in these programmes, many of the participants had refugee backgrounds, and in one study, most participants interviewed were refugees. In the following section, we will place some extra emphasis on the support given to refugees in Sweden, mainly through the Establishment Programme (*Etableringsprogrammet*) organised by the SPES.

The Research Setting

All immigrants arriving in Sweden have access to free Swedish language courses (Swedish for Immigrants, SFI), and assistance from the SPES in finding a job or becoming employable if they register with the agency. Such help—aimed at preparing the person for employment—may come in the form of rehabilitation, supplementary secondary education, recognition of prior learning (validation), university preparatory courses, or internships and mentorship activities. Most of these activities are not undertaken by the SPES itself, but by the municipalities or other agencies, and a multitude of public and private educational services providers, companies and other organisations. Many of them collaborate within temporary integration support projects.

Immigrants who have been granted refugee status, their family members, and persons who are otherwise in need of protection, are eligible to receive additional support as they are generally deemed to face greater problems when integrating into the labour market and society than other categories of immigrants (Lundborg & Skedinger, 2016; Diedrich et al., 2020). This additional support is provided through the Establishment Programme within two years after arrival, and via the preparatory measures mentioned earlier. Each participant in the programme has an individual establishment plan, drawn up together with a caseworker. It covers 40 hours of mandatory activities a week and must include SFI courses at an appropriate level, civic orientation courses (practical, cultural and societal information about Sweden) and activities specifically aimed at

preparing the person for employment. Failure to attend the planned courses and activities results in sanctions in the form of reduced establishment benefits. The expectation is that every refugee—no matter their level of skill—should have a job or have commenced studies before the end of the two-year Establishment Programme. Nevertheless, statistics show that only 45 per cent of the participants finishing the programme have a job or embark on studies (Swedish Public Employment Service, 2019). The remaining 55 per cent end up at the Social Security Service, where they continue to receive financial support. Despite the statistics, the programme is continuing, and so are many of the connected labour market integration activities conducted by other actors than the SPES.

Our findings are based on data collected during two different research projects exploring the integration of highly skilled immigrants into the Swedish labour market (Diedrich & Hellgren, 2018, 2021; Risberg & Romani, 2022). Two mentoring programmes and one internship programme targeting highly skilled immigrants were studied in these projects.

One of the mentoring programmes was organised by a not-for-profit organisation (here called NP) with a mission to increase the number of immigrants in the labour market. The organisation had many different types of activities, but the mentoring programme was its flagship. It matched the immigrant mentees with mentors working in private or public organisations. During the programme, the mentees were also offered workshops connected to job searching. The field material consists of observation notes from programme events, interviews with mentors, mentees and NP staff, and archival material.

The second mentorship programme was organised by a large university—we will call it the UNI here—and was directed specifically at highly skilled refugees who had worked as academics in their country of origin. Here, too, the emphasis was on personal development as one important means of finding a job in Sweden. As was the case in the NP programme, a series of workshops was organised in addition to the mentor-mentee meetings. These focused on how to apply for jobs and how to build a network to find a job. To this end, the organisers invited labour market experts, coaches, employer representatives and highly skilled immigrants who had succeeded in finding a job in Sweden.

The internship programme studied was called *Finally a Job!* (FAJ) and was organised by a large Swedish company in collaboration with the SPES. It included introductory training and workshops; each participant was allocated a supervisor at the local workplace, who was to act as a guide or mentor throughout the programme.

For this chapter, we have revisited our field data and coded observation notes and interviews with a focus on expressions of hope for a job, or a better future.

Findings: The Labour of Hope

The activities observed in our fieldwork were generally framed as targeting job integration. As mentioned before, none of these activities was organised to create new jobs, and few were organised to find immigrants employment at their skill levels; the activities we observed came with, and gave rise to, images of hope. Such hope concerned immigrants' chances of becoming employed in the future, but it was also the hope of the organisers for a better labour market integration of the immigrants, and the hope of immigrants for a job, and a better life in some not-too-distant future.

We have divided the expressions of hope we found into three categories: "Being placed into 'some kind of activity'", "An internship will lead to a job...or at least another (Swedish) item on your CV" and "A mentoring programme will get you a job.... or at least develop you as a person".

Being Placed into "Some Kind of Activity"

It is a challenge for SPES caseworkers to match their clients with available meaningful integration support activities to fill their clients' 40 hours per week. Twenty hours are allocated to SFI and civic orientation courses, but the other half should include activities that will help the individual to find employment. These activities are arranged mainly by municipalities and private organisations. In practice, it is not always possible to find meaningful activities, as one SPES caseworker explained:

The biggest challenge is to find the right solutions and activities for each person (...). Another challenge is the supply of available activities. (SPES caseworker 7)

When an immigrant has completed one activity, he or she informs the caseworker, and if there is time remaining in the programme, a new activity needs to be found for the person. The supply and availability of mentoring programmes, internships and other support measures may result in immigrants being placed into activities that are not “right” for them because they do not connect meaningfully to their previous activities, or because the activities do not fit into their individual plans. Several immigrants we met told us they feel as if they have been placed in “some kind of activity” without really knowing why they ended up there. It seems more important to the organisers that the immigrants are in “some kind of activity”, and less important how that activity supports the person’s integration process over time. Even when the organisers overcome the challenges to find a support measure adequate for highly skilled immigrants, further challenges may emerge for the immigrants when they take part in the initiative. It is to these we turn next.

An Internship Will Lead to a Job...or At Least Another (Swedish) Item on Your CV

Internships are widely believed to lead to employment as they provide the intern with labour market and workplace experience. This sentiment was echoed by FAJ’s organisers, who told the interns they had a very good chance of finding a “real” job through their participation. The HR manager in charge of the FAJ programme put it this way:

So, the whole setup is such that the SPES still has the responsibility for these persons during the internship, but then later, sometime towards the end of this six-month internship, we usually move over to a real job. 70% after all get a job with us. (HR Manager 1)

Such information created expectations among the participants that they would end up in permanent employment. Some interns also told us that they saw the internship as a good opportunity to learn Swedish and build a network.

We do not have the exact statistics depicting the results of the programme, but from our interviews and observations, we learned that a positive outcome according to the organisers could mean that interns are offered a position at the company or, with the help of the company's HR managers, land a job with one of its clients. However, we were also told that employment offered to interns is not necessarily in the form of permanent, full-time employment. Several interns were offered employment in the company's staffing pool. The staffing pool was a way for the company to respond flexibly to staff shortages in the branch offices. It consisted almost exclusively of students who were eager to earn some extra money. The manager in charge of the staffing pool explained:

We have our own staffing pool, where you can do some extra work in our branch offices, and I'm in charge of it. I'm constantly recruiting a lot of people to it. So that's why it was natural for me to help HR manager X with the FAJ programme. It's a very natural step after a six-month internship, to move on in the company and learn more, and start to work part time in the staffing pool. (HR manager 3)

Consequently, becoming employed in the staffing pool was seen as a meaningful progression from the internship. However, could it be seen as the *real* job the organisers promised the interns? Probably not: the HR manager calls it an *extra* (temporary) job. This became obvious when one of the organisers declared that one of the advantages of working in the staffing pool for the immigrant former interns—compared to their student colleagues—was that they could apply for (real) jobs that were only advertised internally in the company. The students, on the contrary, were not seen as internal applicants and subsequently could not apply for these jobs. Moving from the internship to the staffing pool, the immigrants still could only *hope* for a full-time, skilled job in the future. Remaining in the staffing pool did not seem a sustainable and meaningful option as the employment conditions were precarious. The HR manager explained:

Yes. It's a temporary contract, you're paid on an hourly basis. So, you jump in when there's a need. But it is temporary employment, on an hourly basis. And it's a win-win situation. I mean, they [the immigrants] cannot promise me how many hours they'll be able to work. And I can't promise them either how many hours they can work because that's determined by the need. (HR manager 3)

This was a win-win situation for the company, as it gave them some flexibility when staffing their operations. The manager assumed that this setup was also beneficial to the immigrants, as they were unable or unwilling to work full time, because they either had other part-time jobs (for which they were overqualified), or they had to participate in scheduled activities which formed part of their establishment support, such as language training.

We did meet immigrants who found permanent employment through FAJ, and in positions corresponding to their skills and qualifications. They were not, however, representative of the 70 per cent who became employed after the internship. The majority received temporary contracts in the staffing pool. And while this could be seen as a way to get a foot in the door of the company, it seems as if such temporary contracts only prolong the immigrants' precarious situation in the labour market. Firstly, the immigrants cannot be expected to support themselves by working in the staffing pool on an hourly basis only. Secondly, this type of temporary work, paid by the hour, is not necessarily seen as valuable work experience on their CV. Consequently, while the FAJ programme may provide “a way into” the labour market for highly skilled immigrants, it does not change their situation in the contingent and competitive labour market. Rather, it keeps them in prolonged, and in some cases indefinite, precarity.

The FAJ programme is by no means the only internship measure that might lead to further temporary, and possibly subsidised and precarious, employment arrangements for highly skilled immigrants. Several immigrants we met during our research told us that they had participated in one internship after the other and had still not found a job. Do mentoring programmes offer a solution here? Let us take a closer look at two such programmes to find out.

A Mentoring Programme Will Get You a Job or At Least Will Develop You as a Person

In addition to the FAJ internship programme, we followed two mentoring programmes: the NP and UNI programmes. The NP programme aimed to help highly skilled immigrants orientate themselves in the Swedish labour market. The programme sought to do so, its organiser claimed, by “developing the participants as human beings”. The mentors were to help the mentees reflect on what they wanted to do with their lives. Their role was not, according to the organiser, to provide the mentees with a job. Yet at the very first meeting, the organiser told stories about mentees in previous mentoring programmes who had found employment because they had participated in the programme, or because they could include the name of a Swedish mentor in their CV. In this way, the organiser instilled some hope for a job in the mentees.

The second mentoring programme we studied, the UNI programme organised by a public university, was directed specifically at highly skilled refugees who had worked as academics in their country of origin. Here, too, personal development was emphasised as one important means of finding a job in Sweden. To this end, the organisers invited experts on the topic to talk to the mentees and coach them. They also invited labour market experts, recruiters, employer representatives and highly skilled immigrants who had succeeded in finding a job in Sweden to boost the mentees’ morale.

Some mentees saw the mentoring programme they joined as a real opportunity, as they had almost given up hope of finding employment. As one mentee in the NP programme recounted:

I could not say much because from the beginning I was very surprised that someone was going to help me at all. I didn't believe it to start with, I was very sceptical, and I was thinking: I come, and I don't have to pay? They're going to help and... sounds very strange, like, eh... a trick, what is behind it, why? I called my husband and I said: yes, everything is true, it sounds fantastic. (NP Mentee 3)

Others seemed less surprised to receive this kind of help. On the contrary, some of the mentees we talked to told us that this was simply another activity in a long line of activities they had already attended, each one coming with the promise of supporting their future employment:

Mentee: This is my third mentoring programme, twice with NP and once with the International Women’s Association. (...) Interviewer: What was your expectation before the last mentoring programme? Mentee: To find a job. Ok, if not a job, an internship. (NP Mentee 4)

The organisers of the NP programme emphasised that the role of the mentors was not to provide the mentees with a job but to guide the mentees’ personal development. The mentor was supposed to help the mentee reflect on what they wanted to do with their lives in the future. Yet mentors oftentimes joined the programme in the hope it would lead to a job for the mentee.

Mentor: Well, it was a mentoring programme. Though I found it to be a bit of hidden recruitment... That is, one was supposed to help this person to get a job. So it was, I wasn’t sure, but I thought I was supposed to be more of a mentor, support and something. But it turned out to be a lot of focus on this person not having a job. And, of course, someone who comes here and doesn’t have a job doesn’t feel good. There was a lot of focus on the fact that we had to ensure the person got a job, and I thought that took over the mentoring itself... It wasn’t really so much a mentoring programme.

Interviewer: Did this focus come from the mentee or NP?

Mentor: Well, it came from NP. (NP Mentor 1)

Another mentor joined the programme in the belief it would be possible to offer the mentee an internship and was disappointed to realise the programme merely “touched the surface” and did not offer the mentees anything concrete. Yet another mentor, who was an entrepreneur, became a mentor mainly to find new talents:

For me, the main objective was to... Say the person is interested in joining our group. I would definitely have continued the mentoring even if it didn't obviously lead to a job in one of my companies. The most important thing is that the person feels that they have made a progression, a journey at their own pace and tempo. That's the most important thing, really. It just so happens that [mentee] has been working with us now for maybe five months, he's got a job. (NP Mentor 3)

The message from the mentoring programmes was accordingly somewhat ambiguous: "The goal is not that you will find a job, but we will tell you what you need to do to get a job", and "Look at these examples of mentees who got a job". But, of course, the mentees too hoped the programme would lead to a job:

We had very low expectations because nobody could give us a guarantee that we were going to find a job through the programme. After all, that wasn't the main goal. The main goal was to participate, to develop ourselves, and I thought that.... But there was a, I was... I had a small, small, small hope that maybe something would happen. Maybe some contacts, maybe an internship. But my main goal was to meet somebody who could maybe show me this, this world, this workplace on the other side because you can't [just] knock on the door. (...) But it wasn't that they were going to find a job for me, it was maybe just a little bit that maybe hoped that something is going to happen. But it didn't help me to find a job. This... This I can confirm. (...) But I noted some people found a job so it's very, very different. So, you cannot compare yourself to others and you cannot have high expectations because maybe they will never happen. So... You know, no work... I was trying to find a job in my profession and it's... No, doesn't work. (NP Mentee 2)

Although the organisers clearly explained that the aim of the programme was not to provide a job, the participants expected that it would lead to a job, or at least an internship. This was confirmed by one of the participants in the UNI mentoring programme, who summarised the expectations among fellow participants saying:

Oh, jobs, jobs...I thought, now I'll get a job. Because (...) we immigrants...I don't have any money...we need a job, we need money...I need to pay my rent, I need to pay it. The whole time I'm thinking: how can I get a job? When it comes to this programme, I thought I was going to get a job. (UNI Participant 2)

This utterance expresses clearly the expectations and hopes of highly skilled immigrants who take part in labour market support initiatives that such initiatives will result in their employment. Further evidence that the organisers were aware of this can be found in an evaluation report of the UNI programme:

Although the programme did not promise employment or any type of continued activity, the conversations with participants show that there nevertheless existed *a lot of hope* among the participants that their participation could result in something more. (Project report, italics added)

This hope was even greater as many of the persons we interviewed had previously participated in other labour market integration support measures such as “Fast track to a job” or Swedish vocational language training. Consequently, the mentoring programme was simply another activity in a line of activities promising to “get them into jobs”. One participant in the NP programme said:

I was trying to do many things simultaneously. Participating in different kinds of projects. It was not only the mentoring programme, I was also in Professional Swedish, a training course from the SPES. Also, there was another project – Start-up matching – that was also from the SPES. But unfortunately, I could not find a job. It's quite difficult for me. (NP Mentee 2)

So, if the internship and mentoring programmes—framed as supporting highly skilled immigrants' labour market integration—do not lead to sustainable jobs, what do they do? What is their result?

The Programmes “Bring You Closer to the Labour Market”: But at What Distance?

Integration support activities such as the programmes described above were seen as key to facilitating highly skilled immigrants’ labour market integration in Sweden. A SPES caseworker described the challenges in the following way:

Everyone needs to take their social responsibility. We depend on industry...on companies...to provide internship positions and to take in these people [immigrants] and to test them, so that we can maybe validate their skills and bring them closer to the labour market. We are dependent on them. The more companies that take their responsibility, the easier it will be for this target group to get out there and become self-sufficient. (SPES Caseworker 13)

However, getting out there, getting “closer to the labour market” and becoming self-sufficient can take a long time, and is seemingly not achieved by participating in only one integration support activity. There is some indication that internships and mentoring activities of the type explored here can, in practice, act as a bridge or link, supporting further activities or temporary or subsidised jobs, and further internships or mentoring activities.

For example, the NP organisation also ran an internship project, which two of the mentees joined after completing their mentoring programme. For one of them, this was the starting point to a successful professional career, as the internship in a Swedish company was a deciding factor in finding a job in another Swedish company. It seemed that a Swedish reference on his CV was what was needed to get a job. The other intern/mentee took a few more years to find a skilled job, in a Swedish company. The internship played different roles in these two cases; in one, it helped the immigrant to quickly achieve the goal of a permanent job, and in the other, it took the immigrant quite a long time to reach the goal, and whether or not the internship helped, we do not know.

We have already shown that the programmes were not the first support activity for many of the participants. There were some signals that they

may not have been their last activity either, something the project leaders for the UNI programme alluded to in their final report:

All the mentors have been contacted and discussions were held with the participants, the mentors and the SPES to explore if some kind of activity could be connected to the programme once it finishes, which the SPES could finance or partly finance (an internship or subsidised temporary employment). (Project report)

The idea of “connecting activities” is noteworthy as previous studies have shown that integration support activities for immigrants often do not relate to or build on each other. One reason given for this is that the choice of which activities immigrants should participate in often depends on administrative and bureaucratic needs or considerations rather than the needs of the immigrants in question (Diedrich & Styhre, 2013; Diedrich & Hellgren, 2021; Brorström & Diedrich, 2022). For the immigrants, this can mean that they end up in repetitive activities or in activities that do not follow any progress towards a clearly defined goal—becoming employable.

In some cases, connections between activities and programmes may exist, but these connections might be more meaningful for the organisers than the immigrants. In the case of the FAJ programme, for example, the staffing pool was presented as a meaningful activity for further integration. Channelling the former immigrant interns into the staffing pool was a good way for the company to secure access to flexible labour, at its disposal whenever needed. Yet the question can be asked whether or not this was in the best interests of the immigrants, as the staffing pool seemed to prolong their precarious employment position rather than leading to a permanent contract. The distance from unemployment to permanent employment did not diminish. Perhaps a permanent job can be likened to a moving target for the immigrant: no matter the labour market integration activity, the target keeps moving away from them. For most of the immigrants, a job was still a Not-Yet (Bloch, 1986); something they could only hope for.

Discussion: Organising Highly Skilled Immigrants' Hopes for the Future

Our findings outlined some of the tensions arising in internship and mentoring programmes organised by Swedish public and private employers and not-for-profit organisations. The programmes are considered to be valuable contributions to getting highly skilled immigrants into jobs. Mainstream accounts tend to stress the efficacy of internships and mentoring activities in facilitating access for immigrants to workplaces and professional and private networks, and in providing an opportunity for language learning and validation of skills and competencies. Yet these types of unpaid or underpaid activities are also criticised, especially when organised in precarious labour markets in which the unemployed young, refugees, immigrants and other “disconnected” groups (Pettit, 2021) desperately try to find employment (see e.g. Allan, 2019). One study found that the fact that mentorships often did not lead to jobs might be due to lock-in effects in other labour market programmes (Månsson & Delander, 2017). We can add some insights from our study to the work of these and other critical scholars.

First of all, the initiatives intended to support labour market integration do not lead to jobs. They are apparently committed to “bringing the immigrants closer to the labour market”. This geographical metaphor of distance and closeness to the labour market has become popular in Sweden over the past years, among both researchers and practitioners. Notwithstanding its widespread application, it is misleading, as it blankets the fact that employers simply do not wish to recruit the labour resources represented by some individuals and groups—in the case discussed here, highly skilled immigrants—due to discrimination, unfair recruitment practices, structural obstacles or other reasons (Knocke, 2000; De los Reyes & Kamali, 2005; Diedrich et al., 2011; Eriksson, 2019; Boréus et al., 2021; Risberg & Romani, 2022). It is possible that the organisations that arrange or participate in these programmes do not intend to hire the mentees or interns once the programme is completed (cf. Allan, 2019). They may see these activities as a benevolent gesture (cf.

Romani et al., 2019), or as a means of gaining access to cheap, flexible labour (cf. Scheuer & Mills, 2016).

Furthermore, by using the geographical metaphor of bringing people closer to something, the responsibility for integration, or lack thereof, is squarely placed in the hands of the immigrants: We have helped you to get close(x) to the labour market, now it’s up to you to take the final steps. This argument does not take into consideration the fact that the person in question may not have come any closer to the labour market at all, as the activities emerging in one specific support initiative—a mentorship programme, for example—most probably have little or no influence on changing ubiquitous recruitment practices. Yet the responsibility to find a job is laid plainly on the individual immigrant job seeker. It is the responsibility of the individual immigrant to be employable, but the employers have little responsibility to employ them (see also Risberg & Romani, 2022). Consequently, the image of a distance to be covered also includes a temporal aspect—it places any results to be achieved and opportunities to be gained in the future. The labour market is somewhere else, and it takes time to get there. When immigrants chase future employment opportunities by participating in internships and mentoring activities, we claim they engage in labour of hope. The future jobs are Not-Yet-Become (Bloch, 1986) items that need to be activated by yet another labour integration activity.

The geographical metaphor also means that the labour market is not where the immigrants are; it is elsewhere. The organisers believe they are supporting the immigrants to move closer to the labour market, which means they are not seen as part of it at this point, but may, it is hoped, reach it in the future. But reaching the labour market does not necessarily mean finding a job—it means, in neo-liberal Human Resources Management lingo, becoming employable. This points directly to one of the central ambiguities surrounding internships and mentoring activities organised for highly skilled immigrants: the immigrants hope they will result in jobs, and the organisers hope they will make the immigrants more employable in the Swedish labour market (cf. Risberg & Romani, 2022). Another important issue here is that many highly skilled immigrants do actually have a job, but often one below their skill level, and often temporary or part-time in nature. Their goal is not to simply reach

the labour market, as they may be there already; their goal is to find a skilled job that matches their qualifications.

It may be useful to move away from an understanding of the labour market integration of highly skilled immigrants as a stepwise process during which the “right” skills and competencies are acquired, thus bringing them ever closer to the labour market and making them employable. Such an understanding ignores the complexities and ambiguities of integration. Capturing some of this complexity might be better served by seeing the immigrants’ participation in these activities as a form of hope labour; they are investing resources in the form of time, money or other means in the construction of hopes for the future. They are engaging in activities for which they are not paid—or are paid very little—in the hope of future employment opportunities adapted to *their* needs and corresponding to *their* skill levels.

Acknowledging highly skilled immigrants’ participation in the type of labour market integration support initiatives presented here as engaging in hope labour might improve the organisers’ abilities to understand the immigrants’ motivations for participating in such initiatives and their expectations and experiences. If immigrants are to develop and sustain a hopeful outlook on future work opportunities, similar to the hope labourers discussed by Kuehn and Corrigan (2013), they must see their participation in the initiative as a legitimate (albeit uncertain) process. To phrase it differently: an immigrant must see this process as a legitimate avenue for securing future skilled employment. Existing studies suggest, however, that the growing number of labour market integration support initiatives have not necessarily improved immigrants’ access to the Swedish labour market over time. The evidence of the performance of policies and initiatives is inconclusive (e.g., Irastorza & Bevelander, 2017) and factors other than the support initiatives and practices might play a decisive role in whether integration succeeds or fails (Fossati & Liechti, 2020). Nevertheless, the organisers continue to facilitate and valorise these practices.

This leads us back to the reflection mentioned previously—that hope can be seen not only as positive and progressive, but also as negative and as impeding a (meaningful) change. Thus, integration support organised for highly skilled immigrants in the form of mentorship and internship

programmes could be seen as part of what Berlant (2011) has called *cruel optimism*, whereby the hope for a better future leads people to reproduce the structures and ways that harm them in the present. It could be that the internships and mentorship programmes intended to “bring immigrants closer to the labour market” further reinforce the idea that they do not even stand a chance of finding employment without attending them. If so, such organising does little to improve the practices labelled integration support, as it requires highly skilled immigrants, unlike the natives, to go through prolonged processes of having to prove and improve themselves.

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Part III

**Integration, When, Where and How
Does It End?**



12

Older Immigrants' Integration: Organisational Processes and Practices in the Australian Context

Marika Franklin, Lucy Taksa, and Fei Guo

Introduction

Immigrants to Australia are not a homogenous group; their heterogeneity is based on their different countries of origin, ethnic, economic, religious, and cultural backgrounds, and different ages. Approximately 30 percent of Australia's population was born overseas (ABS, 2022), and over 300 identified languages are spoken in Australian homes (ABS, 2016). Combined with intra-group diversity, such differences contribute to dynamic and complex integration processes within Australia's multicultural society. Additionally, Australia's population is ageing, with

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approximately 20 percent of people aged 65 years or over born overseas in a non-English speaking country (AIHW, 2021). Considering these trends, a renewed engagement is needed with the discourses of integration and diversity throughout the life course.

Normative conceptualisations of immigrant integration tend to apply a unidirectional orientation, with immigrants positioned as responsible for adapting to the common cultural practices and values of the mainstream society in the host country. Yet broader conceptualisations also exist, which treat integration as a two-way, dynamic, and multidimensional process. Regardless of the way in which integration is conceptualised (see Chap. 2), the focus has tended to be on the immediate settlement period, with little attention given to integration as a process which continues into later life. Thus, enquiry into the processes and practices shaping integration for older immigrants requires greater clarity.

This chapter engages with the growing recognition of integration, seen as a multidirectional process, occurring through mutual interaction of specific “groups” within a particular social space. For older immigrants, the integration process includes a range of players such as the state, formal organisations, families, and individuals. Migrant support organisations play a leading role in providing services and activities for those who arrived in Australia decades earlier, and therefore provide a suitable field to study how integration for older immigrants is sustained. Changes to the way in which aged care is funded in Australia over the past decade have encouraged these organisations to become increasingly involved in the provision of aged care support services for older people ageing at home.

The chapter is based on interviews with staff from several migrant support and coordinating organisations, which provide assistance for older immigrants, as a part of aged care service provision for what in Australia is referred to as the Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD)¹

¹ CALD is an acronym commonly used in Australia to refer to the cultural and linguistic backgrounds and characteristics of Australian residents (ABS, 1999). It replaced the previously accepted nomenclature of Non-English-Speaking Background (NESB) (Sawrikar & Katz, 2009). CALD is used instead of terms used in the international literature, such as ethnicity, BAME (Black and Asia Minor Ethnicity); minority ethnic groups; race; and specific names of cultural backgrounds such as African, Asian, and Hispanic (Pham et al., 2021).

population. Our aim is to present an overview of critical issues they raised about organising their work, aiming at contributing to the capacity of older immigrants to maintain their integration in Australian society.

We begin by describing how Australia's multicultural policy shaped the organisation of immigrant integration, before showing how government policies, funding and practices operate in ways that homogenise older Australians, regardless of their different national, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds. We draw on the wider integration scholarship to justify our understanding of integration as a multifaceted, dynamic process involving immigrants, society, and the state. This part is followed by a brief overview of the life course perspective, which focuses attention on how a variety of events, experiences, and contexts affects integration processes over time. Finally, we present our field material to show that integration is not a static, linear, or unidirectional process, and that a life course perspective is important in understanding the organisation of integration for older immigrants.

Multiculturalism

Multicultural policy has been in place in Australia since 1973, when it replaced prior settlement policies focused on assimilation and integration underpinned by the White Australia policy. The introduction of multicultural policy by the newly elected Labor government in 1973 aimed to address identity and service provision issues experienced by migrants from non-English speaking countries. These immigrants arrived as part of a post-World War II mass migration scheme and had been clearly disadvantaged by preceding policies. Since then, national- and state-level multicultural policies have been supported by a range of legislative and policy mechanisms.

Australian multiculturalism is designed to promote an inclusive plural society in which minority groups have opportunities to access services, feel a sense of belonging, and obtain equitable outcomes in health, social, cultural, and economic domains (Taksa & Groutsis, 2013; Department of Home Affairs, 2018; Elias et al., 2021; see also Modood, 2011, 2013b). Nevertheless, older immigrants in Australia have continually experienced

higher levels of disadvantage and other health risk factors in later life, and a lack of targeted services (FECCA, 2015; Brandhorst et al., 2019).

Since its inception, multicultural policy has undergone various changes aligned with the objectives of various federal and state governments (Koleth, 2010; Walsh, 2014). Since the late 1990s, institutional dynamics and Australian government policies have been shaped by economic rationalism and neoliberalism. Such underpinnings have contributed to ambivalence and varying support for multiculturalism, with impacts on the organisation of integration for older immigrants (Walsh, 2014; Levey, 2019). In policy documents, minimal account has been given to individual, ethnic groups, and intra-ethnic differences. The “poly-ethnic” approach of the late 1970s that shaped the organisation of migrant integration has been superseded by diversity policies which effectively promote a homogenising approach (Taksa & Groutsis, 2010, 2013). Conflicting support for multiculturalism is also evident in conservative federal government immigration policy agendas, which have restricted family reunions, particularly for those from certain national and ethnic backgrounds (Castles et al., 2014). Furthermore, such policy agendas have reduced funding and promoted competitive tender processes for Migrant Resource Centres and multicultural service agencies (Liebergreen, 2008).

Alongside funding reductions and an emphasis on deregulation, productivity and competitiveness, implemented by the conservative federal government from September 2013, policy relating to migrant integration was restricted to the early settlement period (Powell, 2017). Nevertheless, integration has remained a central component of Australia’s multicultural discourse (Collins, 2013), underpinned by the idea of two-way integration (Parekh, 2000; Modood, 2013a, 2013b) in which “government and citizens alike are required to adjust to life in a culturally diverse democracy” (Levey, 2019, p. 459). Critics have, however, argued the neoliberal ideology permeating Australian policies positions responsibility for cultural adjustment primarily with individual immigrants, which is more reflective of assimilation than two-way integration (Levey, 2019; Squires, 2020).

Mainstreaming Diversity

In recent years, integration in Australia has been promoted through mainstreaming policy, which involves a “reframing of diversity as something that involves a ‘whole society’ approach rather than addressing only specific groups within society” (Scholten et al., 2017, p. 286). In the scholarly literature, mainstreaming is conceptualised “as a shift in policy focus (from specific to generic)” (Scholten et al., 2017, p. 283). Mainstreaming diversity has recently spread from support for women and disability service provision to immigrant integration and aged care provision. This approach assumes that health and aged care systems work effectively, and that it is immigrants who need to adapt and integrate into these systems since mainstreaming presupposes that all services provide culturally appropriate care that therefore accommodate the needs of older people from CALD backgrounds (Kelaher & Manderson, 2000; Aged Care Diversity Framework, 2017; Department of Home Affairs, 2018).

There are various views as to why mainstreaming has developed in relation to immigrant integration. For Vertovec (2007), it provides a way to address the multitude of different cultural groups or “superdiversity” in Australia. For Levey (2019), mainstreaming reflects the conservative federal government’s assumption that multiculturalism has been achieved; hence, group-differentiated measures and services are no longer needed. However, the lower health and socioeconomic status of Australia’s cultural minorities (Warburton et al., 2009; FECCA, 2015; Bastos et al., 2018) led Levey (2019, p. 456) and others (Brandhorst et al., 2019) to conclude that the “institutional and attitudinal conditions that [mainstreaming] presupposes are yet to be fully realised in Australia”. Further, critics argue that mainstreaming homogenises cultural differences (Spencer & Charsley, 2021). And while the federal and state governments have invested in different initiatives to enable aged care providers to support the diverse needs of service users, such as cultural competency training and interpreter programmes, significant policy-to-practice gaps remain. As a result, the fulfilment of the cultural and linguistic needs of older CALD members of Australian society is variable, and often lacking

(Karmel et al., 2003; Hogan, 2004; Radermacher et al., 2009; FECCA, 2015), impacting ongoing integration.

Organisation of Care and Services for Older People in Australia

As in many Western countries, Australia's population is ageing and increasingly diverse. While aging presents a variety of challenges for all, they are exacerbated for older people from CALD backgrounds who need to navigate services and systems not designed with them in mind (FECCA, 2015). Those immigrants who arrived in the decades after World War II are now much older than the total population (Wilson et al., 2021). Yet, Australia's aged care policy neglects their cultural differences and diverse needs, favouring individualisation and independence by promoting the capacity for people to remain living in the community for as long as they can—in policy terms, known as “ageing in place”.

The policy agendas described earlier have been linked to welfare-related reforms that have reduced public funding while increasing responsibilities and requirements of not-for-profit, migrant support organisations. A key feature of such reforms is a philosophical shift from welfare orientated models, to care as a commodity that can be purchased by consumers and delivered via various organisations (Allotey et al., 2002; Carlsson & Pijpers, 2021). These policy agendas have immense implications for the capacity to facilitate continued integration, as organisations involved in supporting older people generally and older immigrants specifically, rely on federal government funding. In Australia, and internationally, some view the shifts towards consumer-directed care and cost-reducing mainstreaming services as creating challenges for older immigrants, especially those from CALD backgrounds, whose continued integration is affected by language issues, navigational barriers, and expense of private health and aged care services (Daly & Lewis, 2003; Radermacher et al., 2009; Brandhorst et al., 2019; Carlsson & Pijpers, 2021). The length of time immigrants have spent in Australia, their age at migration, and local and transnational family relationships also affect integration over time

(Warburton et al., 2009). Further, the decreased capacity for families to care for older relatives resulting from the increasing participation of women in the workforce, and from changing cultural values that also have an impact on the maintenance of integration in later life (Sagbakken et al., 2018).

Integration

Despite its frequent use within the Australian and international academic and policy discourse pertaining to migration, integration remains a contentious and ill-defined concept (Crul et al., 2013; Penninx and Garcés-Masareñas 2016; Schinkel, 2018; Squires, 2020). The term *integration* conjures vastly different meanings and assumptions for immigrants and receiving societies in terms of how power inequalities and issues of membership arising from migration are approached and managed by individuals, the state, and society (Willis et al., 2018; Squires, 2020; see also Spencer & Charsley, 2016; Klarenbeek, 2019). In most normative conceptualisations, integration is defined as a static, linear, and unidirectional process with migrants expected to integrate into the dominant society. From such perspectives, the focus is on the immigrants' commitments, efforts, and achievements, evaluated through a narrow set of criteria such as labour force, educational, civic, and political participation (Favell, 2001; Entzinger & Biezeveld, 2003; Colic-Peisker, 2009).

For critics, assumptions and expectations that individuals or groups integrate into a homogenous society are highly problematic in multicultural or "superdiverse" countries where ideologies of nationalism and constructions of belonging are being challenged and redeveloped (Vertovec, 2007; Meissner & Heil, 2021). Criticism also highlights limited attention given to the influence of institutional and societal factors on the integration process, such as language, housing, financial stress, discrimination, marginalisation, and migration-related factors, such as age at migration and length of time in country of settlement (Liu et al., 2019, 2020). Moreover, a unidirectional approach risks creating a moral binary in which immigrants perceived to be "well" integrated are viewed as deserving/legitimate citizens, in contrast to those viewed as failing to

integrate, and thus less deserving, illegitimate outsiders (Phillimore, 2012; Rytter, 2018; Klarenbeek, 2019; Penninx, 2019).

In opposition to the idea of such a linear, static, and unidirectional process, scholars are increasingly embracing the notion of integration as multidimensional; recognising it as an “ebbing and flowing two-directional process”, influenced by various factors over many years (Spencer & Charsley, 2016, p. 9; see also Fozdar & Hartley, 2013; Koirala, 2016; Erel & Ryan, 2019; Squires, 2020). As a two-way process, integration is subject to the continual effort, negotiation, and adaptation of multiple actors in a changing socio-political context (Ryan et al., 2021).

The two-directional, multidimensional integration framework such as proposed by Ager and Strang (2008), for example, encompasses core domains assisting migrant integration such as (1) markers and means (employment, housing, education, and health), used as both indicators of integration and means towards greater integration; (2) social connections (social bonds, social bridges, and social links), which facilitate access to the means and achieve the markers; (3) supportive factors facilitating integration such as language, cultural knowledge, safety, and stability; and (4) foundations such as rights and citizenship (Ali et al., 2021). Also, besides the structural dimensions of integration, such as social positioning and participation in the labour market that have dominated the integration and settlement literature, attention in the integration scholarship is increasingly being drawn to cultural, and emotional dimensions of integration (see Martinovic et al., 2009; Ersanilli & Koopmans, 2010; Erdal & Oeppen, 2013; Cheung & Phillimore, 2014; Erel & Ryan, 2019; Wessendorf & Phillimore, 2019; Becker, 2022).

In addition to multidimensionality, integration is increasingly being recognised as a dynamic process; promoting the view that there is “no integration ‘end state’, no ‘integrated society’, but rather an evolving process” (Spencer & Charsley, 2016, p. 4). Thus, integration “outcomes” such as labour force participation and English proficiency are no longer desirable end states, but rather “mere snapshots in an everchanging set of processes” (Spencer & Charsley, 2016, p. 9). A dynamic approach also brings attention to how actors, processes and the impact of social determinants change over time and over the life course.

Incorporating the Life Course Perspective

The life course perspective relates well to contemporary research on immigrant integration and ageing, as both migration and integration are dynamic processes (Dannefer & Settersten, 2010; Grenier, 2012) which unfold over time (King et al., 2006; Ferrer et al., 2017; Brotman et al., 2020; Holman & Walker, 2021). A widely used conceptualisation of the life course is that proposed by Elder (1994). According to Elder, the life course is a dynamic and multilevel phenomenon, with ever changing pathways structured by institutions and organisations and individual trajectories (i.e., roles, status, and development) which impact on individual identities and behaviours (Elder, 1994; Ferrer et al., 2017). Key themes of the life course perspective include: (1) life events, timing, and structural forces; (2) local and globally linked lives; (3) identities and categories/processes of difference; and (4) domination, agency, and resistance (Elder, 1994; Ferrer et al., 2017).

In the traditional view, age is seen as underlying the linear organisation of education, work, family, and leisure time (Settersten, 2003). However, the life course of immigrants may not follow this normative linear trajectory, due to discontinuities related to employment, education, resource accumulation, social networks, identity, and sense of belonging. Resulting interruptions can influence the integration process, and socioeconomic and wellbeing outcomes over the life course (Ferrer et al., 2017; Erel & Ryan, 2019). Other life course influences implicated in immigrant integration include: the historical period of migration, length of stay in the country of settlement, and age at migration (Kilkey & Ryan, 2021). Thus, different points in life present different opportunities for integration.

While integration processes are considered of particular importance during the settlement period, they may also become important in the later stages of immigrants' lives, when they need to interact with, and navigate through, organisational care and systems meant to support "ageing in place". Normative expectations for integration, such as learning the language, labour force participation, and economic self-sufficiency, not only attribute integration to immigrants only, but vary in applicability depending on where immigrants are, and were, in their life courses.

For instance, those migrating in later life for family reunification or lifestyle preferences engage in different integration processes than those migrating earlier in life. The experience of displacement or disengagement from communities can also increase in later life, thereby weakening chances of access to meaningful social roles and social participation, impacting on a sense of belonging, identity, and connection to place (Wilmoth, 2004; Liu et al., 2019). Evidence suggests that as people with migrant backgrounds age, they pursue more social interactions with those from similar backgrounds, seeking a sense of familiarity and wellbeing (Tran et al., 2022). Preference for interactions with people from the same ethnic background and migrant support services can be reinforced by the tendency for older people to revert to their first language later in life (Thomas, 2003). Furthermore, increasing dependence on a range of people and organisations in later life can particularly affect the wellbeing of older people from CALD backgrounds (Park et al., 2019).

In short, this kind of literature highlights that integration changes over time, alongside changes to social roles and group memberships, engagement with new institutions and structures, and positioning in society (Liu et al., 2019; Park et al., 2019; Kilkey & Ryan, 2021). As the outcomes of integration are built through mutual interaction of specific “groups” within a particular social space, it is important to explore the role of organising in sustaining integration later in life. Next we present some field material illustrating organising integration in relation to older immigrants living at home in the community in Australia. In our study, we paid close attention to practices of several not-for-profit organisations involved in aged care and support service provision for older people from CALD backgrounds. Examining organising processes of integration in the context of immigrant ageing can enhance formulation of policy frameworks and the development of appropriate strategies and tactics to ensure continued migrant integration as they age “in place”.

Method

This research forms a part of a larger ongoing study funded by the Australian Research Council evaluating the demographic and social dimensions of immigrant ageing in Australia. In this chapter, we focus on the perspectives of organisational representatives involved in supporting continued integration for older immigrants ageing in the Australian community. The research was conducted in Sydney, which is Australia's largest city, located in the state of New South Wales; the state has traditionally attracted the largest number of immigrants, and therefore encompasses a diverse, multicultural older population (ABS, 2014). Interviews were undertaken from June to October 2021 via Zoom due to COVID-related public health orders following the granting of ethics approval to conduct the interviews by the Macquarie University Human Research Ethics Committee.

The interviews focused on organisational practices in not-for-profit organisations involved in aged care support for immigrants aged 65 years and over living at home. Purposive sampling was used, with potential interviewees identified through members of the project's Industry Advisory Group and selected based on the CALD representation of service users. Interviews were conducted in English by three members of the research team, who used an online video conferencing system at a time convenient for interviewees. Interviews, ranging in length from 45 minutes to two hours, were recorded and transcribed through the video conferencing system. Identifying information was removed from transcripts and interviewees' names were replaced with pseudonyms.

Interview questions included background information such as age, country of birth, education, ethnicity, and language spoken at home; and specific questions related to the structure and nature of the organisation and the interviewee's role, funding arrangements and service provision, characteristics of service users and community groups, organisational partnerships, engagement with ethnic specific, and mainstream community members. In two cases, interviews were with more than one person from a specific organisation.

Data analysis was informed by Braun and Clarke's (2006) approach to thematic analysis. This approach to analysis involves a series of phases through which common, emergent themes are developed and extracted from the raw data. Initial thoughts and ideas were discussed amongst the interviewers, followed by reading and rereading of transcripts, and listening to audio files, for full immersion in the data. This process led to the development of codes which were used to identify data, considered by the interviewers to be most pertinent to the topic of immigrant integration. These codes were then applied to the whole dataset, which facilitated the identification of repeated patterns within the data. The patterns and relationships between codes, and further discussion between the interviewers to reach consensus, led to a set of themes being developed, which are presented here.

Results

Ten interviews were conducted with eight women and two men who were in various positions within their organisations, such as board members, chief executive officers (CEOs), managers, and coordinators. Nine interviewees were first- or second-generation immigrants; all were fluent in English. The organisations in which they worked provided aged care services, except one that operates as an advocacy and informational clearing house, helping mainstream and ethno-specific providers to understand the aged care system, and cultural sensitivities of specific ethnic/religious/cultural groups. The material collected demonstrated that integration is intimately connected with organising practices and takes different forms in relation to the multifarious organisational initiatives aimed at "supporting", "managing", and "coordinating" various groups of immigrants, with different consequences for immigrants as well as for the organisers. These issues are highlighted in the next section focusing on the characteristics of migrant support organisations that have begun to engage in aged care support.

Migrant Support Organisations Engagement with Ageing Immigrants

Participants in this research included staff and leaders from a range of not-for-profit ethno-specific, multicultural, and community service organisations. A few of these organisations have been involved in ethno-specific welfare-based activities supporting specific, more established and larger immigrant groups over numerous decades. Others service a mix of immigrant groups that historically were not numerous enough to support an ethno-specific organisation, and may have originally focused on social interaction, rather than service provision.

Organisational size, length of operation, and CALD groups serviced contributed to the pace and extent to which aged care has been incorporated as a core service deliverable to support continued socio-cultural integration for immigrants later in life. Some interviewees stated that their aged care service provision is limited to social groups and leisure, learning and physical activity-based sessions, supplemented by additional services such as transport and meals. Others reported that their organisation provides a full range of services including learning, social and exercise-based activities, respite, personal and domestic services, and specialist nursing in the home.

All interviewees noted that their organisations provide programmes and services for older people from CALD backgrounds to sustain integration. Such programmes and services include English language classes, computer classes, access to government agencies and welfare, and volunteering opportunities, while also supporting older people to maintain their ethno-cultural heritage in keeping with Australian multicultural policies. Provision of different welfare streams was said to help foster integration, a “holistic approach” to service delivery and continuity of care, minimising the number of institutions, systems, and individuals that older people from CALD backgrounds need to engage with. For example, Milena and Annika’s organisation delivers not only home support but also “a disability program and mental health program, and a family program with lots of sub programs”, which has enabled a “holistic and intergenerational approach” to the organisation of integration.

Despite the widespread policy push towards mainstreaming aged care service provision, interviewees defended their multicultural or ethnic and culturally specific orientations. They emphasised their difference from mainstream for-profit services, describing their approach to organising as more responsive and adaptive to heterogeneity in context and specific circumstances of older immigrants and their communities. Emphasising this point and problematising the mainstreaming funding models and the “positive ageing” agenda, Thom, from an ethno-specific support organisation, said:

This model is not people focused, because you expect everyone to be fully independent, ignoring their CALD in their language, ignoring their age, ignoring their limited social networks, compared with their Australian peers. So, there is a need for CALD specific service across the full human services spectrum. So that’s our understanding, it would not be agreed by everyone right, especially government or funding bodies, but this is our belief. And now, based on this belief that we extend ourselves into aged care because we believe aging population is of course, not only affecting Australian born people but also affects CALD people.

According to several interviewees, a key strength of an ethno-specific organisation is the fact that a high percentage of its staff are themselves first- and second-generation immigrants, who are bilingual, culturally aware, and sympathetic to the immigrant experience. Many examples were provided of staff and service users sharing language, values, culture, traditions, and histories. Sophia claimed that “our staff strength is as multicultural staff members and we tap in on each other’s strengths, to learn from each other, a cultural sensitivity to step in and talk to the client in that language, just to help him or her to feel comfortable”. Similarly, Angeline, stated: “I think, being a multicultural service is our big niche, so a lot of our clients come for that, [I] mean put it this way, they can get our care workers who speak the language and who understand their culture”. As Thom noted regarding the fact that many staff came from refugee backgrounds themselves:

They personally went through [a similar] journey, they have sympathy, they have understanding and, not to mention (...), a traditional advantage like communication, they speak the same language, share the same value, you know, celebrate, respect, the same set of traditions, culture, history. So that's the biggest advantage for us as a new age care provider.

However, this culturally specific approach to organising sustained integration for immigrants has been fundamentally affected by government mainstreaming policies. Thom noted that although there were not many people from South Asia or Afghanistan in the areas served by his organisation, “for future growth, and this is in line with our vision, mission as a multicultural resource centre”, his organisation steps “into different service areas” in the “strong belief that we expand ourselves in line with the needs of our clients”. Similarly, Marco emphasised that his Italian migrant support organisation now also supports immigrants from China, Vietnam, and Korea; a conscious decision to reach out to ethnic groups that lacked the infrastructure for aged care service provision. As he put it: “We've created this wealth of experience in working with culturally diverse communities that we can expand to other communities. In recent years we've developed a really good working relationship with the Portuguese community”.

In short, these culturally specific organisations that had traditionally focused solely on the integration of immigrants from one ethnic group during the early settlement period, have adapted to the imperatives of government multicultural and mainstreaming policies. Despite being critical of the latter, entering into aged care support for numerous different ethnic groups has occurred in order to secure needed funding to address the changing needs of immigrants during the life course.

Supporting Cultural Autonomy, Language, and Identity in Later Life

Unlike the “big issues” of integration, such as employment, housing, and English language proficiency, which tend to be the focus during the settlement period, interviewees told us how integration for older

immigrants is oriented around day-to-day life, which includes building and maintaining social connections and cultural practices, as well as addressing daily difficulties referred to as “everyday integration” (see Cherti & McNeil, 2012, p. 3; Goñda et al., 2021). Interviewees said that they support socio-cultural integration through a diverse range of community and home-based services and activities. They also drew attention to the ethnic and cultural diversity of their service users, highlighting differences in preferences, needs and vulnerabilities related to socialisation, personal in-home care, family dynamics, food, and language. In some instances, these differences were associated with culture, language, and religion; in others, they were related to the migration experience. Milena and Annika (interviewed together) thus drew attention to the variability in preferences for activities and types of care:

The Chinese they like to go out (...) for the whole day, and go and see, do a lot of physical walking and things like that, whereas (...) we don't get that with the Greeks and the Italians (...) I have noticed that people from Poland and Germany, Austria, Hungary like playing bridge (...) many clients of ours, who would go and ask for transport, because they are meeting their friends in the Bridge Club (...) Russians don't do that, however, we found that some of them do like to be in the group of similar aged people and they talk about politics, those from the former Soviet Union (...) they like to discuss the food, of course, but not bridge.

While culture and ethnicity were emphasised throughout the interviews, differences pertaining to migration experiences were also mentioned. One example of this related to programmes for older people from China who had migrated for family reunification and caregiving/receiving. Such support provided Chinese-born grandparents in Sydney with opportunities to socialise and develop social ties with other Chinese-born immigrants with similar life courses. These types of programmes and other learning opportunities—such as helping older immigrants with using and navigating public transport systems; teaching them digital literacy; and facilitating their access to institutions, welfare, and health providers—were primarily linked to issues associated with the migration experience rather than culture or ethnicity. These activities and linkages

were useful in maintaining social connections and independence—with important integration benefits for older immigrants.

Interviewees recounted how nuanced ways of relating to culture and language can re-emerge in later life in response to new circumstances. The phenomenon of reverting to first language in older age was mentioned as a common occurrence. However, as Marco stressed, language not only is a communication tool but also provides an ongoing connection to culture for older immigrants. As he put it:

Language is not always the determinant, [it is] more social connection ... But I think there's a cultural connection clearly (...) if your preferences [are] for somebody from the same culture, whether it's language or food or whatever it might be (...) they feel more comfort in that.

As Milena and Annika pointed out regarding South African immigrants in Australia, even though they “grew up with English” and speak it “well”, they use “different expressions and different ways of saying things that can really put people's backs up”. An example provided in this regard was the tendency for them to use expressions, such as “you must go and see whatever movie it is, or you must taste”, which the interviewees said could be interpreted as a South African tendency to be “bossy” and linked to their “reputation of having servants and bossing servants around”.

Carla commented that there were “different issues for different groups”. For example, those who came to Australia during the 1950s from Greece and Italy tend to “know a bit of English (...) they just are more aware of things because they don't have as big a language barrier”. This means the organisation does not need to engage the services of a translator for these groups of immigrants. By contrast, the organisation does need to engage translators for the more recent immigrants “because a lot of them don't speak English”.

Interviewees told us that even those who have lived in Australia for many years and are proficient in English may prefer to engage with workers and other persons who speak their first language. As Carla indicated, it is not only a preference for someone who speaks the language, but someone who is sensitive and understanding of issues related to the

migration experience, such as trust or lack of trust in government organisations. She added:

A lot of them prefer the informal support from us, because they know us, so they feel comfortable about it, but with the government support it's a bit more rigid and they get a bit wary of it sometimes. You know the Chinese like to have my Chinese translator there to help them (...) when they are dealing with assessors for My Age Care and things like that. They just like to have someone that they know a bit.

While many social and care-related activities tended to be embedded within ethnic/culturally specific practices, they also remained part of the wider social space of integration, providing opportunities for social support, connection and belonging at the ethnic and broader community level. Carla noted the value of this dimension for integration by saying "It creates a feeling of belonging".

While many cases of ethnic specific services and activities were quoted, examples were also given of how organisations operate as spaces for building bonds among immigrants, as well as fostering relationships between diverse ethnic groups and the host society. Carla referred to specific cultural practices, such as Yoga and Tai Chi that are open to people from English speaking backgrounds and conducted in English, saying that these activities attracted older immigrants from China and also people from other non-English speaking backgrounds, who tend to "speak English in that group" and who form friendships with each other as a result.

Socialisation was considered by interviewees as highly important to facilitate so-called ageing well amongst older immigrants. Emphasising the relationship between social engagement and wellbeing, Milena and Annika said that "one of the key things to keep a person ... in a good state is [for that person] to have the social connection".

Interviewees also said that migrant support organisations are spaces for people to learn about and explore other peoples' cultures. Integration was facilitated by cross-cultural/multicultural and mixed immigrant/non-immigrant activities, fostering mutual social integration and inter-ethnic participation. In this regard, Marco noted that while activities provided

by his organisation had traditionally supported only Italian immigrants who had come to Australia after World War II, more recently “some of the day care groups attracted not just Italian immigrants but also those from Greece or former Yugoslavia, because the food is better”. Also on this topic, Carla commented:

Another way we integrate is there are Australians that actually do that Chinese Tai Chi group. (...) they'll see them in the park, and they come and just do it as well, not knowing the language, but they will follow the movements. So, we actually have (...) a few Australian people ... and that's been a good integration (...). And when we've had Chinese year and moon festival they come to the celebration.

Hence, concluded Carla, she is “just so surprised at how this organisation integrates so many cultures together and it seems to work”.

Organising Continued Integration for Older Immigrants

Interviewees indicated that supporting older people from CALD backgrounds requires extensive engagement of a multiplicity of stakeholders, including other ethno-specific and multicultural organisations, religious and culturally specific organisations. Also needed are interactions with mainstream providers and umbrella representative organisations (both ethnic specific and general) such as Carers NSW; the Federation of Ethnic Communities Councils of Australia (FECCA); Settlement Services International; the Dementia Alliance; and Commonwealth, state, and local government entities, such as federal departments of migration, housing, disability, ageing and health and local councils and libraries, which provide funding and services. These relationships and collaborations widen the capacity of migrant support organisations to deal with the diverse needs of their clients, through resource sharing, opening referral pathways, and expanding touchpoints for entry into aged care services, sharing the cost of ethno-culturally specific programming and events, and expanding access to venues and volunteers who are bilingual.

These partnerships and collaborations were also said to assist in the maintenance of integration by increasing recognition and support for older people from CALD backgrounds, by helping to create networks of care and building social capital through collaboration and cooperation, trust, familiarity, and commonalities among older immigrants, the organisations that support them, and wider society.

Tangible examples were provided of how organisations worked together to extend the breadth of cultural relevance that they can incorporate into their service delivery. Exemplifying how organisations work together to expand the way in which cultural needs and integration processes can be met, Carla told us that her organisation had previously supported a group from the Indian subcontinent but lacked the knowledge of cultural practices which made it difficult to cater for the needs of these strict vegetarians. Thus, the organisation contracted a team leader from another ethno-specific organisation to provide the necessary support, resulting in close co-operation between these organisations.

Organisational co-operation of this nature has been critical in addressing gaps in funding for smaller CALD or less established immigrant groups. As Maria commented: “So, there’s a lot of partnerships among ethnic specific groups” in the geographic area covered by her organisation and she referred to one organisation that had historically dealt with the welfare needs of Italian immigrants now working “closely with Australia Nursing Home Foundation which is the Chinese community”, enabling them to mobilise funding to support the Vietnamese and the Korean communities. In this way, the ethno-specific communities are now “working in partnership”.

Interviewees discussed a range of problems constraining service delivery efforts to support older immigrants, and to ensure their continued integration in Australian society. Several of them mentioned that no additional funding is received to manage age care support for immigrants, even though the necessary use of interpreters and translators, the planning and delivering of culturally specific services and activities, the support for administrative navigation, and activities such as filling out forms, add costs and strains their organisational resources. Drawing attention to this additional work, Patricia commented that her organisation has “to do a lot of unfunded work” particularly to support CALD clients’

assessment for government funding. Indeed, she noted that “our clients (...) they don't know how to navigate the system” for health referrals. Thus, added support was required from her organisation, such as providing an interpreter or translator, increasing the time taken to provide needed support that “is not funded”.

Some expressed concern about the fact that smaller migrant support or ethno-specific organisations struggle with the high bureaucratic burden associated with aged care support service delivery, and that therefore CALD groups with smaller ageing populations may be left behind. As Thom noted, the relatively smaller Korean community has “an upcoming elderly group, they're not very big but what happens in that situation?”, when most support providers for Asian communities provide only Chinese language resources. Marco expressed similar concerns about the pressure of the reporting and compliance requirements in delivering support services for older immigrants, particularly for “a lot of smaller organisations, to meet those requirements and to stay within the guidelines”.

Numerous interviewees expressed serious concerns about meeting the language and cultural needs of the older CALD population, pointing out that at times specific CALD groups are at risk of missing out. Carla commented: “I don't have the funds to employ someone once a week to take the Spanish group”. Moreover, she commented that the employment of “an Australian girl” after the Greek translator left “just didn't work out because [there were] too many nuances”.

Another critical factor constraining the ongoing organisation of integration for all immigrants, and specifically older immigrants as raised by interviewees, related to the way government funding is divided between government departments for migrant settlement services, mental health, disability, and aged care, which prevents cross subsidisation at the service level. Interviewees expressed particular concern about the way aged care and disability funding is now tied to individual service users rather than organisations such as theirs. They argued that current funding models restrict a life course approach to organising integration, by limiting flexibility of service providers through how funding is administered, as well as by creating uncertainty for providers regarding what their total funding stream per annum will be.

Funding limitations also impacted on transparency and access to information about aged care for older immigrants from CALD backgrounds. In this regard, Allison noted the lack of materials translated “into Greek, Italian and Chinese Mandarin or Cantonese (...) so that they know what they’re signing, or ... the questions they’re answering”. Noting the expense of translations, Allison further commented, “that will be expensive, so it really doesn’t [seem likely to happen] (...) we need to address that”. Similarly, Maria emphasised the importance of providing correct and transparent information to community members either through translated materials or bilingual educators, stating: “Language is a really important thing. And we need to explain to them the system (...) that’s something that’s really important for us because (...) knowing and understanding the system will empower them to be able to use” it.

Discussion and Conclusion

This chapter started with the statement that immigrants to Australia are not a homogenous group, despite policy interventions that neglect their heterogeneity based on different countries of origin, ethnic, economic, religious, and cultural backgrounds, and age ranges. Such diversity contributes to dynamic and complex integration processes within Australia’s multicultural society over time.

In Australia, not-for-profit organisations that were set up in the decades following the post-war migration scheme, and more so those following the advent of multicultural policy, have now extended their remit beyond immediate settlement and integration support to engagement with immigrants ageing in place, that is, in their own homes and communities. By recognising the multi-dimensionality of integration and considering temporality in the form of the life course, we stress that integration is not linear and unidirectional but rather a dynamic, ongoing process (see also, Spencer & Charsley, 2016), and that outcomes at earlier life stages may not ensure integration in immigrants’ later lives (see also Chap. 13).

As the material presented has shown, “everyday integration” in immigrants’ later lives is reliant on organising activities that help to build or sustain social connections and cultural practices within specific cultural

groups, and between them (including those with non-migrants). In short, organising immigrant integration needs to be maintained well beyond the early period of settlement. In some cases, support activities for older immigrants provided by the interviewees illustrate that ongoing integration needs can be greater for some immigrants than others.

While there are limitations on the extent to which migrant support organisations can tailor service provision to meet the individual or even specific cultural needs of older people from CALD backgrounds, it is evident that such organisations play a central role in maintaining integration processes across the life course. Limitations on their capacity to fulfil such needs are greatly affected and constrained by present Australian government policies. The findings highlight the impact of changes in multicultural policies and the advent of mainstreaming policies underpinned by neoliberal ideology that have decreased funding for not-for-profit migrant support organisations, with the shift towards government commissioning of services.

Our interviewees expressed concerns about the financial viability of migrant support organisations that provide aged care services for specific immigrant groups, and about neoliberal funding mechanisms focused on compliance requirements associated with financial rather than social imperatives (see also Tonts & Haslam-McKenzie, 2005; Harley et al., 2011). Such policy interventions, when contrasted with the needs of older people from CALD backgrounds, have led migrant support organisations to diversify and extend the services they offer to aged care. Some interviewees highlighted the organising efforts focused on finding ways to supplement government funding with their own income generating activities and inter-organisational partnerships. Others expressed concern that multicultural frameworks and policies contribute to competition among organisations for limited resources (see also Modood, 2013a; Vacchelli & Mesarič, 2021). One example of this is the lack of government funding provided for organisations to meet specific language needs of older people, such as for interpreters, translation of written materials and bilingual staff. Clearly, in Australia, government policy has been shaped by the expectations that English language and familiarisation with institutions and welfare should be acquired earlier in the life course, during the initial settlement period.

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13

But You Are Not an Immigrant! On Nordic Immigration in a Cultural Perspective

Orvar Löfgren and Barbara Czarniawska

Intra-Nordic migration is noticeably absent from the discussions about immigration to Sweden. Yet the migration between Sweden and Norway, Denmark and Finland has a long history and been on a large scale, so that a closer look at it may shed light on different aspects of integration than those concerning other immigrant flows.

What makes intra-Nordic labour migration especially interesting is that it has been freely permitted, and even encouraged, not least since 1954 when the passport requirement was abolished, and intra-Nordic migrants gained access to the Swedish welfare system. Yet the time perspective and different local contexts are important in any discussion of class and immigration, as we have learned from novels written over a

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period of more than half a century. How did the experience of migrants differ when they joined Swedish society in the 1950s, 1970s, or in 2000 and later?

In this chapter, we will present some analytical insights such intra-Nordic experiences offer. Our starting point is the reading of novels portraying immigrants to Sweden (from 1945 to 2017; see also Czarniawska, 2020). The novels, often with an autobiographical dimension, open up for a rich material and reflections on the immigrant experience. While there are quite a few novels depicting Finnish immigration to Sweden, it was hard to find Danish or Norwegian counterparts. The reason is probably that migration from Denmark and Norway in many ways was a “Migration Light”, not least due to the language affinity, while most Finns experienced a strong language barrier. We thought that an intra-Nordic comparison could be interesting and decided to contrast the Finnish and Danish experiences. Our Danish material was gathered from several sources, starting with a long-term research project on Danish-Swedish mobilities in relation to the building of the Oresund Bridge, spanning the sound between Copenhagen and Malmö, which opened in the year 2000. The project encompasses interviews as well as materials from media and popular culture (see Löfgren, 2003, 2008; Löfgren & Nilsson, 2010).

Denmark

Scania Becomes Danish!

A Dane once joined a debate on immigration problems in the south west Swedish province of Scania one of us attended. He turned to the main speaker and said: “After all, I am one of your immigrants.” The speaker answered immediately: “No, no, you aren’t an immigrant, you are a Dane!” So, who is and who is not an immigrant?

In 2007, dull and gloomy winter photos from new residential areas on the Scania side of the Oresund Bridge hung on the walls of an exhibition hall in Copenhagen. With their exhibition “On the other side”, the

Fletwerk architect firm entered the debate about immigrant ghettos that was raging in Denmark. Did “Danish ghettos” exist in Scania? The architects pasted quotes from blogs and internet sites in which potential Danish emigrants discussed the problems and opportunities related to moving to Scania:

We are a couple considering moving to Sweden. This is why it would be nice to know if there are some places where there are already more Danes ... so that we won't be completely isolated.

Other bloggers said that there was nothing wrong with the fact that Danes in Scania were hanging out with their compatriots; after all, real immigrant ghettos only exist in Denmark, don't they? In any case, Swedish authorities should not “push us to integrate”. Luckily, in Sweden, parents can actually demand that their children are taught in their mother tongue. Someone also reassured visitors to the exhibition that there was a “real Danish sausage stall” on the square to which some intended to move.

There was a fairly specific reason for the architects' comic picture. When the Oresund Bridge opened in 2000, many people were convinced that the Swedes from Scania would invade Copenhagen and its vicinity, creating real expat communities. In reality, the strong Danish currency and high apartment prices on the island of Zealand caused a rapid increase in the migration of Danes to Scania. It was not, however, the first time such movement occurred.

A New Tribe: Regionauts

During the official opening of the Oresund Bridge, the Danish Prime Minister Poul Nyrup Rasmussen permitted himself a joke: “Now we got Scania back without firing a cannon shot.” The Swedish Prime Minister, Göran Persson, who was sitting next to him, looked uneasy. Would Scania really become Danish again, as it was up until the Roskilde Treaty of 1658, when Denmark lost several provinces in what is now Southern Sweden?

This was not the only allusion to history during the inauguration of the bridge. It was also said that the “blue wall” that the Oresund region became after the peace treaty could now be demolished. But as many scholars have shown, this “wall” was never impenetrable. There was a continuous movement of people, things and ideas across the sound, which became particularly intense during the nineteenth century. In the early industrialised Copenhagen area, there were many specialists whose skills were needed in Scania—from dairy workers and agronomists to crafts people and architects (Nilsson et al., 2007).

But the great flow of people went in the opposite direction: Copenhagen and Zealand became important destinations for migrant workers from Scania and its neighbouring regions, Blekinge and Småland. People who could not afford a ticket to America could at least take the steam ferry across the sound. Towards the end of the nineteenth century, the Swedes were the largest immigrant group on Zealand and not an unproblematic one. They were often described as a vulnerable group at the bottom of society, for example in Andersen-Nexö’s novel *Pelle Erobreren* (Pelle the Conqueror, 1906–1910, film version 1987).

Around the turn of the previous century, the Swedes in Copenhagen were seen as a source of problems, as some of them took up petty crime and prostitution. “Swedes” became a derogatory epithet, meaning people who took the worst and lowest-paid jobs—a new Copenhagen underclass. Strangely enough, it was exactly this group that became quickly assimilated. Today, only Swedish surnames testify to this migration, which continued into the early twentieth century.

The experiences of migration at the end of the nineteenth century show not only how common it is that stereotypes and prejudices were directed at the new arrivals, but also that issues of identity and adaptation were shaped differently in different eras. Questions of cultural encounters and cultural diversity were unknown in turn-of-the-century Denmark. This changed later, which could be seen in the 1970s, when high unemployment in Denmark caused many Danes to look for a job in Scania, where they quickly became the biggest immigrant group. They were also perceived as problematic, as they often remained unemployed and had related social problems.

Then came the bridge, and many people used the new connection to become “regionauts”, examining the opportunities on the other side. In 2007, Danish newspapers discussed the consequences of the fact that many Danes were moving to Scania. The hypothesis was that it was the “wrong kind” of Danes who moved across the bridge—those who were not interested in integration but had instrumental motives for the move. Such people would take advantage of the economic benefits, such as cheaper housing, commute to work in Copenhagen, and perhaps move back in a few years. There were heated discussions on the web, such as when a Dane who had been living in Scania for a long time said she resented what she called the new Danish “comfort refugees”, who moved only to “buy cheap cars and houses and send their children to Danish schools. They never learn Swedish – zero integration, they spit on Sweden and the Swedes”.

“The Danish hotel” became a nickname for the new buildings in the village of Annestad, next to the bridge. Were immigrant ghettos developing in Scania? The mayor of Malmö, Ilmar Reepalu, was interviewed and said that he did not see a problem in Danes hanging out together in the city: “We do not regard Danes as foreigners, but as our brothers. They already understand our language and our culture.” Yet when the journalists from *Information* published a feature titled “A visit to Danish devils¹ in Annestad”, they informed the readers that the Danes living there did not even know the name of the Swedish Prime Minister. The newspaper *Sydsvenska Dagbladet* joined in and pretended to construct a special test for immigrants from Denmark, in an ironic reaction to the Danish proposal to introduce tests for immigrants back home.

“Brians”, Forest Dwellers and Love Refugees

So which Danes actually moved to Sweden? Danish newspapers often talked about “Brian-types”—a Danish expression covering a certain stereotype of young blue-collar workers who moved to Malmö. They lived in the suburb of Annetorp, were described in derogatory terms as men

¹ An allusion to a popular Danish TV series *The Kingdom*, 1994, by Lars von Trier.

who had shaved heads, one earring, a delivery van and did not pay taxes. These “Brians” were seen as the wrong kind of regionauts, only interested in economic gain. The right kind was illustrated by the example of a Danish family who bought a house in the small town of Eslöv and told the journalists: “We have dreamed about moving to Sweden in many years ... We do not want to live in a Danish ghetto, but among Swedes. We want to learn the Swedish way of life.” There was also a group calling themselves “Danish cottagers”, who bought summer houses in the Scanian woods and who wanted to live “closer to nature”.

There were also “the love refugees”, as the Swedish media called them. The Danish tightening of immigration rules in the early 2000s meant that newly wed Danes could not bring their partners into the country if the partner was not an EU citizen. Such couples reluctantly chose an expat settlement in Malmö, hoping that after five years their partner would obtain Swedish citizenship, so that they could move to Denmark. The Danish party in the marriage often commuted to work in Copenhagen over the “bridge of sighs”. But when the five years had passed, some of the couples stayed, as they felt at home in Malmö.

However, most Danish immigrants were single, young couples or families with children, who needed cheaper housing and commuted to work in Copenhagen. Many of them were willing to return quickly to the other side of the bridge if the house prices, legislation or exchange rates changed. It was a rather unsentimental migration, enhanced by the proximity to the home country. Living in Malmö, but working, going to the cinema and buying rye bread in Copenhagen was a rather mild form of exile. They watched Danish channels on TV, had a Danish morning newspaper in the mailbox and listened to Danish radio on their way to work. For urban planners on both sides of the sound, this mobility was both advantageous and problematic. The statistics show moves back and forth across the border, as housing prices or the job market changed, for example in 2009, when housing prices levelled off and Danes began to move back to Denmark.

So do these moves over the bridge deserve to be called migration? A young Dane who decides to live in a cheap apartment on the Swedish side and commutes to work, leisure and shopping in Denmark does not need to be exposed to much of the “Swedishness”. A woman from Malmö

who takes the train to Örestad every day, walks 150 m on Danish territory to her workplace in a pharmaceutical company where she sits on the sixth floor and works with other Swedes, does not meet much “Danishness” either.

But what happens when a young Dane starts a family and has to decide if the children should go to a Swedish daycare centre or school? “Now we have to think about whether we want our children to become Swedish or not,” as the members of one young Danish family put it. Or what happens when an elderly Danish couple who have had a summer cottage in the Swedish forest for years consider retiring there? Like other migrants, regionauts may think of moving to work or housing across the sound as a temporary commitment, but one never knows what will happen next.²

Lund historian Hanne Sanders (2010) has pointed out that during the first half of the twentieth century—a time that is usually seen as “the peak of nationalism”—the citizens of Scania rarely described Denmark in terms of a different nation. Paradoxically, the Oresund Bridge, this integration device, has made the national differences more distinct. The even more numerous cultural encounters across the bridge are now moulded into templates about how Danes and Swedes behave and live. Brians, the love refugees, the forest dwellers and other, different kinds of Danes are lumped together, although it is not the same Scania that they see. Still, the question of whether Danes living in Sweden are immigrants or not remains unanswered. Not so in the case of Finns.

Finland

After World War II, the need for labour in a rapidly expanding Swedish industry coincided with high unemployment and a difficult economic situation in war-torn Finland. More and more people took the ferry to Sweden and applied for industrial jobs in the 1950s and 1960s. Migration peaked in 1970 and Finns came to constitute the biggest immigrant group in Sweden; the total number of migrants was over half a million (De Geer and Wande 1988). This extensive Finnish immigration was

²The pandemic of COVID-19 added another confirmation to this statement.

concentrated in certain industrial areas and city suburbs, where the migrants were numerous enough to create their own communities, and keep to themselves, in a way that was not previously common. It is this first wave that has been depicted in the early Finnish immigrant novels; later, the immigration declined, and the novels changed—both the topics and the tune.

The Early Novels

We begin with the well-known trilogy by Hannu Ylitalo: *Finnjävel* (The Finnish Devil, 1972), *Svenskarnas land* (The Land of the Swedes, 1973) and *Hemma bäst* (Home Sweet Home, 1975). Ylitalo himself came to Sweden in 1963 and worked on Volvo's assembly line. His novels attracted much attention and provoked many discussions in Finland. Was his description of the lives of Finns in Sweden perhaps too dark? President Kekkonen described his books as a warning to those who wanted to seek happiness in Sweden.

The protagonist of the first book, Raimo, has just finished his military service and is having a hard time finding a decent job in Finland. He is told that he should travel to Gothenburg, where the car industry is waiting for people like him. All he must do is go to the office and tell them about his arrival; they will even arrange accommodation. So he fills in the "Sweden papers", takes the ferry to Stockholm, and tries to get to know some people in Gothenburg (all this without a single word of Swedish). At the Volvo employment office, he and other Finns are registered, photographed, shown information films in Finnish, and then quickly guided to the assembly line. The bureaucratic requirements are minimal, as jobs are arranged by acquaintances and relatives. Raimo is given a place in Volvo's barracks, together with many other Finns—single young men, often with a rural background. There are people of other nationalities in the barracks (mostly Yugoslavs), but the Finns are the largest group, and also share their leisure time.

The Finns keep to themselves, look down on the Yugoslavs and think that the Swedes put on airs. They go to the Finnish association's dances and meet Finnish women; they do not see why they should learn Swedish.

After all, there are a great many Finns in Gothenburg; it is possible to live entirely in the Finnish circle, using an interpreter for discussions at work or in the meetings with authorities. Many people plan to return home—as soon as they can get a proper job and the housing shortage in Finland ends. Life in the bachelor barracks is hard but intoxicating—literally so: cheap wine and vodka flow throughout the book. Here a group of Finnish workers celebrates Independence Day and one of them jumps up on the table to give a celebratory speech:

-Yepp, we are robots that increase Swedish prosperity, and we are spiritually exploited. Three hundred thousand people living in a linguistic vacuum. Damn, what bilingual characters we have become, victims of the commercial language and communication by the bottle. Ten per cent of our children go to high school, while almost 80 per cent of the Swedish kids do. It can hardly be because our children are stupid. A raw Finnish working class is being born in this country. Come here, you bloody Finnish cultural babblers, and see how 300,000 Finns live in spiritual despair. (Ylitalo, 1972, p. 175, our translation³)

In the next book (1973), the perspective changes: Finnish immigration is now portrayed mainly through the eyes of women, who are working as seamstresses at Algots in Borås (a city 70 kilometres from Gothenburg, known for its textile industry). The main character, Kaisa, travels to Sweden with two of her children and immediately finds a job at Algots. The central theme in the book is the Finnish children's problems at school. They do not understand Swedish, receive very little Finnish instruction, try to skip school as much as possible and, when at school, keep quiet. The school is not a way into Swedish society, but a constant reminder of exclusion.

The third novel (1975) follows the Finnish families into their new life, in one of Borås' new areas. Finnish immigration coincided with the expansion of the Million Programme,⁴ and the immigrants' dream was to

³All translations in the text are by the authors.

⁴An ambitious public housing program implemented in Sweden between 1965 and 1974 by the governing Social Democratic Party to make sure everyone could have a home of good standard at a reasonable price.

have an apartment in these new areas. As it was, there were also many Finnish neighbours here, so the families, social networks and Finnish associations continued to maintain an inner community, with no need to have contact with the surrounding society. There was also a hard-drinking male collective that constantly constituted a temptation and a threat to the newly formed families.

This self-exclusion was often explained by the unfriendly attitude of Swedes, who treated the immigrants as an underclass. Here is another author, Martta Matinlopolo, who in her novel *Vem känner morgondagen?* (Who Knows What the Future Will Bring? 1976) made her characters dream of returning home:

- And what the hell has Sweden done for us? In this country we only have lousy jobs; there's no reason for hymns of thanksgiving.

- Finland didn't even give us lousy jobs. I didn't even get any spade work... That country can go to hell.

- So even you have sold your skin to Sweden, for a trifle, for a colour TV, car, furniture and other nice rubbish? You are like everyone else. I won't sell! I will make money and go back when times get better in Finlandia. (p. 9)

Some of them, however, understood that it might not be that easy:

No, Arttu stays in Sweden. Can't face another struggle to adapt. Once is enough for anyone. If I tried to go home again now, it would be the same as when I came here. I will have to start my life from scratch. And it doesn't pay. And where would a man my age get a job in his home country? Nowhere. They want young, professional people. Sweden can keep the old scrap. (p. 34)

So they stay, and their children grow up in Sweden.

The Second Generation

A recurring theme in Ylitalo's trilogy is a rapid "Swedishisation" of the second generation, which creates rifts within the family:

You don't feel like a citizen of any land anymore. It is a bitter feeling when your daughters don't want to speak Finnish, because they have learned Swedish. We were forced to learn Swedish to understand what they said. (1973, p. 78)

The third volume (1975), too, depicts the conflicts between the Finns who choose to integrate and became "Swedish servants"—for a car and a townhouse—with children who do not speak Finnish, and those Finns who do not want to learn a new language, have problems in their communication with Swedish society, and dream of returning home to Finland. Anja and Raimo, a married couple, work at Algots and in a tyre department at Volvo, now have a son and are worried that he will be "Swedishised". Raimo's work is monotonous, so in order to fight the everyday boredom, he hangs out with Finns who drink. His mother ages quickly, becomes ill and dies. Still, those who learn Swedish and forget Finnish are treated as traitors.

But the bachelor barracks at Volvo and the high-rise buildings in Borås were not the only places where Finnish immigrants lived. In places where there were not so many Finnish immigrants, life was different. Susanna Alakoski's autobiographical *Svinalängorna* (2006) depicts growing up in Ystad⁵ in a Finnish family that arrived in Sweden towards the end of the 1960s. (Alakoski was born in 1962 in Vasa.) The book follows the family during the 1960s and 1970s, with the girl Leena, who, like the author, was born in Vasa in 1962, as the narrator.

The *Svinalängorna* (the pigsties) is the nickname for the new municipal housing area. It is class rather than ethnicity that marks the difference between exclusion and inclusion. There were not many immigrants in Ystad in the 1960s, but several of them ended up in the same residential area, which also hosted families with alcohol abuse and social problems.

⁵ Kurt Wallander's hometown.

Leena's parents become increasingly dependent on alcohol, as it is the drinking that unites neighbours and friends, while their children do not fare well.

The exclusion of the Finns can be seen in events small and large. Parents do not care about going to school events, do not celebrate birthdays ("because we do not do that in Finland"). In Ylitalo's novels, school is mainly a problem for Finnish children, but in Alakoski's novel the school becomes a way out—into Sweden.

Leena is ashamed—both of her family, and of her home country. In contrast to her father, Leena quickly learned Swedish, but continued to live in two worlds. "I cheered on Swedish teams at school, Finnish ones at home" (Alakoski, 2006, p. 151). It was important for her parents and their Finnish friends to emphasise the superiority of Finnish culture in all areas, from the poverty of Swedish food ("too sweet") to the superiority of Finnish sports. "Dad and Veikko continued with their Finnish bragging. I was ashamed, hoping no one would hear them, that the balcony door was closed" (p. 149).

Symmetrical Stereotypes

The Finnish migrants' encounter with Sweden is described in the novels in terms of various types of inferiority. The emigrants who return to Finland on holiday (by car) create an image of Sweden as the country of the future. Sweden is ahead of its time, Finland is lagging behind and this image is reinforced by the geographical metaphor: Finland is the old-fashioned East; Sweden is the modern West. Yet the images are ambiguous. On the one hand, Sweden is a country of success, where "the new" already exists, while on the other hand, Swedes are portrayed as inflexible and superficial, while Finns are honest and old-fashioned in positive ways. The contrast also concerns the difference between the country and the city, as many characters in the novels long to return not only to Finland but also to their village.

The image of Sweden as the country of the future is confirmed on the ferry trip to Stockholm. In Roy Michelson's *Den inbillade friheten* (The Imaginary Freedom, 1990) Tanja takes the ferry to find a job in Sweden.

“Tanja has a tingling feeling in her stomach when she walks down the gangway. Everything is so different here. Somehow nicer, more stylish and bigger. The cars on the quay, the customs uniforms, faces, and their soft language... Suddenly she is ashamed of her appearance and of her clothes. She thinks that there is a ‘made in Finland’ stamp over both” (pp. 118–119).

Indeed, the Finnish migrants encountered a society with a large number of stereotypical notions and old prejudices about the Finns, according to which they were peasants, silent, old-fashioned men prone to take to the bottle and to the knife. Stereotypes often work as a self-fulfilling prophecy: Swedes saw who they wanted to see in the new immigrants. (It is interesting to note that back in the nineteenth century, Danes stereotyped Swedes in a similar way, as a backward nation of forest dwellers, hard drinkers and prone to draw knives; see Linde-Laursen, 1995.)

The majority society’s condescending, sometimes even contemptuous, view of the Finns kindled the dream of return. Return is a more important theme in the Finnish novels than in the other immigrant novels (Czarniawska, 2020). Ylitalo’s trilogy ends with the family loading the car for the journey home: “He was ready to leave... He was about to start all over again... Maybe he would find new comrades with whom he could feel part of a larger whole, and experience involvement in a developing society.” The car travels through central Sweden, “further and further east. To where the sun rises” (1975, p. 181).

Returnees changing their status from members of a marginalised underclass in Sweden to successful emigrants in the home country is a recurring theme in immigrant stories—from bragging Swedish-Americans visiting the village where they were born to Turks investing in a house in their home village to returning as heroes in a success story.

Being an Underclass

The growing number of Finnish workers changed perceptions of class. During the postwar years, the concept of class was falling out of use. It was seen as an old-fashioned word in the new welfare society, where class

divisions were supposed to disappear. Everybody should strive for a modern, classless (or actually a new middle-class) life.

In this new idealised social landscape, the Finns stood out, defined as a marginal and often problematic group, failing to adapt to Swedish society. They sometimes came to represent a new kind of underclass—a word often used by Finns themselves in the novels.

The experience of Finnish immigrants as an underclass has several common features in several novels. To begin with, the migrants often moved from the countryside to the city, so their alienation was reinforced by the encounter with the urban realities. Secondly, their view on their position in Swedish society also depended on whether or not they were planning to return to Finland. Return was actually, and not only in novels, much more common among Finns than other immigrant groups; half of the 400,000 Finns who came to Sweden between 1945 and 1980 returned home (De Geer & Wande, 1988). Those who were determined to return home were not interested in becoming a part of Swedish society. The Finns who attempted such an integration could be seen as traitors; hence, the internal conflicts mentioned above (Ylitalo, 1973). In Raimo's view, the Finns who learned Swedish and found an apartment and a car were bourgeois, who betrayed both Finland and their class of origin. Being integrated was seen as becoming bourgeois.

Regardless of how bourgeois they had become, they still remained members of the underclass in Sweden. In their own perception, the exclusion was also due to the fact that their country was behind in societal development. For many characters in the novels, moving to Sweden is also a journey to the future.

Another class differentiation had to do with relations between Finland-Swedes, who came from the Swedish-speaking minority in Finland,⁶ and the Finns. With Swedish as their mother tongue, the Finland-Swedes had very different opportunities to navigate Swedish society. In Finland, they were a minority; in Sweden, it was easy for them to join the privileged majority. In Martta Matinlompola's novel, Liisa's mother, who works in a factory, says: "There are no people I hate more than Jehovah's Witnesses

⁶Finland has a Swedish-speaking minority that meets the four major criteria of ethnicity, that is, self-identification of ethnicity, language, social structure and ancestry (Allardt & Starck, 1981).

and Finland-Swedes. At the factory, the Finland-Swedes behave as if ordinary Finns did not exist” (1976, p. 67). The old animosity earned a new energy in the new country.

At a Distance

While most novels about Finnish immigrants are sad, on the verge of tragic, Nousiainen’s novel *Hallonbåtsflyktingen* (The Raspberry Boat Refugee, 2007) can be read as a parody of a handbook for the perfect integration project. The main character, Mikko Virtanen, sees himself as a Swedish man trapped in a Finnish man’s body. The farcical plot is based on Mikko’s boundless love of everything Swedish and his attempt to become completely Swedish. Here, Sweden and the Swedes are portrayed with an ironic touch as a dreamland, where everything is better—from family relationships and Christmas celebrations to the “raspberry boats” (a type of wine gum sold on the ferry to Sweden), the football team spirit, and the social democratic idea of a welfare state as a “people’s home”.

I watch my Swedish friends. They have just the right amount of strong self-esteem, both as the nation and as individuals. The self-esteem of Italians, French or Americans is too strong, that of Finns is too weak. The Swedes’ self-esteem is just right. It is perfect. (Nousiainen, 2007, p. 92)

For Mikko, moving to Sweden is not enough. He wants

something more genuine, lasting, real. I want my Swedishness to be perfect and comprehensive, I do not want an immigrant life as a bilingual, second-class citizen.

I want to be a native Swede. I want to be modern, gentle and understanding, a family man in the Andersson, Johansson or Svensson family, or possibly Lindqvist. I need Swedish roots. (p. 17).

Mikko compares all that is Finnish with all that is Swedish. No detail is too small to acquire a symbolic meaning, and there is never any doubt as to what is best:

In Sweden (...) I feel alive. In old Swedish high-rise buildings, the gate opens inwards. It welcomes the visitor; in Finland you have to pull the gate open and stand outside and give way to it in wind and cold. In Sweden, the bicycle bells have a happy talking sound, in Finland the same signal says that the pedestrian should go to hell and stop whizzing around on the cycle path. (p. 28)

Does this mean that things have become so much better that one can laugh at immigrants' problems? For Finns, perhaps; for Danes, they were never bad; but for the other immigrants, it is not so certain.

Nordic but Not Scandinavian?

How can we explain why the migrant Danes and migrant Finns are, and were, treated so differently in Sweden? There is an obvious time difference; the main Finnish immigration wave occurred in the years 1954–1969; the Danes started moving to Sweden in larger numbers only after 2000, when the bridge was opened.

Still, Finland shares with Sweden much of the same Nordic background as Denmark. (500 years as part of the Swedish Empire meant that both legislation and administration have great similarities even in today's Sweden and Finland.)

Also, Finland is a Nordic country but not a Scandinavian one; the greatest difference is that of the language. All Scandinavian languages have the same roots and can be understood by speakers of each other's languages (with the exception of Icelandic, which has remained quite unchanged through the centuries, and is therefore difficult to understand now).

There is no doubt that integration in a country requires knowledge of its language (see also several other chapters of this volume). In Martta Matinlompolo's novel, when Liisa is on the ferry to Sweden with her mother, they listen to drunken Finns quarrelling on their way back to their jobs in Sweden after their holidays. One of the men starts talking to Liisa's mother: "life is hell for those who don't speak the language. It is a disadvantage in every way. You might think that such a small thing

shouldn't make Finns feel at a disadvantage ... but even small things feel big when you don't speak the language" (1976, p. 20). Liisa soon discovers how true this is: "Mother never dared to go to the store, she was afraid that someone would ask her about something which she wouldn't be able to answer" (p. 158).

Hannu in Jalava's *Sprickan* (The Crack, 1993) came to Sweden as a child with Finnish parents and is sometimes told that he speaks "Finnish with an accent", as he often moves in Swedish-Finnish environments. Still

the fact that 95% of the people in the country where he lived did not understand two words of his language meant that they could not see the world of this language, its universe, its wind in the grass, the wind that only exists in that grass in the eye of this language and its ear, nor would they ever understand parts of his face, actions, and emotional states. (p. 90)

The requirement to learn Swedish, and the difficulties related to it, magnified by age, a low level of education and a linguistic distance are not limited to the Finnish migrants. Yet there is a hierarchy of languages, and thus of the migrants who speak them. At the top are the immigrants from English-speaking countries, who do not even need to learn Swedish, as practically everybody in contemporary Sweden understands and speaks English. In second place are people who speak French and German, as the older generations in particular learned these languages at school. At the bottom of the hierarchy are Afro-Asiatic languages, as the story of a 2015 immigration "wave" reminds us of the early Finnish wave, with the addition of war-caused traumas.

What would be the ideal way of integrating immigrants into their new country? The old idea was that of *assimilation*, but this term was rarely used in our field material, and then only in the oldest novels. However, one can interpret "Swedishisation" as a synonym for "assimilation". It was probably an effect of a post-World War II trauma that the so-called "classical assimilation model" was criticised and abandoned (Morawska, 1994). Ewa Morawska has primarily linked it to the change in perspectives on ethnic issues in the United States, but it is conceivable that the fate of the assimilated German Jews also played a role in it (e.g. see Bauman, 1988; Brubaker, 2001). She herself wanted to defend it:

the assimilation model, (...) refers to a vision of society increasingly unified in the course of gradual boundary reduction between group participants. This process is predicted to move through stages called, respectively, acculturation (first in the extrinsic characteristics such as language and customs, then intrinsically in norms and values), social integration (first institutional in secondary associations, then in primary contacts, finally in intermarriage) and, ultimately, identification (collective, then individual). This multistage assimilation process, idealized as a “melting pot” of equal contribution from all groups, (...) entailed the dissolution of immigrant heritages into the ways of the hegemonic white Anglo-Saxon Protestant (WASP) middle class, to the point where distinctive ethnic characteristics cultural, social and psychological would totally disappear. (1994, p. 77)

Morawska included examples from her family of Polish Jews who emigrated to the United States after World War II and contrasted this model with an “ethnicisation model”—an equivalent of what at present is called “diversity”. Morawska’s conclusions, however, did not suggest assimilation as a model that should be used in relation to presently incoming immigrants, but as a model to use in a historical analysis of immigration. Also, if even Danes did not want to be assimilated, it would be hard to demand that of the Syrians, for example.

At present, a notion that is earning attention is that of *hybridisation*, “the creation of a hybrid culture based in the host society but drawing its emotive energy from the native country” (Kraidy, 2005, p. 11). Here is an argument for its use as a leading concept in the context of migration:

Hybridization is an antidote to the cultural differentialism of racial and nationalist doctrines because it takes as its point of departure precisely those experiences that have been banished, marginalized, tabooed in cultural differentialism. It subverts nationalism because it privileges border crossing. It subverts identity politics such as ethnic or other claims to purity and authenticity because it starts out from the fuzziness of boundaries. (Nederveen Pieterse, 2015, p. 97)

On 13 April 2019, *Dagens Nyheter* presented the results “of a unique research study where overseas immigrants in Sweden talked about their values”. To be more precise, they answered the questions they were asked,

which provides excellent material for a discourse analysis; the distance from this to “values”, whatever they are, is great. In the article, however, readers were told that “Swedish values” are the most advanced in the world, so that one can conclude that the more and the faster immigrants adopt them, the better. We would rather follow what George Hutchinson (2018) said, and hope with him that processes of intercultural and international communication and cooperation in order to avoid war and environmental devastation might gradually weave peoples together in new and more “free” ways that will in turn lead to the diffusion across cultures of newly shared values and practices, including the protection of “human rights” (p. 379).

Respect for human rights, not “Swedish values”, would, in our reading, be a main purpose of a Nordic hybrid society.

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14

The “Integration Problem”: A View from the Rocking Chair

Sten Jönsson

The Problem and the View

I am no longer an active field worker in social sciences. Hence the rocking chair view. But I do have some 50 years of experience of studies of integration in acquisitions, teamwork, strategic management and municipal organisation. Most relevant, perhaps, was an evaluation of a comprehensive decentralisation reform in our city. The former, traditional municipal organisation was replaced by a “ward structure” where matters closest to the citizens (such as social services) were transferred to 21 district wards, each with a committee of representatives for the parties in the same proportions as that of the City Council. The idea behind this decentralisation was to try to allocate important resources in accordance with the actual needs of the inhabitants of that particular ward. As always, inhabitants had tended to cluster in neighbourhoods in accordance with socio-economic variables, so demands for services were quite different. It

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soon became popular among citizens and media to compare allocations, and point to “unfair” budgets. Politicians were tempted to “fish in murky waters”. This was later countered by basing allocations on “objective” measures of actual costs, based on “needs”, as one civil servant told me. This meant that a single mother, born abroad, with two pre-school children would generate, say 120,000 SEK to the budget of the ward where she lived, while a healthy, 30-year-old male would generate, say 120 SEK. The amount varies from individual to individual and is based on a number of dimensions. Still, it was difficult to uphold the political organisation with 21 ward councils to be staffed by the party organisations in accordance with the election results. The appointees became bored and realised that there isn’t much you can do when you have a position far down in the party organisation. Some gave up their political career. When the ward organised “Meet your representatives” evening events in the local library, people tended to stay home. The countermove was to reduce the number of wards (so that inequalities would become less visible?).

In the meantime, New Public Management came to town, which meant that striving for efficiency became more pronounced. This led to more outsourcing of services to private contractors, but also to many municipal activities being re-organised into limited companies owned by the municipality. The legal profession gained, and the traditional welfare state professions lost, influence. Economists? There were not many of them, but those who joined argued for school choice, while the preparations for the ward reform included setting up parent committees for increased participation in the work of the schools.

It should be added that Sweden has a tradition of receiving refugees. They come in “waves”, as a consequence of internal conflicts in their home country, or driven by the hope of a better life. As a rule, state authorities allocated groups to municipalities and provided related financial support. But the principle of everybody having the right to live where they want was also valued highly. This allowed refugees to move to the cities, and friends and compatriots there. In our evaluation (Jönsson et al., 1999) of the decentralisation reform in Gothenburg, we were often told that “they” (other municipalities) received the financial support and “we” had all the costs! And then, in 2015, a new wave, larger than ever, arrived from Syria and other Middle Eastern countries, from Somalia and

Afghanistan. Even if some of the municipal districts already had large proportions of immigrants (and a fair number of refugees in hiding after having been refused asylum), and thus had some experience, this was something else. It is fair to say that the city of Gothenburg was not ready for this. There had been some promising cases of cooperation between state authorities and local offices, regional administration and municipal units, but the size of the present challenge was overwhelming. People with traumatic experiences and language problems, a lack of certified translators, an automated industry that required only skilled workers and so forth social workers and school teachers worked to the limit. How does one do “integration work” in such a situation? Gang criminality was rising, and it was common to blame the immigrants. Radical Islamism was answered with radical nationalism and radical populism. Social media joined in. What should one do?

“Radical Hope” as a Solution

Immigration is usually the result of some cultural disaster in the old home country. Nobody abandons their country unless living conditions deteriorate (or if one holds unrealistic hopes, or dreams about a new life, good work and prosperity in the new country, in which case one is classified as an “economic” refugee, travelling on “hope”, and usually with a heavy burden of debt). Such a catastrophe-based state of mind is hard to imagine for people like us in our well-ordered life (well, missing the bus to an important lecture is a disaster too!).

Outcomes are precarious. The individual can easily take a wrong turn at any moment and embark on a “path of no return”. Steven Dudley (2020) gave an account of how America’s most notorious gang came into being: It started in 1972, when the 14 richest families in El Salvador blocked a modest agrarian reform, which was followed by protests from a motley alliance of students, unions, dispossessed farmers, Liberation Theology and communist guerrilla groups. When repression did not work, a military coup was initiated. Civil war followed, with the United States and Cuba each offering support to one side. With this came a huge flow of refugees that, to a large extent, ended up in California, and the

Los Angeles neighbourhood of Pico-union. In that area, schoolyards became the turf of battling gangs that moved between the streets and the schoolyards, divided along racial lines. Whites and blacks dominated, and the Salvadoreans formed their own gang, first for protection, and for a sense of belonging, calling themselves Mara Salvatrucha Stoners (MS-13 for short). But as they were not doing very well in the battles, they merged, in 1983, with the Mexican Mafia, making it the only street gang that had been declared a “transnational criminal organisation”. By 1988, California had passed legislation to back up harsh measures against street terrorism. Many Salvadoreans ended up in jail and, since they had no papers (97% of all asylum applications were refused with reference to the military coup being anti-communist), this set the stage for deportations back to El Salvador from 1996 (when a peace agreement ended the civil war). The turf war, with another grouping, Barrio 18, continued and spilled over to Guatemala and Honduras. Now the gangs are everywhere and extract payments from all kinds of human activity. The horrible thing about gang criminality is that it spreads gradually as new recruits are hardened by ever more advanced errands and a “violence capital” is accumulated. A result to be avoided!

It is difficult for the Swedes of today to imagine the catastrophe-based condition of most arriving refugees; perhaps a relative who emigrated to the United States 100 years ago had a similar feeling. In order to bring such a sense of cultural devastation, and the specific role of hope, closer I choose to recount Lear’s (2008) story of the Crow Indians, the tribe pushed aside by white immigrants a long time ago, and their chief, Plenty Coups. As Plenty Coups told Frank Linderman (1962) at the end of the 1920s:

But when the buffalo went away the hearts of my people fell to the ground and they could not lift them up again. After this nothing happened.

The last four words describe how a culture dies. It was not so much that Crow Indians died—many survived on the reservations, even though they were affected by the diseases of the white man. It was their culture that died. The chief’s name, Plenty Coups, gives a clue. The Crow, who were a nomadic, hunting people, could demonstrate courage and win

social prestige by participating in hunting and in war (defending hunting grounds). Hunting buffalo and beaver required skill and endurance, but it was in war the opportunities appeared. When confronting the enemy on the battlefield (there were no frontiers, just the prairie and the moving buffalo herds), one could ride up towards the enemy line and place a "coup stick" in the ground. This signalled to the enemy: here is the frontier, don't you dare pass! The warrior who stuck the stick in the ground had to defend it with his life. The stick forced the enemy to accept the frontier and leave, or accept the challenge. The greatest honour went to the warrior with the largest number of coups and duels won.

Another way to accomplish a coup was to sneak into the centre of an enemy camp and steal a horse. Thus, Plenty Coups had many coups, each marked with another feather in his head attire or on his shield. When the Crow were forced onto reservations and the buffalo disappeared, it was no longer possible to build their identity in this way. Both war and horse stealing were prohibited. To stab a stick in the ground had no meaning now.

Such things could not happen to people in modern societies, could they? A cultural devastation that wipes out every possibility to cultivate your identity and self-esteem? True, these times of globalisation bring radical changes, and offer new opportunities, but we modern people are protected by our flexibility, aren't we? We teach our students that they must expect to have multiple careers in their professional life. They should think about their "employability" in broad terms. But could such concepts save us from the total loss that befell the Crow? It is a matter of loss of "ontology"—our notion of what the world consists of. Lear (2006) illustrated the confusion (and shame) by quoting a Crow woman who had beaten her daughter for the first time ever because she had sneaked out to a dance with a "bad" boy: "I'm trying to live a life that I don't understand!" What does it mean—now—to be a good person and do what is appropriate? Can the old virtues, like courage, be substituted with something else?

As a young man, Chief Plenty Coups helped his people onto a new path by wandering, in the traditional manner, out into the wilderness in search of a revelation in a dream; the Crow believed that nature was inhabited by spirits who could reveal themselves and give good advice. It took a while, but after a few days he came back and reported to the elders

that he had seen a buffalo herd disappear into the ground. It was replaced by a different kind of “spotted” buffalo, which tended to gather in smaller flocks. “I have seen such buffalos at Fort Laramie,” said Yellow Bear, a well-travelled elder, “and the whites have found ways to reproduce them!” This gave credibility to the rest of the dream; now an apparition showed itself and told Plenty Coups that the old life would be coming to an end (in a terrible storm) but there was a chance of survival if the Crow learnt to listen “like a Chickadee”, observe others and find a way forward. (The Chickadee is a kind of tit that makes a specific sound to inform other members of the species that it has found something valuable.)

On the basis of the prophecy of the disappearing buffalo (which came true) and the pressure from the Sioux, the elders decided to change policy and ally themselves with the white man. The chickadee part of the dream, about observing and learning, became the guiding star of Plenty Coups, who rose to become chief, invited Catholic missionaries to build a school on the reservation, became an accomplished farmer and represented his nation in negotiations in Washington, and, in 1920 laid down his coup stick and feather headdress on the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier at Arlington. He also saw the push from government to “privatise” reservation land as a means of protection (by the white man’s law) against further white incursions as a useful solution rather than yet another imposition.

The new, “radical”, hope was built on something from the old culture (a dream inspired by the Gods), which opened a path to a new world perception (ontology) on which the Crow people could build their strivings for the future. It served as a “key” to a different “frame”, in Goffman’s (1974) terminology. Hope is a crucial virtue for people who are uncertain whether their desires may be realised. It constitutes protection against despair. Plenty Coups offered an extreme variety of radical hope; a new life could be built as the Crow learnt to observe and communicate like the chickadee—the key to a better life. The Crow became farmers, in a 180-degree turn from their earlier nomadic, hunting life. (The Nobel laureate Lucas [2000] presented a parallel argument around the take-off phenomenon of the “Tiger” economies. People who had been used to the daily struggle for subsistence saw alternatives and invested in their own

improvement and that of their children. Human capital accumulated and the economy took off.)

Lear (2006) called the hope that grows from the cultural trauma “radical” because it is directed towards the future good through “transcending” your current difficulties. People need such hope to help them understand what that future “really” is. Plenty Coups filled the role of bridge-builder as chief, and by initiating the action mentioned above. Laying down his coup stick on the tomb at Arlington served as a symbolic closure of the old culture. Weber might have described his leadership as charismatic. It is therefore very likely that the immigrant who comes from a “devastated” culture needs hope that is “radical” in the sense that it, essentially, lacks an ontological basis.

The Problem of the Recipient: Clausewitz’s Logic of Tact

I found the best illustration to the difficulties faced by authorities and organisations in cooperating towards a common goal—such as receiving refugees—in Kornberger et al. (2019). They studied the work with the “refugee crisis” in Vienna during the autumn of 2015. One might argue that this was not a very serious crisis for the local organisers—all the refugees that poured in from Hungary were aiming for a new life in Germany or Sweden. All one had to do was to send them on their way—problem solved.

But it took great efforts by many authorities (used to working hierarchically inside territories regulated by law—not to intrude on the turf of the others), charitable organisations like Caritas and volunteers. Information was unclear. Some 500 people were expected to arrive at the *Hauptbahnhof* (Central Station) by train, and 5000 arrived. We were told that there were 20,000 refugees in Hungary, but four months later 300,000 had been “moved through”. The chief of police was one of many “managers” that told the researchers of multiple items they were forced to learn. When a mass of people gets moving, there is no way you can stop them; all that can be done is to steer its movement left or right. When

beds had been secured for the night, the refugees refused to enter the buses, because they suspect they would be taken to another camp. Non-certified translators were engaged, which is unthinkable under normal conditions. They got into shouting matches with the refugees. A spontaneous grass-roots organisation, Train to Hope, emerged and adopted a stark, hierarchic command structure, not acceptable to any public sector authority. A reception desk was established, where individuals were given codes that could be transmitted to Munich, the next stop on their journey, which facilitated work there. Had the police started a procedure of identity checks there would have been huge congestion at the Hauptbahnhof, and no further work could have been done. As soon as the worst crisis was over (in January 2016), the researchers interviewed the leaders of the organisations involved (police, military, municipality, railway, social services, Ministry of the Interior and Caritas, to name a few) about their experiences.

The first observation drawn from the interviews was that all the organisations seemed to have had to go beyond their formal area of responsibility (similar to what the Municipal Housing Corporation set out to do in Chap. 4). Somebody described it as “working in a legal vacuum”. Furthermore, the situation was so uncertain and changeable that no authority was able to follow their own routines and norms of conduct. They simply had to design their role and action in cooperation with others, and thereby establish joint protocols and standards. This produced a feeling of being of no use in their office. They had to be on site at the Hauptbahnhof to “see” what was going on. They needed to engage with the situation to feel what was needed in cooperation with others, to generate flexibility and be action-orientated. A necessary pre-condition for quick adaptation to emerging situations, then, is to delegate decision-making powers to those closest to the centre of events. The outcome of this was that organisations adapted to and tended to complement each other.

A second coordination mechanism was to show determination and moral stance from the top. This found its expression in a repeated emphasis on the humane treatment of refugees and maintaining order. With such moral leadership from the top, it follows naturally that

representatives in the field covered for each other (*Rückendeckung*), which promoted collective responsible action.

What kind of logic guided this, seemingly, successful handling of the “refugee crisis” in Vienna 2015? It was not “appropriateness” and “consequentiality”, the two main logics discussed by March and Olsen (2015). Those two do not cover essential aspects of what could be observed. Appropriateness is a logic where persons ask themselves, “What should a person like me do in a situation like this?” The answer to that question is based on one’s self-image, created inside the frame constituted by rules, tradition, and “proven experience”. The normative power—our will to act in accordance with what is “appropriate” in a situation—comes, as Korsgaard (1996) pointed out, from our will to live up to our self-image. Kornberger et al. (2019) noticed that appropriateness mainly looks back (on areas of competence and proven experience), which was of no help in this situation.

Consequentiality is a logic that looks ahead to the consequences that may be expected to follow from action. It is a matter of a rational decision; a choice of the alternative with the most beneficial (expected/calculated) effects. There is a preference for “objective” and measurable consequences and a “scientific” attitude in calculations. Risks and uncertainty are transformed into probability distributions. Confidence stems from knowing that one has made the right calculations given the current circumstances, that is, in its rationality. Both these logics fail to capture the problem to the satisfaction of Kornberger et al. (2019), consequentiality because there were no reliable data and no time for investigation, appropriateness because all participating organisations found themselves in a “legal vacuum” where ordinary rules do not apply and there is no “proven experience” to fall back on. Searching for alternatives the authors found a fit in Clausewitz’s (1832/1984) “logic of tact” (think of tactics). The core of warfare, according to Clausewitz, is translating complex information into action. He described this ability in two dimensions:

- *Coup d’oeil*—the ability to assess the situation quickly, that is to “see” the truth through an intuitive comparison of things and their relations (see also expressions like “sensory presence” or *Fingerspitzengefühl*). Compare, for contrast, the sense of being “useless” in the office.

- *Courage d'esprit*—determination and goal directedness. Maintaining attention on what is essential now—a kind of moral leadership. The function of this dimension is to counter hesitation and half-hearted action, while upholding the two basic principles—treating refugees humanely and maintaining order.

This “logic of tact” seemed applicable to the situation in Vienna, (as it did to the one in Berlin or Stockholm) in the autumn 2015, that is, in what was described as an acute crisis. But is it useful when several authorities, businesses and voluntary organisations decide to “take on” the situation in a “vulnerable area” of the city (as resource-weak areas dominated by immigrants and their families are presently called in Sweden)?

Integration Without Crisis? (When Those Who Are to Be Integrated Have More Attractive Alternatives)

The situation in those “vulnerable areas” like the ones described in Chap. 4 is not like the one at the Hauptbahnhof in Vienna, even if many consider the crisis acute in terms of the lack of integration of new arrivals and gang-related shootings (among the not so newly arrived).

What distinguishes the current integration situation from the one in connection with the “waves of refugees” (on foot or in boats) related to armed conflicts in other parts of the world is that in the (somewhat) calmer and more slow-moving times, alternatives emerge. One can, for example, choose to be integrated with compatriots, or people of the same religion, in the neighbourhood. A colleague said, in a heated argument recently: “They have no incentive to be ‘integrated’! They live a comparatively good life as it is!” meaning that they have chosen to be integrated into some clan-structure, something they recognise from the old country. The positive side of a clan is the common values, traditions and norms, the feeling of community. There is a kind of reciprocity in the community of a grouping that furthers the individual’s loyalty to the group. In the best case, this supports a legitimate authority of the clan leader. But

as the distance grows between the leader and the members, this authority may quickly switch to an illegitimate exercise of power.

Remember the opening scene of *The Godfather*? There is a wedding party going on outside with happy music—everybody is there. In the dark room inside, Don Corleone receives Mr Bonasera, who has come to ask for help. His daughter was attacked by two young men. He reported it to the police and the perpetrators were given a three-year suspended prison sentence.

“Suspended! They sneered as they left! And my daughter’s life is ruined!”

Don Corleone: “Why did you go to the police? Instead of coming to me? I have always wanted to be your friend and my wife is the godmother of your daughter!”

Mr Bonasera mumbles something about the rule of law serving him well. Don Corleone reproaches him again for not coming to him directly. Bonasera humiliates himself and says he will pay anything ... Corleone is angered by this show of mistrust (as if he would only do something for a friend for money!). Bonasera begs on his knees. Don Corleone asks what Bonasera wants him to do? “Kill them!”

Corleone brushes such a request aside. Then Bonasera says: “Make them suffer like my daughter.” Don Corleone promises to see what he can do and accompanies Bonasera to the door with the words: “Some time I might come to you and ask for a favour.”

When Bonasera has left Don Corleone tells his consigliere: “Give the job to Clemenza, we cannot have somebody who loses his temper. We are no murderers!”

There is a similar story (based on numerous interviews) in Bäckström Lerneby (2020), about the events in the northeast of Gothenburg. Confronted with provocative questions, the leader of the clan argues that he is “only a problem solver”. The book describes gang criminality and a benefits fraud in a large family whose leader is also a religious leader. What is it that guarantees discipline in a clan? Obviously, it is the threat

of violence (“violence capital”, as it is called in debates), but it is also this “problem solving” that generates “debts” for services rendered, to be paid by way of future favours (social capital, as it were). This goes for the Mafia in Sicily, as well as for groupings in vulnerable areas. The problem is that individuals become habituated to living with these two incompatible logics—that of the violence capital (most effective when not used, but depreciated over time if not upgraded), and of the social capital (quite ineffective when used, but effective when upgraded). The social capital of the welfare state, cherished for being there when needed, is based on the assumption that people will be treated equally if they meet the criteria for the regulations of benefits—it is in this sense impersonal—while the social capital of the clan is specific to the individual and handled with discretion.

The logic of discretion under which the welfare state functions is designed to protect the individual from state abuse, but there are also professional discretions that do not serve the individual—as my colleagues and I have discovered in numerous cases, not least in an evaluation of an organisational reform (Jönsson et al., 1999). One example was little Charlie who had trouble in school. The teacher who taught him in the first two grades understood how to help him improve his performance but didn’t transfer the intimate knowledge about “how Charlie works” when it was time to hand him over to the next teacher. It takes two years to learn such things, so the next teacher (grades 3–4) will spend two frustrating years learning how Charlie works and Charlie will not be better off in the process. (There have surely been reforms to cater for better long-term education results since then, but the problem of substitute teachers who come and go without the benefit of knowing useful things about Charlie—the individual—remains.) Rules and regulations are supposed to be applied equally to all. Professional discretion does not benefit the welfare state client, but social discretion serves the clan well.

Is There a Way to Make Sense of These Fragments Theoretically?

I believe there is, but one must start with Max Weber's (1922/1968) concept of "social action". Weber, who looked upon himself as an economist, wanted to build his sociology as an economist, and started with social action, as related to, and intending others.¹ Social action has meaning (either as the direct action itself or as the type of action), which can be understood. This may not seem to be a very original idea today, but the point is that the "social" in "social action" stresses the presence of the other in deliberations. People's ability to understand it by "re-living" or identifying (*Nachlebbarkeit*) with the act is important because when they build their understanding of such action, they strive to make it in their mind into a self-evident truth (Weber's "*Evidenz*"). That which is "rationally evident" can satisfactorily be understood intellectually. That which is "emotionally evident" can be understood only in its emotional context. But it is also possible to misunderstand an actual action by comparing it with "types of action". (I can explain to my golf partner why my stroke landed the ball in the woods, while my partner may understand it as sheer incompetence. We both use "accounts/narratives" with the quite useful capacity to accommodate more than one logic at a time.)

I claim that the understanding of social action is typically based in a narrative form. This can be used to bridge understandings in efforts to achieve integration to the extent desired by individuals; after all, it is not possible to "integrate" groups or classes (like "immigrants", "Somalis" or other collectives).

Cooren (2000) observed that when narrating something, people often use a template, "the canonical form of a narrative". They make sense of accounts by filling in the template structure. If something is missing, they fill in the blank parts with plausible assumptions. According to Cooren (2000), such canonical form has four stages:

1. *Manipulation* (someone sets the narrative in motion; this can be a matter of "desire" (want to), or "duty" (have to))

¹ See Searle (1983) for a discussion of the continental conception of intentionality.

2. *Competence* (the performer gains access to the necessary resources and know-how to carry out the act)
3. *Performance* (doing what is operationally required)
4. *Sanction* (reward/punishment—exemplary action is rewarded, etc.)

A complete understanding requires a “plausible” content for all parts (otherwise one “fills in” assumptions), to be able to compose an “account” that “makes sense”, or a narrative that is “self-evidently” true (Weber’s *Evidenz*). In linguistics, such a narrative approach demonstrates that it is the receiver (or user) who determines the meaning of what is said or written, not the sender. One should also add that the first and last parts of the canonical form (Manipulation and Sanction) contain the normative moments of the narrative, while the two in the middle (Competence and Performance) contain the operational moments. It should also be noted that the Sanction part builds “capital” in context. Mr Bonasera assumes a debt to Don Corleone for “making the two boys suffer” (an “asset” for Don Corleone). I borrow a hedge trimmer from my neighbour and assume a social debt that I confirm with a friendly gesture each time I see him. Social capital is being built. Our local policeman uses statistics to confirm that the Neighbourhood Watch sign works, as our neighbourhood has fewer burglaries. It has worked!

“Social action” and the “canonical form of the narrative” are the keys to understanding (Goffman, 1974) how individuals accumulate social capital and thereby identity (Fukuyama, 2018). Social capital gives trust, honour and legitimate authority. Violence capital provides opportunities to exert power. Financial capital gives resources permitting one to take action in selected directions. Expertise gives the power of knowledge. Leadership provides influence (as Plenty Coups did). The rate of growth in capital is regulated by different logics. Narratives are the containers of some social capital, but they also have the capacity to act as a bridge between logics (Goffman’s, 1974, “frame alignment”). It is the stories’ ability to house several logics in the same narrative that can offer the keys to build a new, radical hope.

But There Is No Crisis... or Is There?

Kornberger et al. (2019) used Clausewitz’s concept of “logic of tact”, characterised by an ability to adapt to the current, local situation, by judging the immediate situation (*coup d’oeil*) and by instilling determination (*courage d’esprit*) in members of the organisation, to make sense of the management of the “refugee crisis” in Vienna in the autumn of 2015. Also, as mentioned before, the top managers of various organisations involved realised they could do no good from their offices; they had to go to the Hauptbahnhof to manage the “refugee crisis” on the spot. This is why it was a real, concrete crisis. Being there meant that one could learn both important and less important things, such as that when a mass of people start moving in awkward directions it is impossible to stop them, but one can try to steer them to the left or right; or that people will believe that the buses outside will not take them to temporary accommodation but to another camp.

The “integration problem” in Gothenburg, Sweden’s second largest city, is not like that, but a similar sense of crisis can emerge when the inhabitants demand that “something must be done” about a problem. Gothenburg might have a crisis of that kind, I believe. The standard procedure for politicians has been to issue statements to the press about “anomalies” and to announce new ways to rectify things. But there has been a transformation—from the welfare state’s dealing with collectives (workers, civil servants, intellectuals, immigrants) towards an adaptation to neo-liberal individualism. Furthermore, the individual politicians have become, to use Weber’s (2004) expression, more “of politics” rather than “for politics”. They tend not to see politics as a calling but as a profession. This will have effects on rhetoric as well as on the capacity for sustained action. Here, the solution might be for the City Council to arm its Executive Committee and civil servants with extensive mandates to act. At the same time, they must learn to keep away from the details (making “politics” out of specific situations—“challenges” as the jargon goes), which is difficult.

Media, coming under economic pressure, have, in a similar way to politics, moved away from a party politics orientation (e.g. conservative,

liberal and socialist) to highlight issues of the day and advertising volumes. The prospects are grim as far as the need for useful rhetoric goes. At the same time as the State provides financial support to promote sound competition between media outlets, major capital holders have achieved a concentration towards a domination for neo-conservative politics with the State as the source of all evil. The international infotech giants have provided “platforms for social media” where all kinds of conspiracy theories are promoted. There are serious risks of a regress among citizens towards becoming an uninformed electorate (and events like the one on the US Capitol in January 2021).

The hope for the future for traditional media seems to lie in winning the trust of “the people” by good, sustained, trustworthy journalism (every household needs a subscription to keep up with events and receive information that helps them live a decent life, yet this may sound unreasonably utopian). Today’s problem is that “the people” are more fragmented, ignorant and easily influenced by neo-liberal rhetoric on themes like individual liberty, market solutions and self-realisation. This produces fertile ground for making politics out of an unjust allocation of resources, for instance, between different areas in a city. A rich suburb pays a lot of tax and “gets nothing back”, while a city’s deprived areas are “subsidised”. The counter-argument to this kind of “fairness argument” is that the very reason for the existence of a self-governing municipal part of the public sector is exactly this—to re-allocate resources from the healthy, strong and rich to the sick, poor and weak. Without such re-allocation the right of the municipalities to exist ceases.

The civil servants of the liberal welfare states in the Global North, professionally conscious of territory, hierarchically regulated and in a constant struggle for budget allocations have unlearned to co-operate across boundaries. They have traditionally built an impressive competence to control the elected politicians in their respective municipal board (like the School Board), but they are not used to making commitments in cooperation across office boundaries that have budgetary consequences.

Finally, there are the activists who want to “lift” the local part of the municipality out of its current problems by mobilising “everybody” for this worthy cause. Here the argument seems to be that the inhabitants are victims of various evil forces, which invites defensive responses from

those who feel targeted. As far as the schools (which seem to be the strategic arena for long-term action in many countries) are concerned, the solution seems to have been to allow parents to choose freely which school their children should attend. But one should remember that while the “choice” of school takes a minute, what schools *do* takes nine years or more. In the meantime, a schoolboy may choose to start running errands for the strongest young man in the neighbourhood, graduating in permission to carry a gun in a future turf war. A schoolgirl, as Zuboff (2019) eloquently described, connected to the internet most of her time, may dream about becoming an influencer but will likely end up as a follower in her constant longing for “likes”. The internet is becoming the “social terrain” where we trim our identity.

The prerequisites for crisis-free solutions are not very good; both those who are to be integrated into Swedish society (the immigrants) and those who are supposed to “do the job” (the natives) carry heavy luggage, and the risks of ending up in the ditch are present and dangerous.

Friendly advice from a rocking chair:

- Look at the “integration problem” as a *discursive* one.
- Look upon integration as something that must be done *individual by individual* (not as a problem of collectives). Here an interesting opening seems to be something we discovered rather late in our evaluation of the organisational reform in our city (Jönsson et al., 1999), namely that people in “vulnerable areas” tend to make “accommodation careers”; that is, those who manage to establish themselves on the job market and begin to look more optimistically at the future tend to move away from “vulnerable areas”. (At the time, we saw that as a problem, since the wards in focus had a continuous inflow of “resource-weak”, and a corresponding outflow of stable, inhabitants, but it could probably be looked upon as a measure of success. Most people strive to establish themselves in “better areas”.) In this respect, the addition to the law saying that public housing companies (owned by municipalities) must conduct their business in a “business-like” fashion (not as a deficit service) is questionable. It seems to steer housing projects towards richer clients in projects close to the city centre (not affordable for those who are supposed to be integrated).

- Make extra efforts to work across administrative boundaries in common efforts. This goes against the grain of public service traditions, but also includes a need to listen to and respect opinions expressed by other professions. Possibly the most difficult part of the job that needs to be done.
- Realise that receiving refugees from war-stricken parts of the world is just the beginning. The responsibility of the recipient country or municipality is to provide a context where the newly arrived immigrant can establish a decent life.
- Schools are probably a more important strategic factor than generally recognised. In our evaluation of school issues, undertaken in Sweden in the early 1990s, we witnessed frustrating effects of the concentration of children with less than good pre-conditions to do well in their education. Teachers tended to give up, experiencing a lack of support and/or an ability to work in their chosen profession. (How does one teach mathematics in a class where the vast majority does not understand Swedish?) There have, I hope, been great improvements since then, but certainly not enough. The “school choice” is not a solution.
- The problem is one of communication. Cooren (2000) and Kornberger et al. (2006) and Cooren et al. (2011) argued for a better understanding, including more research, on the organising property of communication.

Not very original advice? Well, it comes from a rocking chair user.

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15

Organising Integration: Some Conclusions and Directions for the Future

Andreas Diedrich

Many chapters of this book highlight the advantage of looking past formal organisations in order to gain a better understanding of the integration phenomenon, and especially how integration is organised in everyday practice. The authors describe processes through which formal organisations may emerge and temporarily become stabilised—or not; they show how organising materialises in everyday actions and interactions and also how the various materials produced in these processes sometimes act back on their makers. Such contributions call into question more conventional perspectives on agency and the role of discourse in a context of migration and integration.

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Integration as a Boundary Word

The chapters of this volume well illustrate the variety of ways that the concept of integration is understood, showing that it is far from taken as given, or “organised for good” (Czarniawska, 2004, p. 780). The refugees, immigrants, caseworkers, public officials, private employers, politicians and representatives of civil society whose voices are heard have diverging ideas about what integration is, about when and where it happens, and about who should be involved or subjected to it. Yet they use the concept regularly and make sense of it by translating, editing and inscribing it into things (see Czarniawska, 2008). An interesting story has been told by Polzer (2008), who described the South African government’s efforts to grant permanent residency permits to Mozambican refugees who had settled in the eastern parts of the country. By the time the initiative was launched in the mid-1990s, many of the refugees who had arrived in South Africa in the 1980s had already received documents through various formal and informal means.

Those who still did not have documents in 1999 were therefore in many ways a marginal “rest” group with specific age and gender characteristics (older and more female, not working) who had not been able to use work, social connections, school attendance or bribes to get documents previously. Of those who had arrived in the 1980s as refugees, therefore, by 1999 only those who were not already seen as SADC “economic migrants” or “South Africans” by the South African state were still undocumented and therefore available to be categorized as “former refugees” for the FMR amnesty process. (Polzer, 2008, p. 483)

Polzer showed that bureaucratic categorisation redefines the meaning of integration, as well as who is and who is not integrated. She concluded by arguing that offering refugees amnesty and permanent residency, the state’s bureaucratic categorisation—“Former Mozambican Refugees” (FMR)—meant they were successfully integrated. Mozambicans’ invisible integration has been edited and eventually inscribed in official categories and permits.

As organising unfolds over time, the meaning of integration also shifts, as is well illustrated by the two integration projects in Berlin described by Albrecht and Jungmann in Chap. 7. Their story shows how meaning changes as different actors become involved in the process and influence the way integration of refugees or other immigrants is understood. In some translations, integration becomes intermingled, and temporarily coexisting, with other concepts such as “social inclusion”, as Brorström and Styhre show in Chap. 4, when they describe how a municipal housing corporation attempted to counteract segregation in a marginalised neighbourhood. Some other translations connect integration to what is usually understood as assimilation. The Swedish settlement programme mentioned by Diedrich and Risberg in Chap. 11, for example, requires refugees in Sweden to find a job, which is facilitated by “acting like a Swede”—in other words, assimilation.

These fluctuations in translation have been observed in other studies of migration. FitzGerald and Arar (2018), proposing a “sociology of refugee migration”, compared the situation of refugees in the Global South to that of refugees in the Global North:

Integration in major refugee host countries is often different from integration into rich, liberal states of resettlement. Refugees in much of the Global South do not need a generation to learn the language or cultural norms of the host. Instead, the lack of political incorporation and the protections that are afforded in such contexts become the greatest challenge. The ethnic boundary changes that are a subset of the assimilation process may be easier and faster for refugees in the Global South than in many contexts of labor migration to the Global North, even as political integration is slower (or unattainable) because of government restrictions (see Abdi 2015). (FitzGerald & Arar, 2018, p. 399)

Yet, they argued, although integration is understood differently in different countries, the integration activities in the Global South, which hosts large numbers of refugees, and those in countries in the Global North, with their elaborate, bureaucratic systems of refugee resettlement, are connected through a range of relationships mediated, coordinated and translated by supranational organisations such as the United Nations

High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) or the International Organization for Migration (IOM). FitzGerald and Arar (2018) concluded that it thus does not make sense to analyse the integration of refugees across settings by using universal theories that focus on “necessary” stages to be passed and proclaim when and how integration is (successfully) achieved.

In other words, while there always seems to be some contemporary consensus about what integration means, the concept is continuously translated to fit the needs of local settings. Such changes combined with the stability of the use of the word are similar to what Star and Griesemer (1989) called *boundary objects*. A boundary object is any object that is part of different parties and facilitates collaboration and coordination between them, no matter how differently perceived by different parties. To be able to function this way, a boundary object must be at the same time concrete and abstract, fluid and well-defined. In the words of Star and Griesemer, boundary objects are “plastic enough to adapt to local needs and the constraints of the several parties employing them, yet robust enough to maintain a common identity across sites” (1989, p. 393). Good examples of such boundary objects are maps, library catalogues, blueprints and design drawings (Star & Griesemer, 1989; Carlile, 2002; Fox, 2011). Similarly, “integration”, while interpreted differently by immigrants, organisers and others (including researchers), facilitates collaboration and coordination between them in local settings, although not automatically producing favourable outcomes for the organisers or the immigrants. This is why it can be seen as a *boundary word*.

Therefore, while the concerns voiced by Schinkel (2017, 2018), Favell (2019) and others about the role of integration in “racialising” and further marginalising immigrants are understandable, *the debates* on whether integration should be replaced by other concepts such as inclusion or incorporation *neglect* its boundary function. Other concepts may fulfil the same function but none of them will provide “a true reflection of reality”, as Richard Rorty (1980) pointed out. The chapters in this book show convincingly that in order to achieve integration, no matter how it is theoretically defined, it is necessary to understand how the idea of integration is translated into practice. It is important to find out how people in different settings use the word, what actions are labelled with its help,

what tangible outcomes it generates, and how this boundary word helps people to make sense of what is going on (Weick, 1995). There is little to suggest that terms currently in fashion, such as inclusion, will not become translated and adapted in local settings in intended and unintended ways, with potentially positive and negative consequences for immigrants and organisers alike. Seeing integration as a boundary word directs research focus towards collaboration and coordination activities—that is, organising—between and among immigrants and natives, including the obstacles to and possibilities of bridging, changing or removing the boundaries between them.

Organising Integration as Construction of Action Nets

The contributions to this volume show clearly that integration takes place within as well as outside of formal organisations. Meaningful insights can thus be derived from observing processes, rather than structures—*organising* rather than on *organisations*. In this vein, the concept of action nets can be of use (Czarniawska, 2004; Lindberg & Czarniawska, 2006). Constructing action nets is a process of connecting (mostly collective) actions that are understood to be necessary for a specific purpose and seen as legitimate in a specific institutional order. Connecting actions into nets requires, in turn, creating times or spaces where various actions can be translated into one another. For instance, a refugee support organisation may create a language café, where refugees meet the locals who help them learn the language, with meetings taking place in the afternoons, as most refugees are obligated to attend state-sponsored language classes in the mornings.

Thus, while many studies of organisational phenomena have as their starting points “actors”, “organisations” or “networks”, Czarniawska (2013) suggested that these are the outcomes of organising, rather than its inputs. An investigation, in other words, should start earlier, before an organisation or a network is in place and has become taken for granted:

Network assumes the existence of actors, who forge connections. Action net reverts this assumption, suggesting that connections between and among actions, when stabilised, are used to connect the identities of actors. (Czarniawska, 2013, p. 14)

This brings to light critical instances of organising that may otherwise be obscured when studying already established entities, such as organisations, structures, cultures, groups or communities (Czarniawska, 2008). An action net approach requires one to begin by identifying ongoing actions, and then checking if they become repeated, and whether connections between these actions emerge and become stabilised over time. A formal organisation may or may not be one of the results of such action nets. The emergence of *Employment Promoting Procurement* described by Ek Österberg and Zapata in Chap. 5 may serve as an example here. Their case also shows how connections between actions may be established and stabilised by the introduction of artefacts (see also Lindberg & Walter, 2013). Such artefacts might be actual objects, such as a computer or a building, or quasi-objects such as a software programme, a model (such as the “Riace Model” described by Zanutto, Greco and Poggio in Chap. 8) or, as in Ek Österberg and Zapata’s chapter, a policy. It must be emphasised that there may at first be little that signals whether or not connections between actions will become stable. An action nets approach focuses on the process of organising, whatever the results might be.

A word of caution is in order here: it is quite challenging to study organising as it unfolds. It is much easier to begin a study on immigrants’ integration by focusing on actors such as formal organisations, or recognisable networks. For example, it is easy to locate the German Public Employment Service (*Arbeitsagentur*) or the Senate Administration for Integration, Labour and Social Affairs in Berlin. It is much more difficult to start from an assumption that integration support for refugees in the city consists of a complex action net, in which the decisions taken by the Head of the *Arbeitsagentur* are just some among many others; and it is even more challenging to depict such an action net in a diagram (a brave attempt to do so is found in Chap. 9). These challenges may explain why researchers interested in organisational aspects of migration and integration have continued to focus on formal organisations, such as a recent

Special Issue of *Comparative Migration Studies*, which asks how organisations shape migration and inclusion (Lang et al., 2021), or the studies that have explored integration as *something* that takes place within an organisation (e.g. Ogbonna & Harris, 2006; Kalonaityte, 2010) or is supported (or not) by an organisation (e.g. Nardon et al., 2021).

When instead studying organising, a historical or genealogical approach is of course also possible: One could go back in time to the point when there were only tentatively connected actions, in order to explain how things turned out the way they did and to show that at any point in time things could have been different (Czarniawska, 2013). What is important is to maintain the focus on processes and intended and unintended consequences.

Agency Is Distributed and Shared, Not Individual

What does a focus on organising processes mean in terms of exploring agency—the person’s (or thing’s) ability to act? An action nets approach assumes, in agreement with Actor-Network-Theory (ANT), that agency is not a given capacity or feature that a person (or a thing) possesses. Agency, according to Latour (2005), is better conceptualised as the outcome of interactions between heterogeneous agents (“actants” in ANT parlance) in a network—or, in the terminology of the present book, the outcome of organising. When studying organising as construction of action nets, the connections (relations) among humans and nonhumans are important. And as an action net requires objects to keep connections between actions in place, agency too is shared and distributed not only among humans but also nonhumans. Latour’s example of the automatic door closer that acts for a person opening a door for another person illustrates this well (Latour, alias Johnson, 1988), as does his example of the “sleeping policeman” traffic control device that forces drivers to slow down. This means objects can be attributed agency, as they can support, direct, slow down, discriminate or even punish humans.

In studies of organisational phenomena in migration settings, calls have recently been made for a better understanding of the agency of

refugees and other immigrants, and how their agency can be improved. Scholars answering these calls have examined the tactics used by refugees and other immigrants in their settlement process, asking how they exercise “agency in the processes of reaching individual goals of integration” (Bucken-Knapp et al., 2020). Other authors have asked, “Which kinds of agency do refugees perform?”, connecting it to their personality and individual psychological capacities (Obschonka et al., 2018), or wondering what factors promote or inhibit their “human agency” (Huggman et al., 2011). And while other recent scholarly work has framed “migrants’ agency” as an interactive process, this process is nevertheless seen as the “interaction between individual agency of migrants” and a wider context (see Triandafyllidou et al., 2023). While this focus on immigrants’ agency is laudable, it tends to neglect the fact that agency is not an *a priori* given capacity of an individual actor, and that no individual person acts outside power relations including humans and nonhumans.

A symmetric approach to agency propagated by Latour (2005) could be put to good use here: treating persons and things equally from the start and using similar language to describe how they act and connect their actions during the process of organising. In contrast to other management and organisation studies, which have recently witnessed a “turn to objects” (Lindberg & Walter, 2013), most studies of organising integration have continued to focus on language,¹ neglecting the material basis of organising.

To Conclude

Taking the importance of formal organisations for granted may well inhibit the work of researchers exploring immigrants’ integration into labour markets and societies. But does it matter to the practitioners? Can detailed knowledge about organising be of use to immigrants, caseworkers, public managers, private employers and representatives of civil society involved in integration support? There are many studies showing that an excessive focus on formal structures, standard operating

¹ Some exceptions include Diedrich (2013a, 2013b, 2016); and Mahmud (2020).

procedures and established networks is often unsuccessful (see e.g. Mills & Weatherbee, 2006; Czarniawska, 2009; Weick & Sutcliffe, 2015). In a migration context, Brorström and Diedrich (2022) explored a (failed) project aimed at developing a new *best practice model* for integration support. They showed how a disproportionate focus on formal structures and organisations, and the subsequent failure to involve the refugees meaningfully in “their” integration, quickly turned out to be inferior to a spontaneous construction of an action net, following the pragmatic idea of what needs to be done in practice. And Oscarsson and Danielsson (2018), who studied the support given by social services personnel to young refugees during the refugee crisis in Sweden (2015), revealed the importance of improvisation, prioritisation and creating alternatives in the daily actions of public officials. Such insights suggest that a change of focus in studies of immigrant integration—from organisations to organising—may not only provide new impulses to theoretical developments but also be of value to practitioners—immigrants and organisers alike. Above all, such a change of focus will hopefully provoke a questioning of the taken for given assumptions about who needs integration and who does not, and about who or what should be involved in organising its support.

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