

INSTITUTIONAL RESPONDS FOR SOCIAL INCLUSION

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***Abstract:** This article reviews the social inclusion issue and describes a differentiation between the two terms – social inclusion and social integration. Social integration refers to the social network of the individual and his membership within a group, and here the focus is on unemployment as one of more reasons to an impaired social integration. It is the base for the quality of life, health and length of life of the individual. Integration is now and then related to the terms of assimilation and segregation, this approach gives us a better understanding of social inclusion. Inclusion and integration is not the same, and what divides the two concepts is the part dealing with the individual in focus and its ability to participate. By solely focusing on inclusion in the integration process no attention is paid towards how the individual in action could or should participate in order to adjust itself adequately into social society. As the two concepts appear in a dualistic relationship, which makes it important to discuss both inclusion and integration when attention is drawn on how to solve the problems occurring in an integration process.*

***Key words:** social inclusion, social integration, quality of life, individual, social network*

In order to clarify our context and our point of departure, we here state how the terms of integration and culture could be understood. Subsequently, some general guidelines as to the integration procedures will be represented. Here the focus will be on points that can promote as well as impede this procedure. It should be added that attention is primarily drawn to the integration and secondary to the term inclusion. Because the process of inclusion is inspired from the ideas founded in integration, the term integration is presented to create awareness about what inclusion contains and captures.

Inclusion and integration is not the same, and what divides the two concepts is the part dealing with the individual in focus and its ability participate. Also the concept of

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participation is of great importance. By solely focusing on inclusion in the integration process no attention is paid towards how the individual in action could or should participate in order to adjust itself adequately into social society. To capture the way in which the individual can participate in the process of integration, attention should be drawn to the concept of integration in order to make awareness of what comes to play when talking about integration. By this we do not say that one should chose either to use the concept of inclusion or the concept of integration – no. The two concepts appear in a dualistic relationship, which makes it important to discuss both inclusion and integration when attention is drawn on how to solve the problems occurring in an integration process.

Definition of the Term Integration

The term of integration is originally derived from Latin (*integratio*) and means "melting together", "fusion of some parts" or "connection of diversity to one whole, involvement into a greater whole". "In terms of social science, integration includes the social processes connecting individuals and groups in a superior whole". "Cultural integration is a matter of letting in ethnic minorities in the community, regarding habitation, policies and language". "Social integration refers to the social network of the individual and his membership within a group, and here the focus is on unemployment as one of more reasons to an impaired social integration. Studies made in the 1970's 1980's have proved that social integration is the base for the quality of life, health and length of life of the individual". Social integration relates to the network of the individual or inclusion in new networks. However, Mrs. Charlotte Hamburger, who has given her essential contribution to the public debate regarding integration, defines the term of integration as follows: "*The general term of integration refers to a situation, where the aim is to make two or more seeming units work together within the same «space»*"¹.

In order to have a better understanding of the term integration, we will have to observe the contexts, where this term is used and for what purpose it is used. Our context here is when we discuss the policies of integration, and here the basic meaning of this term is that people with another ethnic background than the national majority should give up parts of their own culture in favour of the national country culture². And so we have made the choice to define the term of culture related to opinion formation, through which the behaviour of the individual as well as of other people can be expressed. This means that the term of culture is a pattern of adjustment and expression of the individual's and others' action. From a

¹ Hamburger, Charlotte (1989), *Etnic minorities and social integration*.

² Hamburger, Charlotte (1989), *Assimilation or integration? Danish immigration policy and Turkish women*.

psychological point of view, the term of culture may as well be looked upon as a phenomenon defining how human beings are supposed to solve their problems, learn and adapt social skills. When the term of culture is used as a guideline, the term does not include anything controlling human behaviour. As we understand this term of culture, it includes a procedure that it might change over a certain period. The produce and reproduce of Culture and individual must be understood in a dialectic relationship affecting each other mutually. According to our understanding, we have chosen the following definition of the term of culture. "*Culture is a universal idea and the values, morality and real behaviour – as well as their material and immaterial products – taken over from the previous generation, and which people will try to pass over to the coming generation – maybe in a revised form – and which is different from people living in other cultures*"¹.

However, this term of integration is relative, due to the fact that the result when one culture should give up parts of its culture is not clearly defined; nor do we know the ideology behind such a policy. Here we understand ideology in the way that both the policy of assimilation as well as that of segregation could be included within this way of understanding the policy of integration. So it is very clear that the term of integration has been defined in a pluralistic way.

Integration is now and then related to the terms of assimilation and segregation. It is said that those 3 terms are all situated on the same line with the terms of assimilation and segregation as the two extremities and the term of inclusion almost in the middle of these two terms. The description of how the terms are supposed to be situated on a line mostly shows the attitude of how two or more ethnic minority groups should behave when meeting the culture of majority.

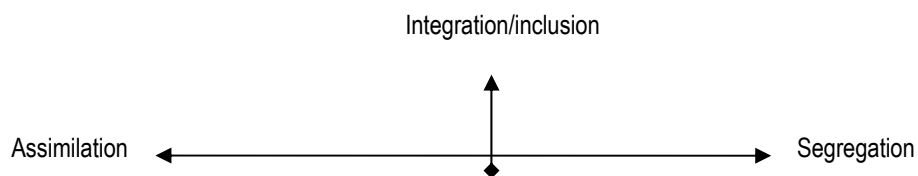
The question of how to define integration can be changed according to the context and to the circumstances existing in a given situation. In some cases integration is very much identical to assimilation, which basically means that a minority culture when meeting the majority culture in the host country should give up completely its own culture in favour of the majority culture. The word assimilation is derived from Latin (assimilare), and translated mean "to make similar".

In other cases, the policy of integration means a segregation which means a total separation from the majority culture, in order to preserve and maintain a development the culture of the minority without any influence of say the national majority culture. Integration or the question hereof will most likely never be quite identical to the policy of either assimilation or segregation. Segregation is also derived from Latin (segregare), and it means to separate".

¹ Kapatschof, (2001), *Psyke & Logos*, copyrighted by Danish Psychological Publishing Firm, Vol. 22, p. 114.

In brief, it has to be mentioned that the policy of integration or the question as to integration first and foremost should try to balance between the policy of assimilation and segregation. Including the aim that the culture(s) purposing to be included in the culture of the majority are permitted to try to preserve some special features from its/their own culture; maybe they will have to give up other cultural features in order to include cultural features from the majority culture such as language, behaviour and values, in order to create a new culture in common with the existing culture of the majority, so the minority as well as the majority is preserving a lot of fundamental features, and at the same time both of them are developing in order to live in harmony with the surroundings, i.e. the common culture.¹

Illustration



It could be necessary to make an illustration of what aspects are captured in the integration process. Because the terms mentioned above are related, "being situated on the same line", it would be appropriate to examine where and how they are identical and where and how they are not.

When considering the relation between the terms of integration and assimilation, it is essential to define the ideas of the community that are lying behind the improvement of the theories.

The fundamental idea behind the theory of integration is the idea of a multicultural community based on one culture in common. Where the policy is that the newcomers should keep their own cultural features under condition that the basic standards of the community are respected."²

As to the theory of assimilation, the aim is "to create a culturally homogeneous community by assimilating (absorbing) the ethnic and cultural minority groups in the culture of the majority"³.

¹ Horst, Christian (1988), *Integration and assimilation*.

² Ibid 7.

³ Ibid 7.

What seems to differentiate the theories is the question, whether the community should be composed culturally homogeneously or should be multiculturalism. Both have in common the fundamental idea that there should be a kind of cultural common features in a community ruled by some different cultures, before this community could be able to work, and both theories are based on a community with two or more cultures represented. Besides, they are founded on a theory of cultural ethnicity – with the main message that the culture is the one, "that constitutes ethnic differences, and conflicts between two or more ethnic groups are due to distinctions of the cultural understanding"¹). Both theories try to avoid a segregation of the community, which is another common feature. Because for these theories segregation do not match their idea of how a community should consist. Related to the theories of inclusion and assimilation, the theory of segregation is mostly the proponent of a community composed by many groups without any cultural features in common.

What those theories in general have in common – including the theory of segregation – is the fact that they all agree on the principle of equality, which must be present and valid for all groups within the community. But the difference derives from a disagreement on the idea, whether there should be an aim of equality between all individuals and groups within the community.

Apart from the fact that segregation wants to preserve the ethnic groups – just like the policy of integration which should like the minority group try to preserve some of its specific features - "segregation implies the lowest possible level of interaction between ethnic groups"². One could say sharply that a characteristic for the theories of segregation and integration is the fact that they are founded on the theory of pluralism, where the focus is on groups as entities within the community, as opposed to the theory of assimilation, where the focus lies on the individuals.

Integration processes

As our focus lies on inclusion, we will have to mention the inclusion processes running or supposed to run, and the starting point when practicing the policy of inclusion. As mentioned above, the starting point for the policy of inclusion is the idea of a community including two or more cultures, and therefore we should like to mention the factors to be worked with in order to promote the inclusion and to make clear the values in the starting point for the inclusion.

From a very simplistic point of view, there are three existing aspects to observe:

¹ Hamburger, Charlotte (1989), *Assimilation or integration? Danish immigration policy and Turkish women*, p. 42.

² Hamburger, Charlotte (1997), *Ethnic minorities and social integration*, Copenhagen.

- The ethnic groups of a community should be included within the majority community by means of positive special measures.
- Identities of the ethnic groups are controlled in a way in which a double inclusion might happen.
- There might be a multicultural development when creating the different policies within the community¹.

What the first point means, is the fact that in the policy of integration, the starting point is within a group and not only in individuals. That the newcomer primarily will be looked at as part of an ethnic group, with its own culture, that must be structured in smaller institutions, such as classes and faith.

A double integration means that at the same time when including the ethnic group as a whole from the majority culture, you must observe that the members within the ethnic group should be included in the group. If this does not happen, it might be very difficult for the single newcomer to be included in the majority community.

What is meant by multicultural development, is the idea of integrating officially representatives from the ethnic groups in the community, in order to make sure that within the political decision-making process as to integration, consideration is taken as to the demands and meanings from the ethnic groups, to avoid that the majority culture is the only one to set the political agenda. The fundamental idea is based on equality, acceptance and justice towards the ethnic minorities in the decision-making process within the majority community.

Summary

- Integration is an idea, which has been pluralistically defined.
- Questions concerning integration will mainly be placed between the idea of assimilation and segregation.
- The fundamental idea for the policy of integration is a community with two or more cultures.
- The basic idea in the theory of integration is the idea of a multicultural community based on a common culture.

What should be called attention to?

When defining the term of integration we touched aspects concerning the integration process, as well as knowledge, which is useful when trying to understand the

¹ Hamburger, Charlotte (1989), *Assimilation or integration? Danish immigration policy and Turkish women*, p. 42.

perspectives one is dealing with as a promoter of initiatives in order to encourage an inclusion.

When an inclusion really has to happen, it is very important to be aware of the game running dialectically when producing and reproducing the individual and the community. Different perspectives are running based on the partners' premises and conditions to act and their intention when acting. The awareness hereof must be present; otherwise the best way of inclusion could be simplified. In order to avoid this simplifying we will have to include the way in which the participating individuals are acting or could act in order to be included. Here, the schools are important. The starting point for all these institutions will be the individuals they are working with – instead of regarding the students as one whole group. And this procedure is important in order to try to understand the procedures and acts that should and could be useful in order to include people with another ethnic background.

If this happens, the interest in premises and conditions for newcomers will increase; when these newcomers are going to be included in say the national community, and how these premises and conditions might match each other. Besides of that, the educational institutions could give their contribution in teaching newcomers the democratic tools and democratic processes in the national community.

Critical point

When discussing inclusion, many conflicts of inclusion might occur as a consequence of non-existing understanding and knowledge for either the minority or the majority, for their ways of acting, which could be viewed upon as cultural diversities.

The subject of inclusion will very fast be a subject of differences between the minority groups and the majority group. Instead of being treated separately, the differences could be looked upon as objective differences, such as a ban on serving Halal meat or scarves etc. This means that the real problem will not be touched, namely the idea of what is culture and what is the original culture. The ideal would be to create a common knowledge hereof, which could be communicated through the educational institutions.

The idea of culture is oriented by a group and not by an individual; however, if social inclusion should be promoted, you must draw more attention to the individual. Because one way of promoting an optimal inclusion is to include the premises and the conditions of the individuals involved. The purpose of the social inclusion must be to train newcomers in the idea of a democracy, in order to make them participate and give them an influence in the community they are supposed to be a part of in the inclusion process. If this happens, the focus will go from culture to politics. The problem is, that if this does not happen, the result could be that "they" will not have an optimal influence on their participation in the community they "now" are going to be a part of. So when teaching it is important not to focus on culture. Instead, you will

have to include the fixed place of the individual, his premises and conditions for acting, in order to understand what can promote the social inclusion.

Relation to practice

What is 'The best practice' within this area cannot be generalized; it relates to the situation in focus, because practice has been made by human interaction, which is determinant and normative for the expression of 'the best practice'. Hereby 'The best practice' is defined in the way of how the involved partners meet with and live out inclusion in the best way. In order to find out what 'The best practice' involves, you will have to draw the attention and raise the consciousness of the operators within the inclusion area; these operators will have to be conscious about the actions, premises and conditions existing within this area, in order to promote the social inclusion through learning efforts. If this does not happen, newcomers in say Denmark, for example, do not know for sure, what they will have to do in order to get included and how they are supposed to act when facing inclusion. In order to establish a successful inclusion, a certain degree of transparency is necessary in the actions used by the community to promote the inclusion of the newcomers in the Danish community. What is very essential is that all the operators in charge with actions needed to promote inclusion are team players and that they agree upon what is inclusion, and upon which actions can be useful to make inclusion happen.

Psychological perspective

Individual acting in practice

Viewed from a psychological perspective when an individual is in the process of integration, integration could be discussed in relation to the dimensions of normality versus marginality. Marginality indicates an unequal relation of power status. Being marginalized means outside normality. In this perspective integration can refer to a command to assimilate and integration means in this connection to become part of majority/within the normality. Idealistically, integration refers to a mutual adjustment between the 'normality' (the majority) and the marginality (the minority). However there is a risk that the endeavours of integration could result in a form of normalizing the individuals being marginalized. The bias of the dominating norms can lead to a bias of normalization in the discussion of integration. So it could mean that integration is being arranged with a bias focusing on the norms of the majority – so to speak.

Integration can also be seen as a process aiming at changing an involuntarily marginalized position into a position of participation and influence on the person's own existence. If this is the case, integration becomes an offer. This presumes however that the process involves and is approved by the one in action. On the other

hand, the endeavours of normalization are in a form of a command containing a compulsory and probably undesirable process, which is conducted under the premises of the majority in the society. This happens without implication or consideration of the individual being integrated. No matter how the process of integration is being described, the individual trying to become integrated is challenged if the majority does not reconfirm the individual's hopes and expectations for the integration. Idealistically - to *be integrated* means that the individual feels and experiences that it is 'being a part of', while at the same time, accepts to be 'different from' the surroundings. Thus the individual constitutes its own personal coherent way of living. The process of integration is risky. The individual can experience a loss of the primary frame of reference like family and friends, which could threaten the person's self-image and thereby influence the individual's social relations. In worst case this indicates that the retaining or constitution of a positive and harmonious self-image of being in a process of integration is being complicated.¹

The phenomenon of recognition

In the search of recognizable directions the individual is widely challenged in its participation in the new culture, which can influence its self-image. While participating in a new culture the individual gains access to an experience of itself in a qualitatively and new different way compared to before. This can lead the individual to question the new culture as well as the culture of origin. The process is not without complexity. Old norms, values and rituals are expected to undergo/suffer change while new ones arise. This means that the individual by interfering and participating in the society is a co-creator of its own living conditions, where norms and values are expressed in special motives, thoughts and feelings. The individuals' actions are determined by as well subjective as objective conditions, which both can increase and decrease its possibilities to act. In this perspective the context meaning the specific society in which the individual participates, becomes a constitutive factor, which can restrict or facilitate the individual.

Constitution

The society in which the individual participates in is a part of and the individual itself, constitute each another. A dialectic relationship is in action between the constitution of society and of the individual itself. The specific developing way of society influences the way in which the individual participates and develops in society. At the same time the individual influences the way in which the society develops by participating in the society. Theoretically this is how the interaction occurs. However mutual constitution does not always take place between the individual and society.

¹ Arenas, Julio G. (1997), *Intercultural psychology*, Hans Reitzels Publishing A/S.

Attention on the interests and needs of society tends to push the position and needs of the individual away to the advantage of society. Solely the individual itself cannot implement changes of this premise. Alone the individual can either be assimilated or segregated away from the society, meaning not taking an active part in a way in which the society develops. The way in which the individual is responded to by the society, has a constitutive influence on how the individual experiences it. When the individual meets with other individuals, the individual is confronted with differences - "what it is not" - and hereby constitutes a new self-image. The identification of the individual is being constituted through the meeting with 'external' or this 'the other'. The individual defines and realizes through the identification what it recognizes as familiar. But why is necessary for the individual to identify with a greater context? From an existentialistic stand the individual has a quest for meaning in life and needs a frame of reference to navigate in the society/contexts it is participating in. The culture and the communities in which the individual interacts compose an essential frame of reference. However individuals meeting new cultures can have difficulties finding their way as the new culture can appear strange and impenetrable.

Thus in process of meeting with the new culture the individual can become aware of its frame of reference. But until the individual has gained some awareness of its frame of reference, it can act restrictive or assimilative in relation to the original culture and in the meeting with the new culture of majority. Consequently there is a risk of exclusion if the culture of majority does not respond with a pattern of acceptance but instead reacts with a pattern of rejection due to the way in which the individual acts or should act in order to be integrated. If the last scenario happens, an individual risks to experiencing isolation. An isolation which furthermore could be enhanced if the individual in particular does not obtain insight in and acceptance from its own group or culture which is eventual existing in the culture of majority. Here knowledge of the language of the majority culture becomes important because language tends to become a stepping-stone to obtain insight and understanding for and about new cultures.

Premise for action

For the individual to become integrated it is essential that the premise and the integration procedures are defined in a clear and obvious way. However, the individual can experience a conflict in the integration process if it has interests of action, which are different from the ones held by the society of majority and if the individuals are told to follow those rules of action of the majority. To get through such a conflict the individual must choose: should I 'put up with it' or should I 'make my way out of it'. However it is important that a given conflict is solved, otherwise a mutual understanding and integration by the individuals cannot take place.

Another obstacle to successful integration can stem from the individual's conscious or unconscious pursuit of its own interests in action. In this process the individual risks to experience a clash of interests in relation to other individuals. If the individual is unaware of this connection there can be a risk that the individual cannot understand the actions it takes part in and consequently loses its ability to navigate as it wishes. In order to avoid this lack of transparency the individual needs to acknowledge or to become conscious about the fact that the individual can intervene to change the way in which it should and can act to become successfully integrated - e.g. (but in a way this is another to be institutionalized, because in the process the individual undergoes a manipulated institutionalism – so to speak.)

If the individual does not possess this consciousness then the surroundings, the majority in which it participates, will dictate the way the individual should act. Lack of consciousness makes the integration process unclear. However this lack of transparency in the integration process can be lifted if the individual acknowledges that it can have an impact on its participation in the integration process. But the individual alone cannot affect how it participates. It cannot alone change conditions, this can only happen in inter-subjective relations with other individuals who are in the same situation as the individual itself. To act differently the individual is depending on how other individuals act, individuals having the same opinions and wishes to change the premise under which they participate.

Now what could motivate the individual into action, into participation in a way in which it should or could be integrated?

Consciousness and emotions are closely connected. A motivating factor for developing an enlarged consciousness about the individual's role in the integration process could be a conflict of interests in the settings in which the individual participates.

The conflict could arise because the individual pursues interests that are in contradiction with those of other individuals who are acting in the same setting. These individuals may belong to the same minority group or to the majority group.

A conflict can also arise as a consequence of the way in which the integration procedure is tried and exercised.

A contented individual is not motivated for changes and has no increased awareness of its action potentials. But if the individual experiences conflicts during the process of integration it will proceed to action. In the conflict situation the individual gets awareness of its own ability to act, an action potential that contains restrictive and expanding aspects. The expanding way to act usually appears in a situation of conflict. This is caused by the individual's dissatisfaction with the process of integration, its own actions included. However, in the search for how to change the premise of integration causing the conflict, the individual can fall into a trap. This

happens if the individual looks for answers on how the premise could be different in the surroundings instead of within itself. If this is the case, then the integration process can easily turn out impenetrable to the individual trying to get integrated.

Comments

When trying to promote inclusion by education you will have to draw the attention to the fact that it is critical to use a westernized model – like the one presented above – on people coming from so-called far-cultural countries, when they will have to be included in a western country. One danger in using this method is the risk of not catching all the slight differences and the reasons why people who are not the same ethnicity act as they do when meeting the specific community. A lot of misunderstandings can take place in the inclusion process, only due to the fact that the reflective and theoretical approach of the teacher or the inclusion does not match the experience of the individual who will have to be included. In order to avoid these misunderstandings, there ought to be collected facts from the newcomers' home countries. This would create a better understanding of their cultures and promote the understanding of how people coming from non-western countries could be included in the best way in say the specific community. So, promoting inclusion is a question of accumulating knowledge and facts in order to understand how to intervene.

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