

INTEGRATION IN HOST SOCIETIES AND DEVELOPMENT: ADAPTING POLICY APPROACHES TO THE NEW MOBILITY

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This Brief promotes a new approach to integration in host societies, recommending policy adaptation to the current realities of continuous mobility. This approach can make the difference between capitalizing on the new mobility or missing out on its development potential.

The policy considerations in this Brief address two migration developments that ought to change the way we think about integration in host societies. Migration is no longer a one-time movement leading to permanent settlement. We are increasingly witnessing multiple migration (i.e. frequent and multi-directional cross-border movements of migrants), which has an impact on migrants' intentions for integration. In addition, demographic and economic challenges have engaged societies in a race to attract the highly skilled, but the best and the brightest are commonly the most highly mobile participants in the world economy. The migration landscape is now more complex and competitive, underscoring the necessity for an updated approach to integration.

New mobility, old integration, and the case for a new policy approach

Host society integration policy has largely lagged behind these emerging realities and is still founded on one-way migration and permanent settlement assumptions. This model has emphasized immigrants' labor market success and has supported such measures as language training and foreign credential recognition, domestic education and work experience, antidiscrimination legislation, citizenship acquisition, and calls for social cohesion or even cultural homogeneity and exclusive national loyalty. At best, it relies on an understanding of integration as the process of gradual mutual adaptation between host society and immigrants, and aims at *eventual* participation by the latter in all aspects of the social, economic, cultural, and political life of the former.

The new mobility is characterized by frequent and multidirectional migration, not only between the host and homeland but also onward migration to yet other destinations. The migrant profile is now different: residence, education, and work may have been taken up in more than one country, equipping migrants with enhanced skills to bring to an international career. Large-scale multiple migration also means increased diversity, multiple identities, overlapping societal memberships, geographically spread-out diaspora communities, and rich human and social capital.

The new integration

Current integration policy is ill prepared to address the new mobility for two main reasons: (1) the growing competition for talent requires greater attention to retention than unidirectional migration does; (2) outmigration, diaspora formation, and homeland return are not included in the integration model, which could otherwise capitalize on the development potential inherent in the new mobility. So, how can we rethink integration?

The global competition for talent invites us to focus on work, both as a personal measure of successful integration and as a development vector. Immigrants' previous home lives and workplaces create expectations of success in the host societies. Without job satisfaction within a relatively short period after arrival and a welcoming social environment, outmigration or return rapidly becomes attractive. Integration policy needs to reflect this new competitive reality.

Decisively tackling xenophobia and racism is especially important—through both legislation and diversity education. Host societies can increase economic success by combining pre-arrival measures, such as better matching of immigrant profiles with job markets over-emphasizing language skills and other adaptability factors in admissions policy, with post-arrival measures, such as microfinancing and creating postgraduate work programs for international students and streamlining their permanent residency. In a volatile global economy, migrants' human and social capital should be particularly valued in admissions policy and further developed after arrival, by holding information sessions about life in the host country, facilitating entry to professional networks and start-up enterprises, setting up mentorship programs, and so on. Migrants should also enjoy opportunities to participate in political life and institutional governance, which raises the likelihood of their trust and emotional investment in the host society. Measures that make naturalization more difficult will be counterproductive in the age of the new mobility and competition for skills. It is critical for policy makers to recognize that rich human and social capital is a mobility enhancer. We can no longer see migrants as

passive agents, emotionally and economically abstracted from their homelands and from other societies where they may have professional and personal connections. We are now in a seller's market for talent and in a network society, and integration policy must accept its new role in talent cultivation, retention, and circulation.

Encouraging migrants' institutional and political participation in Western liberal democracies is paramount. Doing so enhances migrants' human and political capital with knowledge and practice of democratic institutional culture and accountability, as well as of diversity governance, building up crucial appreciation of the latter's complexity and policy challenges. This enhanced human capital is a valuable resource for regional and global development. With growing cross-border mobility and transnational patterns of movement among the highly skilled, this human capital is inevitably transferred to countries of origin or new destination, where migrants may become part of the governance and administrative functions, business community, or other institutions.

Migrants commonly use their networks in the origin, transit, and destination countries, both formally and informally, to assist them in the migration continuum. These social networks create favorable conditions for business development and trade, and they act as bridge builders in many aspects of human activity. Policy makers should capitalize on diaspora networks, including with integration policy that recognizes multiple identities and facilitates connections between migrants, homelands, and diaspora. Such policies mean openness to multiple citizenship and intermittent residency

patterns, cooperative cross-border work mobility frameworks, integration diplomacy, bilateral or regional agreements on pension transfers, academic exchanges, education and professional credentials recognition, reduced taxes on remittances and other financial transactions, cultural relations with the country of origin, and city-to-city partnerships along established migration corridors, among others.

Conclusions

This Brief reconsiders current approaches to host society integration policy, calling for a timely correlation with the new mobility context. Outmigration, transnationalism, diaspora formation, return to homelands, and multiple identities and loyalties are integral parts of highly skilled migrants' lives and are unavoidable in a globalized, competitive world. Rather than relegating these phenomena to debates on national security or brain drain and responding with protectionist measures, policy makers in immigrant-receiving countries and homelands should tap into their economic and social potential through integration policy that acknowledges the parameters of the new mobility as national, regional, and global development factors. It is possible to capitalize thus on the social and human capital migrants build in the new migration continuum. Such an approach promises to lead to more stable and mutually beneficial development for all migration actors; this proposition would also be in sync with the new mobility and ongoing transnational belongings among diasporas. The long-term development benefits may outweigh the short-term losses, especially in an era of intense mobility and competition for talent.

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