

Chapter 3. Adaptation, integration, assimilation – an attempt at a theoretical approach

Małgorzata Budyta-Budzyńska

Immigrants find their place in the host society in a variety of ways and, therefore, various different terms are used to describe the degree in which they “enter” into the host community, both in everyday usage and in scholarly analyses. One may speak of the separation or marginalization of immigrants, their adaptation, integration or assimilation into the majority environment. In spite of the frequent use and intuitive understanding of those terms, there is no agreement as to their precise meanings. Indeed, the sense of the terms just mentioned depends upon the **context** to which they are applied – whether we are speaking of the so-called old, historical, native national or ethnic minorities; or of recent, extraneous nationality groups consisting of refugees, resettled people or economic emigrants; it depends upon the **field of study** within which we describe the analyzed cases: the definitions of those concepts differ according to whether they are applied in anthropology, sociology, psychology, economics or political theory; it depends upon the **scientific paradigm**: for instance, within the structural-functionalistic Parsonian approach, the concept of adaptation is an absolutely key category, while in other approaches it might not appear at all. Finally, the meaning of those concepts is dependent as well upon **a specific country’s experience with immigrants**. The words “integration” and “assimilation” have different meanings in French politics from what they mean in English politics. The understanding of the mentioned categories is in addition under the influence of **fashion**, and of the **dominant political discourse**, such as that related with “political correctness”¹.

¹ Grzymała-Kazłowska (2008) enumerates the following approaches towards integration and assimilation: the **descriptive-investigative**, that describes the mechanisms

Within the approach presented in the following, separation, adaptation, integration and assimilation are treated as successive degrees – beginning with the weakest and least advanced, of the immigrants’ “entry” into the host society. All the four concepts denote both a process, and a state – they describe a phenomenon in its phase of appearance and growth, i.e. dynamically, as well as the effects of this process, its final result. Similar to the concept of diffusion, adaptation and assimilation are categories originating from biology – in the social sciences they refer to inter-group and inter-cultural contacts and are applied to immigrants and the host society, or to ethnic and national minorities and majorities.

The four degrees of the “entry” of immigrants into the host society²

We may distinguish several degrees in the “entry” of immigrants into the host society. The boundaries between them are difficult to define, since the process of “entering” into the community of the majority may develop in different ways depending on the sphere of life. The least advanced stage, at which many immigrants remain and never surpass, is that of separation.

Separation is a process, and state, where the group either remains in self-imposed isolation (marginalization), or is isolated from the majority of society. Isolation may be an effect of official policies followed by the state, or by a specific government, but it may as well result from historical prejudices, tradition, resentment, or be an effect of recent events. Institutionalized isolation is currently highly infrequent, what is observed

of absorbing immigrants into the host society; the **normative-ideological**, formulating recommendations as to what is desirable; the **legal-institutional**, which analyzes legal norms and state policy on immigration; and the **political**, which exposes the way that those concepts function in public discourse and are employed towards social mobilization, raising fears, distracting attention from other issues, or raising support for specific political decisions. The first of those approaches is a description of the existing situation, a diagnosis – while the remaining three are rather visions or proposals of solutions to specific problems.

² We disregard here the situation of being a cosmopolite. The cosmopolite, Bauman’s tourist, feels well in every place, is equally at home everywhere and at the same time, is not at home anywhere. In such a case it is difficult to speak of “immersion” in a specific community or culture.

more often is customary separation, applying to housing space or the educational sphere. No state in Europe could currently afford to follow a blatant policy of segregation, yet spatial separation is not infrequent: in the Czech Republic there exist isolated Roma settlements, in French cities one may find housing projects populated entirely by several generations of immigrants from the Maghreb, in Amsterdam some urban neighborhoods are dominated by the Moroccan minority.

Adaptation is the next stage of the “entry” of immigrants into the host community. The concept of adaptation was made popular by Darwin, and it means as much as to acquire a minimum of capabilities enabling survival. This is a category that seldom appears within anthropology (however, it is present in the works of Malinowski); it is, however, employed by various schools of sociology ever since sociology has been a separate field of knowledge: in Spencer’s evolutionism (where adaptation denotes the gradual improvement of social abilities under the pressure of the environment), in the functional school (adaptation meant as a mechanism that regulates the mutual relations between the subjects of social life), in Parsons’s functional-structural approach (adaptation meant as the capability of subsystems to adapt to the system as a whole – a part of AGIL). For the purposes of the present study, we shall define adaptation as the minimal accommodation to the environment that enables survival. We may single out economic adaptation, related to the job market; cultural adaptation, relative to language and cultural competence in the country of settlement; and social adaptation, concerning the social interaction with the native population.

Adaptation, being the least advanced degree of “entry” of immigrants into the host community, does not require close contacts with members of the host society, nor does it raise the need to establish close bonds within secondary groups – not to mention entering into primary groups of the host society. Adaptation refers usually to the basic biological and economic conditions enabling survival. It assumes adopting within certain spheres – mainly those related to work, of patterns of behavior and norms dominant in the host environment, while maintaining own patterns of behavior and values within the private sphere.

The next degree of “entry” of immigrants into the majority group is integration. **Integration** means a process and state where immigrant individuals and groups establish relatively robust relationships with

members of the host community and take part in diverse aspects of its life, while not abandoning their own national identity. Integration refers mainly to social relations, it describes the functioning of an individual or group within a new social environment, in a situation where the immigrants enjoy at least a minimum of economic security, and have attained at least a moderate level of language and cultural competence within the country of settlement. Integration means, beyond a certain level of capability, a striving to become a part of the surrounding society. This is not possible without some assistance from that society, and from the state. What is required for integration is a social environment that wants to, and is able to, facilitate the immigrants' life in their new surroundings. The state is assumed to play an active role in helping the immigrants become a part of society, and the majority group is assumed to allow such an inclusion. In the spheres of culture and identity, this means a re-evaluation of existing tradition and culture, with this process applying to both the immigrant community and to the majority.

Many authors (e. g. John Berry) consider integration the most desirable modality of “entry” into the host society; while others are of the opinion that not integration, but assimilation is the most stable state and the one that provides the best conditions for advancement – this is because integration, through the constant “application” of integration policies creates “aliens”. The obligatory participation in integrating activities places focus on the “differentness”. Such a situation often leads to alienation from both communities: immigrants who take part in integration programs remain “different” from the hosts, but at the same time become “different” from those immigrants who do not participate in integration (Mecheril 2003, quoting Kindler 2008, p. 68). In addition, any form of different treatment on the basis of ethnic origin stigmatizes its subjects and often leads to dependence on assistance. Paradoxically, therefore, a policy of integration may inadvertently fail to ease the “entry” into the host society, instead making it more difficult.

The last stage of “immersion” into the host society is assimilation. Etymologically, **assimilation** means becoming similar. It is a process and state which results from the contact with another ethnic-cultural group, when the behavior of the minority group undergoes a change such that they adopt the culture and self-identity of the other group. In theory, members of the majority group could as well become assimilated into the

minority – but at present such an effect is very infrequent, usually it is individuals from the minority who become assimilated into the majority, such as immigrants into the host society³. Members of the minority group, immigrants, gradually cease to differ culturally and socially from the host society, totally melting into their country of settlement⁴. The fading away of ethnic differences is in this case accompanied by a will to change identity and, in general, by acceptance of this transformation on behalf of the majority. Assimilation is always a one-way process, its aim being to make members of an ethnic minority or immigrant group into a part of the majority community. Assimilation usually refers to the spheres of self-identity and culture, although some authors, such as Milton Gordon (1964) single out structural assimilation and apply this category to the socio-economical conditions prevailing in society, i.e. the similarity between the immigrant community and the host majority with respect to vocational structure⁵. Similarly as in the case of integration, opinions differ as to the value of assimilation. Some view assimilation as a chance of a better life for members of the minority group (leaving the ethnic ghetto, vanishing of ethno-classes); others view it as a hazard to the majority (disruption of ethnic purity) and a betrayal of the minority ethnos (being unfaithful to tradition). To some it is the most desirable state, while others find it totally unacceptable.

³ Historically cases when a minority culture imposed itself upon the majority were rather frequent, being related to conquest, the carrying out of a civilizing mission, or Christianization. Currently, this happens only exceptionally. We disregard here the situation when a minority group formed by foreign managers imposes a corporate culture in a given country.

⁴ The word “assimilation” was introduced by the Chicago school in its research on racial relations in America. In his *Introduction to the Science of Sociology*, Robert Park enumerated four degrees of interaction: **accommodation** (the subordinate group adapts its behavior to the expectations of the dominant one, known in biology as adaptation to the environment); **competition** (when the subordinate group forms its own, competing system of values and norms); **conflict** (leading to the extermination or exclusion of one of the groups involved); **assimilation** (the full acceptance and adoption of the values and culture of the dominant group).

⁵ Gordon (1964) singled out the following degrees of assimilation of minority groups: cultural assimilation (acculturation), structural assimilation, amalgamation (having to do with exogamy), and assimilation with respect to self-identification.

Table 1. The four degrees of an immigrant’s “entry” into the host society (meaning both a process and a state)

Separation (marginalization)
Adaptation
Integration
Assimilation

Source: Own work.

The four dimensions of an immigrant’s “entry” into the host society

Speaking of the adaptation, integration or assimilation of immigrants into the host community, we should distinguish four dimensions of these processes: the economic, the cultural, the socio-political, and the one dealing with self-identification⁶.

Table 2. The four dimensions of an immigrant’s “entry” into the host society

The economic dimension , related to the job market
The cultural dimension , related to language and cultural competence
The socio-political dimension , related to social interactions and political activity
The self-identification dimension , related to the sense of community and national identity

Source: Own work.

⁶ Some authors (Biernath 2008) distinguish between the legal-institutional dimension related to rights and citizenship, and the spatial one, having to do with the place of residence. This does not seem to be necessary, as the spatial dimension is contained within the social one, and the legal-institutional – within the socio-political. By enumerating only four dimensions of the “entry” into the host society, we are making reference to the four subsystems present in Parsons’s theory.

Taking the intersection of the four dimensions with the four degrees of the immigrants’ “entry” into the majority society, we obtain 16 situations which may possibly occur. Not all of them were present in our study, we will, however, enumerate them as they are in theory possible.

Table 3. The intersection of the degrees and dimensions of an immigrant’s “entry” into the host society?

Dimension of “entry” Degree of “entry”	Economic	Cultural	Socio-political	Self-identification
Separation	-	-	-	-
Adaptation	+	+/-	+/-	-
Integration	+	+	+	-
Assimilation	+	+	+	+

Source: Own work.

The economic dimension (an aspect studied by economics and sociology) has to do with employment. The ability to find one’s way around in the job market enables the immigrant to provide material security for him- or herself and his or her family through labour, not by resorting to welfare or funds provided by non-governmental organizations. Professional activity conditions a certain kind of social relations, forces an entry into secondary groups of the host society – a situation that provides greater opportunities for acquiring language and cultural competence relative to the host country. A successful economic adaptation influences other kinds of adaptation, and vice versa – familiarity with the language and culture (the cultural dimension), and networking within the host society (the social dimension) affect the individual’s functioning on the labour market. We see here how Bourdieu’s three forms of capital undergo mutual transformation (economic capital ↔ cultural capital ↔ social capital). Referring to the economic dimension, we may speak of four kinds of situations:

1. *Total withdrawal from the host society’s job market*, meaning either renouncing employment and relying on welfare benefits, or employment in an immigrant business, that is – employment within the ethnic milieu. Such a type of employment often does not require any contacts with the native population, one may live for years without making any

acquaintances in the host community and without gaining any familiarity with their language or culture. Such economic behaviors are usually accompanied by isolation within one's own national group, formation of a kind of ghetto, and self-induced marginalization.

2. *Employment below one's qualifications*, not exercising the individual's primary profession, often in the so-called second market, poorly paid and with few social benefits – usually in service jobs and professions avoided by native residents, described in the literature as “3D” jobs (dull, dirty, dangerous). In this case, functioning in the job market requires a certain minimum of contacts with the local population, but those are usually restricted to professional matters.

3. *Employment in one's primary profession*, according with the individual's education and qualifications, where familiarity with the local language and culture is usually required (to a degree beyond what relates directly to the job), and extensive contacts with members of the majority.

4. *Professional advancement to a degree that would be difficult or impossible to attain in the native country*, where the acquired language and cultural competence relative to the country of settlement, often supplemented by additional education abroad, enable significant professional advancement and allow the individual to attain a higher social position than he or she would be holding in the home country.

The cultural dimension (an aspect studied by anthropology and sociology) relates to acculturation, which is the influence of a foreign culture on the individual, as a result of which he or she adopts in part or in whole the cultural patterns of the hosts, their symbolic codes, customary practices and lifestyle. We may analyze the cultural dimension by applying the category of *habitus*, due to Pierre Bourdieu. *Habitus*, the aggregate of an individual's predispositions towards certain actions, behaviors and aspirations, is understood as a kind of practical sense, which by unconsciously appealing to dispositions creates predispositions and determines the capability to find one's way around in a new environment. This capability, to find one's way around, is under the effect of several social fields, in the case of immigration these are: the field of the sender society, of the receiving society, and of the immigrant community itself. All these three fields mutually interfere in modifying the individual's *habitus*. In this sense, migration is a new stage of socialization, tied to acculturation, and may lead to:

1. *Total cultural indifference*, or a situation of cultural inertia. The individual becomes indifferent to which circle of culture he or she is in, feeling uneasy within both; one environment is no longer one's own, while the other remains foreign.

2. *Nativism*, a situation where the individual shuts off the influence of the foreign culture, clinging to his or her native one. Such an attitude is often accompanied by an obsessive cultivation of the native culture and rejection of all foreign influences.

3. *Additive synergy*, a situation when the immigrant begins to fuse elements of the immigrant culture with the majority culture, as a result beginning to function within a kind of syncretic culture. Many authors regard this state as the most desirable one, as the immigrant becomes at ease in the new environment, while preserving his or her ethnic roots.

4. *Deculturation* (or cultural assimilation), meaning the total abandoning of the original culture and adopting the culture of the majority. Many other authors, in turn, regard this state as the most desirable one from the individual's point of view, because it allows him or her to fully become a part of the majority, avoiding the dilemmas related to preservation of ethnic and cultural distinctiveness.

A similar set of four situations related to the cultural aspect is considered by John Berry (1988) in his model of acculturation⁷.

The socio-political dimension (an aspect studied by sociology and legal and political science), related to social interactions and the

⁷ John Berry constructed his distinctions based on the answers to two questions, that is, he took into account two bi-valued variables:

- the attitude towards the preservation of the subject's original cultural identity, whether this is something that matters (yes/no)
- the attitude towards maintaining relations with members of the dominant group, whether this is something that matters (yes/no).

From the intersection of these two questions, Berry obtains four possible situations:

- integration, biculturalism, synergy (yes, yes)
- assimilation (no, yes)
- separations (yes, no)
- exclusion, marginalization (no, no).

Along the same lines one may distinguish four kinds of attitude of society towards immigrants. Taking responses to questions concerning:

- the subject's attitude towards immigrants' acculturation: yes, agree/no, do not agree
- approval of immigrants preserving their identity and culture: yes, approval/no, disapproval.

immigrant's position with respect to the state. What is described here is the immigrant's functioning within the new social environment, and how he or she makes use of social networking within the immigrant community. Immigrant social networking has an ambivalent role in the process of the immigrants' entry into the host society. On the one hand, it eases the process of finding one's way around in a foreign social environment, making it easier to survive the difficult initial period of emigration, thus creating a kind of shock absorber that protects from excessive trauma; but on the other, it can make it more difficult to integrate with the host community, obstructing social advancement by blocking departure from the immigrant environment, or by imposing a constant duty to come to the aid of "our own people". The social dimension has to do with the immigrant's entry into secondary and primary groups of the host society, and the adopting of social roles proper to this society. The political dimension has to do with how the immigrant makes use of his or her political rights, including citizenship, and his or her political activity – efforts to become not just an object of politics, but primarily a subject of politics. With respect to this dimension, we may single out four situations:

1. Social isolation, or the total renouncing of contacts with the native population. Isolation means remaining exclusively within one's own ethnic environment, making no use of political rights, and creating no representation to influence the decision-making process.

2. Social adaptation, which consists in participating in a very limited way in relations with only some secondary groups – professional groups, in the confines of the labour market, and political ones, in case of political activity; and acquiring a modest degree of language and cultural competence with respect to the country of settlement. This is the case of minimal accommodation in the professional and public dimensions, related to employment and the state.

3. Partial integration, which consists in freely functioning within the host society, while at the same time cultivating one's bonds with the

From there we obtain, similarly as in the previous case, four kinds of attitudes demonstrated by the host society:

- pro-integration (yes, yes)
- pro-assimilation (yes, no)
- pro-separation (no, yes)
- exclusion (no, no).

community of origin. Such a situation assumes the acquiring of language and cultural competence relative to the host society, and entry into their primary groups – of neighbors and friends, but does not assume adopting their national identity, nor of most of their customs within the private sphere.

4. Full integration, meaning establishing relations at the level of primary groups, mainly family relations, and adoption of the customs of the dominant group in private life.

The dimension of self-identification has to do with changes in the sense of national identity (an aspect studied by psychology and sociology)⁸. One may single out here a cognitive, emotional and behavioral aspect⁹. The cognitive aspect has to do with cultural canon, and familiarity with tradition and history. In many countries, it is a requirement when applying for citizenship to demonstrate familiarity not only with the language, but also with the history and culture of the country of settlement. The emotional aspect has to do with the declared membership in a nation, and is expressed in statements and demonstrations of feelings towards a specific nation. The behavioral aspect has to do with various actions which demonstrate involvement in favor of a specific national group.

Emigration is often a state of “suspension”, resulting from an insecurity concerning one’s own identity as bonds of loyalty and solidarity with the new community have not appeared yet, while the old bonds either have been broken or are suspended. The individual becomes estranged from his or her community of origin – although today, thanks to the Internet, not to such a degree as in the past, and at the same time has yet to fully adopt the new cultural patterns of the community of settlement. This may result in a situation of:

1. *Perpetuation of immigrant identity*, or a state of insistently stressing the old national identity.

2. *Confusion, anxiety and stress*, stemming from the insecurity concerning one’s identity, possibly even leading to depression.

3. *The development of loyalty towards the new homeland*, a sense of solidarity with the receiving society, and a will to participate in its social

⁸ Described by Pawel Boski (2009) as *psychological acculturation*.

⁹ National identity, being an attitude, like any other attitude is formed by three components: the cognitive, the affective and the behavioral one.

Table 4. Immigrants' attitudes in the context of the degrees and dimensions of "entry" into the host society

Dimension Degree of "entry"	Economic	Cultural	Socio-political	Identity
Separation	Total withdrawal from the labour market of the host society, or employment within the ethnic community	Cultural indifference or nativism	Social isolation with respect to the host society	Strengthening of the original ethnic identity
Adaptation	Employment below qualifications	Cultural accommodation – minimal level of language and cultural competence	Social accommodation – social relations with the majority group restricted to the professional sphere	Strengthening of the original ethnic identity, or sense of confusion, depression related to insecurity about one's identity
Integration	Employment within one's profession	Additive synergy – partial adoption of the norms and customs of the majority group, including those related to the private sphere, while preserving cultural patterns from the society of origin	Partial integration – entry into primary groups of the host society, while in the family sphere remaining in relationships with persons from the country of origin	Sense of loyalty and solidarity towards the host society, while preserving the original national identity
Assimilation	Employment within one's profession	Deculturation, i.e. cultural assimilation – a sense of cultural community with the host society	Full social integration – entry into family relationships with persons from the host country, civic and political activity within the new social environment	Complete change of identification, i.e. identificatory assimilation

Source: Own work.

and political life. At times, the immigrant presents a hyphenated identity, a double or split identity, or defines him- or herself by reference to context (i.e. the situation in which his or her identity is invoked).

4. Complete change of identification (identificatory assimilation), or the adoption of the majority's identity, together with an array of means of manifesting this identity.

Among emigrants, similarly as on a national frontier, identity is a choice, and is dependent on the immigration policies of the receiving state and on the emigration policies of the state of origin, as well as on the attitudes towards aliens that prevail among members of the receiving society – which in turn are a result of political and economic circumstances, and on the history and tradition of the receiving country. Like on a frontier, among immigrants a variety of forms of national affiliation may exist: with the community of origin, the community of residence, a new cohort of people of split identity, or cosmopolitans indifferent towards issues of nationality. The national identity of an emigrant, like on a frontier, may vary during the person's life and displays a fluid character (Budyta-Budzyńska 2010).

Factors that affect the degree of “entry” of immigrants into the host society

The degree of “entry” of immigrants into the host society is affected by a variety of different factors, whose weight and intensity varies over time, and those factors exert a direct or indirect influence on the individual, or the community as a whole. Such factors may be classified in three groups: those that relate to characteristics of the host society, those related to features of the society of origin, and those related to attributes of the emigrants, or in terms employed by demographers: features of the emigrant cohort.

The first group of factors, having to do with **features of the host society**, depend upon whether that society represents a **type of culture** of great and robust tradition, or is a rather insecure or freshly revitalized one. A different behavior is displayed by a society certain of the value of its culture, which is proud of it, and either is currently an exporter of culture, or remembers that in past centuries its culture radiated onto the region and the neighboring countries; different from that of a society uncertain of the

singularity and originality of its achievements. It is important whether the host society has an **experience of multiculturalism**, as such an experience leads to a degree of tolerance. We should, however, stress that tolerance and social permissiveness of mixing with aliens is not a simple function of tradition and history, but is above all highly dependent on political circumstances¹⁰. Another relevant factor is the current **degree of cultural and ethnic homogeneity of the host society**. Ethnic heterogeneity is often a cause of tensions and ethnic conflicts, but at the same time it provides practice in resolving disputes of nationality, and forces towards an institutionalization of conflict in the shape of the creation of formal mediating bodies. A factor whose importance can't be overestimated is **the condition of the economy and the situation on the job market**. When economic conditions change, this usually brings about changes in the policies towards immigrants and the attitude of native residents towards immigrants. The country's economic situation determines whether immigrants are seen as needed workers, or as individuals who only generate costs. And finally, of importance is also the **immigration policy of the host state**, which is a product of all the above factors.

When speaking about the immigration policies of the state, we must distinguish between the immigration policy that has to do with controlling the flow of immigrants, i.e. the regulations ruling the granting of permanent and temporary residence permits, and the policy towards immigrants related to their adaptation to the social environment of the host country. Sometimes policies are implemented to manage immigration, for instance people from foreign countries are encouraged to come to the host country for temporary employment, especially in periods of economic boom, by creating conditions favorable to the arrival of their families, while at the same time neglecting to implement a policy of integrating the immigrants with the majority community; immigrants are either regarded as a transient community, or expected to cope by themselves. Such a situation existed in the 1950s and 1960s, when many of the countries of Western Europe attracted guest workers, because their labour was in demand, but they were treated as a transient community. ("Guest" is

¹⁰ Many historical examples exist that demonstrate how a society's tolerance shifted from day to day due to political circumstances. Alliances made by a state could at one time indicate intolerance towards aliens, but at another that the end is above the means, and for instance, pacting with infidels is admissible.

a highly euphemistic term, they were hired on temporary contracts, and in many cases were not allowed to change their place of residence or employment. Being brought in and hired for specific tasks, they were expected to return afterwards to their home countries.) In some cases, extensive adaptation programs for immigrants exist, however, obtaining resident status may be very difficult¹¹.

Another factor which may have an impact on the rate of integration is given by the **rules governing granting of citizenship** (in other words, the right to equal treatment). In general, there exist two basic principles for granting citizenship – one based on *ius sanguinis*, “the law of blood” (which in spite of several amendments remains in force in Germany), and the other – on *ius soli*, “the law of land” (in force for several generations in France). The former means that to obtain citizenship, one must demonstrate kinship with members of the host society. The latter requires having been born on the state’s territory, an ethnic bond with the dominant majority is not required. Currently, a third principle is increasingly being invoked, one that accounts for the numerous cases of immigration: *ius domicilis*, the granting of citizenship to persons who obtained permission for permanent residence. Citizenship would be granted on the basis of social and symbolic bonds with the host country, resulting from extended residence on its territory and successful integration (thus not origin, nor birth, but culture and adaptation to the norms and principles observed in the country). In the EU states, but also elsewhere, citizenship is not a necessary condition of political participation, for instance the right to vote in local elections is granted to non-citizens. This sort of relationship between the individual and the state is described by the term *denizens*. It consists in the arrangement where permanent residents of the host country are granted a number of rights related to employment, social benefits, medical service and the right to vote in local elections. This gives rise to a kind of residential citizenship. Most immigrants are not full citizens and, therefore, do not enjoy the right to vote in general elections, but they are encouraged to participate in associations, take part in local elections, and receive medical care and social benefits according to the

¹¹ One may distinguish four models of policy towards immigrants: the segregation model, the assimilation model, the integration model and the multicultural one. In reality we often deal with a mixture of various models.

same regulations as citizens (this is the situation of a sizable group of Poles resident in Iceland)¹².

The institutional-legal factor mentioned above may to a large degree determine how fast the immigrants “enter” into the host society. Let us stress, however, that one should distinguish between the official policy as defined in declarations, documents and political statements, and the unofficial policy embodied in detailed regulations, attitudes of local authorities, and the actual conduct of institutions. Sometimes these two policies diverge and fail to be complementary: an official policy favorable to immigration might not be accompanied by the involvement of state officials in aiding immigrants.

The next group of factors has to do with the **particular characteristics of the country of origin of the immigrant group**. Of importance is the degree of **cultural similarity** between the immigrants and the host society. It is known that immigrants belonging to the same language and cultural family as the host society are quicker to “enter” into that society (a smaller cultural distance leads to a smaller social distance). Of some importance, though currently that importance is diminishing, is the **geographical distance** between the country of origin and the new place of settlement. When serious communication problems exist,

In the segregation model, immigrants are not expected at all to adapt to the host community, sometimes this is even actively prevented, for instance via housing policies. Immigrants are treated as transients, who in due time will return to their home countries.

In the assimilation model, immigrants are expected to renounce their original culture and adopt the language, culture and values of the hosts.

In the integration model, immigrants are expected to adopt some part of the hosts’ practices and cultural patterns, but not to abandon their original culture. Sometimes this is a bidirectional process, with the hosts adopting some habits from the immigrants.

Multiculturalism assumes that the state agrees that the culture of origin should be preserved, and often supports its cultivation.

¹² In some countries the granting of citizenship is the crowning of the process of integration, marking the final point of the period of entry into the host society. It needs to be preceded by a successful “test of integration”, and the fulfilling of a number of conditions, such as passing tests in language and history, or submitting a declaration of loyalty. Citizenship is a kind of reward for the efforts undertaken. This is the case e.g. in the Netherlands. In other countries, the granting of citizenship is a precondition of integration, and is treated more as an incentive for integration – this is the situation in France. In some countries naturalization takes place during a ceremony, while in others a certificate of citizenship is sent by mail, for instance in Iceland.

the immigrants are condemned to long stretches of time spent living among foreigners, which may lead to faster assimilation. Another factor of importance is the existence of a **multicultural experience** in the society of origin. In the case that the immigrants had prior contacts with other cultures and communities, establishing of new social relations usually becomes easier. Not without significance is also the existence of a **tradition of emigration** in the society of origin. If it is traditional that in every generation, some family member leaves the country, and everyone has relatives or acquaintances who live abroad, this bears an influence not only on the size of the flow of emigration and on its direction, but also means familiarity with the country of settlement will be acquired at a quicker rate. At this opportunity, we must mention the role of social networking and of emigrant social capital.

When speaking of social capital, we must distinguish between two meanings of the term, one of them originating from James Coleman, and the other from Pierre Bourdieu. According to Coleman, social capital is the capability to cooperate with individuals within a group (but beyond the family) in pursuing common aims and interests. In this approach, social capital is dependent on the existence of a tradition of joint action, on the ability to join into teams, of sharing a certain set of norms and values (leading to trust). Social capital in this meaning is a feature of a group or community (Coleman 1990), and in this meaning the term is used in well-known analyses by Francis Fukuyama (*Trust: The Social Virtues and the Creation of Prosperity*) and Robert Putnam (*Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy*).

The second meaning of social capital, due to Pierre Bourdieu, refers to the density of networks of interaction and contacts maintained by the individual, giving him or her access to certain actual or potential resources (Bourdieu, Wacquant 2001, p. 105). Social capital may directly translate into other forms of capital – economic or cultural, because social interactions translate to a better position in the labour market, and affect the growth of competence in language and culture. In this understanding, social capital has to do with features of the individual, his or her network of connections and acquaintances.

Both meanings of social capital may be applied to the case of immigration, although none of the mentioned authors wrote about such an application of this category. The group's social capital (in Coleman's

sense) determines the degree of the immigrants' self-organization, which applies both to business undertakings, as well as to social activities – in charity, culture or celebration of anniversaries. The individual's social capital (as understood by Bourdieu) has to do with his or her emigrant social networks and the resources to which the individual gains access through such networks. In many cases it is the emigrant's social networks that determine the destination of emigration, or even the act of emigrating. The emigrant chooses a destination where he or she will find family, acquaintances or friends – they are often those who procure the first accommodation and employment. Emigrant social networks make it easier to find one's way around a new environment and reduce the trauma of emigration. With respect to later stages of emigration the role of emigrant networks is no longer as unequivocally positive. On the one hand, they remain a base for the emigrant, and a kind of safety net in case of adversity; they may provide employment in immigrant businesses, or the possibility to work in service of the immigrant community: as interpreter, teacher, psychologist, counselor, nurse, etc. (In some cases emigrant networking expands the pool of opportunities provided by life on the interface between two communities, in the so-called transnational enterprises). On the other hand, emigrant networks often work in detriment of integration, making it more difficult to “enter” into the host society, hinder social advancement by dragging the individual socially downwards, toward “their own people”. The role of social networks in the immigrant's “entry” into the host society may be thus described as ambivalent.

The final group of factors that influence the ability to find one's way around in a new social environment is given by the attributes of the **immigrant cohort**, meaning its **size** – a small group will find it harder to preserve its identity versus the majority (though on the other hand, as indicated by Georg Simmel (2005) in his consideration of social groups, small groups can be surprisingly coherent and able to preserve their identity for a long time). A very large immigrant group may be nearly self-sufficient, with many of its members working exclusively for the needs of other members of their own group. Such a group has little need for contacts with the majority of society.

In the process of finding one's way around in a foreign society, other factors that matter include such demographic-social factors as: **educational level** – in general, the better educated are observed to adapt more

easily; **age** – the young adapt faster than the old; **gender composition** – women usually adapt with more ease than men. Of importance is the **habitus** of individual immigrants and of the group as a whole. However, what seems to be of the utmost importance is the **kind of emigration** – whether we are dealing with transient emigration, commuting, seasonal or settlement. And what is the attitude that the immigrants arrive with – whether they regard their current country of residence as a temporary stop in their lives, or a final destination.

Study of Polish immigrants in Iceland, 2010

The situation of immigrants is commonly described from three possible perspectives:

- Micro, meaning the level of the immigrant’s experiences and feelings. At this level, the analysis focuses on individual emotions and valuations (a psychological and anthropological approach).
- Meso, meaning the relations between the immigrant and the receiving society, and the interactions with the immigrant’s own national group, both in the country of residence and in the original homeland. Within this perspective we also find the description of relations between groups (the sociological approach).
- Macro, meaning relations with the host state and its public institutions. Within this perspective, the legal and institutional obstacles or facilities aimed at immigrants are presented, and the immigration policies of the host state are analyzed (the approach of political and legal science).

All those three perspectives (levels of study) were present in our research. We asked Polish immigrants in Iceland about their individual paths to emigration, their experiences and circumstances, as well as about how they function within various social groups, both Polish and Icelandic. We were interested in the inter-group relations, and in the behavior of the Polish minority in various situations, for instance during a wave of anti-government demonstrations that took place when the recent crisis erupted. In our study we took into account the political and institutional factors, by inquiring about the action of various institutions in favor of immigrants, and about the immigration and integration policies of the Icelandic state. Of interest to us were all the dimensions of becoming a member of a new community, mentioned in the theoretical section:

the economic, the cultural, the socio-political, and the one concerning self-identification.

The economic dimension related to the labour market was analyzed on the basis of questions about home budgets, amounts of savings, monthly expenses, job satisfaction, ways of finding employment, and strategies of survival in times of economic crisis. We were interested in learning how Polish immigrants view the Icelandic work ethic, and how they accommodate to Icelandic standards.

The socio-political dimension was analyzed on the basis of answers to questions about contacts with three groups: Poles in Iceland, Poles in the homeland, and Icelanders. The desire to establish relations with native residents is affected by the way the immigrant perceives them. To establish what this perception is like, we asked our respondents a series of questions concerning their view of the Icelanders. In addition, we asked how in the Poles' opinion they themselves are perceived and valued by the Icelanders – speaking in the language of symbolic interactionism, we attempted to reconstruct the “looking-glass self” of the Poles (their idea of how Icelanders view the Poles).

The cultural dimension, in other words the answer to the question: to what extent have the Polish immigrants adopted the host society's culture, was studied by inquiring about the cultural patterns related to leisure time, about elements common to both cultures, about the elements of Icelandic culture immigrants find attractive and would like to see adopted in Poland, and what they find surprising, astonishing, annoying, or even repulsive and unacceptable. The cultural dimension was reconstructed through the description of everyday life, and of national holidays, and religious and private celebrations. For a person to be able to function relatively well and efficiently in a new environment, he or she must become familiar with the patterns of behavior enforced in that environment, needed to carry out social roles, and he or she must attain a certain level of language and cultural competence relative to the country of residence. This may be viewed as a renewed socialization. The degree of “entry” into the host society is, therefore, dependent on the relative weight of the two socializations: the original one, related with the ethnic group, and the new one, related with the country of residence.

The self-identification dimension is first and foremost answering the question: how has the experience of emigration changed the outlook on

matters of identity and national bonds. Do the immigrants display a kind of nostalgic memory, or rather rejection of the proverbial “Polish little hell”. We took as an indicator of the extent to which our respondents feel tied to their country of residence vs. the extent of their ties with the homeland, their answers to a question concerning important political and social events, which they regard as turning points. This is a key issue, as collective identity conditions individual memory, these are the so-called frames of collective memory described by Maurice Halbwachs (2008). What the individual considers to be a turning point derives from his or her membership in a community. Every community not only remembers differently, but remembers different events. Additional analysis of ties with Poland was performed through questions concerning the subjects’ appraisal of the situation in the home country, their reflections on the Smolensk disaster, and their participation in ceremonies that followed the tragedy.

The degree of “entry” into the host society is affected by policies followed by the central and local governments with respect to immigrants, and the attitude of the native population towards newcomers. An attempt to study this issue was made by the Icelandic part of our research team, by reconstructing the dominant media discourse on the topic of immigrants, by analyzing the integration policies followed by the central and local governments, and the attitudes of Icelandic employers towards foreign workers. The way in which the problems of immigrants are presented and analyzed in the media is not only a reflection of social attitudes towards immigrants, but above all a factor that shapes those attitudes. Whether immigrants are presented as drunks and thieves, or as cultured and hard-working Europeans, is of paramount significance in creating expectations and fears directed at the foreigners. Media image forms the attitudes of the majority towards the immigrant group, but also conversely – it may generate unfriendly attitudes towards the hosts among the immigrants.

Translated by Robert J. Budzyński

References

- Berry J. (1988). Acculturation and Psychological Adaptation: A Conceptual Overview, in: J.W. Berry, R.C. Annis (eds.), *Ethnic Psychology: Research and Practice with Immigrants, Refugees, Native Peoples, Ethnic Groups and*

- Sojourners: Selected Papers from the North American Regional IACCP Conference on Ethnic Psychology Held in Kingston, Canada*, Amsterdam: Swets and Zeitlinger.
- Biernath M. (2008). Różnorodność integracji – jej wymiary i mechanizmy, in: A. Grzymała-Kazłowska, S. Łodziński (eds.), *Problemy integracji imigrantów: koncepcje, badania, polityki*, Warszawa: Wydawnictwa Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego (series *Prace Migracyjne*).
- Boski P. (2009). *Kulturowe ramy zachowań społecznych: podręcznik psychologii międzykulturowej*, Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN.
- Bourdieu P., Wacquant L. (2001). *Zaproszenie do socjologii refleksyjnej*, trans. A. Sawisz, Warszawa: Oficyna Naukowa.
- Budyta-Budzyńska M. (2010). *Socjologia narodu i konfliktów etnicznych*, Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN.
- Coleman J. (1990). *Foundations of Social Theory*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.
- Gordon M. (1964). *Assimilation in American Life: The Role of Race, Religion and National Origins*, New York: Oxford University Press.
- Grzymała-Kazłowska A. (2008). Integracja – próba rekonstrukcji pojęcia, in: A. Grzymała-Kazłowska, S. Łodziński (eds.), *Problemy integracji imigrantów: koncepcje, badania, polityki*, Warszawa: Wydawnictwa Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego (series *Prace Migracyjne*).
- Halbwachs M. (2008). *Společne ramy paměci*, trans. M. Król, Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN.
- Kępińska E. (2008). *Migracje sezonowe z Polski do Niemiec: mechanizmy rekrutacji, rola rodziny i zróżnicowanie według płci*, Warszawa: Wydawnictwa Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego.
- Kindler M. (2008). Transnarodowość. Nowe teorie migracji a wyzwania integracji imigrantów, in: A. Grzymała-Kazłowska, S. Łodziński (eds.), *Problemy integracji imigrantów: koncepcje, badania, polityki*, Warszawa: Wydawnictwa Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego (series *Prace Migracyjne*).
- Park R. (1921). *Introduction to the Science of Sociology*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Simmel G. (2005). *Socjologia*, trans. M. Łukasiewicz, Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN.
- Stefańska R. (2008). Między multikulturalizmem a asymilacją? Polityki integracyjne w Europie, in: A. Grzymała-Kazłowska, S. Łodziński (eds.), *Problemy integracji imigrantów: koncepcje, badania, polityki*. Warszawa: Wydawnictwa Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego (series *Prace Migracyjne*).