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THE OUTCOMES OF GLOBAL MIGRATION REGARDING DIVERSITY, POLICY, AND ECONOMY

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Abstract

Starting with the “assimilation trajectory”, expressing the idea according to which immigrants would abandoned their culture of origin and fully embrace the “dominant culture”, the researches about immigration and the consequences of it have evolved toward a more complex and balanced vision of integration. While migration became a global issue, integration theories moved toward a vision, not only being an issue concerning only immigrants, considering that it is a societal phenomenon. Thus, models have been developed, taking into account the policies of the host society toward migrants, but also the public opinion toward them and the community they create in the host country. These models illustrate the complexity of the integration of migrants, issue that have cultural, political and economic consequences. Indeed, migrants tend to keep some of their cultural elements for a few generations, elements that might raise issues in the host society. Furthermore, political decisions have to be taken in order to reduce the flow of immigrants, to prevent or reduce the risks of discrimination regarding the different communities. Some political parties also use immigration as one of their main argument and tend to play and accentuate society divisions. Economic outcomes deserve to be mentioned, immigrant communities are often weaker than other communities in

the society and consequently it leads them to an economic and social marginalization. The theories and outcomes of integration processes of migrants are profuse, we try to present some of them.

Keywords: migration, integration, assimilation theory, multiculturalism, the host community, segmented assimilation.

Migration. Accelerated by the current globalization which facilitates the flow of people between the different parts of the world, this phenomenon has been studied by sociologists, economists, and anthropologists since the beginning of the 20th Century. The main focus point has been the outcomes of immigration in the societies. This article, after a brief theoretical overview, will look into the consequences of global migration regarding diversity, policy, and economy. This article will show a specific interest in the American and Western European theories and visions of immigration.

The interest of sociology for immigration could be traced to the beginning of the 20th Century. An American view of the sociology of immigration has been developed from this area and scholars continue to produce studies regarding that issue. During the 1920's and 1930's the Chicago school of Sociology focused its study on the assimilation perspective, asserting that "new immigrants would eventually move up the occupational hierarchy, lose their cultural distinctiveness, and blend into the dominant culture." [1]. This affirmation was called the "assimilation trajectory". This perspective has not been contested until the 1970's and the 1980's, migration becoming, at that time a "worldwide phenomenon involving transformations on a global scale" [1].

Immigration theory still is heavily linked with the social-problems-oriented approach. The main focus point is, therefore, the immigrants' incorporation into the welcoming society. What changed is the understanding of the process of integration. While the Chicago school of Sociology were talking of full assimilation, Alejandro Portes in *The Economic Sociology of Immigration* [2] developed the idea of a "segmented assimilation". By these terms, he understood an assimilation to different cultures. Simultaneously some of the studies shifted from emphasizing on integration to focus on how immigrants interact with the pre-existing structure. Why these changes occur in the sociological part of the migration theories? It appears that these shifts try to answer to the failure of the assimilation thesis when it confronted with the resurgent of the ethnic identities and cultural affirmations among the migrants.

Consequently, "multiple melting pot" models have been issued, mainly adopting a socioeconomic point of view. The concept of "ethnic communities" surfaced as a form of "immigrant incorporation". The study conducted by Bonacich and Modell in 1980 found out that, while "social solidarity had helped to establish success in the first generation, was eroding in the second generation" [3]. This phenomenon could be analyzed according to the idea that

social solidarity is only a temporary phenomenon and that the second generation, better integrated into society did not need such solidarity. In order to understand the mechanism in a comprehensive manner, A. Portes, developed a model consisting of twelve outcomes depending on the host society behavior toward migrants. According to this model, the government policy on the subject could be “receptive” (meaning receiving assistance), “indifferent” (relating to legal immigration) and “hostile” (concerning disapproval of migration process). The model also explores the public opinion reaction. The latter distinguish two types of reaction: “prejudiced” (reception of often nonwhite migrants) and “nonprejudiced” (regarding the reception of white migrants). Finally, the model differentiates two types of communities of immigrants: “strong” ones and “weak” ones. By “strong” communities he understands “geographic concentrations” and “diversified occupational structure” and by “weak” ones, small-scale communities or composed by almost only blue-collar workers [2]. This model tries to understand migrants’ integration from the macro-level to the “middle-level” of the society. In addition, the work of Rogers Brubaker on his comparative study of France and Germany shows that the history and identity of the country has a great impact on the integration of the migrants, drawing a stark contrast between France represented as “expansive, a territorially based community, and state-centered, assimilationist” and Germany shown as “restrictive, a community of descent, ethnocultural, and differentialist” [4].

However, as mentioned before, migration has become a global issue, and some of the theories following the transnationalisation of the process became less concerned by the assimilation in one country but more by the grass-roots of immigration. On one hand, Linda Basch focuses on “the process by which immigrants forge and sustain multi-stranded social relations that link their societies of origins and settlements” [5]. Following works asserted that “immigrants network” are expanding from only the host society to the origin one, going across borders. Faist, in 1998, affirms that these networks “are [a] combinations of social and symbolic ties” [6]. On the other hand, some sociologists have been focusing on the ties existing between migration and the propagation of capitalism. Indeed, with capitalism spreading, the demand for low-paid labor increases and is facilitated by the booming of transportation and communication. Further studies have shown that the creation of these “transnational communities” tends to represent a “strategy of survival and betterment” for migrants, who by this mode create a new mode of integration [6].

The second part of this article will focus less on a theoretical level and more on the outcomes of the current global migration. Four markers could be underlined in order to have an insight of this phenomenon. These indicators would be diversity, racism, multiculturalism and economics. One of the most obvious outcomes of migration is diversity, ethnic and cultural ones. Diversity is directly linked with the attitude of the receiving society and thus, could be

linked with A. Portes theory describing 12 possible outcomes [2]. Immigration leads directly to cultural diversity, the coming individuals often regroup themselves and lives in close communities, keeping their language and few cultural elements “at least for a few generations.” [7]. Nevertheless, this argument could be put into perspective regarding the western European migration to North America or British ones toward this region or Australia. Indeed, these areas present cultural similarities and the assimilation appears to be quick and easily done. S. Castles and M. J. Miller even develop further their argument when saying that when the settlement persists, multiculturalist policies are implemented manifesting themselves through “minority cultural” preoccupation and “political rights”, what Saskia Sassen confirms, when saying that “immigration [...] has participated in the implementation of many of these new arrangements, the state itself has been transformed” [8].

However, as soon as economic fluctuation or insecurity arises, the “newcomers” are seen as responsible for it. Racism appears to be a threat for migrants but the reflection can be pushed further and, in adopting a western point of view, one could say that racism also endangered democracy through the type of political parties using it to thrive [7]. Racism also leads to the rise of the national identity issue, the other way around being also true. The incoming population and culture are seen as a threat to the host society culture and to the idea of Nation-state developed from the late 17th Century. These outcomes tend to lead to suspicion and mistrust from the receiving community toward the arriving one. Consequently, states have been driven to consider, to a larger extent, transnational cooperation and regulation, so as to control the phenomenon. These considerations have drawn particular attention toward borders, which since the treaty of Westphalia, have been delimiting states. The solution answering to this issue appears to be double sided. On one hand, numerous countries have decided to increase their borders security, the example of the United States, reinforcing their border facilities with Mexico and the active support of the public opinion in favor of a wall between the US and Mexico, illustrates perfectly this tendency. On the other hand, several countries have chosen to favor the free circulation of the citizen within a given community. The illustration of this choice is, of course, the Schengen space, inside which there is often no border control. The current situation tends to show a resurgence of hostile behavior and opinion toward migration and immigrants integration into societies.

In addition to cultural and political outcomes, migration has a direct and important impact on the economy. It appears that migrants tend to occupy a specific place in the workforce. A particular attention will be drawn to the place and role of immigrant women. Since the 1970's, numerous studies have shown the importance of migrants in what is called the “informal economy”. Two types of strategy seem to exist regarding this issue. The first one would be that some societies “receiving large numbers of unauthorized migrant workers

sometimes choose to ignore the inflow or to view it as benign.” [8]. The second strategy appears to be the exact opposite. The underground economy and migrant workers are considered by society as pernicious. Indeed, migrant workers are seen by the society as unfair competition due to their condition of work (very often difficult) and their low salaries. A report of the OECD from 1994, also underlines these aspects of migrants’. This “labor market segmentation” for migrants appears to lead to the marginalization of migrants in the society [9]. These observations could be exemplified by the role and position of immigrant women in the host society. Poor women immigrants appear to become the “targets for employment with low pay and long hours” [10], in several industries but especially the garment one. The gendered vision of women, seen as docile and good with their hands, favored their employment in industries with hard working conditions, low salary and long hours of work [10]. The concentration of this social category in the “transformative industry” has a tendency to influence greatly on the social position of immigrant women in society, influence often synonym of depreciation in this case. Overall the status of immigrant workers in the workforce has an impact on their assimilation into the host society.

This article has tried to present an overview of the flourishing field of sociology of immigration, focusing on Northern America schools and on Western European views, and to show the evolution from the assimilation concept of the school of Chicago to the “segmented assimilation” of A. Portes [2]. It also tried to present the outcomes of migration and of the assimilation process of immigrants. Trying to adopt a comprehensive vision, this article encompassed cultural, societal and economic results of immigration in the host society.

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