

Assimilation Challenges: Migrants are not Machines that can Easily Forget the Data Once Stored in

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ABSTRACT

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Dear Editor,

Individuals migrate for various reasons, seeking better opportunities or refuge. However, migration comes with challenges, including clashes with the host society. Upon arrival, migrants must adapt and please the host society, often learning its culture and language.

Sociologists utilized the extremely complicated concept of assimilation in the early 20th century to explain the relationship between immigrants and other citizens as well as institutions in the host nation. However, this link is mostly thought of as a one-way line that connects two groups; a straight line comes from the migrant to the host country. So, assimilation is an obligation of the immigrants; immigrants must be able to adapt to the new culture and blend in with the long-established,

culturally homogeneous society (Spencer, 2022). According to Herbert, and J. Gans (2007), assimilation is mostly the responsibility of the immigrants (and their offspring), and it can be purposive or planned, as in the cases of parents pressuring their kids to perform well in school or status-seekers adopting the habits of people whose position they aspire to. The degree to which the attitudes and behaviors of immigrants resembled those of other locals, or "natives," served as a marker for this assimilation process (Entzinger & Biezeveld, 2003; Park & Burgess, 1921). As Robert Park defined it is a process of increasing the fusion of tiny, oppositional social groupings into more inclusive, wider organizations, according to Robert Park, who first presented the assimilation theory in 1914. This fusion happens when immigrants take on the customs, values, and ways of life of the host society (Laubenthal, 2023; Chen, 2022). It happens when immigrants adjust and assimilate into the social, cultural, linguistic, and

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customary norms of the host society, according to De Haas, Castles, & Miller, (2019); Rosmiza, Sharifah, Raihan, Syed, & Jaafar, (2022). This fusion has its own cost as De Haas, H., Castles, S., & Miller, M. J., (2019) explained that the cultural legacy of the immigrants is often sacrificed when they become assimilated.

According to some academics, assimilation is made up of both objective and subjective components. Taking on the customs, values, and behaviors of the new community is a part of objective assimilation, which is the extent to which migrants integrate into the prevailing culture of their new location. Qualifiable traits include things like work status, educational attainment, language proficiency, and intermarriage rates. Financial status and the ease of access to resources are some of the elements that influence the process of objective assimilation. These elements provide insight into how successfully immigrants assimilate and navigate society. Subjective assimilation, on the other hand, gauges how much a migrant identifies with and integrates into their preferred reference group. Migrants have the right to select their reference group according to shared ethnicity, language, or experiences. Subjective assimilation is influenced by social networks, cultural norms, and a sense of belonging (Chen, 2022). There are several ways to think about assimilation. Some scholars suggest that this is a progressive integration of the immigrant's original culture with the host community (Rosmiza, Sharifah, Raihan, Syed, & Jaafar, 2022). This suggests that immigrants will adopt new habits in their new country and combine them with their previous ones to produce something unique and different. Some argue that as a result, immigrants are becoming more like the majority and losing their distinctive characteristics (De Haas, H., Castles, S., & Miller, M. J., 2019). Here, immigrants would rapidly adapt to the lifestyles of the host countries, leaving behind their previous ones. Some contend that this fabric provides immigrants full access to the opportunities and privileges present in their new countries

(Laubenthal, 2023). Does this mean that if immigrants fail to assimilate, they won't have all the rights in their new nation?

A traditional theory of assimilation, the melting pot idea postulates that different cultures may "melt together," giving rise to new hybrid social and cultural forms. This point of view assumes that immigrant populations may become inseparable from the host society, just as water and flour can combine to produce dough. In the past, the notion has been frequently applied to explain how immigrants have assimilated into American society and how cultures have integrated. Although the idea behind the melting pot hypothesis was to create a new civilization, Milton Gordon (1961) contends that acculturation is a more accurate description of what happens in practice. In the projected construction of a new hybrid culture in which the minority and majority coexist peacefully, the minority is frequently forced to conform to the "cultural patterns" of the host community. I agree with Gordon (1961) that there is a degree of domination, and dominant cultures suppress minority cultures.

Let's dissect this melting process. Melting is the physical process by which heat is applied to change a solid material into a liquid state. When it comes to its metaphorical use, it's frequently used to refer to the total fusion or blending of two different cultures into one cohesive whole. A gradual merging of cultural components is implied by the term "melting," which permits the development of a new, shared identity while preserving some characteristics of the two original cultures. A more varied and richer society where people are exposed to a wider range of traditions, viewpoints, and practices might result from this exchange. When two parties are willing to lower their cultural barriers and influence one another's cultures via mutual teaching and learning, melting takes place. In my view, melting is a two-way process that involves migration from the host country to the migrants themselves. It is important to remember that this process is not a one-way street with the host nation at the finish and merely



migrants at the beginning. Achieving true melting does not mean that migrants give up their own culture and become inseparable from the host society.

The relationship between migrants and host societies is not truly melting. The "melting pot" metaphor is outdated. I propose "sinking ship" to describe assimilation expectations. Host cultures often expect migrants to drown in the dominant culture without retaining their own. This submersion leads to the dominance of one culture, risking the loss of the weaker culture's traditions and values. Submersion imposes complete adaptation on migrants, hindering integration and limiting cultural exchange and mutual enrichment. The expected assimilation process is extremely challenging and demanding; they refer to it as the "melting pot process," while I call it the "sinking ship process." Migrants must adapt to a new environment, way of life, social norms, and legal systems because of their life-changing experience. Because it is often considerably different from one's home country, cultural adjustment can be rather challenging and might result in emotions of alienation and separation (Laubenthal, 2022). Researchers are examining how people respond emotionally to cultural shifts and are discovering a link between poor mental health outcomes and maladjustment. Acculturative stress, caused by culture shock, impacts adaptation and can harm mental and physical health, leading to poor decisions and job issues (Organista PB, Organista KC, & Kurasaki K, 2002). Migrants face emotional challenges as they strive to blend into the dominant culture while losing their cultural identity. They may experience depression, existential crises, and shame about their past. Balancing cultural heritage with assimilation can cause internal conflicts and identity crises (Laubenthal, 2022). Additionally, prejudice and discrimination from the host society further hinder migrants' sense of acceptance and belonging.

Immigrants frequently encounter prejudice and bias from the host society, which makes integration more difficult due to negative attitudes and

discrimination (Cabaniss et al., 2018).

Migrants struggle to adapt because their minds are filled with their native values, cultures, and experiences. To assimilate, they must "empty their cups," or make psychological space for new experiences and beliefs, which is difficult due to varying levels of knowledge, adaptability, and the desire to preserve their own culture. This makes the process challenging and sometimes impossible. Migrants are humans carrying the weight of their memories and information, not machines that can quickly erase data. Their prior knowledge, culture, and customs form the basis of their actions and identities. Assimilation requires balancing a new identity with preserving the old one.

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Code of ethics

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Authors' contribution

S. M. H., and A. A. W., were involved with Original Draft; S. M. H., Writing-Review and editing; S. M. H., did the Supervision. All the Authors read and approved the final version of the manuscript.

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