

Example of identity and migration essay

[Sociology](#), [Immigration](#)



Introduction

The connection between identity and migration can be understood through a series of factors. Individuals migrating from their birth places into new territories come across other people, other cultures, other habits, other lifestyles. Interacting with the new environment, migrators can experience various reactions, ranging from inadaptability or depression to assimilation and biculturalism. Whether finding hard to adjust or finding advantages of the relocation, is in the nature of the individual. This indicates that individuals have different ways of responding and reacting to a foreign environment, which are in direct relation to their personality traits, with their identity.

Supporting Paragraphs

When talking about identity, there are various aspects one can refer to. Sociologists define identity as (1) the set of qualities that determine a social category, wherein the persons belonging to that category comply to the same rules, share common features or expected behaviors or (2) as the totality of the social characteristics that distinguish a person from the others (Erikson in Fearon, 1999).

A person who is entrenched in the social conventions of the group s/he is a part of and who has distinguishing features that makes him/her unique will be influenced by a foreign environment once s/he reaches there. His/Her unique characteristics will define how the individual will react to the new stimuli that constitute the new environment.

In fact, recent researches have determined that the social characteristics

determined by a group's individuality (gender, age, marital status or employment status) do not substantially affect the migration effects: whether the person adjusts easily or finds difficulties in adapting to new environments. Rather their extraversion and openness to new experiences influenced how individuals adjust to migration (Jokela, 2008).

Wingens, Windzo, Valk and Aybeck discuss about the “ Big Five” personality traits that are likely to influence the immigrants' integration in a new location. These are “ openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness and neuroticism” (2011, p. 83).

Depending on the individuals' predispositions to these five factors, they can either be distressed, frustrated, and reach anxiety or depression, or, on the contrary, they can find an exciting opportunity to meet new people, new situations, developing their personalities, their knowledge, their language and their culture, by interacting with people from the new environment. Nonetheless, the social factors should not be neglected when discussing about migration. Housing, social welfare, social assurances, rights and liberties, the openness of the new location of receiving and welcoming strangers, the diversity of the new location, are other significant factors that can influence the personality of individuals who are migrating and implicitly determine the effects of migration upon their identity change.

As such, families migrating in other countries to find a better job or an improved lifestyle might come across social insurance problems, or they could identify housing problems or an unwelcoming attitude from the inhabitants of the country, with whom they might interact. All these aspects might be perceived as burdens, which can become deeper and deeper each

time a new social challenge in the new location arises. This might increase the sensibility of the migrants, which could lead to personality changes. This automatically imposes changes in the migrant's identities.

Positive experiences occurred in the new location in which migrants land can also impact their personality and change their identity. As such, migrants who benefit of all the facilities to accommodate to the new location can become more interested in learning more about the new country/city they live in, curious to know more about the regular lifestyle of the locals and understand their culture and traditional heritage.

The positive effects of the migration can be perceived as a benefic aspect of migration and this can also contribute to identity change, more likely to enriching one's identity. For instance, learning a new language and understanding the social, economic and political context of the country in which migrants reach, can be beneficial for their cultural background and may help them integrate better. The impact in this case is that individuals might tend to forget their native language and the features that define their belonging to their nationality and borrow the characteristics of the new country, which will determine new lifestyle and will change their identity.

On the other hand, a migrant who expresses openness, who is agreeable and extraverted can influence himself/herself the new environment, the location in which s/he migrated, engaging in cultural diversity exchange. In fact, Rajan observes that the presence of the outsiders in a home country can generate the loss of the home country cultural and linguistic identity, and it can even generate social tensions (2011).

This phenomenon stood at the basis of cultural assimilation and in enriching

cultures through foreign contact since the formation of the societies. This is a form of interacting and understanding others, which only contributes to improving lifestyle through social and cultural experience and exchange.

Conclusion

Social factors such as belonging to a social group and the individual traits that define one's personality have been found as significant aspects that contribute to the identity change in the context of migration. The way the migrants' identities change depend on five factors that define their personality (openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness and neuroticism), which can make the difference between changing one's identity into depression and inadaptability to the new environment or into being assimilated by the new culture and finding advantages in integrating.

Works Cited

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