

Meeting Halfway? The Moral Dilemma of Muslim Migrants Engaging in the Austrian Labor Market

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Abstract: Most of the studies on the labour market integration of migrants in Europe have hitherto focused on host countries' efforts to foster integration and the consequent effectiveness of these efforts. This study, however, emphasises on the much-needed migrant-side of the integration process to explore migrants perceived cultural challenges and their corresponding ability to deal with these challenges. With the help of a series of in-depth interviews targeted at exploring the lived experiences of highly skilled Muslim migrants settled in Innsbruck, this study shows that the religious beliefs and value systems, rather than the ability to speak and understand the local language, mainly hinder Muslim migrants from fully integrating into the Austrian society. Using the framework of French pragmatic sociology of conventions, the study further articulates that in order to be perceived as 'included' migrants use the instrument of compromise at three levels of extent, i.e., liberation, selective adaptation, and simulation. Some migrants are able to get liberated and they bring themselves closer to the local value system at the ontological and ideological level (liberation). Others change a few selective principles (values) to make use of most of the integration opportunities (selective adaptation). And yet at another level of compromise, some migrants pretend in the public as if they are very close to the local norms while in actual continuously believing in their originating belief systems and keep disliking the value system of the host country from deep within (simulation).

Keywords: Integration, Compromises, Convention Theory, Pragmatism, Labor Market, Austria.

1. Introduction

"I mean, literally I was very open. I was... I tried to adapt to the Austrian lifestyle like for example drinking wine or beer. Because if you drink... with your colleagues, you know, you feel included." (Anonymous respondent)

The influx of migrants into the European Union (EU) territory coincides with the challenge of their integration into the labour markets of the member states (European Migration Network, 2017). The EU is continuously putting efforts and resources, in collaboration with member states, to foster the process of migrants' integration and inclusion into the European society in general and the labour market in particular. The continuous positive intent of the EU is evident in European Commission's action plans on integration

and inclusion 2014-2020 and (most recent) 2021-2027 (European Commission, 2020). Moreover, many other similar programs have also been implemented in the previous years. These plans stress member states to develop a welcoming and enabling atmosphere for migrants regarding their thorough inclusion in the economic and the social landscape of the EU. The most promising developments in these action plans, particularly in the areas of education and employment of migrants, are the valuation and recognition of skills and the mainstreaming of language learning to facilitate the job-seeking process (Krause & Liebig, 2011; Sarvimäki&Hämäläinen, 2016; Wiesbrock, 2011). However, the difference between us versus them, despite all these efforts of the commission along with the positive intent and actions of member states, remains there.

For a successful integration and inclusion, in addition to the efforts from member states and the European Commission, active effort on the part of the migrants themselves is inevitable. When it comes to the migrants particularly coming from an entirely distinct religious and/or ethnic background, the most crucial question for integration and inclusion is not just getting a job but getting conversant with the cultural repertoire of the host nation in relation to the work and social life. Hence, migrants' expectations, their perceptions of host countries' actions, and their willingness and ability to make compromises between the host and home cultures play the most significant role in the process of integration.

The majority of studies on the labour market integration of migrants in Europe have hitherto focused on host countries' policies and efforts to foster integration and the consequent effectiveness of these efforts. This study, however, emphasises on the much-needed migrant-side of the integration process to explore migrants' perceived cultural challenges and their corresponding ability to deal with these challenges. By doing this, the study brings to the fore migrants' process of engagement with the surrounding host environment, explicating the nature and extent of compromises they make in an effort to effectively integrate into the European labour markets. For this purpose, the study uses the frameworks of French socio economic orders of worth (Boltanski&Thévenot, 2006) and regimes of engagement (Thévenot, 2001, 2011b).

2. Labor Market Integration

A key factor in the successful integration in the labour market is migrants' ability to deal with the cultural differences they experience in the host countries (Alencar, 2018; Ricci, Crivellaro, & Bolzani, 2021; Syed, 2008). Most likely such experiences are aggravated by highly skilled migrants belonging to a different religious background (Geurts, Davids, & Spierings, 2021). This group of migrants have a greater susceptibility to cultural sensitivity because of their extreme perceptions of being discriminated based on cultural and ethnic identities. Most of the existing literature on labour market integration proclaims that, for a smooth integration, migrants use their cultural and social capital and try to transfer it to the host destinations (Eggenhofer-Rehart et al., 2018). However, researchers have rarely emphasised the type of compromises (as underlined in the opening quote) migrants make and the strategies they use to deal with the surrounding expectations and challenges in the host environment during the integration process.

Integration, despite being the most commonly used term in the migration literature, has no agreed upon definition. The most comprehensive framework for a normative understanding of the concept of

integration has been proposed by Ager and Strang (2008). They divided the concept into “four themes (i.e., foundation, facilitators, social connection, and markers and means) and ten further domains covering achievement and access across the sectors of employment, education, health, and housing, assumptions and practice regarding citizenship and rights, processes of social connection within and between groups within the community, and structural barriers to such connections related to language, culture, and the local environment” (pp. 184–185).

The integration process of highly skilled migrants has been explained by most of the studies using the acculturation framework (Wang & Mallinckrodt, 2006). This framework divides the settling-in process of migrants into four categories: separation, marginalisation, integration, and assimilation. Other frameworks include acculturative stress (Akhtar & Kröner-Herwig, 2015), cross-cultural adjustment (Ravasi, Salamin, & Davoine, 2015), human capital (Khattab, Johnston, & Manley, 2018), career capital (Eggenhofer-Rehart et al., 2018), social identity (Dietz, Joshi, Esses, Hamilton, & Gabarrot, 2015), functional model of friendship network (Schartner, 2015), relative deprivation, theory of rising expectations, theory of exposure (Verkuyten, 2016), rational choice (Hadjar & Scharf, 2019), personal agency (Verwiebe et al., 2019), Bourdieu’s theory of practice – social capital, economic capital, and cultural capital (Eggenhofer-Rehart et al., 2018), Bourdieu’s theory of capital – social capital, economic capital, cultural capital, and symbolic capital (Al Ariss & Syed, 2011), Bourdieu’s theory of capital, field, and habitus (Joy, Game, & Toshniwal, 2020), and the relational view of integration (Al Ariss, Koall, Özbilgin, & Suutari, 2012).

3. Skilled Labor and Cultural Adjustment

Integration is a multifaceted phenomenon. On the one hand, it involves antecedents and motivators behind the move of immigrants from their homelands to the host destinations, their actions, strategies, and adaptability during the process of integration, and their experiences thereof. While on the other hand, it involves the institutional and political environment of host countries creating facilitations (or otherwise, barriers) for integration, the attitude and behaviours of natives towards the immigrants, the overall public narrative regarding the multiculturalism (Bourhis, Moise, Perreault, & Senecal, 1997).

Yet another face of integration is the role of migration industries in the process. Along with other significant roles of facilitating immigrants, actors in migration industries may play a vital role in developing immigrants’ perceptions, expectations, and opinions regarding the destination culture, values, and political environment, which as a result shape their interpretations of and reactions to the instances of discrimination or racism during the process of integration. In these lines of inquiry, previous research has focused on different categories of people migrating from one country to another including refugees, asylum seekers, sojourners, students, and skilled labour (i.e., diversity of socio-economic conditions) belonging to a variety of geographic and religious backgrounds (i.e., diversity of origins). Most instantly helpful categories for any host labour market are skilled immigrants and international students of higher education (Al Ariss & Syed, 2011; Baruch, Budhwar, & Khatri, 2007; Steinmann, 2019). The reasons for the high demand for skilled immigrants are the ageing population, skill shortages, and decreasing fertility rates (Kwon, 2019). In particular, skills shortages have radically transformed the labour markets of several countries.

Similarly, international students pursuing higher education get special attention from host country labour markets as they are skilled in their fields and as soon as they finish studies, they are part of the labour market. International students in the EU are rising but after completion of their studies, relatively low number of students (according to OECD, 16% to 30% graduates) are choosing to stay (European Migration Network, 2017). However, the member states of the EU are interested in and taking measures for incorporating former international students into their labour markets.

Most of the previous research on skilled immigrants and international students, however, is done in the contexts of the US, UK, or Australia. Considering the fact that most of these immigrants are coming from developing countries, which by and large have an inclination towards the English language, thanks to the colonial influences, the challenge of their integration in non-English speaking countries is much higher compared to the Anglophone countries. Only a few studies have looked at the integration processes of students of higher education (highly skilled individuals) migrating into non-English speaking countries. For instance, Akhtar and Kroener-Herwig (2019) measure the impact of socio-demographic variables, coping styles, and language proficiency on acculturation stress of international students using a survey of students in Germany. Their study reveals that international students of Asian, African, or Latin American origins as compared to their European counterparts experience higher levels of acculturation stress, whereby being proficient in German language predicts a lower level of acculturation stress.

Apart from the country of origin and language, religion of immigrants is another major factor in the successful or unsuccessful integration, and research has shown previously that Muslim immigrants are particularly different from other immigrants and finds that Muslims integrate less and more slowly than non-Muslims (Friberg&Sterri, 2021). Due to a strong religious identity, a UK born Muslim living there for over 30 years can be compared with a non-Muslim just arrived in the country (Bisin, Patacchini, Verdier, &Zenou, 2008). Moreover, unlike migrants from other religious backgrounds, in the case of Muslims, higher on-the-job qualifications and higher income levels are associated with a strong religious identity (Bisin et al., 2008)

Recognising the fact that the integrating activities are not based on any single moral value of actors, rather they are based on a plurality of principles of justice which are constructed and shaped during the process of integration; French socioeconomic convention theory suggests that the ability to move between different moral principles (or orders of worth as commonly referred by conventionalist scholars) enables actors to effectively engage with the cultural environment of the host nations (Thévenot, 2001, 2011b). Assuming different engagement modes available to actors, an important insight on the part of conventionalist scholars is that coordination of activities (during the process of integration) requires reducing migrants' doubts and strengthening their confidence in the prevailing engagement modes.

In this paper, we draw on in-depth interviews of 21 Pakistani Muslim migrants in Austria to examine 1) how actors recourse to their repertoire of moral principles originating both from home and host country cultures, and 2) how they use compromises as a strategy to deal with the host culture expectations, which help to consolidate their status in the host country's labour market. Interpreting our findings using convention theory's notions of quietude and two-sided engagement, we highlight how actors tend to keep their eyes closed on several moral issues, while closely observing or resisting the other issues in order to at the same time pursue their interests and being considered as qualified in the host labour markets.

Before we explore our findings on the integrating activities of Muslim migrants in the Austrian labour market, we introduce important concepts for our analysis and provide details on the respondent profiles and how the data was collected and analysed.

4. Analytical Framework

Thévenot (2015) criticises existing analytical tools for their narrow view of social phenomena based on ‘Western understanding of modernity’. His sociology emphasises upon a plurality of types of human actions—“publically justifiable actions, individually planned actions, and familiarly habituated actions” (Thévenot, 2001, 2011b), a plurality of mechanisms of personal identity—based on the type of engagement with the environment, a plurality of ‘formats of information’—like formalised public formats, extremely intimate and informal clues etc. (Thévenot, 2007a), and a plurality of ‘modes of evaluation’, based on their unequal preparation for commonality. The orders of worth framework (Boltanski&Thévenot, 2006) refers to the plurality of stipulations of the common good, whereas the regimes of engagement framework (Thévenot, 2001, 2011b) refers to the plurality of kinds of good based on their different level of preparation for commonality.

4.1. Plural ways of engagement with the world

Conventionalist sociologists stress upon the plurality of ways of making things common, and the investments and sacrifices involved in this process. Making things general entails a particular sort of sacrifice with regard to the opportunity costs of these things, what Thévenot (1984) calls ‘the paradox of coding’. It refers to the sacrifices involved while investing in forms (Thévenot, 1984). Regimes of engagement i.e., familiar engagement, engagement in the plan, and engagement in publicly justifiable action, and the related notion of ‘grammars of constructing commonality in the plural’ are based on the idea of the plurality of making things *general* or *common*. Three regimes have three corresponding grammars, i.e., “grammar of the plural modes of equivalence, the grammar of plural individual choices in a liberal public, and grammar of personal affinities to a plurality of common places”.

Sociology of conventions investigates, in a pragmatic fashion, what is required for living together in common humanity and differentiates many ways of constructing commonality in the plural. The perspective refers to different ways of bringing humans and their environment together, different from the already established notions of groups (Bourdieu, 1977) and tensions between groups. Moreover, it stresses upon the plurality of sources of confidence in reality, which also implies the plurality of making sense of reality. The plurality of sources of confidence in public refers to the more intimate sources and confidence based on more personalised affinity with the environment, other than the confidence coming from public justification.

Familiar engagement is based on a customary interdependence with a local human and material environment. (Thévenot, 2011a). The regime of engagement in a plan is similar to a normal action as it refers to a frequently used level of engagement of human beings with their environment and the good involved in this engagement is also the ordinary idea of the fulfilment of an action. (Thévenot, 2007b). The regime of publically justifiable action relies upon the need for *public order* (Boltanski&Thévenot, 2006). The

evaluation attached to this regime must possess the commonality and legitimacy subscribed to a third party. The demand of the equivalence required by generalising is highest at this level. Boltanski and Thévenot (2006) elaborated on the requirements of the common good and reality test for six legitimate orders of worth (namely “market, industrial, fame, civic, domestic, and inspired) in order to avoid a sense of injustice.

4.2. Quietude versus in quietude

The notion of *two-sided* engagement refers to the capability and vigilance of actors in closing and opening their eyes towards the world. One side of the engagement refers to the confidence in the world, entrenching not only from justifications of the public regime but also from more personally familiarised senses of reality, resulting in a comfortable closing of eyes or quietude. It also refers to the blind trust in symbolic forms like rituals (Thévenot, 1990, 2006). Public quietude has a key role in the certification or qualification of objects and persons. The other side of engagement refers to the potential of doubt and opening of eyes, related to the sacrifice made in making things general and/or the sacrifice in terms of the opportunity cost of operating in one particular regime. This other side of engagement, i.e., ‘the public inquietude’ is central to pragmatic sociology. Unlike critical sociologists like Durkheim and Bourdieu who emphasised overwhelmingly upon the ‘quietude’ side of human engagement with the world, the pragmatic institutionalists extend a parallel focus on the other side i.e. the in quietude, the doubt, or the uncertainty (Diaz-Bone, 2011). This two-sided engagement is necessary for a living community—as it ensures the continuity of democratic progress in society (Blokker&Brighenti, 2011).

5. Study Setting and Methods

Austria is among the member states with a relatively higher proportion (above 10%) of inhabitants born outside the EU (Action plan 2021-2027) (European Commission, 2020). The stability of the economic development of Austria has been ensured by its strong corporatist structure. The state is authorised to license, frame and incorporate corporate entities into the state system, grant them rights, responsibilities, and representational monopoly (Sezgin, 2019). The state system also guards against inflows of international labour into its labour market. Although for skilled migrants, regardless of Austrians working abroad who want to return home or foreigners, their foreign experience is not considered when seeking a job at an intermediate level (Biffel, 2019).

In Austria, an increase has been recorded over the years regarding former students remaining legally in the country (Jacob, Kühhirt, & Rodrigues, 2019). As of October 2017, Austria is complying with the 2016/801 recast directive as third-country national students may remain in the country for a minimum of nine months after completion of studies. According to the Directive, 2016/801 member states should allow students to stay in the country for further employment, subject to their successful completion of university studies (European Migration Network, 2017).

The integration of Muslims, in general, has been a challenge for Austria, and in this particular case, it is not possible to achieve it by solely implementing religious policies. These secularisation of policy restricting Islamic activities in the public sphere has led to an exclusionary model for Muslims (Sezgin, 2019). Another aspect is the societal acceptance of Muslims; as revealed by the Special Euro barometer 437 public opinion

survey, among European countries, Austria is on the top list where people do not feel comfortable working with a Muslim (European Commission, 2015).

This study focuses on skilled migrants with Muslim religious backgrounds who come to Austria to pursue higher education and career opportunities. Research on international students and skilled migrants' integration in host cultures lacks a more encompassing and multifaceted analysis. For example, more research is needed on how migrants integrate, the strategies they deploy, and the networks they mobilise in this process (Crowley-Henry, Connor, & Al Ariss, 2018). There is also a shortage of research on how migrants face and cope with integration barriers in the host country (Crowley-Henry, Connor, & Al Ariss, 2018). Migrants' decision-making processes need to be unpacked in order to successfully reveal how they choose between multiple options to remain intact in the host culture.

More relational-oriented and reflexive methodologies encourage researchers to recognise a wide range of vested interests. A good investigation of the integration phenomenon requires the investigator to listen and explore immigrants' personal stories. The researcher needs to make sense of the meaning-making process of respondents and their cultural models, conventions, and social expectations. This type of inquiry will uncover respondents' paradigms (Schutz, 1967).

For this purpose, in-depth interviews with 21 skilled migrants working in different companies in Innsbruck were conducted. All the participants were informed that their identity will be kept confidential. The data in this study is analysed using the lens of the French socioeconomic convention theory. This theoretical perspective helps study the modes of engagement of immigrants while interacting with the host environment and the repertoire of logic they recourse to while making these cultural choices. Table 1 provides the interview guideline. Participants of this study used jargons during the interviews. Some of the words that are commonly used by majority of the participants include: Chamri (skin), Gorian (white girls), Halal (permissible), Haram (sinful), Sharam (abashment), Larkian (girls), Mahol (environment), Mazhab (religion) and Saqafat (culture). In the current study, we are focusing on the process instead of the practices or the structure. This raises a question: how do people engage with the locals and which tactics do they employ? In order to study the process, as to how people integrate in the foreign culture, sociology of conventions may provide a new avenue in directing the research. Instead of addressing to the surface level issue (i.e., language used by the participants) in the current study, we rather aim to highlight more deep level issues in the process of integration. And to achieve this we draw on the orders of worth (Boltanski & Thévenot, 2006).

Table 1: Interview Guideline

<i>Categories</i>	<i>Questions</i>
Decision of Migration	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How and under what circumstances did you decide to move to Austria? 2. When and for what reasons did you decide to stay permanently in Austria? 3. Would you like to settle back in your home country at any stage of your life? (If yes, why and under what circumstances?)
Cultural Shock	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. How do you describe Austrians' attitude towards you? 5. What cultural traditions in Austria did you find impossible to adopt?
Food	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Do you like Austrian food? Share your experiences.
Dress	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. Do you feel comfortable with the street fashion or clothing, especially when your family (wife) is here, and they have to comply with this? 8. Girls in Austria wear very short dresses, particularly in summers. Do you feel comfortable with this when you are outside along with your family?
Family system	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 9. To what extent are you comfortable with the Austrian family system? (Particularly the culture of boyfriend/girlfriend, have you been able to prepare yourself to adopt it? 10. Would you like/wish that your parents and siblings also come and settle in Austria? 11. If yes, would they be comfortable with these (above-mentioned) cultural differences? 12. Since you are now living here on a long-term basis, would you prefer to marry an Austrian/European girl or with a girl from your home country?
Religious practices	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 13. To what extent do you have to change yourself in religious matters while living here? 14. During your stay in Austria, have you ever found difficulty performing religious rituals/practices, such as five-time prayer or fasting in the month of Ramadhan? 15. Is there any change in your mosque-going behaviours?
Income	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 16. Are you satisfied with your income here? (If not, what factors do you consider as barriers) 17. And what type of work are you doing? 18. How do you compare average income back in your home country with what you earn here? 19. If you had spent this period in Pakistan, do you think your experience would have been more beneficial or less compared to the net worth of your experience here? 20. What is your opinion on the unemployment conditions here in Austria compared to the level of unemployment back in your home country? (How many of your acquaintances here are still unemployed or struggling to find good employment?)
Accommodation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 21. Did you find any difficulty, or do you still find any problem finding suitable accommodation in Austria? Or are you satisfied with the facilities arranged by the Austrian Government?
Language	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 22. To what extent do you believe that learning the German language is crucial for earning a good income and success at the workplace?
Integration	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 23. How do you define integration? 24. What do you think are the success factors to get fully integrated with Austrian culture? 25. To what extent do you find yourself integrated with Austrian culture already? 26. Do you feel yourself a part of Austrian society? 27. (If yes) Do you think your Austrian friends/colleagues feel the same about you? 28. Do you feel at home here in Austria?

Source: Authors' formulation

6. Results and Discussion

Table 2: Categories of findings and corresponding sample responses

<i>Key Dimensions of Findings</i>	<i>Sample Responses</i>	<i>Corresponding Areas of Theory (Sociology of Conventions)</i>
Devices of Compromise:	"..would obviously prefer not being nude in the presence of own countrymen but ok to be in a sauna bath like environment with foreign people.. and I can't really make sense of girlfriend/boyfriend as an institution.."	Social objects and categories
Changing Broader Principles (Mode Shifting)	"I have seen that Muslims here, in the end, turn to be more flexible and they start adapting cultural principles such as family structures, and particularly they start accepting girlfriend/boyfriend as a relation like Austrians do, which Muslims normally don't accept."	Plurality of Orders of Worth: Religious vs. humanitarian Institution of Family/ Collectivism vs individualism
To pretend (Acting)	At the time of my residence contract there were conditions (not in black and white of course) relating to the practices of rituals such as Adhaan and also there were reservations about our cooking and the smell it creates and stuff like that, which I normally pretended to be ok with, you know, you have really limited options here when it comes to accommodation."	Quietude; Prudence
To free their real self (freedom), Become broad-minded, Liberalization	I believe that social media is helpful in the process of integration in Austria. In fact, I found my first girl through Facebook(haha)."	Engaging with oneself, Human as choosing being;
Selective Compromises	"I am not comfortable with girls' physical education in schools (particularly swimming training), but for boys it is fine..."	Orders of worth
The red lines (of change/ the limits of compromise) Boundary conditions	".....anything that is part and parcel of Austrian life but you do not like it or want to eat...for example, alcoholic drinks (Beer, Wine, etc.) or pig meat are very common in Austrian traditions. Even you can compromise occasionally on drinks, but pig, out of the question."	Inquietude
Real vs Perceived barriers to integration	"Actually, I was mostly within surrounded by my own native community mostly discussing Pakistani politics and stuff and actually very rarely spent time with locals here during my entire stay. Maybe that is the reason I still do not feel included."	False consciousness (borrowed from critical sociology of Marx)

Source: Authors' findings

The analysis of interviews suggests that educated and skilled Muslims of Pakistani origin working in the Austrian labour market do compromise on their existing values and principles. The main point is that the highly qualified people are trying to integrate by using different strategies. First, they try to interact and, for this, they also use social media to turn it into social relations with the locals. Moreover, they also use social media to learn the language, to inform themselves about events where they can actively participate, and search for accommodation. Second, they also do compromises, such as, going to the nightclubs, drinking non-alcoholic beer (pretending) and even at times eating non-halal meat (i.e., chicken, mutton, and beef but refusing to eat pig meat). To some extent, this gives them the feeling of being included. However, participants narratives suggests that it is not strait forward to conclude as such, as at the same time there remains a feeling that all their efforts go in vain. In other words, despite such compromises they are unable to successfully integrate with locals. They change their stances and move between different orders of worth (Boltanski&Thévenot, 2006). The emphasis of our analysis, therefore, was to uncover during the process of integration how respondents moulded themselves to feel included. We find three categories of people leading to three so-called strategies of compromise. In the following section, we articulate how, in order to fill the void of value systems and in order to feel 'included', a normal migrant uses the instrument of compromise at three levels of extent, i.e., liberation, selective adaptation, and simulation.

The best-case scenario or the ideal form of integration we observed in the discussions of respondents was the one referring to Muslim migrants who get liberated in the process and bring themselves real close to the local value system. These migrants become successful in changing their worldviews (the so-called paradigms). They transform at the ontological and ideological level and get liberated. As a result, they respect the local value system and cultural institutions. Liberated migrants find themselves at the level of familiar engagement with their corresponding workplace and social environment. This type of engagement is based on a customary interdependence with a local human and material environment (Thévenot, 2011a). In this regime, either things are personalised, or the personality is adjusted to things in close proximity to maintain a localised good. This regime highlights the most frequently used facets of personality in relation to dealing with the environment. The type of good experienced as a result of the ease of continued use of a particular format of personality is beyond a routine or habit as it has a dynamic attachment with an instantaneous environment and this type of attachment is entirely different from a kind of personal property which can be transferred from one place to another (Thévenot, 2011a).

The second strategy of compromise migrants deploy is the peculiar change of a few selective principles (values) to instrumentally materialise most of the benefits associated with integration. Changing selective principles and practices, for example, drinking alcohol, but avoiding red meat particularly that of pig, refers to this type of selective compromise. The dislike of women's dress by migrants in situations, when accompanied with their families, is also a similar selective behaviour.

"...you might have heard the veil has been banned recently, and girls can no more hide their hair in public places. How can one feel comfortable with it especially when you are living here with your family..."(Anonymous respondent)

"I will be very uncomfortable if my parents are here during summer time, you know girls wear almost no clothes and being with them (parents) outside, I cannot imagine..." (Anonymous respondent)

However, there are justifications for both actions making migrants' behaviour publically justifiable within their own communities and within the hosting environment. It is premised basically on the limited acceptability towards things—the red lines. Such as not to get nude in the presence of own country people but it's okay to be dress-free in a sauna-like environment with foreign people. Second, not accepting girlfriend and boyfriend as an institution for their children. Third, not exercising religious practices such as prayer in public places.

"I do not pray in the presence of people at the workplace, normally prefer to do it at home." (Anonymous respondent)

"I really compromise on food, as I have started eating chicken in the absence of halal options." (Anonymous respondent)

"I do not mind having a girlfriend. In fact, I would like to have one, but I would not permit my own children (daughter or son) to be in such a relationship. You know, after all we are Muslims and Islam does not allow it." (Anonymous respondent)

"I think it is okay to have a girlfriend, but I cannot imagine marrying here... I want to marry with a Pakistani girl who is Muslim and to have children with..." (Anonymous respondent)

The intensity of the selective compromising behaviour is evident with the most common practice of having acceptance towards eating non-halal chicken, mutton, and beef but a continuous reluctance of eating Schwein (pig). This approach towards integration, we have labelled as selective adaptation.

A contradiction of principles is also evident between religious and humanitarian principles. Respondents seem to fascinate Austrian humanitarian values but also continuously try to recourse to their religious background. Hence, some of them are in a continuous paradoxical disposition.

"Non-believers won't end up in Jannah no matter how good their behaviour is no matter how much humanitarian activities they are performing, I mean that is after all our core belief. They (no-believers) would call it religious fanatic belief. But I mean it's not a joke. And you know we want to live here because this is no doubt a peaceful country with strong values, justice." (Anonymous respondent)

"We can't afford this type of education in our country, (talking about kids' education). It is very expensive back there, and here it is free. We have better education opportunities for our kids. There is equality, justice and freedom, but unfortunately at the cost of our religion." (Anonymous respondent)

"I want to teach my children about Islam, I want them to be a good Muslim. Unfortunately, they cannot get good religious education here, but in Pakistan. It is not the problem with religion, in Pakistan the problem is with people, people are like this there, but at least there kids can be on the righteous path and can eat halal food. I don't know I am confused between the benefits here and benefits there..." (Anonymous respondent)

"My brother is not me; he cannot accept what I accepted here... we are different... I cannot expect them (family) to understand things, they cannot. They think I am a practising Muslim; I tell them that I pray and fast and I do not eat non-halal food. From deep within I am not satisfied, I know I am going against my religious teachings. Honestly, it haunts me but its better here..." (Anonymous respondent)

Another instance of contradictory and selective acceptability of principles is evident in the form of migrants believing in the institution of family, but in most cases, it is kept for kids and women in a household. However, men are found to have some sort of flexibility in this principle for themselves. But it is not very simple. The cultural values they carry with them from their homelands force them for this selectively strict option for kids and women. Human beings under the influence of basic biological instincts want to enjoy their lives to their fullest, which requires some decoupling from religious and conventional bindings, and they tend to adopt the instinct to a possible extent. However, they do not want to or else culturally they cannot afford to accept similar freedom for kids and families.

It refers to the regime of publically justifiable actions. This regime relies upon the need for *public order* (Boltanski&Thévenot, 2006). The evaluation attached to this regime must possess the commonality and legitimacy subscribed to a third party. Respondent migrants have referred to different worlds in their justifications of changing of values and principles. The process of integration makes migrants move between different orders of worth, yet leaving them with a choice to adapt to the most general is ableones.

The third strategy of compromise, we have explored in our analysis of the interview responses is simulation. Some migrants pretend in the public as if they are very close to the local norms while in actual deep in their hearts they continuously respect and obey their native belief systems and keep disliking the Austrian value system. This type of engagement with the world is addressed by Thévenot (2007b) as engagement in a plan. It is similar to a normal action as it refers to a frequently used level of engagement of human beings with their environment and the good involved in this engagement is also the ordinary idea of the fulfilment of an action. This regime refers to a prudent exercise of the will by an autonomous individual who is also 'capable of projecting herself successfully into the future'. The kind of pleasure engendered by a fulfilled plan ought to be evaluated in terms of how crucial the good is for human social life (Thévenot, 2007b).

In our analysis, we have also found instances of false perceptions of integration barriers. It is mainly because of Muslim migrants' lack of social interaction with the local community. Given their primary motivation and preference to spend more time within their own community instead of with host country members makes Muslim migrants socially isolated. As a result, they overestimate the cultural barriers and refrain putting efforts to remove those barriers.

7. Conclusion

What does it take for a Muslim migrant to get integrated into Austrian culture? We argue that a wide range of strategies Muslim workers use in order to integrate into Austrian culture starting from a complete shift of mindset from a radical Muslim believer to a liberal participant in society and to act in the public as a moderate citizen while pretending to be very similar to the local people. Human actors in everyday social life have to rely upon certain broader ideologies to justify their actions and interactions in the social. All actors involved in such social situations need to share these ideologies to be able to continue a smooth interaction and coordination in everyday life.

With this research, we intend to enrich understanding of the process of integration of Muslim migrants in the European labour markets, thereby, examining their strategies to get to grip on the cultural differences using the theoretical framework of sociology of conventions. Research in this field has in the past

highlighted the procedures of transferring cultural, social and economic capital from the home country to the host country. Our focus on how actors make compromises on their moral choices requires access to their' actual labour market integration processes. In-depth interviews with a group of highly skilled migrants allow this type of access.

Most of the studies on the labour market integration of migrants in Europe have focused on host countries' policies and measures to foster integration and the consequent effectiveness of their efforts. However, in this research, we emphasise the migrant side of the integration process to explore migrants' perceived cultural challenges and their corresponding ability to deal with these challenges. By doing this, we bring to the fore migrants' engagement with the surrounding host environment, illustrating the nature and extent of compromises they make to integrate into the European labour markets effectively.

With an interpretive analysis of the lived experiences of highly skilled Muslim migrants residing and working in Innsbruck, this study shows that the religious beliefs and value systems, rather than the ability to speak and understand the local language, mainly hinder Muslim migrants from fully integrating into the Austrian society. The findings of this study further articulate that, in order to fill this void of value systems and be perceived as 'included,' migrants use the instrument of compromise at three levels of extent: i.e., liberation, selective adaptation, and simulation. In the best-case scenario, few get liberated and bring themselves closer to the ontological and ideological level of the local value system. The study attributes this level of integration as liberation. Others change a few selective principles (values) to make use of most integration opportunities. This level of integration is labelled as selective adaptation. And yet, at another level of compromise, some migrants pretend to be very close to the local norms in public. In reality, however, they continue following their originating belief systems and keep disliking the value system of the host country from deep within. Such integration efforts and compromises are placed under the category named *simulation*.

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