

Religious Segmented Assimilation: The Case of Integration of Western Immigrants in the Israeli Secondary Education System

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Abstract

Immigrants from Western countries (speakers of English, French and Spanish) arrive in Israel with high human and economic capital as compared to immigrants from other countries. The aim of the study was to examine inter-generational differences in rates of eligibility for matriculation certificates among three groups of immigrants from the West. The study was conducted on the basis of Ministry of Education data. The sample included 52,043 students who completed 12th grade in 2011.

The findings of the study indicate variance among the three groups, both in terms of rates of eligibility for matriculation certificates and in inter-generational dynamics. Spanish speakers had the highest rates of matriculation eligibility among the three groups. Among the second generation of Spanish- and French speakers the rates of eligibility for matriculation certificates were higher, compared to the first generation. In contrast, English speaking immigrants were found to develop in the opposite direction: rates of eligibility in the second generation were lower than in the first generation, after controlling for background variables.

These trends are explained mainly by differences in the patterns of integration in the educational streams chosen by the three immigrant groups. These findings correspond to the segmented assimilation theory. However, in addition to the classic version of segmented assimilation theory, which contended that immigrants undergo assimilation in the various socio-economic strata of the society according to the human capital they bring with them, our findings indicate **religious segmented assimilation** as well. Our findings show that religiosity plays a crucial role in educational achievements among western immigrants.

Keywords: ethnicity, immigration, religious segmented assimilation, educational system in Israel

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