

# **Social cohesion: The role and function of adult education for social integration of immigrants in Sweden**

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# Purposes

- ... to examine Swedish integration practice and demonstrate the intersubjective knowledge of the “other” embedded in these practices. The practices examined are generally known as integration measures/projects
- ... the practice examined in the paper is organized by different institutions and their objective is to include immigrants in their areas of competence – irrespective of the area of competency, these practices have the following ingredients:
  - Validation of immigrant prior competence
  - Practical vocational work (praktiktjänst)
  - Swedish Language immersion programme



# Position

- ... is grounded in the emancipatory tradition, within the wide field of adult education, which is focusing on social justice, participation and agency, rather than on learning per se
- ... to challenge the state-centric character of the practices by clarify the limits that are inherent in this practice



# The empirical data and analytical focus

- ... the result presented in this article is based on nearly a decade of empirical studies – interview studies, policy studies and discourse analysis – of the Swedish integration practice
- ... the analytical focus of the data is on the here and now of immigrants, their situatedness in a specific context
- ... and on how these institutional practices constructs the “problem” of the immigrant – the intersubjective construction of the social exclusion of immigrants



# The result of the study shows

- ... the assessment techniques embedded in the measures examined are involved in a process of identifying gaps and of classifying immigrants' knowledge, skills, and competence in relation to a norm
- ... a consequence of an asymmetric power relation
- ... it puts the burden on the excluded
- ... to have a chance in Sweden invest in “Swedish mores”
- ... the measures act as site for normalization of immigrants as ‘different’ and is used for subordinate inclusion of immigrant in their area of competency
- ... legitimizes different forms of institutional control of certain categories of immigrants



# The measures ignore the fact that

- ... immigrants transcends both society and the nation state (a largely ignored perspective)
- ... immigrants are often dynamically situated in three locales that intersect and affect their everyday practices: the host society; the homeland; local and transnational diasporic communities
- ... these **embedding** play a crucial role in constructing the different groups' sense of belonging in the different spaces, and the situatedness of immigrant in the transnational space they occupy
- ... the embedding in the transnational space widens the structure of opportunity of immigrants



# Theoretical implication Bourdieu's concept of social field

- ... a social field is constructed and limited by social positions that allow and disallow certain acts, expressions, utterances and so forth
- ... social fields are dynamic, and that their boundaries are fluid rather than static
- ... society is conceptualised as the sum total of intertwined social fields and relationships within the different fields
- ... f immigrants the society they are embedded in transcends the host society, the country of origin and may include a third or fourth country



# Using Bourdieu's "social field"

- ... "social field" can be used to examine transnational immigrant practices and strategies that transcend nation states and societies
- ... "social fields" – a multiple and intertwined network of social relations
- ... the notion of transnational network and practice refers to social relations, experiences and strategies that individual immigrants engage in
- ... the cultural capital that is valued in one space cannot be valued or exchanged in the second or third space





## The study shows

- ... a need to reconceptualise or widen the notion of citizenship as something else than a singular loyalty to a particular national collectivity
- ... I can live in one country without sharing its imagined collective memory
- ... in reality people do have multiple collective loyalties and, quite often, multiple formal citizenships



Thank's for your attention