

Integrating Immigrant and Absorbing Groups into a Joint Community

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This research focuses on inner migration of families to rural communities in the Israeli northern periphery, and their integration with the veteran residents. A survey was conducted among 113 veteran and 120 migrant residents in four rural communities, two Kibbutzim and two Moshavim. Findings pointed out many similarities between the groups in their demographic and economic profiles, in their basic cultural and social motivations and expectations towards living together in their joint community, and in their positive appreciation of the community life. All these make an important basis for integration. Indeed, the main acculturation strategy (according to Berry's acculturation theory) used by both groups was that of integration, while marginalization was the least used strategy. Yet, gaps were found between the veterans' tendency towards separation and the migrants' tendency towards assimilation, especially concerning partnership in decision making. This gap may be a source of conflict. Migration of strong populations is vital for periphery development. Its success depends on building a shared positive cultural capital.

Keywords: *Acculturation strategies, Assimilation, Integration, Marginalization, Native and migrant residents, Separation.*

Introduction

This research focuses on inner migration of families to rural communities in the Israeli northern periphery and their integration with the veteran residents of these communities.

The Israeli northern periphery is a weaker region in terms of economics, education level, services and opportunities. The overall migration rate in this area is negative (ICBS 2014). Yet, there are people – many of them from central urban regions – who decide to migrate into this area, and their decision raises various questions.

Our two central research questions were: What do these migrants seek in this peripheral region? And how do they integrate with the already established communities, to which they migrated? These two questions were also examined with regard to the veteran residents of the local communities, who are meant to absorb the migrants into their communities: What were their goals for opening the gates of their communities for newcomers? And how do they integrate with them?

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Theoretical Background

Counter-Urbanization Migration

The movement of urban-to-rural migration into peripheral areas was revealed in developed countries in Europe and America since the 1990's. It was called "counter urbanization", "nonmetropolitan turnaround", "rural rebound", "rural renaissance", "amenity migration", and so on (Champion 1998, Chipeniuk 2008).

This non-mainstream but expanding trend is accompanied by structural, economic, demographic, social and cultural changes in rural areas. The improvement of transportation and communication links has supported the invasion of global and capitalist entrepreneurs into these traditional rural areas (Brown 2002). The improvement in infrastructures caused agriculture to lose its hegemonic position in the rural economy, created diversion, and introduced new, non-agricultural activities to the region. The population has changed as well – alongside the negative out-migration of native residents, especially younger and more educated ones, we see an in-migration of new residents with more urban life-styles and characteristics (Beyers and Nelson 2000, Panelli 2006).

Theories of Migration

Theories of migration explore the motives for migration and its outcomes. People take rational decisions about migration or immigration by weighing push and pull factors (cases of forced migration are beyond the scope of this study). Push factors are those which motivate people to leave their original place of residence, while pull factors are those which motivate them to move into their new place of residence (Kestens 2004, De Jong et al. 2002, Sanchez and Dawkins 2001).

Classic theories of immigration suggest that the key reasons for migration and immigration are economic ones – the search for a better standard of living (Geyer 2002, Marshall and Foster 2002, Swain and Garasky 2007). Post-materialistic theories, however, argue that migration is also motivated by socially-constructed cultural and symbolic meanings and moral values regarding the expected life-style in the destination place, and suggest that migrants and immigrants take these considerations into account against or alongside the material and economic motives (Cloke 2006, Panelli 2006). This argument, about the non-materialistic motives and values that attract migrants to rural areas, is in accordance with the modernization theory of Inglehart (1990), who describes a shift in Western society towards "post-materialistic" values of self-fulfillment, self-expression, subjective welfare and quality of life. These motives may attract migrants to rural areas, even when their earnings are expected to decline due to their move. The pull factors for migrating represent a positive, idyllic culturally-stereotyped image of rural life and values: Living close to nature, in harmony with the landscape, in a smaller

and more scattered community; a healthier, safer, happier life in a meaningful community, especially for the sake of the children. These are accompanied by the push factors of wanting to avoid the negative aspects of the urban environment: Noise, density, pollution, and impersonal and artificial relationships (Arnon and Shamai 2010, 2011, Beyers and Nelson 2000, Brehm et al. 2004, Chipeniuk, 2008).

Integration between the Absorbing and the Migrating Groups

The trend of migration from urban centers and urban life-style into rural communities raises questions concerning the integration between the absorbing and the migrating groups in the same society or community, especially in light of the wide gaps between these two groups.

Berry's (2001, 2011) acculturation theory is one of the basic theories that examine this question. Berry's theory describes the acculturation strategies held by both the absorbing society (which Berry considers to be the dominant group) and the migrating group (which is a non-dominant, usually a minority group). Each strategy reflects a combination of two related processes: a. The extent of the desired social relations and interactions with the other group; and b. the extent to which each group crosses its cultural boundaries in order to meet the other group's culture, or prefers to stick to its own cultural identity.

Berry details four acculturation strategies for each group, which are parallel to those of the other group. The four strategies of the migrants are (the parallel strategy of the absorbers is presented in parenthesis): 1. Assimilation (melting pot) – refers to individuals who do not wish to maintain their separate cultural identity and seek daily interaction with other cultures; 2. Separation (segregation) – refers to individuals who wish to hold on to their original culture, and avoid interaction with others; 3. Integration (multiculturalism) – refers to individuals who are interested both in maintaining their original culture and in constant interactions with the other group; 4. Marginalization (exclusion) – refers to individuals who have little possibility or interest in maintaining the culture of their own group or in creating relationships with others.

When the strategies held by the two groups match each other, there is no problem between them; otherwise, the mismatching strategies can be a source of conflict. This can happen, for example, when the migrants use the assimilation strategy, but the absorbers use the segregation strategy.

Mutual adaptation between newcomers and the original community is best achieved when the newcomers prefer the integration strategy, and the absorbing community holds the parallel strategy of multiculturalism, both at the individual/psychological and group/cultural levels. This process of integration/multiculturalism is based on the acceptance of the two underlying values of diversity and equity (Berry 2011). The construction of a pluralist society may lead to the development of social solidarity and shared social capital for the benefit of both groups. Social capital represents instrumental, purposive networks of social relationships based on interpersonal trust,

reciprocity, cooperation and mutual commitment. It is usually described as empowering and developing for the community and its members by strengthening social support, while at the same time facilitating coordination and collaboration between the community's members and their networks. Members of diversified societies must first build a bridging social capital, which connects between individuals and cultures with different social identity. This bridging capital may then lead to the development of bonding social capital between people with similar social identities (Colclough and Sitaraman 2005, Putnam 2000).

The unique contribution of this research lies in the fact that it simultaneously examines the motives, satisfaction levels and acculturation strategies that characterize the absorbers and migrants.

Research Context

Our study focused on the absorber and migrant groups in four communities, two Kibbutzim and two Moshavim, in the Israeli northern peripheral region. Kibbutzim and Moshavim in Israel are generally small communities of *Gemeinschaft* lifestyle (Tönnies, in Adair-Toteff 2003). These settlements were established since the 1930's based on different variations of socialist ideology and were initially mostly-agricultural. The Kibbutzim members shared more economic and social life aspects, while the Moshavim members maintained a more individualistic way of life. A fundamental economic crisis in the 1980's brought many changes to the life of these communities. This crisis intensified the process of withdrawal from agricultural economy and brought extensive cultural changes to the communities, including the desertion of many residents (Greenberg 2012).

One solution to this crisis was the establishment of new attached neighborhoods to which new citizens migrated. By absorbing them, the old residents hoped to rejuvenate the average age, stop the out-migration of their younger generations, and to have more partners who could share their life and life expenses. These migrants went through a screening process to ensure their compliance with the community's way of life. Hence, the context of this research demonstrates a case study of integration between culturally-similar groups, which enables us to examine Berry's (2001, 2011) acculturation theory in a basic situation, which is far simpler than the cases examined by Berry, of integration between extremely different groups.

The newcomers were absorbed as members of the community, but their legal status was inferior, and restricted their ability to take part in decision-making processes and to share the veterans' economic infrastructures (Greenberg 2012). Thus, the new attached neighborhoods created a dual process: On the one hand, two similar sub-populations of veteran and new residents were integrated in the same spatial area into one community; on the other hand, legal, economic, social and community gaps were maintained between the two groups.

Research Questions

We compared the two groups of veteran and new residents and asked four basic questions:

- a. Do they differ in their demographic profiles and economic situation?
- b. What were their motivations and expectations regarding living together in a joint community?
- c. In which aspects did they find their joint community lives more or less satisfying?
- d. Which acculturation strategies did each group use to integrate with the other?
- e. Does the residents' group and acculturation strategies explain the residents' satisfaction with their lives in the community?

Research Methods

Procedure

In 2012, a survey was conducted among residents of rural communities with new attached neighborhoods in the Israeli northern periphery. Four of these communities, two Kibbutzim and two Moshavim, were the field in which we investigated the research questions. Two corresponding closed questionnaires were constructed for each of the groups, and each participant answered the questionnaire by a face-to-face interview.

Sample

A random sample of individuals was chosen from lists of veteran residents and new residents in the four communities. The total sample size was 233: 120 migrants and 113 veteran residents, 115 Kibbutz members and 118 Moshav members.

The demographic characteristics of the survey participants are presented in table 1. About 60% of the interviewees in both groups were women, and 40% of them were men. The average age of the veteran interviewees was significantly higher than that of the new residents, as well as the average number of years in the community and the number of children. More of the migrants were native Israelis in comparison to the veterans, and their average education level was significantly higher. In average, most of the research participants in both groups were non-religious people.

Measures

The survey questionnaires consisted of four clusters of questions, which are detailed hereby:

Demographic profile and economic situation: Gender, age, education, family status, children and religiosity; current employment, livelihood and economic status.

Motives for migration to the northern periphery/ decision to absorb new members in new attached neighborhoods: Motives related to quality of life (private house, education, community life, and quality of social life), economic situation, quality of amenities, and entertainment opportunities. The motives were measured on a Likert scale of 5 degrees.

Assessment of community life: respondents related by a Likert scale of 5 degrees to 45 statements that described various characteristics of their community life. These statements were gathered into six indexes (their Cronbach's alpha is presented in parentheses): personal and emotional connection to the place of residence (.78), equality between migrants and absorbers in rights and legal status (.61), social support (.72), social cohesion (.75), assessment of management and leaders (.71), and feelings of participation and partnership (.77).

Acculturation strategies in four life domains: The research participants were asked with which group they preferred to share four aspects of their lives – leisure activities, interest in what is happening in the community or inside their own group, preferred friends, and engagement in decision making. In each of these life domains, they indicated, on a Likert scale of 5 degrees, to what extent they preferred their own group (separation), the other group (assimilation), both groups (integration), and none of the groups (marginalization). Indexes were built for each strategy. Cronbach's alphas were: integration – 0.65, separation – 0.72, assimilation – 0.65, and marginalization – 0.64.

Findings

The research findings are presented according to the research questions.

Demographic Profile and Economic Situation

Through a comparison between the members of the groups – the migrants and the absorbers – we were able to estimate their social and economic resemblance and differences. These characteristics, according to Berry (2001, 2011), make an important basis for their integration. The data is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of Migrants and Absorbers (Averages and Percentages)

Characteristic	Migrants	Absorbers	t-test	
			<i>t</i>	<i>p</i> *
Age	41	58	-17.37	.000 *
Years of residence	8	37	-18.63	.000 *
Native Israeli ~	92%	68%	4.91	.000 *
Married ~	91%	79%	2.59	.010 *
No. of children	2.6	3.4	-6.34	.000 *
Age of youngest child	6	23	-17.46	.000 *
Religiosity rate (scale: 1-5)	1.3	1.2	1.06	.292
Education level (scale: 1-6)	3.6	3.2	2.69	.008 *
Education: Academic degree ~	58%	36%	3.38	.001 *
Employment: full time jobs ~	78%	67%	1.851	.065
Work place: in/ near settlement ~	83%	83%	.000	1.000
Income level (scale: 1-6)	5.8	5.2	-1.68	.096
Economic status evaluation (1-5)	3.6	3.8	-2.56	.011 *

Note: * Significant difference $p < .05$.

~ Binary variable (1= yes, 0= no)

By definition, the newcomers have lived in their new communities a significantly lower number of years compared to the veteran residents (8 vs. 37, respectively). The two groups also significantly differ in their stage of life: The newcomers are younger (average age 41 vs. 58), with younger families and children.

Although the migrants hold a significantly higher human capital of education compared to the veteran residents (58% vs. 36% respectively have an academic degree), their occupational status is quite similar: More migrants work a full time job than the veterans (78% vs. 67%), but this gap is non-significant, and the same majority (83%) in both groups work in or around the place of residence. Additionally, their leading occupations are similar in both groups (school teaching, industry and engineering, and managerial positions), but much more veterans are working in agriculture (14%) compared to newcomers (3%). Their income level is also similar, with no significant difference, although the subjective evaluation of economic status is slightly and significantly higher among the veteran members (3.8 vs. 3.6 among migrants).

Hence, one can get the impression of basically two similar groups, without any dramatic social or economic gaps between them. Moreover, culturally, they share the same Hebrew language and the same basic secular Jewish lifestyle (1.25 average level of religiosity), as well as a similar cultural background. This resemblance, according to Berry, is an important basis for integration.

Motives and Expectations of Migrants and Absorbers

While the findings among migrants are marginally higher, the two groups of veteran and new residents are also basically similar in their motives and expectations with regards to the migration to the new attached neighborhoods, as can be seen in table 2.

The leading item (first row) in both groups denotes a strong shared equal belief (in an average degree close to "very much") in the project of new attached neighborhoods in veteran communities. Most members of both groups expected the project to have positive outcomes and improve their lives. The leading motives and expectations of both groups were social and communal quality of life: Improved education quality (significantly higher level among migrants, who are parents to younger children), a high-quality community (significantly higher level among migrants), and improved social life (same level in both groups). Migrants were also highly motivated by the opportunity to live in a private villa (which is much more difficult to achieve in central urban areas), and by the expectation to improve their quality of life by living in a green environment. Veteran residents were also highly motivated by the chance to rejuvenate their community, and to a smaller degree, by the expectation that the project's development will stop the out-migration of the young generation, their sons and daughters, and maybe attract back those who already out-migrated. At the same time, they were only moderately confident that the newcomers will not change their ways of life.

Table 2. *Motives and Expectations of Migrants and Absorbers (Averages)*

Motives	Average (1-5)		t-test	
	Migrants	Absorbers	Mean Difference	p *
Positive attitudes towards the project	4.61	4.53	.08	.484
Education quality	4.58	3.97	.61	.000 *
Quality of community life	4.37	3.93	.44	.000 *
Quality of amenities	3.32	3.74	-.41	.004 *
Quality of social life	4.02	4.09	-.07	.564
Economic situation	2.63	2.73	-.10	.576

Note: * Significant difference $p < .05$.

On the other hand, the motivations and expectations by migrants and absorbers in the domain of economic life and standards of living were rated much lower, and were found to be a secondary motivation for supporting the project. The two groups, it seems, expressed realistic observation and estimated correctly the inferior condition in the peripheral region, both in the amount and quality of services and amenities (the expectations among migrants were significantly lower). They were particularly aware of the inferior employment, earnings and economic opportunities (expectations less than average level in

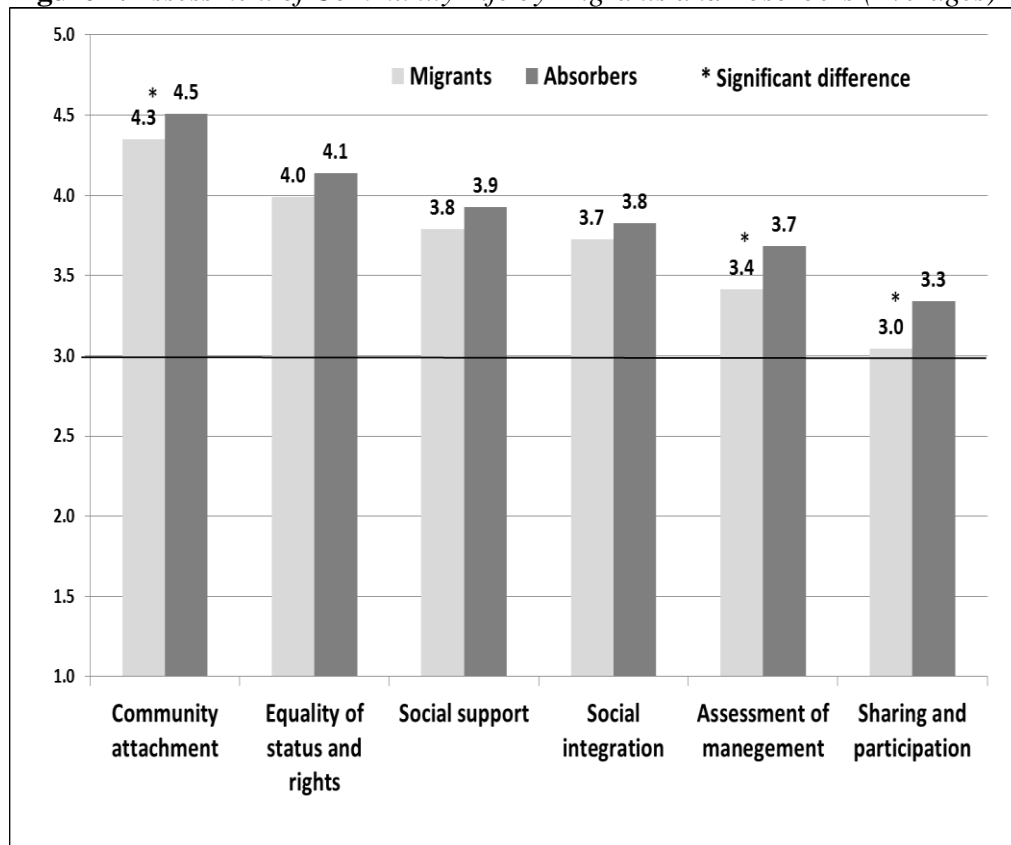
both groups). Migrants also had low expectations for cultural and entertainment opportunities in their new peripheral area of residence.

Thus, the primary and secondary motives and expectations of newcomers and veterans alike, with regards to their decisions to migrate to rural peripheral communities and to open the gates of these settlements for new residents, were similar in both groups. These common motives created another layer of preparation for integrating the two groups into one society, although veteran citizens were not sure that the integration will cause positive influences.

Assessment of Community Life

A further support for this conclusion can be seen in the similarly positive assessment of community life by both groups, as can be seen in Figure 1.

Figure 1. *Assessment of Community Life by Migrants and Absorbers (Averages)*



The assessment indicates a strong personal and emotional connection to the community. Although the community attachment is significantly higher among the veterans, its high rate among migrants is impressive. In addition, both groups expressed similar positive feelings towards the shared community with regards to the equality of status and rights, social support, and social integration, and expressed these positive attitudes and feelings by warm

recommendation to their friends to live in their own community (average 4.3 on a 5 degrees scale).

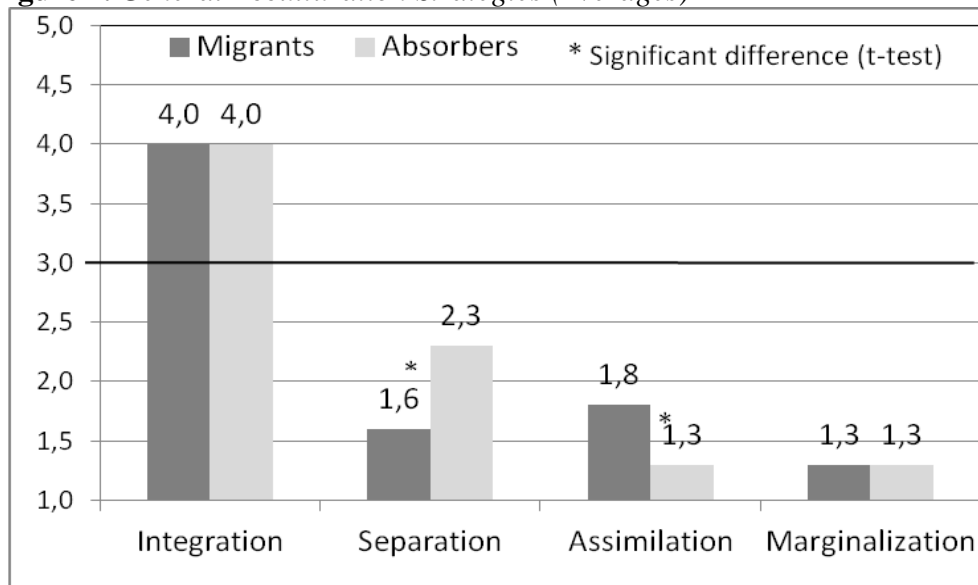
Two difficulties are hinted: First, the migrants' medium rate in their management assessment, which is significantly lower than that of the veteran residents (average 3.4 vs. 3.7, respectively); second, the medium rate in the assessment of both groups regarding participation and influence on community decisions and life – which was the lowest-rated indicator, especially and significantly among new migrants (average 3.0 vs. 3.3 among veterans).

Finally, we turn to the question of acculturation strategies and integration between the migrating and absorbing groups.

Acculturation Strategies

The resemblance between migrants and veterans in their demographic characteristics, their motives regarding the attached neighborhood and their feelings toward the joined community may indicate a common willingness to develop close relationships and integration. This willingness was examined by their acculturation strategies, as described in Berry's acculturation theory. Figure 2 compares the general strategies used by the newcomers and the veterans.

Figure 2. *General Acculturation Strategies (Averages)*



It is clear that the preferred strategy by both groups is that of integration (average 4.): sharing with the other group while keeping connections with their own group. Marginalization is a marginalized strategy in both groups (average 1.3). A significant difference between groups existed in the two other strategies of separation and assimilation. Members of the absorbing group preferred to be separated from the newcomers and to avoid a close relationship with them significantly more than the newcomers did (average 2.3 vs. 1.6), while

migrants preferred assimilation with the absorbing group significantly more than the absorbing group did (average 1.8 vs. 1.3). These gaps may be a source of conflict between them.

What strategies were preferred in various life domains? Table 3 details the strategies used by the two groups in four central domains of their joint life. An examination of the various acculturation strategies in these domains reveals a more complicated picture.

Table 3. *Acculturation Strategies in Four Domains (Averages)*

Domain	Strategy	Migrants	Absorbers	t-test	
				<i>t</i>	<i>p</i> *
Leisure activities	<i>Integration</i>	4.1	3.9	.97	.334
	<i>Separation</i>	1.8	2.2	-2.58	.010 *
	<i>Assimilation</i>	1.5	1.4	1.11	.270
	<i>Marginalization</i>	1.3	1.4	-1.74	.084
Interested in what is happening	<i>Integration</i>	4.0	3.9	.47	.641
	<i>Separation</i>	1.4	1.7	-2.45	.015 *
	<i>Assimilation</i>	1.2	1.1	.29	.771
	<i>Marginalization</i>	1.2	1.2	.24	.811
Friends preferring	<i>Integration</i>	4.3	4.1	1.23	.220
	<i>Separation</i>	1.4	1.6	-2.39	.018 *
	<i>Assimilation</i>	1.2	1.4	-1.17	.24
	<i>Marginalization</i>	1.2	1.3	-.69	.490
Interested in decision making	<i>Integration</i>	3.5	3.9	-2.67	.008 *
	<i>Separation</i>	1.9	3.9	-11.95	.000 *
	<i>Assimilation</i>	3.4	1.3	12.66	.000 *
	<i>Marginalization</i>	1.4	1.3	.30	.763

Note: * Significant difference $p < .05$.

When we examine the first three life domains – leisure activities, interest in what is happening and friends' preference – we can identify a similar pattern: The leading strategy is that of integration (averages between 3.9 and 4.3); that is, most people prefer to be involved with both groups to the same extent. Assimilation and marginalization are the less chosen strategies (averages between 1.1 and 1.5). There is a significant gap between the two groups in relation to the separation strategy, which is slightly more preferred by the absorbing group.

But when we look at the domain of decision making, we find a significant gap between migrants and absorbers: While migrants want to assimilate with the absorbers, to be part of them, at the same rate they want to integrate with

them in decision making (averages 3.4 and 3.5 respectively), the absorbers express the choice of separation strategy at the same rate as integration (averages 3.9). In this aspect, it seems, they don't really want to absorb the newcomers, and make them partners in making decisions concerning community life.

Albeit the leading strategy of integration, which is common for receiving and migrating members and is a fundamental basis for building a community of cooperation, the tendency of absorbers to use the separation strategy, and especially not to accept the newcomers as partners in decision making, may be a severe source of conflicts between the two groups, and an obstacle on the path for combining them with the community. Indeed, we know there are conflicts concerning decision making in relation to education, development, investment and other matters that sometimes even lead to court.

Explaining Satisfaction with Lives in the Community

In order to integrate the research findings we conducted a linear regression analysis in an attempt to explain the residents' general satisfaction with their lives in the community by their different group (migrants vs. absorbers), gender, acculturation strategies and their contentment with their social lives.

The whole regression model was significantly validated by the ANOVA test ($F= 16.05$, $p=0.000$), and explained 32% (R^2) of the variance of the residents' satisfaction with their lives in the community, as the dependent variable.

Table 4. *Explaining the Residents' Satisfaction with their Lives in the Community (Linear Regression)*

		Unstandardized Coefficients	Standardized Coefficients	Significance	
		B	Beta	<i>t-test</i>	<i>P</i>
(Constant)		1.889		5.065	.000*
Group ~		.215	.160	2.837	.005*
Gender ^		-.015	-.011	-.190	.850
Acculturation strategies:	<i>Integration</i>	.219	.269	3.672	.000*
	<i>Assimilation</i>	-.012	-.010	-.165	.869
	<i>Separation</i>	.013	.016	.225	.822
	<i>Marginalization</i>	.023	.018	.289	.773
Contentment with social life		.371	.423	7.208	.000*

Note: * Significant difference $p < .05$.

~ Binary variable: 1= Migrants, 0= Absorbers.

^ Binary variable: 1= Female, 0= male.

The significance of each explaining variable is shown in table 4. The migrants were found to be significantly more satisfied with their community compared to the absorbers' group of residents, and we found that the integration acculturation strategy as well as the contentment with social life significantly explained the level of satisfaction with community life. The

variables of gender and the acculturation strategies of assimilation, separation and marginalization were all found as insignificant predictors.

Hence we can say the veteran group of absorbers was less satisfied than the new migrants' group with their community life in the combined community, although the integration acculturation strategy and contentment with social life had positive contribution to the satisfaction of community life's in both groups.

Conclusions and Discussion

What can we conclude from the research findings? First, we may refer to the trend of migration into periphery regions. The periphery in Israel, as well as in other developed countries, can attract strong population with high human capital from central urban regions, as described by the notion of counter-urbanization (Champion 1998, Chipeniuk 2008). The main motives for migration are post-materialist values (Inglehart 1990) rather than material or economic considerations. The classic economic theory for migration was not confirmed in this study. The inferior economic situation in the periphery does not necessarily play a leading role in motivating people to migrate. A strong population may be attracted to periphery because of its unique pull factors, and particularly the chance to improve their quality of life: housing, environment, education and community (Cloke 2006, Paneli 2006, Inglehart 1990). Migrants to the periphery may develop a quick "place socialization" and express a strong connection to their new community (regardless of the time they have lived there).

Additionally, we may draw conclusions concerning the process of community integration. The general findings pointed out many similarities between the groups in their demographic profiles, in their basic cultural and social motivations and expectations towards living together in their joint community, and in their positive appreciation of the community life. These similarities may establish an important basis for building a joint cooperative community (Searle and Ward 1990). The tendency of both groups to use a strategy of integration in their common life may further support this process (Berry 2001, 2011).

The shared motives and intensions are the necessary conditions for integration in a united community, but they cannot guarantee the success of this process. We found that veterans tended towards a strategy of separation, especially with regards to joint decision making, while migrants preferred a strategy of assimilation and wanted to be equal partners in decision making. These findings reveal contradictions that may jeopardize the attempt to build a joint cooperative community, and may become a source of conflict.

In order to support the integration of communities, it is important to remember, first of all, that the periphery must strengthen itself by attracting a strong population. Integration in the community is a source of mutual benefit for migrants and absorbers alike. It may boost a spiral process of mutual

enrichment between the community's social capital and the migration of population with a high human capital. Communities must invest in bridging social capital between its segments and transform it into linking social capital (Colclough and Sitaraman 2005, Putnam 2000). A strategy of separation contradicts the building of a unified strong community. When new migrants are accepted into an existing community, declarations must be supported by actual acts of sharing, including granting them an equal legal status and share decision-making privileges; migrants should not be treated as strangers. The migrants, in turn, have to understand the host community's fears of changing old traditions and ways of life, the fear of gentrification.

This study shows that even in a case of relatively similar groups, and not only in cases of very different ones (as in Berry's theory about ethno-cultural minority migrants, Berry 2001) – the process of integrating new migrants into an absorbing community is not simple, nor one-dimensional. It is an ongoing common, developing, dynamic, and complicated process of mutual adaptation and pluralism.

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