In the Melting Pot:

Integration, Assimilation, and Uniform Societies

Andreas Wagener[*]

Abstract

Integrative policies for immigrants aim to foster the acculturation of non-natives and locals by narrowing gaps between immigrant and native milieus and life-styles (melting pot-approach). In a welfarist framework, we show that policies adopted with the view that society should best converge to some pre-determined life-style or core culture ("assimilation") generalize fail to harmonize life-styles while policies adopted with the perspective of convergence to an endogenous, "average" life-style ("integration") lead to uniformity. Integration policies, thus, succeed in evening out differences while dominant-culture, assimilationist approaches fail to have common life-styles emerge. However, averaging integrative policies imply an intolerably high degree of cultural indifference and relativism.

Keywords: Acculturation, Integration, Assimilation, Immigration.
JEL Classification: J61, H59, J78, Z10.

---
[*]Institute of Social Policy, University of Hannover, Koenigsworther Platz 1, 30167 Hannover, Germany. Phone/fax: +49 511 762 5874/4574. E-mail: `wagener@sopo.uni-hannover.de`.

1   Introduction

Can integration policies narrow the gaps in life-styles of immigrants and native popula-
tions? Immigration brings together culturally and economically diverse people. Some of
the the more serious problems of this multi-faceted issue are related to the accommodation
of immigrants to their new residence countries – and, vice versa, to the accommodation
of the receiving countries to their new inhabitants. While on the surface the debate on
immigration often centers around the net economic benefit or burden which immigrants
bring to their host countries, anti-immigrant feelings and movements substantially arise
from non-pecuniary implications consequences of migration.[1] They emerge from frictions
among people with different cultural backgrounds, priorities, religions, and values. In
everyday life such differences become apparent in dress-code, language, musical and culi-
naric tastes, the way to communicate with each other, but also in trifles such as the way
one responds to noise or disposes garbage.

The experience of differences in life-style and culture (irrespective of whether the gaps
are real or just perceived) may cause discomfort both for immigrants and domestic pop-
ulations. Immigrants, who typically are minorities, may feel alienated, helpless, insecure
or even ostracized for their deviations from the mainstream. Natives could be afraid to
be overrun by foreigners with exotic or repulsive customs, of a strange religion, or of a
different ethnicity. Their anxieties periodically give rise to xenophobic dystopias about
"floods" of immigrants and the "threats" non-natives pose to social cohesion or cultural
identity.[2] Immigration may even be seen to challenge the very concept of the "nation
state", at least as far as the idea of a state rests on a community's ability to define and
restrict membership through citizenship, definition of culture, and life-styles.

Politics has to respond. Government actions (or inaction) that affect social and cultural
lines of distinctions in multi-ethnic societies ranges from setting the constitutional, legal
and political framework (e.g., access to nationality, equality policies)[3] to local provisions
for housing, zoning, or language classes. Taking up a notion coined by anthropologists
Redfield et al. (1936), policies dealing with stabilizing the often less-than-harmonious fit
between autochthonous and immigrant cultures are called *acculturation policies*.[4] Indeed,

---

[1]Dustmann and Preston (2007) find that cultural aspects substantially shape attitudes towards im-
migrants. Verbon and Meijdam (2008) propose a model where the number of immigrants allowed to a
country is affected by feelings of cultural distance on the side of natives.

[2]For empirical evidence, see Scheve and Slaughter (2001), Mayda (2006) or Facchini and Mayda (2008).

[3]On http://www.integrationindex.eu, these polices are compared for many European countries.

[4]Unfortunately, the (sociological) terminology is not uniform here. Numerous concepts with different

Redfield et al. (1936) define as acculturation

> "those phenomena which result when groups of individuals having different
> cultures come into continuous first-hand contact, with subsequent changes in
> the original culture patterns of either or both groups" (p. 149).

In principle, two policy approaches towards acculturation can be distinguished: the *"melting pot"* and the "salad bowl" approach. With a "melting pot"-approach, politics aims to forge *one* national identity or culture; a "salad bowl"-approach endorses the prevalence of cultural diversity within actual demographics. The mono-cultural melting-pot approach is the traditional European way of creating national identities; 19th- and 20th-century nation states (including, according to Huntington, 2004, also the U.S.) encouraged or enforced such cultural unity. In the multi-cultural salad-bowl approach (ascribed, traditionally and in various degrees, to Canada, Australia, New Zealand, The Netherlands, or the UK), immigrant groups of various origins retain their native cultures (or at least substantial parts thereof), and the major task of politics is to achieve a workable social cohesion and to maintain an equitable status of distinct cultural groups.

In this paper, we analyse policies towards immigrants under a mono-cultural, "melting-pot" perspective. This is not meant to represent any "scientific" superiority of such a perspective.[5] It reflects, however, an emerging, or at least possible, development in attitudes towards immigration in a number of countries: the increasing desire to safeguard

---

and sometimes contradictory definitions are around: integration, assimilation, acculturation, accommodation, etc. In a survey, Rudmin (2003) distinguishes a total of 126 different taxonomies. Terminology is politically loaded, too. In a speech given on February 10, 2008 in front of 16,000 of his countrymen in Germany, Turkish prime minister Erdogan called for the "integration" of Turks in Germany, but warned them of assimilation, which he labelled a "crime against humanity".

[5]There is no agreement among social, political or philosophical thinkers as to whether a multi- or a mono-cultural approach is "right". Historically, multi-cultural approaches such as ancient Rome (emblematic here: the Pantheon with its multitude of deities) or medieval Spain and its *convivencia* of different religions seemed to foster human and scientific advances. On the other hand, warnings of clashes of civilisations (emblematic here: Huntington, 1996) are voicefully raised. Indeed, inspired by Huntington, cultural identities and differences therein have become key in rationalising social and international conflicts.

In the sociological debate, salad-bowl strategies are considered problematic since less than fully integrated immigrants may shun the mainstream culture and turn "'inward". On the other hand, assimilationist strategies, especially when they require special privileges, generate resentments and can harm the very groups they are intended to help.

one national culture or identity, often associated with the perception that multiculturalism has failed (see, e.g., Brubaker, 2001).[6]

Yet, even in a mono-cultural understanding, the direction into which acculturation should go still has to be specified. Re-iterating the definition above, narrowing the gaps between cultures, milieus and life-styles may involve changes for "either or both" groups of immigrants and natives. *A priori*, it is unclear to what single culture the process of acculturation should converge. Two approaches can be distinguished and will be analysed in this paper:[7]

Assimilation   is the process whereby a (minority) group adopts (or is induced to adopt) the customs, attitudes, and the cultural and structural characteristics of another group, typically that of a (culturally, economically, politically, or symbolically) dominant one.[8] The assimilating group gives up its previous identity (in its own eyes and in those of the other group) and over time becomes similar with the pre-existing majority group of the host country in norms, values, behaviours, characteristics and life-styles. Assimilation policies aim to remove as much as possible the "stigmatized" differences (language, life-styles, religious practices, cultural codes, attitudes) of immigrants and to get them as closely as possible incorporated into the "respectable mainstream", this being invariantly defined by the standards of the host country, prior to the inflow of immigrants.

Integration   (or amalgamation) aims at the creation of a new entity by merging different, pre-existing identities and by bringing people of different life-styles into equal

---

[6]Also the standard economic view on acculturation is, in a sense, a mono-cultural one as it focusses on the *domestic* labour market and the degree to which the immigrants' skills are useful in that market.

[7]Recently, Constant and Zimmermann (2008) defined *assimilation* as a "strong identification with the host culture and society, coupled with a firm conformity to the values, norms, and codes of conduct, and a weak identification with the ancestry". *Integration*, by contrast, combines "both strong dedication to the origin and commitment and conformity to the host society". It is roughly in this sense that we distinguish mono-cultural acculturation policies here.

[8]Some popular commentators even speak of immigrant non-assimilation in relatively positive terms. Conservative schools of thought praise immigrants for maintaining traditional values at a time when such values (e.g. patriarchy, family values, self-sufficiency, entrepreneurialism) are being eroded by feminism, welfare dependency, and rampant consumerism in the West (Fukuyama, 1993). In our framework of Section 4, this type of non-assimilation could be captured by using, as a reference life-style level, the life-style of an immigrant group. Finally, active prevention of immigrants' acculturation might be a rational strategy from the perspective of (some subgroups of) natives; see, e.g., Epstein and Gang (2004).

association. It requires *all* stakeholders to settle at a set of common values. For both immigrants and natives, it involves a blend of life-styles, a process in which diverse groups converge to a common life-style which itself is emerging in the process.[9]

In a nutshell, the success of assimilation policies is measured by the achieved degree of the immigrants' conformity to a pre-defined and invariant "core culture". By contrast, the integration model sees cultural identity as a variable social construct that will emerge endogenously from the interactions of different groups (and, possibly, with political intervention). Using the above-cited definition by Redfield et al. (1936), assimilation is an acculturation where only the immigrants' cultural pattern changes while integration involves changes in both, native and immigrant groups.[10] Both types of policies rely on the idea of a reference population (Brubaker, 2001) and share a distaste for large cultural differences within societies.

In most of (continental) Europe, the assimilationist approach has gained momentum.[11] The German debate on a *Leitkultur* (Pautz, 2005), *le creuset* in France and the French *Nouvelle Droite*'s focus on the purity of cultures, and more essentialist ideas of a *European* culture (see, e.g., Tibi, 1998), allegedly rooted in the Age of Enlightenment, may serve as examples. For the U.S., one might view middle-class cultural patterns of WASPs (white Protestants with Anglo-Saxon origins) as a reference type. Recognition and internalisation of maionstream cultures form the yardstick for a successful acculturation of immigrants from an assimilationist view. By contrast, the integration approach (dubbed *Dutch model* by De Palo et al., 2006) acknowledges the existence of a multitude of life-styles prior to acculturation. It is related to the idea of Hirschman (1994) that differences in life-styles and cultural conflicts are essential ingredients for successful acculturation.

At first sight, it might appear that assimilationist approaches are better suited for the goal to achieve cultural uniformity. After all, it imposes from the outset the target culture

---

[9]In their classical work, Park and Burgess (1966 [1921], p. 730) denote by *assimilation* a process of "fusion" in which diverse groups, "by sharing their experience and history, are incorporated ... in a common cultural life". Alas, this is akin to the understanding of integration here. Recall, footnote 4 on terminological diversity.

[10]In a similar vein, Alba and Nee (1997, p. 864) distinguish between mutual and one-sided concepts of acculturation.

[11]Even in the absence of a deliberate decision for an assimilationist policy approach, acculturation patterns in Europe factually seem to follow the assimilationist model. As shown by De Palo et al. (2006), the life-style of migrants into Europe tends to converge, albeit quite slowly, to that of natives. A similar pattern was observed for the U.S. already by Glazer and Moyniham (1970).

onto which acculturation should coordinate, whereas such a fixed target is absent in the integration approach, where the reference culture still has to emerge endogenously.

As this paper argues, this intuition is not generally valid. We theoretically analyse – in a highly stylized framework – the differences between assimilation and integration politics. Somewhat suprisingly, we show that assimilation policies (optimally) fail to arrive at uniform societies. Uniformity can only be achieved when cultural references adjust flexibly. However, such uniformity comes at a potentially large cost: non-chalance or cultural relativism.

The rest of this paper is organized as follows: Section 2 sets up a simple model that, in principle, allows for acculturation both in an integrationist and an assimilationist style. Section 3 discusses social welfare orderings in contexts of variable milieu compositions of society. Building on this, Section 4 analyses assimilationist and integrationist policies; it contains and discusses the main formal results and a critical discussion. Section 5 concludes.

2   The Model

We consider a society that is at least partially economically integrated with the rest of the world. Society (= a country) is populated by pre-existing and immobile households (called "natives") and by mobile entrants ("immigrants"). The natives own the fixed factors, and they form a homogenous group with respect to culture, income, and life-style. Without loss of generality, we normalize their number to one.

Immigrants are potentially mobile and attracted by the living conditions and the integration policies in the target country. Immigrants can be of two types, t or s. In economic terms, the two types could represent skilled and unskilled labour or, more generally, different (and potentially negative) gross benefits which immigrants bring to their host countries. In a cultural interpretation (which we shall pursue here), the types reflect different degrees of "suitability" or integrability of immigrants into their host society – or the domestic population's perception thereof.[12] We will henceforth associate the types with "life-styles". People have a common life-style (alternatively: belong to the same social milieu) if their ways of life, their principles, norms and values exhibit great similarity. The restriction to two types is for simplicity; it allows us to deal with (cultural) differences

---

[12]It is well-known that ethno-cultural groups differ in their ability and propensity to acculturate. See, e.g., Kao and Thompson (2003), Zlobina et al. (2005) and many others.

among immigrants in the simplest way. We should stress that there is no assumption implying that there might be "better" and "worse" immigrants. Moreover, we will assume that types always interact; it will always be the mixture of a society that matters.

We denote by ℓ_v the number of type-v immigrants living in the country. Regardless of his type, every immigrant inelastically supplies one unit of labour in the host country. We assume that immigrants always find a job in their host country: no immigrant imposes a (direct) economic burden due to, say, reliance on welfare payments etc.

There is (only) one good in the economy; it is produced using labour and the fixed factors. The production technology is represented by a well-behaved, strictly concave, Inada-type production function $F = F(\ell_s, \ell_t)$ with positive and diminishing marginal returns $F_v(\ell_s, \ell_t) := \partial F/\partial \ell_v$. The fixed factors, owned by the natives, are embodied in the production function. Labour markets are competitive; thus, the gross wage of a type-v immigrant equals his marginal productivity: $w_v = F_v(\ell_s, \ell_t)$.

Government cares about acculturation; other concerns related to immigration (say, the potential burden on the welfare state) are ignored here.[13] In our one-good framework, we take a very simplistic view on "integration" and "assimilation" politics. Both kinds of politics aim at narrowing the gap between the life-styles of immigrants and natives. In short, they want to have life-styles converge; (dis-)similarity is measured relative to some (exogenous or endogenous) reference standard in the host country. We model these generally complex ideas in a simplistic manner: Earning a certain wage w_v and being exposed to a certain, possibly type-specific acculturation policy, measured by (a possibly multi-dimensional) variable z_v, an immigrant of type v adopts a life-style

$$c_v = c_v(w_v, z_v) \tag{1}$$

for $v = s, t$. Variable z_v can represent direct monetary transfers, language classes, civic education or other types of special training, preferential treatment, affirmative-action programs, the provision of infrastructure (say, housing or zoning) targeted at certain types of immigrants, etc. The life-style notation c_v is an (admittedly helpless) attempt to condense multi-dimensional and non-measurable issues to a single variable; the c_v are meant to capture as different aspects as consumption levels and patterns, civic and political participation, or cultural, familial and religious attitudes.[14] We adopt the (mathematical)

---

[13]Indeed, acculturation and the economic questions of immigration seem to be less closely related than is generally assumed. Banting et al. (2003) report that there is no evidence that different approaches to immigrants indeed lead to differences in the performance or the funding of welfare states.

[14]Chiswick (2007) assumes that immigrants can consume two types of goods: "general" consumption

convention that the higher is c_v, the larger the appreciation of that life-style through the native population.[15]

With this convention, we can assume that c_v is both increasing in w_v and in z_v: Higher incomes and a larger volume of specifically group-targeted integration methods lead to immigrants' life-styles that are better appreciated by locals.

Our main point can most easily be made with an additive representation of (1). Specifically, we therefore assume that the life-style c_v of a type-v immigrant is given by

$$c_v = w_v + z_v = F_v(\ell_s, \ell_t) + z_v \quad (v = s, t). \tag{2}$$

With this crude understanding of assimilation and integration policies, immigrants are viewed to receive a bundle of acculturation measures with money value z_v which adds to their disposable incomes (= consumption) and which "improves" (in the view of locals) their life-style. The z_v may (and generally will) be differentiated across immigrant types. Acculturation politics in (2) have to be financed by taxes on the native population. As we model the programs as (if they were) transfers, the consumption levels of the immobile natives, who are the residual claimants in their home country, amount to:

$$y := F(\ell_s, \ell_t) - \sum_{v=s,t} \ell_v \cdot (F_v(\ell_s, \ell_t) + z_v). \tag{3}$$

This has a natural monetary interpretation. Additionally, we can also interpret (3) as a life-style variable. The negative sign with which the z_v *ceteris paribus* enter in eq. (3) does, in addition to reflecting a governmental budget constraint, also convey the idea that native populations feel alienated from their preferred life-styles (or have to get rid of stereotyped perceptions of their and others' life-styles) as a result of being overly generous or tolerant towards immigrants. In that sense, the negative dependence of y in (3) on the z_v reflects the fear among natives of losses in cultural identity, associated with acculturation policies.[16]

---

goods and "ethnic" goods that are specific to their culture of origin and that define their identity. Implicit in that modelling is the assumption that "general" consumption goods are representative of the life-style of their destination country. Acculturation policies could be interpreted as all policies that "subsidize" consumption of "general", i.e., host-country-specific consumption.

[15]Again, we do not endorse that some life-styles are *per se* more or less acceptable, valuable or worth pursueing than others; what matters is the perception of these life-styles in the public sphere of the host country. We assume that these perceptions are uniform among natives; this (unrealistic) homogeneity assumption gets us around the complex issues of domestic political economy.

[16]Indeed, certain "generous" integrative policies (say, lenient permissions to build mosques in Christian-

The number of migrants (of different types) being attracted – and consequently the life-styles adopted by the immigrants – depend on integration policies $\mathbf{z} = (z_s, z_t)$ (and possibly on those in unmodelled neighbouring countries):

$$\ell_v = \ell_v(\mathbf{z}). \tag{4}$$

The only assumption we impose on the comparative statics of ℓ_v are that they are non-trivial in the sense that the ℓ_v indeed vary with $\mathbf{z}$, for simplicity in a continuously differentiable way. No assumption on the signs of the derivatives are needed.[17] In the context of international migration (as, e.g., in Wildasin, 1991), one would expect that $\frac{\partial \ell_v}{\partial z_v} > 0$ – i.e., that "more" effort devoted to make type-v immigrants' life-styles more amenable also with locals attracts more type-v people to a country. However, such an assumption is not needed here.

From (2) through (4), integration policies targeted at immigrant group v affect the life-styles of everybody in the host society:

$$\frac{\partial c_v(\mathbf{z})}{\partial z_v} = 1 + F_{st} \cdot \frac{\partial \ell_w}{\partial z_v} + F_{vv} \cdot \frac{\partial \ell_v}{\partial z_v}; \tag{5}$$

$$\frac{\partial c_w(\mathbf{z})}{\partial z_v} = F_{st} \cdot \frac{\partial \ell_v}{\partial z_v} + F_{ww} \cdot \frac{\partial \ell_w}{\partial z_v}; \tag{6}$$

$$\frac{\partial y(\mathbf{z})}{\partial z_v} = -z_v \cdot \frac{\partial \ell_v}{\partial z_v} - z_w \cdot \frac{\partial \ell_w}{\partial z_v} - \ell_v \cdot \frac{\partial c_v}{\partial z_v} - \ell_w \cdot \frac{\partial c_w}{\partial z_v} \tag{7}$$

(where $v \neq w$). Since we do not impose much structure on the ℓ-functions, the signs of all these expressions are unclear – implying that the results to follow hold for quite general model structures.

3 Policy Objectives

The government chooses acculturation policies such as to maximize social welfare. Generally, a social welfare function (SWF) represents the positions of a society or of its decision

---

dominated cultures) seem to cause discomfort with locals. Preferential treatment of immigrants or their descendants (as in the U.S. affirmative action programs) may promote the resentment of the native population against immigrants. Moreover, policy packages for acculturation often include measures targeted at the native population, trying to familiarize them with foreign cultures, eliminating prejudices and stereotypes, calling for acceptance and tolerance, advertising the benefits of diversity etc. Some natives may view such campaigns as alienating them from their traditional life-styles, as it is reflected in (3).

[17]In the maximization problems discussed below we of course require that first- and second-order conditions hold. However, this does not *per se* necessitate any assumption on the derivatives of the ℓ_v.

makers on efficiency, inequality and other societal goals; it reflects certain normative principles that allow for the comparison of different social states. In the welfarist tradition, societal well-being increases in the well-being of the individuals living in a society. Hence, in a first approximation, social welfare could be modelled as an increasing function of type

$$SWF = W(y, c_s, c_t). \tag{8}$$

While (8) reflects, to some degree, potential efficiency aspects of immigration, it is rather tacit on the possible "alienation" effects of immigration. With the assumption that W be strictly concave, large differences in life-styles are viewed as undesirable (this is an analogue to inequality aversion, of course). Such differences in "culture" and life-styles have long served as measures (and explanations) for the stratification of society and the social and economic marginalization of population subgroups (see, e.g., Grusky, 1994) – similar as differences in incomes are a standard ingredient in measures of inequality. Yet, the composition of society as it is, e.g., reflected by the numbers of individuals with different life-styles who inhabit a country does not show up in functions of type (8). By contrast, a function of type (8) *ceteris paribus* indicates social indifference between a situation where a single immigrant with a certain life-style resides in a country and another one where millions of identical immigrants with that life-style do. Such indifference is empirically questionable, given the widespread concerns about "too much" immigration and loss in cultural identities.

To capture possible effects of the population structure, social welfare has to encompass both the life-syles and the numbers of individuals of different types living in a country. Classical (generalized) utilitarianism, which ranks different social states by means of the sum of the well-being of those currently living in a certain environment, would be such an objective. To allow for aversion against too much diversity, individual levels of well-being could be subjected to a strictly increasing and strictly concave transformation u before being added to a social welfare index. The SWF would then read as:

$$SWF = u(y) + \sum_{v=s,t} \ell_v \cdot u(c_v). \tag{9}$$

Yet, as is known from population ethics, social welfare functions of type (9) have the serious flaw to give rise to the *repugnant conclusion* (Parfit, 1982; Blackorby et al., 1998). In terms of this application, any situation (with a certain number of individuals of different types and life-styles) can be improved upon by switching to another state with a suitably

larger immigrant population has less palatable life-styles. Such a strong substitutability of population size for life-style appears to be in stark contrast to political preferences in target countries of immigration; it would imply that feelings of alienation among the natives can be overcome by letting more and more immigrant with even more "objectionable" life-styles into the country.

In utilitarian population ethics, a widely discussed remedy against the repugnant conclusion is the *critical-level (CL) population principle* (Blackorby and Donaldson, 1984). It posits that there exists some threshold level of well-being (or income) such that adding an individual with this well-being to a society of otherwise unaffected individuals will not change societal well-being. Combining the CL population principle with a strict societal preference for higher individual incomes implies that social welfare increases (decreases) whenever an individual with an income higher (lower) than the CL immigrates.

This idea can be readily transferred to acculturation: *Ceteris paribus*, the immigration of an individual is viewed as socially beneficial if the immigrant meets (from the perspective of the native population) certain standards in terms of his/her life-style. Immigration of people who do not meet these standards is regarded as unwarranted while new members of society above the critical level are welcome as an enrichment for society.[18]

In addition to avoiding the (cultural version of the) repugnant conclusion, evaluation methods for income vectors of equal and of different lengths should obey several other desiderata as well (extensively surveyed in Blackorby et al., 2005). Generally, if a social welfare function satisfies – in addition to some basic axioms – a critical level principle, strict monotonicity in individual life-styles, and separability in each partition of the population then it is ordinally equivalent to

$$SWF = [u(y) - u(\alpha)] + \sum_{v=s,t} \ell_v \cdot [u(c_v) - u(\alpha)] \tag{10}$$

(see Blackorby and Donaldson, 1984). Here, $u(\cdot)$ is a strictly increasing and, for conve-

---

[18]Several countries (such as Australia, Canada, or the UK) use skill-selective immigration procedure, only admitting entrants above a certain critical level of their human capital (measured by "immigration points"; see Belot and Hatton, 2008). *Prima facie*, skill thresholds look quite dissimilar from our critical level, which are defined in terms of life-styles. However, skill applicability is often strongly correlated with cultural similarity (proxied, e.g., by linguistic affinity or geographic distance). Moreover, life-style similarity may even be perceived when religious or ethnic backgrounds are quite dissimilar. E.g., McGarry (2008), the Religious Affairs correspondent of The Irish Times, reports that Muslim immigrants have integrated so fast into the Irish society because their views against contraception, premarital sex, or homosexuality fit well to the Catholic tradition of Ireland.

nience, twice continuously differentiable function. Variable α denotes the critical lifestyle level. In population ethics, social evaluation methods of type (10) are referred to as *(generalized) critical level utilitarianism*. Applying (10) to the set-up of acculturation, the critical level α serves as an acculturation threshold: Adding a (mobile) immigrant to the population only enhances welfare if $c_v > \alpha$.[19]

It should be stressed that α does not *per se* reflect an aversion against diversity as such, but only a rejection of failing to meet certain minimum desiderata. Dissimilarity aversion emerges from the strict concavity of $u(\cdot)$, which we shall henceforth assume.

While it so far may have appeared that the critical life-style level in (10) is invariant ad endogenous, there are good reasons

For given and fixed numbers of $\bar{\ell}_v$ ($v = s, t$), (10) basically collapses to (9). The attending policy implication (for strictly concave $u(\cdot)$) is a uniform society; a fixed life-style threshold is irrelevant. Acculturation policies should be designed such as to even out all differences in live-styles:[20]

$$y = c_s = c_t.$$

We shall see now how this uniformity result has to be modified once acculturation policies alter the composition of the population.

4   Assimilation vs. Integration

Social welfare functions in the form of (10) can capture preferences for assimilation and integration policies. Both policies aim at a uniform "melting pot". Assimilationist policies take as their point of reference a predetermined and invariant life-style while with an integrationist approach the reference life-style varies with the composition of the population. With an assimilationist policy, an immigrant (only) adds to societal welfare if her/his life-style meets a certain exogenously given standard; with an integrationist approach, the standards are endogenous. In terms of (10), an assimilationist policy uses fixed critical levels, while integrationists apply variable critical levels.

---

[19]The expression "$-u(\alpha)$" in the left-most bracketed term in (10) is an irrelevant constant (it refers to the immobile native).

[20]Maximization of (11) with respect to z_v requires $\partial SWF/\partial z_v = \bar{\ell}_v \cdot [u'(y) - u'(c_v)] = 0$. This implies $y = c_s = c_t$.

4.1 Assimilation policies

With an assimilationist approach, acculturation politics are chosen as to maximize, for some exogenously given α,

$$SWF = [u(y(\mathbf{z})) - u(\alpha)] + \sum_{v=s,t} \ell_v(\mathbf{z}) \cdot [u(c_v(\mathbf{z})) - u(\alpha)] =: W(\mathbf{z}) \qquad (11)$$

We obtain

Proposition 1 *Assimilation policies will never result a uniform society.*

Proof: From (11) an optimal assimilation policy for immigrant group v requires:

$$\begin{aligned}
\frac{\partial W(\mathbf{z})}{\partial z_v} &= \frac{\partial \ell_v}{\partial z_v} \cdot [-u'(y)z_v + u(c_v) - u(\alpha)] + \frac{\partial \ell_w}{\partial z_v} \cdot [-u'(y)z_w + u(c_w) - u(\alpha)] \\
&\quad + \frac{\partial c_v}{\partial z_v} \cdot \ell_v \cdot [u'(c_v) - u'(y)] + \frac{\partial c_v}{\partial z_w} \cdot \ell_w \cdot [u'(c_w) - u'(y)] = 0.
\end{aligned}$$

In a uniform society (with $y = c_t = c_s =: x$) this would boil down to

$$[u(x) - u(\alpha)] \cdot \left(\frac{\partial \ell_v}{\partial z_v} + \frac{\partial \ell_w}{\partial z_v} \right) = -u'(x) \cdot \left(\frac{\partial \ell_v}{\partial z_v} \cdot z_v + \frac{\partial \ell_w}{\partial z_v} \cdot z_w \right) \qquad (12)$$

where $v \neq w$. This cannot hold for $x = \alpha$ (the LHS would equal zero but the RHS would generally not). Hence, neither side of (12) must equal zero. Division of eqs. (12) for t and s by one another gives

$$\frac{\frac{\partial \ell_s}{\partial z_s} + \frac{\partial \ell_t}{\partial z_s}}{\frac{\partial \ell_s}{\partial z_t} + \frac{\partial \ell_t}{\partial z_t}} = \frac{\frac{\partial \ell_t}{\partial z_s} \cdot z_t + \frac{\partial \ell_s}{\partial z_s} \cdot z_s}{\frac{\partial \ell_s}{\partial z_t} \cdot z_s + \frac{\partial \ell_t}{\partial z_t} \cdot z_t}. \qquad (13)$$

This is well-defined as all $\frac{\partial \ell_v}{\partial z_w}$ differ from zero (which we assumed). Under that assumption, condition (13) can only hold if $z_s = z_t$. With unequal productivities this is, however, generally incompatible with uniform life-styles. Hence, a contradiction. $\blacksquare$

Hence, with assimilation policies, society optimally remains diverse. Moreover, there is no hint as to whether immigrants of different types should be alike or not. Hence, the uniformity bias of standard utilitarianism will generally be overridden by concerns about (relative) population sizes.

4.2 Integration policies

With assimilation, the reference level for acculturation is constant and exogenous. This can be critizised on several grounds: E.g., adding to a society an exact copy of itself should be a matter of indifference – however, (11) fails in that respect. Moreover, even if the composition of a population does not change, an *a priori* fixed critical level of a normal life-style need not bear any relationship to actual lifestyles. The constant α in (11) creates too sharp an arbitrary cut-off level that need not be in any relation to the society to which it is actually applied. Rather, critical levels should be regarded as context-specific; the social evaluation of allowing new people into society ought to be somehow related to the pre-existing situation.

This then inspires the concept of (what is called here) integration with its idea to let the critical level of acculturation vary: the life-style required from a new immigrant to be perceived as "neutral" to social welfare is a function of the size and composition of the existing population.

As functions, situation-specific welfare-neutral acculturation levels depend on the composition of the population and on (the distribution of) life-styles. In our model, these ingredients are fully determined by acculturation policies z_v. Hence, assimilation levels can be written as a function of these instruments only: $\alpha = \alpha(\mathbf{z})$. The analogue to (11) for country i now reads as:

$$SWF = [u(y(\mathbf{z})) - u(\alpha(\mathbf{z}))] + \sum_{v=s,t} \ell_v(\mathbf{z}) \cdot [u(c_v(\mathbf{z})) - u(\alpha(\mathbf{z}))] := W(\mathbf{z}). \qquad (14)$$

For simplicity, we assume that the function $\alpha(\mathbf{z})$ is twice differentiable, but otherwise we do not impose much structure. Yet it seems plausible to require that adding to an already uniform society a person with exactly that common life-style should be a matter of social indifference: If everybody has the same life-style, then this life-style should be representative. We call this property *Uniformity Invariance* [UI]:

[UI] Uniformity Invariance: *Suppose that* $\mathbf{z}$ *is such that* $y(\mathbf{z}) = c_t(\mathbf{z}) = c_s(\mathbf{z}) =: x$. *Then* $\alpha(\mathbf{z}) = x$.

Observe that "assimilationist" welfare orderings with a fixed α violate [UI]. The class of functions $\alpha(\mathbf{z})$ satisfying [UI] is, however, quite rich; it contains minimum, median, maximum and any weighted average of life-styles.

Define $\bar{\alpha}$ as the (unweighted) average life-style:

$$\bar{\alpha}(\mathbf{z}) := \frac{y(\mathbf{z}) + \sum_{v=s,t} \ell_v(\mathbf{z}) \cdot c_v(\mathbf{z})}{1 + \ell_s(\mathbf{z}) + \ell_t(\mathbf{z})}. \tag{15}$$

With $\bar{\alpha}$ as a reference level adding an "average person" to a (not necessarily uniform) society is a matter of societal indifference. There is a wide class of social welfare orderings (not necessarily utilitarian) for which (15) constitutes a representativeness level and that, thus, indicate social indifference when a new average person enters into society.[21] In a utilitarian framework, $\bar{\alpha}$ exhibits a unique property:

Proposition 2 *Average life-style $\bar{\alpha}$ is the only reference life-style with property [UI] that makes utilitarian governments adopt integration policies that implement a uniform society.*

Proof: Suppose that a utilitarian government uses an (arbitrary) variable reference life-style $\alpha(\mathbf{z})$. The FOCs for maximization of (14) require ($v = s, t$):

$$\begin{aligned} \frac{\partial W(\mathbf{z})}{\partial z_v} &= u'(y) \cdot \frac{\partial y}{\partial z_v} + \sum_{w=s,t} \frac{\partial c_w}{\partial z_v} \cdot \ell_w \cdot u'(c_w) + \sum_{w=s,t} \frac{\partial \ell_w}{\partial z_v} \cdot u(c_w) \\ &\quad - \left(\frac{\partial \ell_s}{\partial z_v} + \frac{\partial \ell_t}{\partial z_v} \right) \cdot u(\alpha) - (1 + \ell_s + \ell_t) \cdot u'(\alpha) \cdot \frac{\partial \alpha}{\partial z_v} = 0. \end{aligned} \tag{16}$$

Suppose that uniformity $y = c_s = c_t =: x$ solves this. With [UI], we must then also have that $\alpha(\mathbf{z}) = x$. After division by $u'(x) > 0$, condition (16) boils down to:

$$\frac{\partial y}{\partial z_v} + \sum_{w=s,t} \frac{\partial c_w}{\partial z_v} \cdot \ell_w - N(\mathbf{z}) \cdot \frac{\partial \alpha}{\partial z_v} = 0 \tag{17}$$

where $N(\mathbf{z}) := 1 + \ell_t(\mathbf{z}) + \ell_s(\mathbf{z})$ denotes total population size. Eqs. (17) for $v = s, t$ define a system of partial differential equations for function $\alpha(\mathbf{z})$. Observe:

$$\frac{\partial \bar{\alpha}(\mathbf{z})}{\partial z_v} = \frac{1}{N(\mathbf{z})} \cdot \left[\frac{\partial y}{\partial z_v} + \sum_{w=s,t} \frac{\partial c_w}{\partial z_v} \cdot \ell_w + \sum_{w=s,t} \frac{\partial \ell_w}{\partial z_v} \cdot c_w - \bar{\alpha}(\mathbf{z}) \cdot \frac{\partial N(\mathbf{z})}{\partial z_v} \right].$$

Hence, in a uniform society (where $\bar{\alpha} = c_w$ for $w = s, t$), $\bar{\alpha}(\mathbf{z})$ solves (17). Condition [UI] ensures that this solution is unique.

Conversely, observe that with a SWF that uses $\alpha = \bar{\alpha}$ as a reference level uniform societies are indeed optimal. Due to the strict concavity of the functions u, the maximum value of the function $\bar{W} := [u(y(\mathbf{z})) - u(\bar{\alpha}(\mathbf{z}))] + \sum_{v=s,t} \ell_v(\mathbf{z}) \cdot [u(c_v(\mathbf{z})) - u(\bar{\alpha}(\mathbf{z}))]$ is zero. It will (only) be reached in uniform societies. Hence, once a uniform situation is reached,

---

[21]This holds, e.g., for the Rawlsian maximin principle where (in our notation) $SWF = \min\{y, c_s, c_t\}$.

no further scope for improvement prevails. ∎

Observe that Proposition 2 also holds for *fixed* population structures (set all partials $\partial \ell_w / \partial z_v$ to zero in the proof). Averaging over life-styles is the only method to induce homogeneity.

4.3 Discussion

Propositions 1 and 2 can be shortly described as follows: Assimilationist policies do not have assimilationalist outcomes.[22] it is Integrative policies, however, have assimilationist outcomes if (and only if) the "melting pot" is an averaging mechanism. Then, integration will succeed in evening out life-style differences while dominant-culture approaches fail with this.

In a cheerful interpretation, these results seem to suggest that attempts to harmonize life-styles can only succeed if the average life-style serves as the endogenous yardstick against which deviations are measured. However, using the average life-style as a variable critical level in an otherwise utilitarian framework comes at serious costs. First, observe that (14) attaches a welfare level of zero to all uniform societies, regardless of the types of life-styles adopted in such societies. Two societies where everybody adopts the same life-style as his compatriots are considered equally good, even if the (uniform) life-styles differ across societies. This reflects an extreme cultural relativism[23] – and such non-chalance will not find much support among domestic populations afraid that immigration threatens their cultural and social fabric.

Moreover, when the demographic composition of a population is fixed, using (15) as a critical life-style level would disapprove of any enhancement in life-styles of those who already have above-average life-styles (the attending SWF (14) is non-monotonic – though the underlying $u(\cdot)$ is). One might interpret this as a reflex of a strong social disapproval of "cultural hegenonism" or even elitism over, or ranking of, life-styles, but it definitely adds further to the crude cultural relativism of (14).

---

[22]Brubaker (2001, p. 534) makes a similar statement, but traces the failure of assimilation to the fact that, when it is forcefully implemented, provokes mobilization against its pressures. Such reactions arre absent from our model.

[23]In terms of population ethics, the property "Increasingness-along-the-Ray-of-Equality" (IRE) is violated by (14); see, e.g., Blackorby and Donaldson, 1984. Since IRE is less demanding than standard Pareto principles, it is generally deemed indispensable as a normative criterion.

Propositions 1 and 2 state that, unless acculturation policies abandon with all notions of "more palatable" life-styles (for which critical levels other than the average would allow, even in utilitarian frameworks), they will fail in their melting-pot idea(l) to produce uniform outcomes. One need not share the conviction that some life-styles are *per se* superior to others to find such indifference questionable. Hence a more sober (and deliberately vague) conclusion from Propositions 1 and 2:

> *Even if homogeneity in life-styles is considered socially atttractive, there is no "acceptable" way to generate it.*

Proposition 1 is driven by the endogeneity in the life-style distribution. Recall that with a given population structure (ℓ_s and ℓ_t are given), homogeneity in life-styles would be optimal whenever reference life-styles are given. With a variable composition of the population (i.e., population shares vary, in whatever way, with policies), homogeneity becomes unwarranted.

Proposition 2 *prima facie* suggests that when the demographic structure is variable, so should be the reference level for life-styles, at least if homogeneity is warranted. The price to be paid for this is, however, an extreme valuation of homogeneity and complete cultural indifference.

5   Conclusion

While many concerns surrounding immigration are of an economic or fiscal nature (skill transferability, net burden to the welfare state etc.), some pressing issues are, in a broad sense, *cultural*. Immigration can profoundly affect, and potentially dissolve,[24] the fabric of society. Economic interests often call for greater migration of (both skilled and unskilled) workers; such policies are implemented via recruitment programs, labour permit systems, and the creation of open labour markets. Political, electoral and cultural concerns or imperatives often favor quite restrictive immigration policies.

In this paper, we analysed – in a highly stylized way – different policy approaches (more precisely: the implications of different normative positions for policies) with the aim of "forging" a common life-style in a melting-pot society. Our simplification reduced life-styles to measurable, one-dimensional variables, homogeneity to uniformity, social

---

[24]Sowell (1996) argues that the (peaceful) settlement of so-called barbarians at the fringes of the Roman Empire preluded their later attacks on the Empire that ruined it.

acceptance to meeting a critical level, and acculturation programs to the choice of a one-dimensional and continuously policy variable. All this clearly pictures reality inadequately: Life-styles are multi-faceted, social and national cohesion is possible in spite of diversity in life-styles, and acculturation encompasses many and complex institutions, services and political actions. Assimilation and integration do not expressly aim at uniformity,[25] and the approaches not only differ in terms of their objectives (fixed vs. variable reference levels) but also in terms of policy instruments: an assimilationist approach aiming at converging to a pre-dominant core culture may put more emphasis on the teaching of national history, the learning of the domestic language, or the adoption of artefacts from literature to cooking; an integrationist approach may put more emphasis on general values (human rights, tolerance, etc.) or skill transferability.

However, in spite of its low dimensionality, our model depicts a real-world problem: the choice of political actions (the $\mathbf{z}$) that are, or can be made, biased according to cultural stereotypes (life-style reference levels α), and need potentially be specific for distinct population subgroups ($v = s, t$). Within such a framework, we come to a gloomy (maybe, to some, also evident) conclusion: Unless one is willing to subscribe to extreme cultural relativism, homogeneity, even if aimed at, cannot be achieved. Conversely, uniformity would necessarily come at the price of "cultural standards".

This paper is a theoretical one; empirical or practical issues do not play any role. This naturally triggers questions about the relevance of our approach. We are not aware of any study that compares and assesses integration and assimilation policies. However, similar issues arise in slightly different contexts. E.g., Bauder (2001) compares "acculturation" approaches for two inner-city neighbourhoods in San Antonio, Texas, where community-based institutions set out to help youth from minority areas with "deviant" styles of behaviour, speech, and dress to succeed in the labour market. In one neighbourhood, local institutions attempted to instill "mainstream" norms of behaviour in (what they labelled) "dysfunctional" youth, assuming that such norms provide youth with the cultural capital necessary in the labour market. In another neighbourhood, institutions emphasized the diverse cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds, but aimed at diminishing cultural isolation and encouraged convergence without associating this with any notion of "superiority" (or, likewise, associating minority lifestyles with "dysfunctionality" or unfitness). In our terminology and *cum grano salis*, the first neighbourhood pursued an assimilationist approach and the second an integrationist approach. Bauder (2001) ob-

---

[25]From the very term, assimilation means increasing similarity – but not identity.

serves that the assimilationist neighbourhood failed in engraving mainstream lifestyles into their clients while convergence was better in the integrationist neighborhood. Assimilation increased marginalization – which led to poorer performance in the labour market. While this well echoes the predictions from our theoretical approach, more research on the economic, poltical, and integrationist effects of policy attitudes towards acculturation seems worthwhile.

Generally, next question is how it is to be translated to the individual plane. Here there may be no alternative to defining assimilation in a more one-sided manner. It seems impossible to meaningfully discuss assimilation at the individual level as other than changes that make the individuals in one ethnic group more like, and more socially integrated with, the members of another.

References

Alba, R., and V. Nee, 1997, Rethinking Assimilation Theory for a New Era of Immigration. International Migration Review 31, 826-874.

Banting, K., et al., 2006, Do Multiculturalism Policies Erode the Welfare State? An Empirical Analysis. In: Banting, K., and W. Kymlicka (eds.), *Multiculturalism and the Welfare State*. Oxford/London: Oxford University Press. 49-91.

Bauder, H., 2001, "You're Good with your Hands, Why Don't You Become an Auto Mechanic?": Neighborhood Context, Institutions and Career Development. International Journal of Urban and Regional Research 3, 593-608.

Bauer, Th., M. Lofstrom, and K. F. Zimmermann, 2000, Immigration Policy, Assimilation of Immigrants and Natives' Sentiments Towards Immigrants: Evidence from 12 OECD-Countries. Swedish Economic Policy Review 7, 11-53.

Belot, M. V. K., and Hatton, T. J., 2008, Immigrant Selection in the OECD. CEPR Discussion Paper No. 6675, C.E.P.R., London.

Blackorby, C., W. Bossert and D. Donaldson, 2005, *Population Issues in Social Choice Theory, Welfare Economics, and Ethics*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge etc.

Blackorby, C. and D. Donaldson, 1984, Social Criteria for Evaluating Population Change, Journal of Public Economics 25, 13-33.

Brubaker, R., 2001, The Return of Assimilation? Changing Perspectives on Immigration and Its Sequels in France, Germany, and the United States. Ethnic and Racial Studies 24, 531-548.

Chiswick, C.U., 2007, The Economic Determinants of Ethnic Assimilation. Forthcoming, Journal of Population Economics.

Constant, A., and K.F. Zimmermann, 2008, Measuring Ethnic Identity and Its Impact on Economic Behavior. Journal of the European Economic Association 6, 424-433.

de Palo, D., R. Faini, and A. Venturini, 2006. The Social Assimilation of Immigrants. CEPR Discussion Paper No. 5992, C.E.P.R., London.

Duleep, H.O., and M. C. Regets, 1999, Immigrants and Human-Capital Investment. American Economic Review (Papers and Proceedings) 89, 186-191.

Dustmann, Ch., and I. P. Preston, 2007, Racial and Economic Factors in Attitudes to Immigration. The B.E. Journal of Economic Analysis & Policy 7 (Advances), Article 62.

Epstein G.S., and I. Gang, 2004, Ethnic Networks and International Trade. IZA Discussion Paper No. 1232. IZA, Bonn.

Facchini, G., and A. M. Mayda, 2008, From Individual Attitudes towards Migrants to Migration Policy Outcomes: Theory and Evidence. IZA Discussion Paper No. 3512. IZA, Bonn.

Fukuyama, F., 1993, Immigrant and Family Values. Commentary 95(5), 26-32.

Glazer, N., and D. Moynihan, 1970, *Beyond The Melting Pot*. The MIT Press, Cambridge.

Hirschman, A.0., 1994, Social Conflicts as Pillars of Democratic Market Society. Political

Theory 22, 203-218.

Huntington, S.P., 1996, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order.* New York: Simon & Schuster.

Huntington, S.P., 2004, *Who Are We? The Challenges to America's National Identity.* New York: Simon & Schuster.

Kao, G., and J.S. Thompson, 2003, Racial and Ethnic Stratification in Educational Achievement and Attainment. Annual Review of Education 29, 417–442.

Mayda, A.M., 2005, Who is Against Immigration? A Cross-Country Investigation of Attitudes Towards Immigrants. Review of Economics and Statistics 88, 510-530.

McGarry, Patsy, 2008, Muslims Have Integrated Well Despite Recent Arrival. The Irish Times, 10/05/2008.

Park, R.E., and E.W. Burgess, 1921 [1969], *Introduction to the Science of Sociology.* Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Parfit, D., 1982, Future Generations, Further Problems, Philosophy and Public Affairs 11, 113-172.

Pautz, H., 2005, The Politics of Identity in Germany: The *Leitkultur* Debate. Race & Class 46, 39-52.

Redfield, R., R. Linton, R., and M. Herskovits, 1936, Memorandum on the Study of Acculturation. American Anthropologist 38, 149-152.

Rudmin, F. W., 2003, Catalogue of Acculturation Constructs: Descriptions of 126 Taxonomies, 1918-2003. In: W. J. Lonner et al. (eds.), Online Readings in Psychology and Culture, Unit 8, Chapter 8. Online at `http://www.wwu.edu/~culture/rudmin.htm`.

Scheve, K. F., and M. J. Slaughter, 2001, Labor Market Competition and Individual Preferences over Immigration Policy. Review of Economics and Statistics 83, 133-145.

Sowell, Th., 1996, *Migrations and Cultures. A World View.* BasicBooks, New York.

Tibi, B., 1995, *Krieg der Zivilisationen. Politik und Religion zwischen Vernunft und Fundamentalismus.* Heyne, Hamburg.

Verbon, H. A. A., and L. Meijdam, 2008, Too Many Migrants, Too Few Services: A Model of Decision-Making on Immigration and Integration with Cultural Distance. Journal of Population Economics 21, 665-677.

Wildasin, David E., 1991, Income Redistribution in a Common Labour Market. American Economic Review 81, 757–774.

Zlobina, A., N. Basabea, and D. Paeza, 2005, Sociocultural Adjustment of Immigrants: Universal and Group-Specific Predictors. International Journal of Intercultural Relations 30, 195-211.