INPLASY

Determinants of migrants' integration in Switzerland: A scoping literature review protocol

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INTRODUCTION

*R*eview question / Objective The aim of this review was to provide an up-to-date snapshot of research on the determinants of migrants' integration in Switzerland. Specifically, this work sought to highlight the evolution of scientific interest and the fields of study engaged, to identify the migrant groups being studied, and to categorize and describe the facilitators and hindrances to the integration of migrants in Switzerland. Therefore, this review addressed the following research questions:
1. How has the integration of migrants in Switzerland been studied?
1.1. How has the interest on the integration of migrants evolved through the years?
1.2. Which scientific fields were engaged in studying the determinants of migrants' integration in Switzerland?
2. Which migrant groups (i.e., country of origin, age categories, gender, and migratory status) were considered in the study of integration determinants in Switzerland?
3. What aspects influenced (i.e., promoted or hindered) the integration of migrants in Switzerland?

Background Migrants' prevalence and major input into Switzerland's structural functioning (nccr - on the move, 2024; Merçay et al., 2023), elevated their integration to a matter of prime political and scientific interest. While Swiss migration policies established a restrictive and inegalitarian landscape of integration (e.g., Arrighi, 2017; Mexi, 2023; Mexi et al., 2021), previous research pointed to drivers and strategies benefiting migrants' integration (e.g., Bennour & Manatschal, 2019). Accordingly, in a quest for reducing inequalities (International Organization for Migration, 2024),

research on factors allowing migrants to be incorporated to the receiving society might enable to promote an alternative and more inclusive approach towards migratory regulations. Thus, the aim of the present scoping review was to map the facilitating and hindering factors of migrants' integration in Switzerland.

Integration processes were extensively debated at theoretical level (Rauhut & Laine, 2023). These models considered integration processes through the negotiation and enactment of new cultural values (e.g., Alba & Nee, 2003; Berry, 1980; Park et al., 1925), relationships with nationals of the receiving society (e.g., Bourhis et al., 1997), and economic integration (e.g., Linjean et al., 2024). Past research further identified personal determinants favoring migrants' integration, such as their language skills, levels of education, and work experiences (Delporte & Piracha, 2018; Zorlu & Hartog, 2018). Social acquaintances, in the receiving society or in the homeland, also favored integration, through the emotional support one received (Barglowski & Bonfert, 2022; Tournczky-Ruiz & Brunarska, 2018). Moreover, migrant rights and naturalization policies influenced their experiences and prospects of integration (Gathmann & Garbers, 2023; Huddleston & Vink, 2013).

In Switzerland, migration policies focused on the country's economic interests (Mahning et al., 2005). Specifically, built upon the slogan encouraging and requiring, the Swiss integration policy encompasses financial support for local immigrant initiatives, and requirements they must meet to be considered incorporated and avoid a weakening of their residency status (e.g., Berisha & Domingues, 2021; Federal Center for Migration, 2017; Kurt, 2021). In this perspective, Swiss migration policies aimed for rapid integration, ensuring that migrants are less dependent on public structures, which in turn was achieved by limiting individual ambitions (Otmani, 2024). Particularly, as it addresses migrants according to their country of provenance (see Leanza et al., 2001), this governmental approach raised issues and inequalities of integration.

Swiss migration policies failed to appreciate migrants' lived realities, favoring instead a normative vision of integration (Mexi, 2023). Exploring migrants' everyday experiences in Switzerland has, however, enabled to identify alternative strategies and determinants that are beneficial to their integration. Similar to other countries, previous research showed that the ability to speak a national language, the sharing of leisure activities with Swiss people, and the reasons for migration, influence their integration process (e.g., Buser et al., 2021; Schütz, 2024;

Spies & Schmidt-Cartan, 2016). Furthermore, integration conditions appeared to be highly variable between Swiss regions. For instance, Bennour and Manatschal (2019) showed that cantons with less inclusive policies, more xenophobia, and heavily represented by conservative right-wing parties entailed more integration hardships for migrants.

Rationale   Insights into the opportunities and challenges of integration experienced by migrants ought to be framed as sources of information for migration policies, as well as catalysts for embracing new perspectives on integration (Allen et al., 2019; Scholten, 2018). In the Swiss integration context, this might enable the identification of specific needs and resources of particular migrant groups. For instance, integration challenges varied according to age, gender, migration status, and motivations underlying the migration process (e.g., Anghel, 2012; Mahmood, 2022; Lacroix & Bertrand, 2024). Despite the widespread scientific interest around migrants' integration to Switzerland, to the best of our knowledge, no review has charted which migrant groups were researched or the determinants that influenced their integration into the country.

METHODS

Strategy of data synthesis   The search strategies employed in the present scoping review were based on the methodological guidelines for scoping reviews proposed by the Johanna Briggs Institute (i.e., JBI; Peters et al., 2020). A preliminary search was undertaken on the MeSH thesaurus and Google Scholar, to identify articles relevant to the aims of the present scoping literature review and index associated terms. Based on a Population-Concept-Context framework, the present scoping review focused on migrants (i.e., Population), determinants of integration (i.e., Concept), and Switzerland (i.e., Context; see Peters et al., 2020). Peer-reviewed research articles and grey literature were searched between October 22 and 23, 2024 on the following electronic databases: EBSCOhost (including Atls Religion Database, Bibliography of Asian Studies, Business Source Premier, CINAHL, EconLit, ERIC, Historical Abstracts, Regional Business News, SocINDEX), Medline ALL Ovid, ProQuest, PsycNet (including PsycArticles, and PsycInfo), PubMed, ScienceDirect, and Web of Science Core Collection. Within these electronic databases, articles on migrant populations were searched using the terms migrant, immigrant, refugee, asylum seeker, political refugee, displaced, foreign-born. Furthermore, the core concept of this

scoping review was searched by the terms integration, social integration, assimilation, and acculturation, as well as by their synonyms. The term Switzerland and authors' Swiss affiliations were also sought out to specify the research context. Boolean operators were used to articulate these search terms, and wildcat operators were inserted as suffixes to capture all possible permutations. For example, these terms were searched within the Web of Science Core Collection as: (((TI=((migrant* OR immigrant* OR refugee* OR "asylum seeker*" OR "political refugee*" OR displaced OR "foreign-born"))) AND ALL=((integration OR assimilation OR acculturation OR integration OR "social integration" OR inclusion OR adaptation OR cohesion OR adjustment OR "cultural integration" OR "economic integration" OR "community integration"))) AND AD=((Switzerland OR swiss))). No additional filter was applied to the systematic search of electronic databases.

Literature sources resulting from the automatic search of electronic databases were initially uploaded on rayyan.ai. A Microsoft Excel file was then prepared, including columns corresponding to the sections of the studies to be screened. Based on JBI guidelines, a two-stage study inclusion strategy was performed, including screening of study titles and abstracts, and full text (Peters et al., 2020). The same set of inclusion and exclusion criteria was adopted for both screening phases.

Eligibility criteria   Studies were eligible (i.e., inclusion criteria) if they: focused on migrant populations, illustrated promoting aspects or barriers to integration into the receiving society, and were conducted in Switzerland. Studies were only included if written in English, French, German or Italian.

Studies were not eligible (i.e., exclusion criteria) if they: did not include primary data (e.g., book chapters, commentary or discussion articles, letters to the editor), did not directly relate to migrant groups, considered aspects of integration other than facilitators and barriers, or were conducted outside Switzerland. For cross-national studies, only Swiss content was considered.

Studies' characteristics, such as year of publication or geographical location, were not considered as inclusion or exclusion criteria. Consistent with the descriptive objectives of this scoping literature review, the quality and methodology of the included studies were not assessed nor considered as an eligibility criterion.

Source of evidence screening and selection
Following the methodological guidelines of the Johanna Briggs Institute, studies were included in

a two-stage strategy (Peters et al., 2020). Duplicates were manually removed from the set of articles obtained from the systematic search of electronic databases. After duplicates removal, titles and abstracts were screened, and the full text of the remaining articles was evaluated according to the eligibility criteria. Of the included studies, reference lists were searched for additional articles to be included. Articles meeting all inclusion criteria were then considered in the data extraction phase.

These two screening phases were conducted between October and December 2024. The screening process was independently completed by two authors. After screening, inter-judge confidence indices were calculated (i.e., % agreement and Cohen's K). Disagreements concerning the inclusion of articles were solved through discussion.

Data management   Two data management systems were employed during the literature source selection process. Initially, the rayyan.ai platform was used to automatically identify and manually remove duplicates. A Microsoft Excel file was then prepared to screen the remaining items. Each column corresponded to a section of the studies. This document also included columns relating to inclusion criteria, within which authors were asked to indicate the presence or absence of the criterion and justify it. The same document was sent to the two authors in charge of screening, and an aggregated document was drawn up at the end of the process to assess inter-judge consistency and support discussions in cases of disagreement.

Reporting results / Analysis of the evidence To address research questions, three categories of information will be extracted from the included studies. First, general study information will be extracted, including: authors, year of publication (research question 1.1.), journal of publication (research question 1.2.), and Swiss study location (when specified). Second, to answer research question 2., characteristics of the study populations will be extracted, including: country of origin, age (i.e., category proportions, range, mean, and standard deviation), gender (i.e., proportion of women and men), socio-economic status (i.e., which indicators), and migratory status (i.e., residence permits). Third, information on the determinants (i.e., drivers and barriers) of integration will be extracted (research question 3.).

Presentation of the results The results of the literature search process will be presented in a Figure, according to the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analysis

extension for Scoping Reviews guidelines (i.e., PRISMA-ScR; Tricco et al., 2018). Additionally, a table including the search equations used in the electronic databases will be provided in the supplementary materials of the research article.

Aligning with the aims of this scoping literature review, results will be presented in a narrative fashion. After presenting the temporal evolution and fields of study of the determinants of migrants' integration in Switzerland, a Figure will outline the characteristics of the studied groups (i.e., frequency histogram of socio-demographic categories extracted from the included studies). General study information and sample socio-demographic characteristics will also be presented in a table. Next, the determinants of integration will be presented both in a table and textually. The table will categorize the determinants, and the text will describe them. Examples from the included studies will enrich the description of the different categories and sub-categories of integration determinants.

Language restriction Only English-, French-, German-, and Italian-written research articles and reports were considered.

Country(ies) involved Switzerland.

Keywords Migrants' integration; Determinants; Switzerland.

Dissemination plans This protocol anticipates the publication of a scoping literature review article. The results of this literature review will also be part of the first author's doctoral thesis.

Contributions of each author
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