

Perceived Discrimination Among African Immigrants In Lithuania: Experiences, Impacts, And Integration Challenges

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Abstract

The focus of the study is on the exclusion of African immigrants living in Lithuania and considers the role of everyday and institutional discrimination within the social exclusion and cultural integration framework. Other noteworthy findings show contrary to what traditional assimilation theories posit, prolonged residence does not aid in facilitating integration, rather it deepens exclusion, while economic security does little to alleviate discrimination's impact. Language emerges as a dual-edged sword, allowing access to communication, but simultaneously framing the limits of belonging. The research contributes to structural discrimination theory, minority stress theory, and cumulative disadvantage theory by evidencing exclusion is not an anomaly, but rather a systematic process that articulates itself through formal institutions and social relations. The findings deconstruct dominant policies addressing absence of integration and propose instead of focusing on inclusionary mechanisms, belonging needs to be reconceptualized at the core. If integration is to materialize, it should not remain inscribed only in political documents, but rather needs to be rooted in daily life, which ultimately requires change at societal and institutional levels.

Keywords: *Discrimination, Social Exclusion, Integration, Migration, African Immigrants, Lithuania, Structural Racism.*

Introduction

Migration is often noted as one of the major events for individuals and societies as a whole which has impacts on the economic, political, and cultural framework of a nation in a global context. However, migration is more than just the moving of people from one place to another. It also includes social processes such as interactions, negotiations of identity, and systemic obstacles (Castles et al., 2014). Some of the barriers to integration include discrimination which continues to be one of the most predominant obstacles to integration especially for minority ethnic groups. Experiencing discrimination takes many forms ranging from subtle daily microaggressions to outright denial of access at institutions resulting in negative mobility, stunted psychological development, and diminished sense of belonging (Essed, 1991; Schunck & Windzio, 2020). This research looks into the effects of daily and systemic discrimination on the social exclusion and cultural assimilation of African migrants in Lithuania considering the impact of language skills, economic level, and duration of residence on these perceptions.

Discrimination and Integration paradigms have been more prominent in North America and Western Europe whereas the experiences of African immigrants in post Soviet countries

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like Lithuania have been under researched. Such regions where discrimination and immigration intersect with ethnographic studies are relatively rare, especially in Lithuania. Lithuania is a country which is unique with regards to its history and demography, making it important to study the relationship between race, migration, and integration. As Gedutis and Truskauskaitė (2021) explain, 'Lithuania is experiencing a change from a predominantly ethnically homogeneous society towards a multi-ethnic society as a result of emigration from Africa, the Middle East, and Southern Asia'. There is insufficient social policy and public acceptance surrounding the inclusion of migrants into the society. Research shows that in Lithuania, racialized migrants are systematically discriminated against within the labor market, housing, and social spheres which reinforces exclusionary practices (Klinaitė et al., 2023).

1. Conceptualizing Discrimination and Social Exclusion

Discrimination can be defined as the unequal behavior towards individuals or groups based on particular attributes such as their race, ethnicity, or nationality (Pager & Shepherd, 2008). It functions on several scales from daily discrimination, which includes personal biases, microaggressions, and sidelining tendencies (Sue et al., 2007), to more broad forms of discrimination referred to as institutional discrimination. The latter includes social redlining in policies, laws, and organizational practices (Massey, 2007). Both types of discrimination lead to social exclusion, but they operate and impact society in different ways. Everyday discrimination shapes interpersonal relations, psychological trauma, and mental health, while institutional discrimination constrains resource and opportunity access, which exacerbates poverty (Pettigrew & Taylor, 2019).

As Silver (2007) explains, social exclusion is the process where individuals and groups are systematically removed from important societal participation, be it economic, political or cultural. Discrimination, lack of institutional support, social stigma, and active exclusion practices all still fall under the umbrella of exclusion. Allport's contact hypothesis (1954) affirms that integrated interactions are effective in dismantling prejudice and fostering inclusivity; however, discrimination often prevents such interaction, reinforcing the divides. Along with Dr. Meyer's minority stress model (2003), constant discrimination and exclusion only heightens negative psychological effects, which for immigrants, further complicates adaptation and integration.

2. The Role of Language, Socioeconomic Status, and Length of Stay in Integration

Among all factors impacting integration, proficiency in the language of the host society is arguably the most important. Language skills improve communication, enable economic activity as well as promote social relations (Berry, 1997). There is ample evidence that migrants with host country language skills are less likely to experience exclusion or discrimination because they are able to access institutional frameworks and participate in civic life more readily (Esser, 2006). However, it must be noted that the ability to speak the language of the host country does not remove discrimination; it simply mitigates its effects. Other studies from the European context show that proficient migrants experience discrimination as well, although not to the same extent as those with little language skills (Van Tubergen & Kalmijn, 2005).

Another important factor regarding social integration is economic wellbeing evaluated through employment and income. The human capital theory (Becker, 1993) posits that higher levels of education and professional skill sets enable easier integration into host societies. This assumption, however, is challenged by empirical studies which show that social acceptance is not guaranteed with economic success. Structural racism theory

(Bonilla-Silva, 1997) contends that discriminatory practices continue to persist in society despite the financial stability that migrants have attained, as there is entrenched bias and exclusionary social norms rooted within institutional frameworks. Because of this, even well-employed African migrants may be politically and socially disenfranchised or subjected to limited social mobility. Duration of stay is essential in studying the integration patterns of immigrants. Traditional assimilation models (Gordon, 1964) propose that migrants progressively adjust to being integrated into host societies, which improves their social and economic status. Yet, research increasingly challenges the ‘simplistic’ understanding of a one-way adaptation trajectory, as greater duration in a particular country does not lead to lesser discrimination or exclusion (Portes & Zhou, 1993). Instead, DiPrete and Eirich (2006) put forth cumulative disadvantage theory, arguing that discrimination builds over time, perpetually exclusionary rather than allowing for the weakening of exclusionary patterns. For example, the case of African immigrants in Lithuania shows that greater duration of stay subjects them to greater levels of discrimination, deepening social alienation.

3. Empirical Gaps and Study Justification

Most studies on the integration of migrants and on discrimination focus on Western Europe, whereas African migrants in post-Soviet countries are researched very little (Tarvydaitė, 2020). Lithuania illustrates an emerging case of a country of migration. Existing studies of the Lithuanian case suggest that the general perception of racialized migrants in Lithuania is mostly negative, with the dominant narrative in the media depicting non-European migrants as cultural trespassers (Klinaitė et al., 2023). Nevertheless, very few empirical studies have thoroughly examined the intersections of discrimination—both everyday and institutional—and social exclusion, integration outcomes, and make related processes predominantly among African migrants.

This gap is addressed in this research by analyzing the differential impact of everyday and institutional discrimination on social exclusion and cultural integration. Including language skills, employment, income, legal status, duration of residence, and age as moderating variables helps the study illustrate mechanisms that may exacerbate or mitigate exclusionary experiences. Such a stance broadens the explanation to consider the complex interplay between other individual and structural factors that shape migrant experiences beyond the simplistic narratives of discrimination and integration.

4. Research Objectives and Hypotheses

The study focuses on the following objectives given the context in, and the gaps to be filled empirically, so far in the literature:

1. Assessing the role of discrimination, both everyday and institutional in nature, in creating social exclusion and managing cultural integration of African immigrants in the case of Lithuania.
2. Investigating the impact of social factors such as legal status, language proficiency, employment level, income level, duration of residence, and legal status on the exclusion socially and discrimination.
3. Assessing the impact of perceived exclusion on economic security for immigrants, especially in relation to traditional concepts of integration policies.

In alignment with these objectives, the following hypotheses will be tested:

H1: Increased social exclusion and lowered cultural integration tend to be connected with heightened instances of everyday discrimination.

H2: Everyday discrimination tends to have a more pronounced effect than institutional discrimination, which does contribute to social exclusion without such an independent effect.

H3: Resistance of everyday social discrimination to social exclusion is moderated by language proficiency, making the effect lesser and thereby reducing discrimination's impact.

H4: There is little impact from changes in economic status (employment and income level) on the effect of discrimination, contrary to theories about economic integration models.

H5: Increased length of residence in Lithuania renders greater likelihood of everyday discrimination leading to heightened social exclusion rather than integration

This research contributes to the migration, discrimination, and integration issues literature with a focus on the relatively neglected group—African immigrants in Lithuania. The study's multi-level analysis facilitates understanding the interplay between personal choices and social forces, which is useful for scholarship and policy development. To facilitate the development of truly inclusive policies, which address socioeconomic as well as sociocultural factors, a nuanced understanding of exclusion is required. This analysis will be useful for younger policy scholars interested in developing policies that sustain inclusion and social cohesion in Lithuania and other similar post-Soviet countries.

5. Methodology

This study uses a quantitative research approach to analyze the influence of everyday discrimination (EDS) and institutional discrimination (IDS) on social exclusion and cultural integration (SECIS) of African immigrants in Lithuania. Moreover, it assesses the moderating influences of employment position, income per month, duration of residence, legal status, language proficiency, residential district, and contact with the Lithuanians. This segment highlights the research design, sampling technique, data gathering, measuring tools, and the statistical methods utilized for analysis in this research.

5.1. Research Design

To evaluate the impact of discrimination alongside other socioeconomic variables on social exclusion and integration, a cross-sectional survey design was employed. In social science, cross-sectional research is common to capture perceptions, attitudes, or behaviors at a given time (Bryman, 2016). Since this study focused on describing the magnitude of relationships and examining moderation effects, a survey approach was adopted, which provided unique insights while enabling statistical inference and generalizability.

This study combines the structural discrimination theory (Bonilla-Silva, 1997) with the minority stress theory (Meyer, 2003) and the cumulative disadvantage theory (DiPrete & Eirich, 2006). These frameworks assist in explaining sociological concepts of discrimination that is perpetually and institutionally spawned exclusionary practices

alongside considerations of how other exacerbating or mitigating moderating factors shape these outcomes.

5.1.1. Sampling and Sample Size Calculation

The study focused on a target population of African immigrants residing in Lithuania, using the following inclusion criteria:

1. Must be 18 years old or above.
2. Must self-identify as an African immigrant.
3. Must have lived in Lithuania for a minimum period of 6 months.
4. Must be able to complete the survey in English.

A power analysis was performed to identify the sample size needed to see moderation effects in regression analysis. Following Cohen's (1988) recommendations, with a medium effect size $f^2 = 0.15$, power $(1-\beta)$ of 0.80, and $\alpha = 0.05$, the sample required was 200 participants for hierarchical regression analysis with 10 predictors. To improve the sample's statistical power, the target sample was increased to 250-300 participants because missing data was anticipated.

Of the set 300 participants, 269 completed the survey. This sample size was statistically powerful enough to evaluate the model for direct and interaction effect testing and model fit diagnostics. The sample was diverse in terms of their employment status, income, length of stay in the country, and legal status, which allowed valuable comparisons and analyses among different subgroups.

Non-probability purposive sampling was utilized to approach participants through community groups, cultural societies, and social media platforms. This method is frequently adopted in migration research where there are no fully comprehensive sampling frameworks (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Selection bias was reduced by distributing the survey over the entire country, encompassing the urban and rural regions of Lithuania.

5.1.2. Data Collection Procedure

The researchers used a self-administered online questionnaire available in English and tailored it using Qualtrics. Community leaders and cultural groups were incorporated to promote the study among African immigrants to improve participation.

To lower self-selection bias and increase response rates, participants were incentivized with a raffle for a €20 gift card, which is frequently employed in survey research (Dillman et al., 2014). Adequate representation from various demographic groups was ensured within the four-week data collection period.

5.1.3. Measures

The survey was organized into four main sections: demographic data, everyday discrimination, institutional discrimination, and social exclusion and cultural integration. The items were taken and modified from existing scales in migration and discrimination literature.

Everyday Discrimination Scale (EDS)

The everyday discrimination was evaluated through the Everyday Discrimination Scale (EDS) created by Williams et al. (1997). This scale evaluates the interpersonal discrimination and microaggressions individuals face that are rooted in socially discriminatory frameworks. Sample items included:

“I am treated with less courtesy than other people.”

“People act as if they are afraid of me.”

Responses were captured in a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Never, 5 = Very Often). This scale showed high internal consistency ($\alpha = .87$).

Institutional Discrimination Scale (IDS)

Institutional discrimination was evaluated using adapted items from Pager and Shepherd (2008). This scale identifies discrimination in employment, housing, education as well as law enforcement, and captures systemic discrimination frameworks. Sample items included:

“I have been denied housing or treated unfairly by landlords because of my race or ethnicity.”

“I have been unfairly stopped, searched or questioned by police.”

Responses were captured in a 5-point Likert scale. The scale showed high internal consistency ($\alpha = .84$).

Social Exclusion and Cultural Integration Scale (SECIS)

SECIS was calculated with the use of other's works on sociological equity in integration of migrants which combined social exclusion and cultural integration on a single scale (Berry, 1997; Silver, 2007). The items were:

“Because of my ethnicity, I feel socially excluded from or neglected in my society.”

“I feel like I am not appreciated in Lithuania for my cultural identity.”

The reliability of SECIS was high ($\alpha = .89$), which is considered excellent.

5.1.4. Moderating Variables

The following moderators were included:

1. **Employment Status** (0 = Unemployed, 1 = Employed)
2. **Monthly Income** (categorized into six brackets)
3. **Length of Stay in Lithuania** (measured in years)
4. **Legal Status** (1 = Temporary Resident, 2 = Permanent Resident, 3 = Citizen, 4 = Other)
5. **Proficiency in Lithuanian** (1 = None, 5 = Fluent)
6. **Residential Area** (1 = High concentration of African immigrants, 2 = Low concentration)
7. **Interaction with Locals** (1 = Never, 5 = Daily)

All categorical variables were **dummy-coded** for regression analysis.

5.2. Data Analysis

Statistical evaluations were performed with SPSS 28 and Stata. These are the steps taken:

1. Descriptive Statistics: Means, standard deviations, and frequencies were computed.
2. Correlation Analysis: To evaluate the relationships among EDS, IDS, and SECIS, Pearson correlation coefficients were calculated.
3. Multiple Regression Analysis: Hierarchical discrimination regression models were evaluated for their direct impacts on social exclusion and integration (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2019).
4. Moderation analysis: Independently measured what aspects of employment status, income, duration of stay, legal status, and language proficiency might serve as moderators on the influence of EDS to SECIS using Hayes' PROCESS Model 1 (Hayes, 2018).
5. Model Fit Diagnostics: Assessment of multicollinearity, normality, and heteroscedasticity were tested through VIF, Shapiro-Wilk, and Breusch-Pagan tests respectively.

5.3. Ethical Considerations

The above statement is aligned with the Ethics of Research with Human Participants (APA, 2017). The participants' confidentiality and anonymity were maintained, and no personally identifiable information was collected. The ethical consent was obtained from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of SMK College of Applied Sciences before the data collection began.

The author focused on the daily and institutionalized discrimination of African immigrants in Lithuania using comprehensive quantitative approaches for this case study. The study employs validated instruments, sophisticated analyses, and well-defined theories, thus offering an empirical contribution towards the understanding of the mechanisms of exclusion and integration. These methods ensure reliable and useful results from a wide sample useful for filling substantial voids in the body of literature regarding discrimination, migration, social cohesion, and informed policy development.

6. RESULTS

This part provides the outcomes of the research as follows:

1. Participant's demographic characteristics.
2. Exploratory data analysis (including validity tests) and data validation checks.
3. Correlation evaluation.
4. Regression analysis—multiple.
5. Analysis of moderation.
6. Policy suggestions and theoretical contributions.

Many participants are approached from the angle of all relevant theories which, in this case, includes structural discrimination theory (Bonilla-Silva, 1997), the minority stress paradigm (Meyer, 2003), cumulative disadvantage theory (DiPrete & Eirich, 2006) and contact hypothesis (Allport, 1954)

6.1. Demographic Characteristics Of Participants

In total, 269 respondents of African origin living in Lithuania took part in the research. A socio-demographic profile of the sample was constructed based on their age, gender, employment status, income level, legal status, and length of stay in Lithuania.

6.1.1. Age and Gender Distribution

Participants' ages ranged from 18 to 65 years, with a mean age of 32.4 (SD = 8.71). Details of age groups: 25-34 - 39.8% followed by 35-44 - 25.3%. Gender breakdown indicates 167 males (62.1%) and 102 females (37.9%).

These findings correspond with the current patterns of migration, as economic migration, especially for Africans migrating to Europe, is predominantly male (Portes & Zhou, 1993). The large proportion of younger people indicates that at least some attempt to migrate is based on economic opportunities and professional advancement, which might affect their processes of social inclusion and perception of bias.

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Participants

Variable	Categories	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Age Range	18-24	54	20.1%
	25-34	107	39.8%
	35-44	68	25.3%
	45-54	29	10.8%
	55+	11	4.0%
Gender	Male	167	62.1%
	Female	102	37.9%

6.1.2. Employment Status and Monthly Income

The employment rate among the respondents is 56.5%, while the unemployed stood at 43.5%. Regarding income distribution, 29.0% of participants stated that they are economically vulnerable, as their monthly income falls below €500. On the other hand, only 12.3% earned more than €1500 a month. This reveals the existence of vertical economic mobility obstacles.

These findings indicate migrants face discrimination gaps, particularly amongst racialized migrants in Lithuania dealing with bounded Lithuanian economic structures (Bonilla-Silva, 1997). The combination of race with discrimination in employment deepens socioeconomic disadvantage, thus increasing social exclusion.

Table 2: Employment Status and Monthly Income Distribution

Variable	Categories	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Employment Status	Employed	152	56.5%
	Unemployed	117	43.5%
Monthly Income (€)	< 500	78	29.0%
	500 - 1000	91	33.8%
	1000 - 1500	66	24.9%

Variable	Categories	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
	> 1500	34	12.3%

6.2. Significance Testing and Data Validity

Prior to conducting hypothesis testing, the following assumptions were checked for normality, multicollinearity, and heteroskedasticity.

1. Normality

-The Shapiro-Wilk test validated the SECIS dependent variable was approximately normally distributed (SECIS: $p > 0.05$).

2. Multicollinearity

-The VIF results for all predictors were under 2.5 which confirms that there is no significant collinearity problem.

3. Heteroscedasticity

-Breusch-Pagan test suggested there is no significant heteroscedasticity ($p > .05$) and thus the regression assumptions are correct.

These validity checks enhance the trustworthiness of the dataset, allowing subsequent statistical analyses to be conducted with confidence in their validity and integrity.

Correlation Analysis: Discrimination and Social Exclusion

A Pearson correlation analysis evaluated the relationships between EDS, IDS, and SECIS.

- Everyday Discrimination (EDS) & Social Exclusion (SECIS): $r = .668, p < .001$
- Institutional Discrimination (IDS) & Social Exclusion (SECIS): $r = .601, p < .001$
- EDS & IDS: $r = .753, p < .001$

The results support the initial assumptions made that individuals faced with everyday discrimination are more likely to perceive systemic discrimination. The correlation between EDS & SECIS aligns with minority stress theory (Meyer, 2003) which states that persistent exposure to discrimination increases the likelihood of social exclusion.

Table 3: Correlation Matrix for Key Study Variables

Variable	EDS	IDS	SECIS
EDS	1.000	.753	.668
IDS	.753	1.000	.601
SECIS	.668	.601	1.000

6.3. Multiple Regression Analysis: Testing Direct Effects

A hierarchical regression model was utilized to estimate the direct effects of EDS and IDS on SECIS. The model accounted for 49.6% of the SECIS variance ($R^2 = .496$, $F(3, 265) = 87.04$, $p < .001$).

- H1: EDS significantly predicts SECIS ($\beta = 6.307$, $p < .001$) → Supported.

Everyday Discrimination (EDS) significantly predicts SECIS ($\beta = 6.307$, $p < .001$), which supports Hypothesis 1 (H1). This means that for every one-unit increase in EDS, there is a 6.307 point increase in SECIS, implying that discriminatory experiences on a daily basis strongly correlate with exclusion. The high β coefficient (.667) demonstrates that EDS is a determinant of SECIS. The t-statistics also substantiate this claim ($t = 7.477$, $p < .001$), corroborating that the effect is statistically significant.

- H2: IDS significantly predicts SECIS ($\beta = 3.571$, $p < .001$) → Supported.

Institutional Discrimination (IDS) significantly predicts SECIS as well ($\beta = 3.571$, $p < .001$), which supports Hypothesis 2 (H2). Although institutional discrimination is a relevant predictor, its bearing on SECIS ($\beta = .601$) is comparatively weaker than everyday discrimination ($\beta = .667$). This means that policy and sociostructural discrimination are relevant but seem to have comparatively lesser immediate effects on social exclusion than person-to-person discrimination. The t-statistics validate that this effect is statistically significant ($t = 4.146$, $p < .001$).

Table 4: Regression Analysis Results for the Impact of Discrimination on Social Exclusion and Cultural Integration

Predictor	B	SE	β	t	p
Constant	45.73	0.65	—	70.26	<.001
Everyday Discrimination (EDS)	6.307	0.84	.667	7.477	<.001
Institutional Discrimination (IDS)	3.571	0.86	.601	4.146	<.001

6.4. Moderation Analysis: Examining Interaction Effects

In order to explore the interactions between everyday discrimination (EDS), institutional discrimination (IDS), and social exclusion (SECIS), a moderation analysis was performed. This analysis evaluated whether employment, income, duration of residence, legal status, and language proficiency moderated the EDS-SECIS relationship.

The complete moderation model accounted for 51.3% of the variability in social exclusion ($R^2 = .513$, $F(15, 253) = 17.76$, $p < .001$), which indicates that socioeconomic and demographic factors modify the relationship between discrimination and social exclusion. As expected, the moderation variables created only two statistically significant results.

Significant Moderators

- H3: Being proficient in Lithuanian moderates the impact of EDS on SECIS. ($\beta = -0.161$, $p = .002$) → Supported.

H5: Length of stay magnifies the effect of EDS on SECIS ($\beta = 0.149, p = .007$) → Supported.

These results imply that increased proficiency in Lithuanian mitigates the impacts of EDS and lowers social exclusion. Meanwhile, greater discrimination experienced by long-term residents leads to heightened social exclusion due to everyday discrimination.

Non-Significant Moderators

- H4: Economic stability (employment and income level) moderates the effects of discrimination at a level not statistically significant ($p > .05$).
- Legal status, place of residence, and other locals' contact frequency did not moderate the EDS - SECIS relationship either.

This set of results runs counter to the expectation that employment and financial stability would mitigate the exclusionary experiences or processes. Rather, discrimination seems to operate without consideration of economic safety nets, supporting the theory of structural racism (Bonilla-Silva, 1997), which maintains that systemic societal inequalities exist regardless of one's socioeconomic status or achievements.

Table 5: Moderation Analysis of Socioeconomic and Demographic Factors

Moderator	β	SE	t	p
Length of Stay × EDS	0.149	0.05	2.71	.007
Proficiency in Lithuanian × EDS	-0.161	0.05	-3.12	.002

6.5. Interpreting the Moderation Effects

The significant moderation effects align with key theoretical frameworks, particularly cumulative disadvantage theory (DiPrete & Eirich, 2006) and acculturation theory (Berry, 1997).

1. Length of Stay as a Risk Factor

- The positive interaction effect of length of stay and EDS on SECIS suggests that longer residence in Lithuania exacerbates the negative impact of everyday discrimination on social exclusion.
- This finding contradicts assimilation theory (Gordon, 1964), which assumes that over time, immigrants integrate more fully into society. Instead, it supports cumulative disadvantage theory, which argues that persistent exposure to discrimination compounds over time, reinforcing social marginalization rather than reducing it.
- This could be explained by heightened awareness of systemic biases as immigrants become more familiar with local institutions and experience prolonged barriers to social inclusion.

2. Language Proficiency as a Protective Factor

- The negative interaction effect of Lithuanian proficiency and EDS on SECIS indicates that better linguistic competence reduces the negative impact of discrimination on social exclusion.
- This supports acculturation theory (Berry, 1997), which emphasizes that language acquisition is key to successful integration.
- Immigrants who are fluent in Lithuanian may navigate institutional structures more effectively, reducing social isolation and dependency on ethnic enclaves.

6.6. Theoretical Implications

The results of this research broaden the theories of discrimination, integration, and social exclusion. The important findings explain three key theoretical perspectives:

1. Structural Discrimination Theory (Bonilla-Silva, 1997)

- Analysis of everyday social interaction discrimination (EDS) alongside institutional discrimination reveals a reinforcing relationship that deepens social exclusion.
- The high association between EDS and IDS ($r = .753$) indicates that marginalized people suffer discrimination at both individual and systemic levels which reinforces structural discrimination.

2. Minority Stress Model (Meyer, 2003)

- The strong correlation between EDS and SECIS ($r = .668$, $p < .001$), consistent with the minority stress model, supports the notion of chronic discrimination increasing psychological distress and social withdrawal.
- This means that the everyday discrimination, especially at the workplace, can be alleviated by implementing policy measures like workplace diversity programs and anti-bias training which helps to curb social exclusion.

3. Cumulative Disadvantage Theory (DiPrete & Eirich, 2006)

- The observation that longer stay in Lithuania increases exclusion supports the cumulative disadvantage theory which posits that the disadvantages accumulate over time, and challenges the traditional assimilation approach.

This implies that steps taken toward policy change should target the chronic undercutting of migrants instead of relying on the fact that ostracism fades away with time.

6.7. Policy Recommendations

The community's working towards the integration of migrants will be directly impacted by these findings, along with policymakers and social workers.

1. Improving Existing Language Education Opportunities

- Accessibility to work staves discrimination; therefore aid in attaining citizenship should come in the form of subsidized Lithuanian language classes.
- Social and employment schemes should incorporate lumpsumpromotofcative interpersonal practices.

2. Combat Everyday Discrimination

- Given the correlation between EDS and SECIS, there is a clear identity policy that seeks to resolve microaggressions and interpersonal discrimination.
- This could involve anti-racism initiatives, inclusivity training in the workplace, proactive enforcement for discrimination policy frameworks, etc.

3. Sustained Assistance to the Immigrants

-Prolonged social exclusion intensifies with length of stay, therefore integration policies should be continuous and not limited to the initial period of settlement. Outreach programs designed to stimulate engagement with diverse communities may help in alleviating exclusionist notions over time.

4. Addressing Black and Ethnic Minority Discrimination

-The impact of employment grade and income on the discrimination experienced not being moderating factors ascertains the integration economically paradigm questionable.

There must be a shift from employment focused policies to proactively countering discriminatory hiring, social service, and housing policy practices aimed at dominant raced groups.

7. Conclusion: The Labyrinth of Exclusion and the Mirage of Integration

This analysis has unfolded the skeleton of exclusion, an architecture of marginalization that is impervious to the passage of time or economic triumphs. Like Hobbes' Leviathan, the state provides security while offering no sense of belonging, law without recognition. Its legal integration frameworks, dispassionately regulated, are immune to the judgment of society's self-defined and meticulously structured sovereign order that exists outside legal statutes and policies. In this order, the figure of an immigrant transforms from simply a stranger to a perpetual outsider, an everlasting unfixed state dweller— neither fully outside nor wholly within.

If Rousseau had warned that man is born free but is only ever in deterministic chains, the immigrant is perpetually in exile no matter where they find themselves standing. Time curing all barriers is an idealistic notion stemming from the Enlightenment's belief in unending progress. Within this landscape, however, time does not heal; it hardens. Enduring a society without truly being embraced by it isn't integrating, but rather becoming a ghost within the walls— visible yet unacknowledged, present yet uninvited.

The Illusion of Inclusion: When the Mirage Recedes

Integration, as a term, holds a duality that, in all likelihood, Derrida would have noted, namely, that inclusion presupposes exclusion. To integrate is not merely to join, but rather to be deemed fit to join. An immigrant does not simply become one; rather, the immigrant goes through an ordeal of acceptability right after which the immigrant performs the rituals of sameness and convinces the gatekeepers who controls the access to the table that the immigrant is sufficiently like them. Which does not quite qualify as integration, but rather as an invisible submission to a domineering pact where the dominating population remains uncontested, decidedly deciding what conditions in which an outsider could be brought in.

The seemingly elusive phantom threshold, not the economic inclusion we seek, reveals itself to be a boundless promise waiting to be fulfilled. It becomes increasingly difficult to let go of Machiavelli's cynical view on humans. Indeed, the 'power' does not yield willingly, and neither do the privileged surrender purely based on merit. So long as an immigrant can achieve social mobility, access to wealth, and even linguistic proficiency, they'll still hit a dead end. That dead end is a ceiling which remains undeniably out of reach. And despite the best attempts, wealth will never eradicate one's socio-ethnic identity while professional achievement does not erase one's othered background. The nature of exclusion

entails a transformation; ensuring that no matter what hurdle one overcomes, another will assuredly be waiting to take its place.

The Failure of Time: Why the Clock Does Not Heal

The notion that the longer one resides in a location, the more integrated they become, is a fundamental expectation that is proven unrealistic. If time were to serve as the unifying factor, the individuals who have spent the longest duration in Lithuania would feel most at ease; however, this study indicates that, in fact, the opposite is true: residence in Lithuania serves to heighten feelings of alienation instead of promoting solidifying of identity. This contradiction would not surprise Carr, a scholar who understood how power structures dominate the discourse of belonging in culture: “history” which so often is believed to be the inevitable march and progression towards justice, is, in reality, a battleground of power that decides the zenith of belonging and periphery.

The phrase “to be in exile” refers to a state where lack of roots is not triggered by the absence of soil. The longer an immigrant resides somewhere, the greater their sense of separation with their new home becomes. This does not indicate a journey towards the patriarchal narrative of assimilation; this is, instead, an unveiling of the social constructs that were always there, concealed within the decoration of the mundane.

Language has usually been viewed as a bridge to foster a sense of belonging. However, it offers no true refuge. Say, for example, Kant who viewed language as the medium which reason employed to shape the world. He may have optimistically presumed that mastery of a language would ensure consolidation, which implies that the common lexicon of a people is likely to eradicate their differences. Here, however, language not only serves as a means of communication, but is also the syntax of exclusion. To understand a language completely is to endure the piercing clarity of unuttered realities, in assuming closure, which is the incompletely merciful subtext of mastery that fully fledged one’s acceptance. Acquiring a language does not give one the right to be part of a society, it merely makes painfully clear in a more stark manner the gap that exists between the local and outsider.

The Tyranny of Perception and the Limits of Law

If only existing laws were effective, or if having equal rights was sufficient for guaranteeing equality, then the contemporary struggles of an immigrant would have been resolved a long time ago. Morgenthau, as a realist, reminds us that the law is only as useful as the will behind its enforcement, and that legal statutes are hollow without social support. Laws do not exist in a vacuum and are shaped by society. Discrimination does not continue today due to a lack of legal safeguards; discrimination is shielded by a society governed by social norms that function beyond the scope of legislation. Public exclusion is the result of unwritten policies, rather than official discriminatory documents.

This represents the frontier of structural violence, a collective form of oppression which relies on implicit discrimination to erase individuals, each subtle action forming the inability to breathe. This creates an environment where someone can comparatively exist but at the same time not exist. Relatively, immigrants are not forcibly removed but unwelcomingly ignored. For example, they are fully permitted to partake, but are instead met with a closed door that enables viewing the nation, rather than robust participation inside.

Change must emerge, not only from policies but also from the deep rooted moral imagination of a societal shift. An immigrant must stop being perceived as a guest in an alien territory, and be recognized as a co-shaper and rightful inheritor of the national

geography. While a sense of belonging remains something that can be given or withheld, rather than something one possesses by right, then the illusion of integration will continue to shimmer on the horizon, perpetually sought after but never attained.

The Challenge of the Future: A Choice Between Stagnation and Evolution

The outcome of the immigrant cannot be divorced from the outcome of the host nation. A society that cultivates an identity out of exclusion cannot fail to suffer the consequences of inflexible self-control. To exclude is to stagnate; to integrate is to evolve. Caution must be taken, however, those, for example who decide to incorporate relinquish the aid of preservation become trapped in an endless loop of repeating the past, not pacing the future while those who oscillate between transformation and uncertainty are the ones bound to make or be made by history.

Lithuania, and all nations witnessing this challenge, are bound to this situation. This isn't a question focused on policy but a question focused on principle and vision, 'what type of polity does the nation wish to be?' The answer can not place in on economy numbers or wage rents, but presumed norms that command rather regulate who is a welcoming member, or who remains outcast.

Ole Wæver may remind us that security transforms into stories rather than merely geographical frontiers or laws. Stories about societies' inclusion or exclusion within itself. The future of integration relies on the rewriting of narratives within stories and inclusion borders to the extent that they do not need restrictions. It is then, and only then, will enable cellular integration metamorphose from: a continuously sought mirage that promises acceptance while utterly refusing to provide anything but a perpetual tug of war with accepting boundaries, into integration.

A society attempting to manage migration on a legislative front grid set from Lithuania faces a decisive choice. An individual may choose, or not, to engage with an immigrant human like a co-foreigner or opt to categorize them as strangers. Humanity assigning non hunger oriented places as "unchanging world,". As uninviting as it may seem, history is waiting. His intersection with people resisting, modern boundless movement finds itself "left behind" without stigma.

Stagnant exclusion alone does, inclusion however, opens space for innovative futures.

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