

Integration and inclusion concepts

Integration is all about maintaining or creating a certain amount of unity in a given system (Scott, 2015, “Integration (social)”). When focusing on a specific target group consisting of refugees and newcomers – integration, as a concept must be understood in terms of the questions and debates arising from migration and refugee flows, resulting in a much more heterogeneous society in terms of cultural diversities and cultural identities. In this context, integration is defined as cultural integration, which takes note of those issues that spring up from such a cultural differentiation. These include matters such as:

- The role of the state in terms of offering new and different kinds of social programmes – including ways of housing, securing employment and education, access to social privileges etc. It is possible to argue that groups of refugees and immigrants often have less access to such benefits compared to the general population of a given host society
- Labour market difficulties, when minority groups have to accommodate themselves to a new national system, but do not necessarily want to participate in certain majority behavioural norms
- The promotion and expectation of cultural assimilation to the new host society versus a policy that creates space for cultural diversity and might even open up for new kinds of national identities
- Examples of controversies when democratic political systems and national identities contra certain religious affiliations are thought of as mutually exclusive (Algan et al., 2012, p. 1-6)

These examples represent challenges and difficulties shared by all European countries who need to accommodate themselves to a certain amount of structural change as a part of the cultural integration process (Algan et al., 2012, p. 1-6).

Inclusion or social inclusion has been defined as “the extent that individuals... are able to fully participate in society and control their own destinies”. In this context, one of the main objectives in a given society then must be to provide its citizens and those on temporary accommodation with opportunities to engage themselves properly – based on a fair amount of resource access in order to provide the means for enhancing one’s own life (Diaz Andrade & Doolin, 2016, p. 406).

Social inclusion, however, is not only limited to questions of economy and resources but should also consider other fields of interaction such as participation in civil society, openness towards cultural diversity, political inclusion and human relations in general. Even though social inclusion may seem to be completely diametrically opposed to social exclusion – these categories are not to be considered as fixed entities but should instead be seen as constantly ongoing processes that interact

and shape society. Social inclusion is also described as “something done by people rather than to them”, pointing out that people have to invest and promote themselves rather than just sitting and waiting for society to engage them – something that would otherwise just entail blank assimilation into society instead of sincere engagement. (Diaz Andrade & Doolin, 2016, p. 406).

Ressources

- Algan, Yann with Alberto Bisin, Alan Manning & Thierry Verdier. (2012). Cultural Integration of Immigrants in Europe. Oxford : Oxford University Press
- Diaz Andrade, Antonio & Bill Doolin. (2016). Information and communication technology and the social inclusion of refugees. MIS quarterly
- Scott, John. (2015). integration (social). In John Scott, A Dictionary of Sociology (4th ed.). Oxford : Oxford University Press



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