

# What do we talk about when we talk about integration?

Norma Wong  
Zubia Willmann Robleda

«Mellom ambisjon og virkelighet: arbeidsmarkedet tilknytning av nyttige ankommende flykninger i Rogaland»

## Between ambition and reality: labour market integration of recently arrived refugees in Rogaland, Norway

- Refugees who settled in Norway since 2015
- Examine the experience and roles of multiple stakeholders in the process of labour market integration: municipal agencies, NGOs, asylum seekers & refugees

<https://www.maviproject.no/more-about-mavi>

# The Introduction programme in Norway



- 2-3 years programme to prepare newly arrived refugees for labour market integration (language, culture, job training)
- Goal to reach 80% of employment or enrolment in education with a year after the programme.
- Strong regional variations (in programme structure, content, and outcomes)
- Tied in with settlement
- Personalized career plan and guidance
- A combination of liberal and activation model

<https://www.imdi.no/kvalifisering/regelverk/introduksjonsprogrammet/>

# Systematic literature review on the labour market integration of newly arrived refugees in the Norwegian context



- Scoping review of studies and reports about labour market integration of refugees in Norway since 2015; included 87 reports, articles, postgraduate theses
- Vast majority focus on the analysis and evaluation of the Introduction Programme or its components based on the goal
- Municipal level studies point to the role of community
- Women face additional challenges in the process of labour market integration

Link to review (full report):

<https://vid.brage.unit.no/vid-xmlui/handle/11250/2659638>

# Integration: multi-perspective and complex concept



*“...Basically, integration promotes specific imaginaries of culture, race and belonging that often disqualify Muslim immigrants per se and cast them as inferior and suspect.”*

Rytter (2018) Writing Against Integration. ETHNOS , p.3

Figure 1  
A Conceptual Framework Defining Core Domains of Integration



Ager and Strang (2008)  
Understanding Inegration: A  
conceptual framework. J.Refug  
Stud, 21 (2) p.170

# Four areas to explore in further research on integration of refugees

From labour market integration to community building

More attention on quality of jobs and career prospects

The process of integration through entrepreneurship

Connecting integration to political participation

# From labour market integration to community building

- Current studies and policies have been human-capital oriented, and employment is central to integration policy:
  - Language
  - Primary and secondary education
  - Job training

*“It is at the workplace where you learn Danish culture and norms, get training in Danish language and ultimately create the foundation of self sufficiency and a good life as an active citizen”*

From a Danish government statement, quoted in Hernes et al. (2020) Nordic Integration and settlement policies for refugees

- Increasing number of studies in Norway and globally are showing a complex correlation between social capital and economic integration outcomes amongst migrants
  - “Two-way integration”
  - Briding, Bonding, and Linking social capital (Bourdieu 1986; Putnam 2000; Woolcock, 2000)
  - Strong and weak ties (Granovetter 1973)
  - Ethnic niches/enclaves/networks



- Scattered and inconclusive, few in the context of Norway, and refugee settlement
- Pointing to the importance of the community in the process; as such policies narrowly focused on human capital are missing a significant factor
- What are the roles of local communities, civil society and social life in integration?

# More attention on quality of jobs and career prospects

- The refugee gap and deskilling amongst migrants
- 23% immigrants reported being overqualified for their jobs, compared to 13% local norwegians (SSB 2016)
- Is the single target of employment rate / enrollment in education adequate?
- Challenge to the assumption that integration starts with employment

<https://www.ssb.no/arbeid-og-lonn/artikler-og-publikasjoner/hver-fjerde-innvandrer-overkvalifisert-i-jobben>

- Deskillling and well-being amongst refugees
- Factors contributing to deskillling
  - Skill mismatch
  - Qualification approval
  - Language capability
  - Lack of network
- Impact of deskillling on refugees and their integration process

Ariss et al. (2012)

# The process of integration through entrepreneurship

- Pull and push factors for immigrant entrepreneurship
  - disadvantaged in mainstream employment due to institutional barriers and stigma.
  - Entrepreneurship may be a viable way to settle and establish financial independence
  - Specific skills and knowledge to offer to local market, or immigrant communities
- Many have the aspiration and propensity to offer jobs to other refugees and immigrants

Kone et al. (2020); Dabic et al. (2020)

- Few studies on immigrant entrepreneurship focus on refugees
- Dynamics of the ethnic community – integration or segregation?
- Arena of continuous negotiation on identity
- Privilege of those with more resources

(Hauff and Vaglum 1993)

# Connecting integration to political participation



## Political participation among Norwegian citizens

	Valgdeltakelse
	2017
Norske statsborgere uten innvandrerbakgrunn	80,0
Norske statsborgere, innvandrere	55,0
Norske statsborgere, norskfødte med innvandrerforeldre	56,6

(SSB 2020)

- Big variations among different country groups
- Different levels of social capital (networks and participation in organisations) may explain the differences in political participation
- Older migrants vote more than younger migrants (Tronstad & Rogstad 2012)

- Political participation needs to be experienced as *meaningful*
- Several municipalities without politicians with non-«western» migrant background (Tronstad & Rogstad 2012)
- Feeling of representation
- Important to look at a nation's sense of nationhood/citizenship - *ius sanguinis vs. ius solli* (Ager & Strand 2008)

- Is cultural assimilation expected or are multiple cultural identities accepted?
- Religious and/or ethnic discrimination
- Refugees have same rights and duties as other citizens?

“Notions of nationhood, citizenship and rights will vary across settings, but in all cases such ideas are fundamental to understanding the principles and practice of integration in that situation.” (Ager & Strand 2008, 176).

- Facilitate involvement in local community organisations



# Summary

- Past studies as well as policies have focused primarily on the human capital and employment
- Many factors have been neglected in the process of integration, and assumptions are not fully questioned and examined
- We need more studies into these other aspects, to expand the scope to wider factors in the process
- We are addressing these additional issues in some ways in MAVI, but much is yet to be done.
- [www.maviproject.no](http://www.maviproject.no)

# References

- Al Ariss, A., Koall, I., Özbilgin, M., & Suutari, V. (2012). Careers of skilled migrants: towards a theoretical and methodological expansion. *Journal of Management Development*, 31(2), 92-101.  
doi:10.1108/02621711211199511
- Alastair Ager, Alison Strang, Understanding Integration: A Conceptual Framework, *Journal of Refugee Studies*, Volume 21, Issue 2, June 2008, Pages 166–191, <https://doi.org/10.1093/jrs/fen016>
- Barstad and Molstad (2020) Integrering av innvandrere i Norge. SSB Report 2020:44 [https://www.ssb.no/befolkning/artikler-og-publikasjoner/attachment/438053?\\_ts=175daec55f8](https://www.ssb.no/befolkning/artikler-og-publikasjoner/attachment/438053?_ts=175daec55f8)
- Bourdieu, P. (1986). The forms of capital. In: Richardson, J., Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education. Westport, CT: Greenwood: 241–58.

- Gericke, D., Burmeister, A., Löwe, J., Deller, J., & Pundt, L. (2018). How do refugees use their social capital for successful labor market integration? An exploratory analysis in Germany. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 105, 46-61. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2017.12.002>
- Granovetter, M. (1983). The Strength of Weak Ties: A Network Theory Revisited. *Sociological Theory*, 1, 201-233. doi:10.2307/202051
- Hauff, E., & Vaglum, P. (1993). Integration of Vietnamese Refugees into the Norwegian Labor Market: The Impact of War Trauma. *International Migration Review*, 27(2), 388-405. doi:10.2307/2547130
- Hernes, V., Arendt, J. N., Joana, P. A., & Tronstad, K. R. (2019). *Nordic Integration and Settlement Policies for Refugees: a comparative analysis of labour market integration outcomes* (TemaNord 2019:529). Retrieved from <http://norden.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:1306724/FULLTEXT01.pdf>

- Kone, Z. L., Ruiz, I., & Vargas-Silva, C. (2020). Self-employment and reason for migration: are those who migrate for asylum different from other migrants? *Small Business Economics*. doi:10.1007/s11187-019-00311-0
- Mikkel Rytter (2019) Writing Against Integration: Danish Imaginaries of Culture, Race and Belonging, *Ethnos*, 84:4, 678-697, DOI: [10.1080/00141844.2018.1458745](https://doi.org/10.1080/00141844.2018.1458745)
- Putnam, R. D. (2000). *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*. New York: Simon & Schuster
- Tronstad and Rogstad (2012) Stemmer de ikke? Politisk deltakelse blant innvandrere og norskfødte med innvandrereforeldre. FAFO report 2012:26 <https://fafo.no/zoo-publikasjoner/fafo-rapporter/item/stemmer-de-ikke>
- Woolcock, M., & Narayan, D. (2000). Social Capital: Implications for Development Theory, Research, and Policy. *The World Bank Research Observer*, 15(2), 225-249. doi:10.1093/wbro/15.2.225