



LITERATURE REVIEW OF MIGRATION, RELIGION AND INTEGRATION AMONG IMMIGRANTS IN THE 21ST CENTURY

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Abstract:

This study provides an analysis of migration, religion and integration literature in a twofold approach: first, the development in volume and the internationalization of the field are analysed. Second, development is analysed in terms of topical focus within migration studies over the recent decades of the 21st century. To capture volume, internationalisation, and topic focus, my analysis involves topic modelling of the landscape of migration studies. Given that there exist different research motives surrounding the subject of migration, previous literature indicates a linear growth path towards an increasingly diversified and fragmented field. Although previous literature indicates an increase in migration studies the problems of migration, in reality, are yet far from being solved. Moreover, the analysis reveals that there is a shift between various topics within the migration field as opposed to a growth of diversification of topics. This means that there is less linkage between studies tackling a specific topic as studies have taken independent directions. Lastly, this literature review study reveals that fragmentation in migration studies has no consistent trend and in contrast, there is a recent connectedness between related topics of migration.

Keywords: social integration, religion, immigration, religious affiliations

1. Background to the review

Most scholars agree that the beginning of scholarly works in migration arguably goes back to 1885 in regard to Ravenstein's work "The eleven laws of Migration" (Zolberg, 1989; Greenwood & Hunt, 2003; Castles & Miller, 2014). Other scholars have noted Thomas and Zaninieck's 1918 study of Polish migrants in Europe as the earliest migration scholarly work (see Piguet et al., 2018). In 1938, Thomas in his literature review of migration studies, indexed 191 sources of migration literature emanating from studies conducted in the UK, USA and Germany (Greenwood & Hunt, 2003). Thomas (1938) notes that most of the studies that were conducted in the field of migration were

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quantitative in nature. King and Skeldon (2010) observe that early migration researches were based on two empirical inquiries: migration within borders and migration outside borders of specific countries.

The 21st century is so far regarded as the beginning of the diversification of migration studies. However, some scholars argue that as early as the 1960s migration scholars had already started taking different thematic approaches focussing on integration (Gordon, 1964). Interest was focused on the relationship between immigrants and their hosts. By the 1970s as there were changing dynamics because of civil and human rights movements, migration researchers started addressing race and ethnicity (Morawska, 1990). Pedraza (1990) observes that by the end of 1989 most migration researches in Europe had become more mindful of immigrant experiences with regard to culture and nationality. In the 1990s due to trends in social sciences, there was a shift to qualitative anthropological migration research (King, 2012).

In the 21st century, Wimmer and Glick (2002) observe that migration studies have shifted focus away from states and state systems. Scholten (2018) observes that migration studies have become more complex as the century advances. This has been so because of the cultural focus, re-inscripting migration with a wider sociological focus. As a result, most studies have therefore focused on the immigrant experience and the constitutive elements of both the host and sending societies (Martiniello, 2013).

Based on the existing literature on migration, it can be concluded that there is a tremendous increase in the volume of research on migration over the 20th to the 21st centuries (Massey et al., 1998; Bommers & Morawska, 2005; Scholten et al., 2015). Furthermore, it is notable that migration studies have become increasingly varied in terms of links to broader disciplines (King, 2012; Brettell and Hollifield, 2014) and in terms of different methods used (Vargas-Silva, 2012; Zapata-Barrero and Yalaz, 2018). It is now a field that has in many senses 'come of age': it has internationalised with scholars involved from many countries; it has institutionalised through a growing number of journals; an increasing number of institutes dedicated to migration studies; and more and more students are pursuing migration-related courses. These trends are also visible in the growing presence of international research networks in the field of migration (Anuka, 2007).

Various scholars of migration have argued that the growth of migration studies has kept pace not only with the growing prominence of migration itself but also with the growing attention of nation-states in particular towards controlling migration (Yalaz, 2018). The co-production of knowledge between research and policy, some argue (Scholten, 2011), has given migration research an inclination towards paradigmatic closure, especially around specific national perspectives on migration. Wimmer and Schiller (2002) speak in this regard of 'methodological nationalism', and others refer to the prominence of national models that would be reproduced by scholars and policymakers (Bommers & Morawska, 2005; Favell, 2003). More generally, this has led, some might argue, to an overconcentration of the field on a narrow number of topics,

such as integration and migration control, and a consequent call to broaden migration research (Dahinden, 2016; see also Schinkel, 2018).

However, recent studies suggest that the growth of migration studies involves a 'coming of age' in terms of the growing diversity of research *within* the field. This diversification of migration studies has occurred along the lines of internationalisation (Scholten et al., 2015), disciplinary variation (Yans-McLaughlin, 1990; King, 2012; Brettell & Hollifield, 2014) and methodological variation (Vargas-Silva, 2012; Zapata-Barrero and Yalaz, 2018). The International Organization for Migration (IOM, 2017: 95) even concludes that "*the volume, diversity, and growth of both white and grey literature preclude a [manual] systematic review*" of migration research produced in 2015 and 2016 *alone*.

Nonetheless, in this study, I attempt to trace the development of migration studies in the 21st century and seek to find evidence for the claim that migration studies have evolved to involve a broadening of the variety of topics within the field. I pursue an inductive approach to mapping the academic landscape of over a century of scholarship. This includes a content analysis based on topic modelling, applied to publications from migration journals and book series. I trace the changes over time in how the topics are distributed within the corpus and the extent to which they refer to one another. I conclude by giving a first interpretation of the patterns I found in the coming of age of migration studies, which is to set an agenda for further studies of and reflection on the development of this research field. While migration research is certainly not limited to journals and book series that focuses specifically on migration, my methods enable me to gain a representative snapshot of what the field looks like, using content from sources that migration researchers regard as relevant.

Besides looking at the development of migration in studies in terms of size, interdisciplinarity, internationalisation, and institutionalisation, the literature review focus in this study will also address development in the topical focus of migration studies. This study will specifically address the development of migration studies in terms of their topical focuses, topics that have been discussed within migration studies, and the change in the topical composition of the field in terms of diversity (versus unity) and connectedness (versus fragmentation). Here, the focus is not on influential publications, authors, or institutes, but rather on what topics scholars have written about in migration studies. The degree of diversity among and connectedness between these topics, especially in the context of quantitative growth, will provide an empirical indication of whether a 'field' of migration studies exists, or to what extent it is fragmented (Naaman, 2015).

2. The role of religion in the process of immigrant social integration

Just like in other disciplines of migration, religion as a factor of migration has been widely studied with there being a huge amount of literature articulating the involvement of religion in migration. Moskos and Dukakis (2017) in a study they conducted about the involvement of religion in the social integration of immigrants of Greek origin in the

United States find out that the involvement of immigrants in religious activities like the attendance of church tends to increase social interaction between immigrants and natives. Calvas (2009) also notes that the flexible religious policies of religions about their membership create diversity and improve integration by providing a conducive environment for interaction. Calvas corresponds with Cleveland and Chang (2009) who also postulate that an increased participation in religious activities increases the chances of new network creation and this validates and facilitates social integration.

Due to the broad scope of religious affiliations, it is not surprising that previous studies on the impact of religion in the process of immigrant integration have focused on description over analysis (Cadge & Ecklund, 2007). Fleischmann and Phalet (2012) argue that there is a remarkable difference between the religious identity of second-generation immigrants and first-generation ones. In their approach, they elaborate that it is easier for the second generation of immigrants to easily integrate into their host societies since their religious identities are more aligned with the host societies. McAndrew and Voas (2014) in their evaluation of the impact of religion on immigrant integration find out that immigrant religiosity is not closely related to their social integration. Thompson and Gurney (2003) in a study that they interviewed a category of Chinese, Latino and Haitian youth report that in all cases the youths considered religion as an important aspect of their lives.

In most studies where scholars have investigated the West as a major immigrant destination center there is a generalized consensus that immigrants with religious affiliations that dominate in the West like Christianity are likely to experience better integration outcomes as compared to non-Western religious affiliations like Islam (Fober & Alba, 2008; Breton, 2012; Wuthnow & Hackett, 2003). Additionally, other scholars agree that ethnic minority religious groups may not have an impact on the broad religious community of the host society but play a big role in shaping the attitudes that locals develop towards the immigrants (Sirin, Valentino & Villalobos, 2006; Arikan, Ben-Nun Bloom & Courtmanche, 2015).

In quantitative approaches, previous studies undertaken (such as Lindley, 2002; Wuthnow & Hackett, 2003; Model & Lin, 2002) to investigate the impact of religion on immigrant integration deliver inconclusive and contradicting results. There is no specificity to these studies as to whether religion is a hindrance or a facilitator of immigrant integration. However, the general conclusions tend to follow the patterns of dependency on immigrant religiosity and the nature of the religious landscape in the host society (Portes & Rumbat, 2006; Khattab, 2009; Jamil, 2012).

Cheung (2014) in his quantitative approach analyses data from various sources in the United Kingdom on the effects of Islam religion on immigrant employment within the United Kingdom. Agreeing with other studies done elsewhere such as Adida, Laitin and Valfort, (2010; a study done in France) they report that there is an Islam employment "penalty". Brown (2000) also investigates barriers of Islam religion to the integration of immigrants affiliated with Islam in the United Kingdom and reports that the Islam disadvantage in employment is generalized but rather varies depending on the origin of

immigrants. He further reports that Islamic immigrants of Pakistanis and Bangladeshi origin are more disadvantaged than those of Indian origin (Brown, 2000).

Keister (2008) assesses the impact of religion on immigrant integration into the economic sphere of the host country and finds out that religious content greatly influences immigrant attitudes towards work once they settle in their countries of residence. Her study concludes that some religions encourage competitiveness and personal gain while others approach economic gain as part of material goals which are secondary to spiritual goals (Keister, 2008). Sherkat and Ellison (2009) in line with that also report that religious content influences cultural formations in different societies.

The incompatibility of religious traditions between immigrants and natives of the host societies has been reported not to be mere as a result of different religious affiliations (Schwartz & Huisman, 1995). Siker (2007) reports that major religions share basic moral principles like benevolence but differ in the degree of endorsement of religious morals and values. Carol, Peez and Wagner (2020) also find out that differing emphasis on social attitudes regarding issues such as gender roles or even sexual orientation from different religious communities may influence immigrant integration into their societies of residence.

There has been a generalized agreement amongst scholars of religion and integration that religious membership is beneficial to immigrants due to the resources gained through religious activities involvement (Voas & Fleischmann, 2012; Mooney, 2009). When immigrants are involved in religious activities of the host country, they get an opportunity to gather and interact with members of their religion and this provides a communal attachment which cushions immigrants from prejudice and any other form of discrimination that they might be exposed to (Foner & Alba, 2008).

Participation in religious activities provides immigrants with an institutional attachment that motivates immigrants and strengthens their sense of communal belonging (Warner, 2007). Houses of worship have been found to offer additional services other than religious related only such as language exchange, consultation services, job opportunities and house vacancies (Potel & Rumbaut, 2006). Access to these resources within involvement in religious activities facilitates immigrant integration. Connor and Koenig (2013) report that immigrants attach high value to resources obtained through religious participation than when the resources stem from ethnic or family ties.

Patel (2012) investigates the impact of religion on immigrant integration and finds out that strong religious expressions from immigrants may serve as signals that activate social stereotypes. He analyses religious expressions such as the wearing of religious symbolic headgear like veil or turban in Islam which indicates an individual's religious tradition to be an activator of social prejudice. Roth (2020) in his study on the impact of religion on immigrant labor integration reports that in the contemporary secularized Western culture, strong religious expressions are associated with conservatism, backwardness and orientation towards the home country. This spurs mistrust amongst locals towards some religious groups, which altogether hinders immigrant integration into their host societies (Koivukangas, 2009).

Some studies have consistently labeled religion as a facilitator of social integration. Hebert (1960) in his study investigating the role of religion in the process of immigrant assimilation in the United States argues that the religiosity of an immigrant is essential because it can replace ethnic and national identities and enable immigrants to easily adapt a national identity which is American identity in his case. Peek (2005) considers religious identity as being superior to ethnic or racial identity which connects diverse communities. The central reasoning in most of these approaches is that religion is capable of offering a connection between immigrants and natives of the host society because it contains universal characteristics that are not limited to regions, ethnicities and races (Balabeykina & Martynov).

Ebaugh and Chafetz (2000) argue that immigrants develop a need for institutional attachment upon arrival in host countries and religion provides networks and material benefits that connect immigrants and natives of the host society. Through such links, immigrants gain entry into the social sphere of the host societies and they are able to get economic opportunities, and educational and immigration-related benefits (Mayda, 2010). This approach shows that besides spiritual and social needs religion aids immigrants in economic opportunities (Kaariainen, 2009).

Martikainen (2005) in his study on New Orthodoxy immigration in Finland reports that the organizational support in both the Turku and Helsinki parishes have met the needs of orthodoxy immigrants settling in Finland. Activities such as discussion groups, food bazaars and family camps arranged by the respective orthodoxy religious leaders have facilitated the social integration of the immigrants of Orthodoxy Christianity into the Finnish social dimension (Martikainen, 2005).

Constant et al., (2006) in their study of minority ethnic groups in Germany contribute to the negative impact of religion on immigrant integration. In this study, they report that immigrants that were non-religious were too quick to adapt to the German culture and were employed as compared to religious immigrants. There is no general consensus on which side of the impact of religion on immigrant integration dominates. The positive or the negative? Such conclusions can only be derived by analyzing country-specific religious demographics (Gearon, 2019).

In the recent past, studies conducted about social integration have identified social integration as being better at an individual level (Beckers & Blumberg, 2013; De Vroome et al., 2013; Şahin, 2016; Viruell-Fuentes et al., 2013). Interactions between neighbors, co-workers and people having something in common are easier and happen rapidly as opposed to random interactions (Sides & Citrin, 2007). Other scholars paint a picture of social integration as the arrival and settlement of new individuals to a society that operates in different sociological settings but nonetheless, the visitors are able to find a common ground and achieve a harmonious co-existence (Berry et al., 2006; Collins, 2003; Fuller & Martin, 2012; Logan et al., 2002; Schrover & Vermeulen, 2005; Waters & Jiménez, 2005; Winders, 2012).

In Finland studies of immigrant integration however mainly indicate that immigrants are likely to easily integrate into Finnish society if they settle in Finnish urban

centers (Wahlbeck, 2019; Ahokas, 2010; Lindström, 2016). This has perhaps been the reason why most Finnish urban centers are multicultural. This pattern of settlement has been greatly influenced by the degree of acceptability of the Finnish people to accommodate immigrants into their social sphere (Sinatti, 2019). In that sense, the issue of immigrant integration is now a major public concern in Finland because of a diverse community populated with immigrants from different cultural settings. Leinonen (2013) argues that for the immigrant and native communities to exist cohesively, there has to be a common ground that has to be arrived at by both natives and immigrants.

3. Significance of religion as compared to other factors of social integration

3.1 Culture and language of immigrant-receiving society

Massey et al., (2011) argue that integration is understood to have fully taken place when immigrants have found jobs, learnt the native language and can freely interact socially with natives without any cultural barriers. For this to happen immigrants have to be well-versed in the means of communication and the culture of the receiving country and even attain some educational qualifications in the host countries (Bukowski, 2009). This is meant to eliminate any differences between immigrants and natives while creating a unified social structure into which immigrants will automatically fit into if they meet the conditions of mustering the means of communication and adapting to the culture and traditions of the receiving country (Raento & Husso, 2002). Åslund & Skans (2009) argue that integration is captured not as a singular event but as a process, a relationship and even sometimes a phenomenon that involves the interaction of different aspects of human life with an aim of finding a neutral ground.

For successive integration of immigrants into any host society, there must be acceptability of the immigrants by natives of the host society (Rodriguez & Garro, 2015). Greenspan (2018) reports that when immigrants are treated with coldness and dismissive attitudes it becomes almost impossible for social integration to take place. Wahlbeck (2019) also reports that settlement and integration in multicultural regions are at least easy as compared to regions that are culturally homogenous because there is a mixture of cultures and the perception of the natives towards the immigrants is flexible since they interact almost on daily basis.

Trotsek (2017) makes a general observation in his study about immigrant integration whereby he argues that it is a process that involves many factors even when the right circumstances that influence integration patterns are favorable. First, the language of the native society presents a huge communication barrier for immigrants to connect with natives. The settlement of immigrants in areas where other immigrants have already settled lowers the necessity to learn the language since there are other options like integrating with other immigrants in the first place (Tervola, 2020). This affects the totality of the duration taken by the immigrants to understand the culture of the natives and to as well facilitate the process of social integration between the immigrants and the natives of the host society (Henderson, 2004).

The notion of the impact of religion on immigrant integration carries its effect as an influencer of patterns of integration and as well a facilitator of the process of social integration (Weng & Lee, 2015). Sahlberg (2011) reports that most African immigrants are prone to the natural fear of being racially discriminated against upon arrival in Western countries. These fears draw them to fellow African immigrants where they settle and initiate social cycles within themselves before opening up to Finnish natives (Kaariainen, 2009). This also shows why most African immigrants are mainly concentrated in urban regions of their host societies where the population demographics are a mixture of different communities making the region a multicultural center (Cadge & Ecklund, 2007). Differences in cultural and communication barriers have been the main reason behind why most immigrants settle in areas occupied by fellow immigrants before getting access to the Finnish social sphere (Bauer & Kramer, 2017). In line with that, Garkisch (2017) reports of other factors such as uncertainty of the traditions and cultural preferences to be among the reasons why the immigrants formulate a notion of being unwelcome in some parts of the country hence maintaining a specific settlement and integration protocol. There is no specific way in which this notion can be changed. It seems to come naturally from both the side of immigrants and the side of natives. However, the feeling of being acceptable plays a role greatly on the side of the immigrants more than natives. To the natives, there is a generalized attitude of indifference towards people of different origins and descent which as well creates a separation between the immigrants and the natives (Monica, 2003).

Niemela et al., (2018) report that the willingness of the natives to express warm reception of the immigrants can as well determine the degree of the perception of acceptability by the immigrants. Free interactions in social meetings and generous moods can help in influencing patterns of settlement and integration since this plays a big role in shaping immigrants' perceptions towards the native society (Jorn & Allin, 2011). Given that this view of feeling acceptable lies deeply in the social dimension, it can therefore be solved by social mechanisms. However, such a social factor as the acceptability of immigrants by the natives of host countries cannot be directly regulated by the policy since it is subject to personal attitude adjustment (Dow, 2007).

Religious facilitation in immigrant integration will require that both immigrants and natives be in a neutral position whereby they will both accept adjustments to their normal religious routines (Yijälä & Luoma, 2019). This prospect seems a solace to immigrants more than natives since with immigrants the change of their routines is something they can quickly harmonize with the fact that they are away from their homeland (Kansalaisareena, 2020). Conversely, natives of the receiver country in a way prefer to have their way of life as the dominant cultural path to be followed. This dissonance is what creates social divisions and the rigidity of either divide to compromise tightens the differences and makes each individual to be naturally attracted to people like them (Elaine, 2007).

Given that there exist different approaches to the impact of religion on immigrant integration, how can then these approaches be explained? To begin with, most studies

have investigated immigrant religious affiliations without a history of their migration into host societies (Ohlendorf, Koenig and Diehl, 2017). Another approach is that other studies conflate religious affiliations with ethnic traditions (Clark & Drinkwater, 2009). Another approach to explain the disparities in previous study results could be due to different perceptions of immigrant religion in different societal contexts. In the United States, literature on the impact of religion on immigrant immigration majorly positions religion as a bridge to the social integration of immigrants into American society whereas, in Europe, previous studies, especially on the impact of Islam religion on immigrant integration suggest of religion as a barrier to immigrant integration (Casanova, 2007; Connor & Koenig, 2013). In Western Europe, probably due to the effects of increasing secularization, religion has not been considered the most prominent marker of national identity (Connor & Koenig, 2013). However, in most of the countries in Europe, there are still distinct boundaries around the Christian cultural heritage that are kept in place (Davie, 2000). Cadge and Ecklund (2007) summarises by arguing that in some instances religion becomes more of a group identity marker than a world view hence the different approaches to the impact of religion in immigrant integration.

3.2 Social cohesion and integration

In an evaluation to investigate religious minorities in different countries, eight studies were conducted in seven countries: Belgium, Canada, England, France, Germany, the Netherlands, and Sweden (Roth et al., 2003). Some of the studies compare religious minorities in different countries, and some focus on a single country. These studies use different data sets to explore social and economic patterns such as educational attainment, social contacts, criminal behaviour, attitudes to pre-marital cohabitation, school-to-work transitions, and labour market experience of immigrant youth from different religious backgrounds. These studies use theoretically informed, differentiated and methodologically rigorous analyses to provide a wealth of evidence on how religious affiliation is related to the economic, social and cultural integration patterns of immigrants and their descendants.

Five of the studies discuss how religious affiliation, especially Islam, is associated with an individual's social and economic outcomes. Shibuya, Fong and Shu (2003) explore how the likelihood of employment for immigrants and local-born youth is related to affiliation with Eastern religions in Canada. Their findings show that among young people affiliated with Eastern religions, only Muslims have lower levels of employment. This pattern is consistent, regardless of whether or not the youth have a university education. The authors also found that religion, and specifically Islam, has an independent and strong relationship with the likelihood of employment even after controlling for race and ethnic background.

Roth's study echoes key findings of Shibuya, Fong and Shu's research, by showing that Muslim youth who were born and raised in Germany experience substantial barriers to attaining firm-based training compared to non-Muslims (Roth, 2003). Such 'religious penalties' persist even after parental socioeconomic resources, ethnic origin and other

background characteristics are taken into account, pointing to discrimination as one possible explanation for existing disadvantage. Roth's finding that no penalties were detected at the transition to school-based training, in contrast to the transition to firm-based training, underlines the potential gate-keeping role of employers in relation to disadvantages for Muslims at the point of entry to the labour market (Mensah, 2013). Another important finding is that non-Muslim applicants who are active in a religious community experience smoother school-to-work transitions, whereas the opposite seems to be true for Muslim applicants (Pamela, 2003).

The other three studies focus on relationships between religion and individual social and educational outcomes. Using unique data from Brussels in Belgium and Cologne and Mannheim in Germany, Carol, Peez and Wagner recount how being religious is associated with lower levels of delinquency in terms of vandalism, property offense, bullying and drug abuse (Carol, Perez & Wagner, 2011). This accords with the theoretical explanation of the protective role of religion, and particularly the importance of religious contents, against temptations individuals face during adolescence. However, the study posits that the relationship between religious affiliation and committing violent acts is more intricate. It shows that acts of violence are more likely to be committed by individuals who consider themselves to be religious, but de facto do not practice an abstinent lifestyle (like abstaining from binge drinking) as prescribed by their religion. This pattern seems to be particularly pronounced among Muslim youth (Carol, Perez & Wagner, 2011).

Kogan and Weissmann examine the intricate link between religion and values, focusing on the extent to which adolescents in England, Germany, the Netherlands, and Sweden accept or reject pre-marital cohabitation (Kogan & Weissmann, 2013). The major finding of their cross-sectional analyses is that highly religious Muslims reject sexual relations outside of marriage more strongly than highly religious Christians from both majority and minority ethnic groups. Conversely, less religious adolescents are more tolerant of pre-marital cohabitation, and no significant differences across religious groups were found. These findings support the theoretical affirmation of the role of religious content in guiding individuals' attitudes and behaviour (Mariya & Chiswick, 2011). The results of the fixed-effects regressions show that an increase in religiosity is associated with a decrease in sexual liberalism, and there are no apparent differences across religious groups (Pereira, 2016). Kogan and Weissmann (2013) conclude that because the majority of Muslims tend to be more religious than followers of other religions, and are more likely to resist the trend towards secularisation, the challenges of Muslim conservatism, exemplified in the study by values of sexual liberalisation, may persist.

In another study on religious influence on migration two scholars, Phalet and Fleischmann evaluate Turkish and Moroccan minorities in the Netherlands about the influence of religion in the process of integration. Integration was assessed in different dimensions: structural (education, labour force participation), cultural (language proficiency, liberal values, gender norms) and social (contacts with Dutch, inter-ethnic friendships) (Fleischmann & Phalet, 2012). Their findings show that immigrant religiosity

is not related to labor market integration or even contact with the native society. The authors further show that immigrant religiosity has a negative impact on inter-ethnic relationships, language learning and sexual liberalism. This implies that several possible mechanisms might be simultaneously at work and bear responsibility for the variance in observed outcomes. The study further shows that there is little connection between individual education and religiosity among the second-generation Muslims in the Netherlands that were subject to their study. There was no difference reported in other social aspects between first- and second-generation immigrants

Most studies done on minority group's labor market integration come to a general conclusion in regard to Muslim immigrants: Islamic religious affiliations are associated with low labor market integration (Massey & Higgins, 2011; Federico, 2015; Olavi, 2003; Grahama & Jesse, 2017). Religious affiliations tend to persist in immigrants but decline as the duration of stay in the host society increases. Young immigrants are likely to lose their parents' religious affiliations but Islam persists more as compared to Christianity (Maliepaard & Karen, 2012). Notably, amongst Muslims, labor force integration is not related to their religiosity. Summed up, studies about Muslim minorities in the west reveal considerable discrimination against Islamic religious affiliations (Jose, 2016).

In the next three studies, the authors explore how context is related to the integration of members of different religious groups. Integration based on religion is context-dependent. Laxer, Reitz and Simon (2020) endeavor to investigate religious integration in two different societies that are dominated by contrasting models of integration. The study, relying on France's 2008 *Trajectoires et Origines* and Canada's 2002 Ethnic Diversity compares republican secularism in France and multiculturalism in Canada, with attention to the hybrid case of Quebec. The study shows that in both societies Muslim integration is hindered by laws related to citizenship and national integration processes in the two societies have widely left out minority religious affiliations (Laxer, Reitz & Simon, 2020). However, the authors report that Muslim associations are more in Canada than in France which nonetheless has little effect on acquiring citizenship. This study underscores the legal implications involved in minority group integration and stresses the importance of the legal system in determining minority group integration.

On religious effects in education, Leszczensky, Sauter and Flache, undertook a study to assess the religious composition of students in a classroom and it's related to their religious identity. Applying the Optimal Distinctiveness theory, the study derives a hypothesis to show the relationship between in-group identification and the share of in-group members. Their findings indicate a suppressed religious expression of Muslims in the class as compared to native Christian youths. Further, the study reveals that individual religiosity is affected by general religious composition in the classroom (Leszczensky, Sauter & Flache, 2019).

4. Impact of religion on immigrant integration

Religion has been an attribute of a religious community but religious influence can also occur at the individual level. This can equally be expressed contextually like in residential or study places. Tajfel (1981) in his theory of social identity links the concept of self to a wider social group and differentiates membership in an in-group and or out-group. Ben-Num Bloom, Arikan and Courtemanche (2015) postulates the theory of social identity and they argue that active in-group identification activates protective attitude within members in regard to their culture and values against perceived threats from the out-group.

In his theory of Optimal Distinctiveness, Brewer (1991) argues that the relative size of a group is linked to its social identification. This theory postulates that a social group must be optimally balanced in order to inspire the strongest group identification (Brewer, 1991). By optimal balance, the theory infers that a social group should be large enough to enable its members to feel included but small enough to enable differentiation from other social groups. Shen and Kogan (2020) investigate how religious groups treat members within their affiliation and “outsiders”, as well as the role, played by the size of a group in expressing their morals and values. In agreement with Leszczensky, Sauter and Flache (2020) they report that most social groups are prone to protecting their culture and expressing dominance over each other.

Immigrant social relations when they settle in new societies begin with an in-group interaction with fellow immigrants (Mensah, 2013). Later, after approaches are made to enter host societies and interact with locals the process of acculturation is initiated and an orientation towards the new society is achieved (Veglery, 1988). Conversely, in some cases, there is a lack of a welcoming gesture from the host society making immigrants absent from social and institutional activities (Esses et al., 2001). In such cases, social integration becomes an uphill task as there exist strata whereby different social identities are created and maintained (Tajfel & Turner, 2019).

Given that the religiosity of immigrants falls under the factors that can influence the social integration of immigrants, Putnam’s social capital theory approach can as well be applied in this study. However, since in different societies religion can have either a positive or negative impact on immigrant integration, this approach can be applied specifically to Finnish society. Sociological scholars who regard religion as a link between immigrants and natives of the host society classify it under the bridging capital (Chiswick, 20003). Similarly, other scholars have taken a different approach or regarding immigrant religiosity as part of the bonding capital since it helps them mitigate loneliness and as well develop a cultural identity (Teresa & Shoshana, 2012; Yang & Ebaugh, 2001). In expressing their religiosity, immigrants most likely combine both the bridging and bonding capital. Tiilikainen (2003) argues that immigrant religious practices like churchgoing, prayer services and religious rituals provide the immigrants with institutional attachment and help create a connection between their home countries and their countries of residence. Ebaugh and Chafetz (1999) argue that religious institutions

provide the physical and social space where immigrants and natives of the host society can adapt changes desirable by both parties.

Allport (1954) and Adida, Laitin and Valfort (2011) in separate studies articulate the *intergroup contact theory* in their assessment of the impact of religion on immigrant integration. They argue that when immigrant religious groups increase in size there is a possibility of increased integration into the host society since increased immigrant religious groups provide contact between the immigrants and the locals. Continuous contact diminishes prejudice against immigrant religious groups hence promoting social integration. In reference to bridging capital, religion will therefore create links between immigrants and natives of the host society, facilitating more integration between the two parties (Boup, 2011).

Blalock (1967) articulates another opposing theory referred to as the *group threat theory*. This theory argues that increased immigrant religious groups work on the negative impact of religion on immigrant integration. When minority groups increase in size it prompts hostile attitudes from the dominant native group. This is largely due to competition over resources or a rise against a threat to the native cultural integrity (Adida, Laitin and Valfort, 2011). This approach can relate to East African Christian immigrants in Finland since this category of immigrants forms minority groups in Finland. Differences observed are that East African immigrants are insignificant in number that their religiosity cannot pose a threat to the Finnish cultural integrity. However, in case of incompatible religious traditions, immigrant religiosity is often suppressed (Waite & Lehrer, 2010).

5. Conclusion

As scholarship is progressively getting better in various fields of academia, there is no doubt an increase in the number of scholarly works contributing to the already known and others venturing into the unknown phenomena. Studies on migration have so far had significance in humanity since they directly influence population demographics and social aspects of human lives. Considerable efforts have been put in by global institutions and governmental authorities to track and influence the rate of migration. This has greatly led to the emergence of different diverse patterns of migrations. Majorly, migration has been at the centre of humanity since it is the foundation of many existing societies and cultures. Viewed more deeply, we get to understand other sprouting factors such as integration and cultural affiliations.

By considering religion as a part of an individual's cultural dimension and blending it with immigrant integration, this study specifically took the task of reviewing previous works done by other scholars and researchers in the broader field of migration. Particularly, it sought to understand major patterns in scholarly works and as well common thematic findings identified as the field is expansively broadening. Indeed, migration and integration are a subject that calls for careful analysis and observation of

both social and human phenomena in a manner relatively identifiable to the subject of investigation.

Conflict of Interest Statement

I declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

About the Author

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