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Barriers to the labour market integration of refugees

The UK and France in Focus

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Abstract

This paper compares and analyses the labour market integration barriers of refugees in France and the United Kingdom. The aim of the paper is to find commonalities and differences and from the analysis draw conclusions, and propose a framework to analyze the barriers of refugee labour market integration. It will review previous literature on the topic, as well as that specifically related to the barriers in the UK and France. The paper finds that the structural, institutional and human capital barriers are interconnected, but most importantly that structural barriers seem to be similar in both the UK and France and therefore a better understanding of them must be developed.

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CHAPTER 1: Introduction

The integration of migrants into host societies is a challenge that is faced by many states around the world. Every year, heterogeneous migrants from diverse legal categories settle in new countries, creating challenges for the new migrants, host societies and countries of origin. A specific topic of importance and strong debate is the integration of migrants into the host labour market. Governments from around the world have expressed their intention and have mobilized resources to facilitate labour market integration. Migrant labour market integration is a complex issue, as there is evidence that different legal migrant categories (refugees, family reunification and economic) experience different labour market outcomes. The fact that every country has different migrant compositions makes the issue more complex as some accept a higher proportion of economic migrants while others have higher percentages of family reunification or humanitarian migrants. Another layer of complexity is the institutional, social and political environments in every country and how that shapes migrant integration. Given the heterogeneity of the EU in terms of institutional, political and structural characteristics, and the heterogeneity of migrants, it is necessary to understand the specificities surrounding the integration of each category in various member states. Responding to this necessity, this paper will focus on exploring the labour market integration of refugees in two EU- countries, the United Kingdom and France.

The paper's main objective is to identify and analyze the barriers that seem to be present in each country, find commonalities and differences, and stemming from

that analysis, draw conclusions and provide a framework for analyzing those factors that might influence labour market integration of refugees.

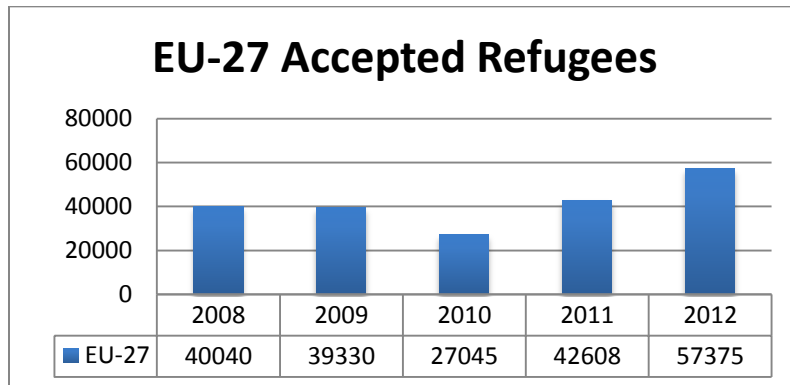
Next, a brief contextual background will be presented. Three arguments will be highlighted, the increasing number of refugees in the EU, the recognized importance of labour market integration and the poor labour market outcomes that have been recently reported.

Increasing number of refugees and asylum claimants in the EU

In 2012, millions of persons have been forced to flee their countries of origin in search of international protection. Recent statistics by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) (2013b) argue the global number of refugees by the mid of 2013 as approximately 11.1 million worldwide. The UNHCR (2013a) reports that by the end of 2012, Europe hosted around 1.8 million refugees or 17 percent of the total worldwide refugee population at that moment. The UNHCR (2014) also claims that the 28-EU member states received 398,200 asylum claims by the end of 2013. This signifies a 32 percent increase compared to 2012 when 301,000 asylum claims were made. Recent statistics from Eurostat support this trend. 2013 statistics show that 434,160 asylum applications were received and 112,730 were given positive protection decisions at first instance. In specific, 49,510 were conferred refugee status, 45,540 subsidiary protection, 17,685 humanitarian reasons and 213, 580 were rejected ¹ (Eurostat, 2014)

¹ These numbers correspond to first instance decisions. The total number, including second appeals and subsequent appeals is not available

The following table summarizes the accepted number of refugees in the EU-27 from 2008 until 2012.



Data: Eurostat newsletters on asylum trends

2010: Only first instance decisions recorded

Even though there was a slight decrease in 2009 and in 2010 only first instance decisions are available, there is a significant increase in 2012.

Expressed intent to refugee integration

Integrating refugees is a complex issue that has gained importance for industrialized states in recent decades (Korac, 2003). More importantly various actors have shown intention to make labour market integration a priority.

The European Commission (2011) shows its intention to integrate third country nationals in its “*European agenda for the integration of third country nationals*”. By setting the European Refugee fund in 2007 it showed its commitment towards refugees (Official Journal of the European, 2007). Both initiatives mention labour market integration as a priority.

In addition, the UNHCR (2013c) found through consultations with refugees that the key concern for them in Europe is employment. Olivier Beer, UNHCR representative to the European Institutions, argues that integrating refugees into the labour market it is of paramount importance, as, if they are not integrated many resort to negative activities such as prostitution, crime, begging, child labor and other negative economic activities.² In fact the UNHCR proposes the integration of refugees into the host societies as one of the durable solutions, the other two being repatriation and resettlement.³

The Council of Europe (2012) claims that the labour market integration of refugees is beneficial for host societies as it will diminish costs in social assistance and allow states to have more cohesive societies, as employment integration leads to integration in other areas. However the council also recognizes there is still a gap between the right to work and the execution of that right, and they urge states to reduce this gap.

Despite the seemingly high interest in labour market integration, as the next section will highlight, poor labour market outcomes of the non-EU born population have been reported recently.

² <http://www.humanrightseurope.org/2012/08/unhcr-refugees-face-exploitation-harassment-and-abuse-in-europe/>

³ <http://www.unhcr.org/pages/49c3646cf8.html>

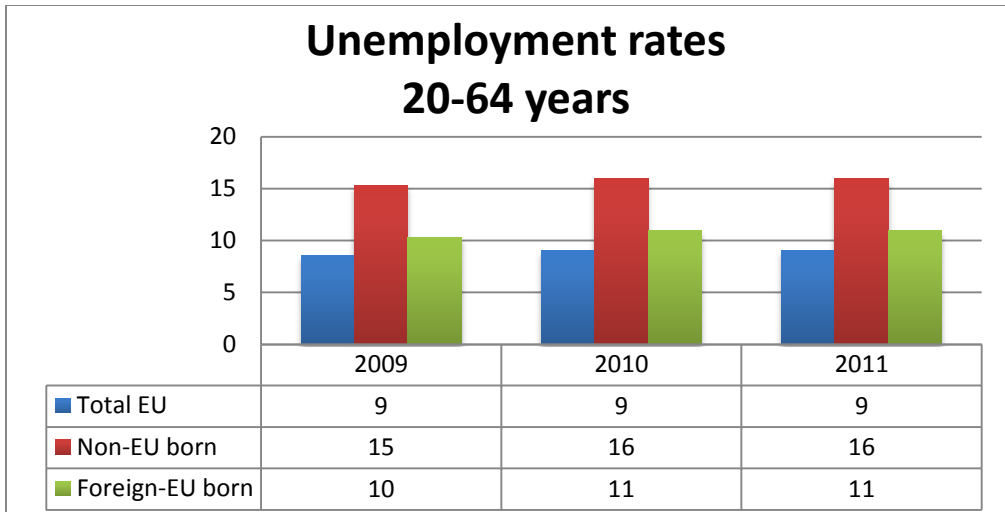
Negative labour market outcomes

First, it is necessary to clarify some important concepts. Labour market outcomes will be *measured* through unemployment and underemployment rates. Those outcomes will be *assessed* as negative or positive by comparing them to the native or the total population rates. *Integration* into the labour market will be understood as the rates of third country nationals or refugees being close to those of the native or total population. In this sense, full integration will mean having the same rates as those of comparable (skilled vs skilled, non skilled vs non skilled) native populations.

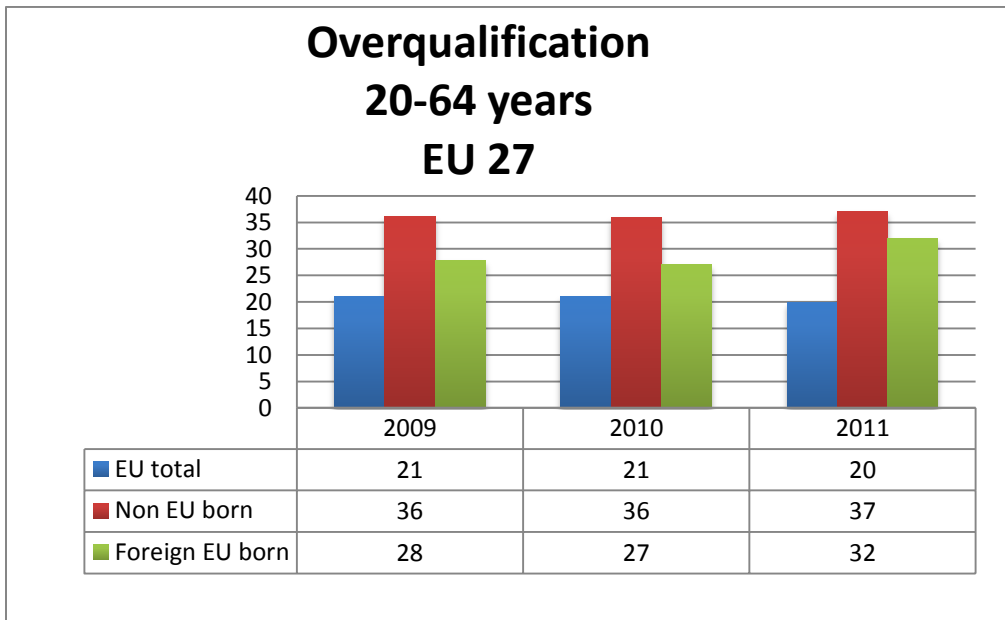
Having clarified this, recent OECD (2013) stats show negative labor market outcomes of third country nationals. Eurostat data⁴ also confirms this. The next graphs, based on Eurostat statistics show that non-EU born persons have had higher unemployment and over qualification rates than the total and the foreign EU -born population. Since most refugees are part of the non-EU born population, these rates include them.

4

http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/employment_social_policy_equality/migrant_integration/indicators



Data: Eurostats



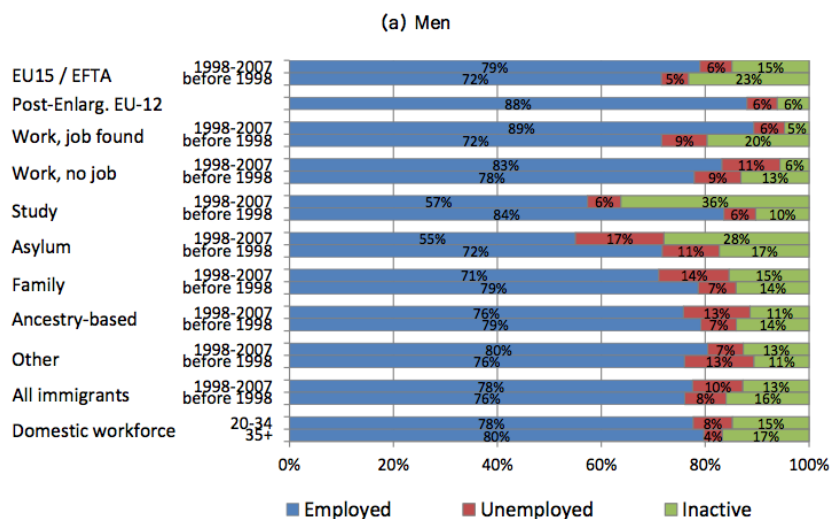
Data: Eurostats

Even though these statistics do not correspond to refugees only it is important to recognize that the majority of refugees, if not all, are non EU-born and as such these rates could serve as a benchmark.

As noted by Salter and Mutlu (2011), the Protocol 24 of the Amsterdam treaty makes it extremely difficult for EU nationals to become refugees in other member states because member states consider each other as safe countries of origin. Salter and Mutlu (2011) do mention that there have been some cases of EU refugees, but that the number is really low, they cite 25 cases in the five years previous to 2011. There are no indications that these numbers have increased greatly, so this paper will assume that the great majority of refugees are non-EU born and therefore, the above-mentioned statistics could represent an estimate of refugees' labour market outcomes.

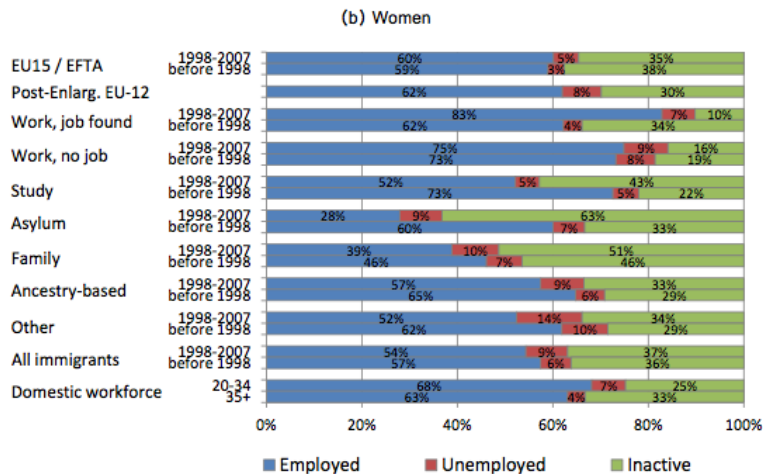
Refugee specific data

Data specifically focusing on refugees is scarce, and most available estimates come from small N conducted research. A recent paper by Cangiano (2012) uses recently released data from an ad hoc EU labour market force survey to estimate the unemployment rates of different migrant categories. As it can be seen, men classified under asylum had the highest unemployment rates 17% from 1998-2007.



Cangiano 2012.

His estimates for women show that refugee women do not have the lowest unemployment rate, but they do have the highest inactivity for the period of 1998-2007. These statistics could point that among migrants, refugees have among the lowest labour market outcomes. Previous studies in other countries support this notion, Sweden (Knocke, 2000, Bevelander and Lundh, 2007), Germany (Constant and Zimmerman, 2005) Australia (Colic, Peisker and Tilbury, 2007). All of those studies have found refugees among the lowest performers within immigrants.



Cangiano 2012

In specific, previous literature in the UK and France show evidence that the labour market outcomes of refugees are low.

Specifically in the UK, the National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (NIACE) (2009) claims that: “refugees are six times more likely to be unemployed than non-refugees.”(p.8) As well, Green (2007) states that in a House of Commons, Work and

Pensions Committee report in 2005, the unemployment rate for refugees was quoted as 36%. As well, Somerville and Wintour (2004, p. 40) report that various studies present unemployment rates significantly above the national average, as well as a widespread underemployment among refugees. They also report that the education of refugees is similar to that of the UK population and that in the countries of origin the refugees had similar employment outcomes than the UK natives. Alice Bloch (2007,p.24) highlights that the unemployment and underemployment rates reported for ethnic minorities seem to be magnified for refugees. A recent study commissioned by the Home office in 2009 and conducted by Cebulla, Daniel and Zurawan (2010) analyses data from the Survey of New Refugees (SNR). The survey was conducted among refugees in 4 stages. The interviews took place 1 week (5,679 respondents), 8 months (1,840 respondents) 15 months (1,259 respondents) and 21 months (939 respondents) after the positive asylum decision. Questions about employment were asked after 8 months and thereafter. The report finds an employment rate of 34 % after 8 months and 49% after 21 months. They report that the national employment rate was 80%. However the report also found that more than one half of the new refugees employed at the 21 months survey, felt they were overqualified for their jobs. The literature in the UK suggests that refugees' labour market outcomes are negative both in terms of employment and over qualification.

In the case of France, there are also a limited number of studies focusing on the integration of refugees into the labour market. In a recent study, Akguc (2013)

reports that refugee men and women have among the highest levels of education among immigrants, from 9-10 years, with only students coming above them. Also it is reported that they have levels of French similar to other migrant's categories. As well they show similar pre-migration employment rates to the highest migrant group, the work migrants (57% men, 47% women), refugees (men 42.8% men 34% women). Despite these positive human capital indicators the report mentions that the labor market outcomes in terms of employment and wages seem to be more favorable to work migrants and students, while family migrants and refugees have lower labour market outcomes. As well, the UNHCR (2013d, p 29) argues that there are only two surveys specifically mentioning refugees: the 2006 *Parcours et Profils de Migrants* (PPM) and the 2010 *Enquête Longitudinale sur l'Intégration des Primo-Arrivants* (ELIPA) survey. A report based on the PPM states that refugees had an employment rate of 34% and that around 48% were looking for a job. Also they note that the ELIPA survey suggest that 14 % of men refugees have a further or higher education degree and females 11%. The men are close to the percentages of other migrants, while the women are far from other migrant women who have an education of 25%. The research done so far in France seems rather limited for refugees, so the picture is blurrier than the one in the UK.

Nevertheless, the rates of non- EU migrants could be used as a benchmark, as a guide. Always having in mind that refugees make up different portions of the non-EU born, in both the UK and France, so these rates might not accurately reflect their outcomes. What seems to be the case, from the limited research, is that refugees do

experience negative labour market outcomes, as do other non-EU migrants, in both countries. So even if we don't know the exact intensity we do know they experience difficulties.

Research Question

The main research question guiding this paper is:

- What are the structural, institutional and human capital barriers for refugee integration labour market integration in the UK and France? Are they similar, different? What can be concluded about refugee labour market integration in both countries?

The main reasons why the UK and France were chosen as particular case studies will be explained in the methodology section.

The next section will provide a literature review of the major theories explaining poor labour market outcomes among migrants.

CHAPTER 2: Literature Review

The literature review will first explain theories of classic economic focus emphasizing either human capital/labour supply or labour demand. Finally, those theories that incorporate concepts from other disciplines, such as politics, psychology or sociology will be studied; namely identity economics, social capital and welfare state models.

Labour Supply

Neo Classical Human Capital theory

Neo classical human capital theory emphasizes the importance of individual characteristics for the labor market integration of migrants and refugees alike.

Constant and Zimmerman (2009) cite the paper written by Barry Chiswick (1978) as seminal regarding this approach. The theory argues that the probability of obtaining a job and earning higher wages increases with the level of human capital a person has (Bevelander and Lundh, 2007). As explained by Zimmermann and Constant (2009) this theory is based on the human capital theory formulated by Becker (1991) and Mincer (1974) and the theory assumes that migrants are self-selected. They are seen as rational individuals looking for utility maximization, therefore are highly motivated to invest in the host country human capital and succeed in the local labour market. Human capital is defined as the education, labor market experience, health (both mental and physical), and labor market knowledge that a person possesses. Lower earnings of migrants after arrival are partly explained because the migrants' skills are not always transferable to the labor

market of their new countries. But it hypothesizes that as immigrants increase their host country human capital, they will experience higher employment rates and earnings more similar to the natives.

Even though the theory is compelling it still has critics. The main criticism is that the theory does not account for possible labour market discrimination, in other words it assumes that the labour market is blind and responds only to the mechanisms of supply and demand (Colic-Peisker and Tilbury, 2007). For example Knocke (2000) finds that in Sweden, refugees that have acquired host country human capital still see barriers to employment and ties them to discrimination. Other studies have shown that the market is not “blind”, by sending applications with native and foreign sounding names (Krause, Rinne and Zimmermann, 2012). This seems to suggest that labour market integration is much more complicated than simply increasing host country human capital.

The next theory emphasizes the role of skills but focuses on the portability of immigrant’s education and skills.

Skills Transferability/ Educational mismatch

As recognized by Piracha and Vadean (2012) there has been limited research on educational mismatch of immigrants. Nonetheless they provide an interesting review of existing literature. Among the main insights they provide is that migration mismatch is unique and different than native mismatch. For example a native born person might hold a job that requires less education than he/she possesses. A

refugee might be in the same situation, but for the foreign born some interesting questions arise. For example; is the over education due to the employers perception of foreign credentials as inferior; is the over education a result of the employment history of the migrant in their home country? Was the migrant over educated in his/her home country as well? Is the over education due to a lack of transferability of skills? All of these interesting questions are directly related to the unique experiences of migrants and refugees. Another important finding reported is that in the UK working for a non-white employer reduces over education for migrants. This suggests that foreign employers might be more willing to recognize and accept foreign education and experience. The next question will be: does this create isolation and encourage migrants to stay within their own communities and create segregated ethnic labour markets? Other interesting questions arising from this theory include: are skills more transferable between certain countries, from industrialized to industrialized, from former colonies, from less developed to less developed? It can be seen then, that the focus is still on the skills but going beyond the previous theory this theory focuses on the international portability of human capital.

In an interesting paper Aure (2013,p 276) argues that skills are contextual and are “culturally and locally embedded in the communities of departure and arrival.” The main point here is that skills are developed in an environment and are useful within that environment, but when a migrant changes the environment in which the skills were developed they might lose their usefulness or the environment might not

recognize their validity. The author also claims that acquiring the language of the host nation could be an advantage but that its effect might be overstated. Being able to communicate in the host language might be a precondition to work but it does not guarantee securing a job that matches and justly rewards the refugees' education and experience. In the same light the author argues that having foreign credentials recognized might not be enough to find employment as the employer might consider the education received abroad as inferior and the experience irrelevant to the local context. So, refugee might be highly skilled but due to a perception from employers those skills might not be justly rewarded.

This theory is useful as it recognizes that skills and education are contextual and thus the non-transferability of skills might result in lower outcomes. Even more it recognizes that not only the skills supply but also other factors, such as perception, play a role in the integration. This theory points to those factors, however it does not explain clearly if the skills gathered in one country are actually different and non transferable, it assumes so, but it does not prove it. Also, it does not explain why an employer might not recognize foreign credentials as equal to native credentials. Other theories that incorporate social concepts might help to explain those questions better. Some of those theories will be explained later on the literature review.

Next the theories that argue that the labour demand and its structure is fundamental will be explained.

Labour Demand and local market structure

Moving beyond an emphasis on skills, these theories argue that a crucial factor for the successful integration of refugees and immigrants is the local labor market, its demand and its structure. Bevelander and Lundh (2007) argue that in Sweden the regional and local labour markets play a role in the integration of refugees. They find that characteristics such as the local unemployment rate and the local size of the labour market affect the outcomes of refugees. For example, refugees were more likely to be employed in certain industries depending on the population density. For example they were more likely to be employed in the industry sector in less populated areas whereas in larger cities they were more likely to be employed in the private service sector. These findings stress the importance of the local labour market and show that some local labour markets might be more accommodating to refugees with certain skills than others.

Piore (1979) supported this argument by claiming that labour market success is not a function of the duration of residence in the host country but a function of when an individual settled in the country. Those who arrived in the country during a healthy economic period will fair better than those that settled when the economy was not in a good situation.

Knocke (2000, p 362) notes that, "Sweden's economic needs and the structural labour market conditions are decisive in whether immigrants are integrated, or segregated, or discriminated against in the labour market and in worklife". The main

argument is that refugees are only integrated into the labour market when they are needed, but in times of economic depression, their chances of finding jobs are less. Also during times of structural changes refugees might not get access to training opportunities, and thus they are not prepared for new labour market demands. In this paper the most deterministic factor is the labour market and its needs. Although the author does point to social barriers. For example, one of the reasons cited to explain why high skilled refugees cannot access the labour market is that employers argue that refugees do not possess “Swedish social competence”(Knocke, 2003 p, 374). Also that factors such as a non-Swedish sounding name could hinder the integration of refugees into the labour market. This theory points to the labour market structure and its needs, but again some factors outside of supply and demand are recognized but unanswered.

This last point leads us to the next section, which studies factors beyond supply and demand that seem to influence labour market outcomes.

Beyond Supply and Demand

Ethnic identity and the labour market

Incorporating the concept of identity to economic thinking, this theoretical framework argues that identity and personal traits play a role in the labour market. Akerlof and Kranton (2000) argue that identity can cause rational persons to choose sub optimal occupations because of identity and social considerations. For example they argue that persons identifying themselves as part of a group might choose to

act in a certain way and thus limit their economic options. They emphasize the importance of belonging to a group, as persons give rewards to those of the same group and perceive them more positively. For example being a woman might reduce economic options as certain occupations are identified with men, and thus discourage women from entering them. They incorporate the psychological and sociological concepts of identity, belonging and behavior to an economic model.

Following this framework, Zimmerman and Constant (2009) argue that ethnic identities matter for economic outcomes. In specific they theorize that the strength of identification of a person with the host culture facilitates labour market integration. In this sense migrants can choose to be closer to the mainstream culture and increase their economic chances. Consequently, the host society will also be more accommodating as they will feel the person as an insider and not an outsider. In other words the local population might be more open to hire migrants perceived as more similar. In this sense the feeling of belonging to a certain group both from the part of the migrants and from the part of the host population might play a role in the labour market integration of migrants.

In the same light Battu and Zenou (2009) suggest that ethnic minorities that acquire an oppositional identity to the majority do experience an employment penalty. This theory sheds light into why even a skilled refugee might not be able to integrate successfully, as employment might also be depended on identity.

Interesting questions from this theory would drive further research, for example, do refugees feel more connected to their home countries than other types of migrants and can this help explain their seemingly lower labour market outcomes? Are refugees perceived as a part of a different group both by the mainstream population and by other immigrants, and could this explain the lower labour market outcomes due to marginalization from both mainstream and migrant groups? It would be interesting to use this theory to understand the specificities of the refugee experience.

Social Capital and labor market integration of migrants

This theory is similar to economics identity as it emphasizes the role of belonging in allowing immigrants and refugees to access jobs and other resources. It is based on the application of the concept proposed by Putnam (2000) in which he distinguished between bonding capital and bridging capital. Bonding capital refers to the links within a community and bridging capital refers to links between communities. Applied to migration and labour market outcomes it emphasizes the that belonging to a network can have positive economic outcomes.

Piracha, Tani, and Vaira-Lucero (2013) find that social capital has a positive effect on the labor market and wages of immigrants in Australia. They emphasize that creating opportunities to generate social capital will be beneficial for refugees' integration into the labor market. A lack of social capital can be tied to unemployment in Australia for Muslim refugees (Fozdar, 2011) both of these

studies focused on Australia show that social connections or networks could facilitate employment.

Contrary to the findings presented above Potocky-Tripodi (2004) argues that social capital had limited impact on the economic adaptation among Latin American refugees in Miami, Fort Lauderdale and San Diego. Instead the findings highlighted the importance of human capital, citizenship, English ability and gender. She also highlighted that social capital is a concept that could be used in different ways and as such create confusion. For example does social capital refer to intra ethnic or inter ethnic linkages? In the same light, Nederveen Pieterse (2003, p 8) recognizes that social capital is a “slippery concept that ranges from cultural attitudes and social practices to public policy, politics and economic development.” In this sense it could be applied in different ways therefore making the term itself problematic.

Lamba (2003) argues that social capital can be useful for accessing the labour market in Canada and indeed he finds that those that used their networks were more successful in gaining employment. He also highlights that a network could limit one’s chances. For example, having networks made up of other marginalized population could actually hinder chances. Interestingly he argues that there are societal or institutional restrictions that could not be overcome by social capital. For example for some degrees there is no credential recognition. A clear example is medicine, where refugees with previous degrees on this field were recommended to take fast track nursing programs. He argues that institutional downgrading of skills could reinforce structural skills downgrade. This is an important point as it

highlights the role of the institutions as creators of social structures and perceptions and that those barriers could not be overridden by either human or social capital.

As a critic, social capital theory seems to suggest that accessing social capital is beneficial, but it does not look deeper into how persons access networks. As was suggested by the identity economics theory belonging to a group might not be as straightforward and simple as social capital might suggest.

The next theory will explain how institutions could play a role in labour market outcomes.

Institutional Arrangements

Koopmans (2009) concludes that multicultural policies combined with a generous welfare state create disincentives for immigrants and refugees to be self-sufficient. He argues that multicultural policies encourage and allow migrants to create their own ethnic societies. In this sense then, it is easier for them to not acquire the host language. If a generous welfare state is added to the picture then dependency on aid is created. He specifically mentions the case of the UK as one where the lean government forces migrants to fend for themselves, in contrary to cases like Sweden that has a strong welfare state. He also mentions the case of the Netherlands with the “ideal” multicultural policy but that still results in poor integration outcomes including the labour market.

This approach is useful as it argues that policies and institutional frameworks play a role on labour market outcomes. A weakness of this theory is that it assumes that refugees or migrants decide to be protected by the welfare state. Some studies have shown that welfare is not a magnet for migration, so the claim of the theory might be biased (Giulletti, Guzi, Kahanec, Zimmermann, 2011). Also, there is evidence, as will be seen later, that in both the UK and France refugees have a strong willingness to work and not be dependent on state support. The possibility exists, that they are forced to enter welfare, as barriers to the labour markets might override their willingness and human capital. The theory is helpful in that it recognizes that institutions might have an effect on individual decision's or choices.

Although all of these theories are interesting and insightful and might shed light into the labour market integration of refugees, the next section will highlight that there is the need to develop a specific theory of refugee integration.

Voluntary Vs Forced Migration

Most theories explaining the motivations to migrate or the integration of migrants are based on the concept of voluntary migration. They assume that a migrant's decision to move is voluntary, and mostly driven by economic factors. As is recognized by King (2012, p 26) "refugees in particular are a tangential field of migration spawning its own, small theoretical literature". The lack of refugee theoretical literature is not a new issue, for example Kuntz (1973) recognized the

need to develop a theory of forced migration as the motives and the integration paths and outcomes of refugees might differ from those of voluntary migrants.

Opposing, this view Bertrand (1998) points that the definition of refugee might become blurred in practice, as some refugees might be moving primarily for economic reasons. He even argues that some persons could be fleeing persecution but decide not to apply as economic migrants. In his view then, the lines between the voluntary and forced decision to migrate is blurred in practice. These two arguments highlight the main discussion in the academic literature regarding the refugees' *decision* to move. While some argue that refugees are distinctly different than voluntary migrants, others argue that in practice the lines are not clear and thus differentiating between them might not be appropriate. Even though the main topic of this thesis is not the definition of voluntary vs forced migration, it is important to highlight the debate, as this paper will accept the view that refugees are distinctly different from voluntary migrants and that this plays a role in their labour market outcomes.

The specific legal framework and life experiences of refugees might play a role in their labour market outcomes and as such it might be necessary to go beyond the current theories explaining labour market integration of migrants to a more specific theory of labour market integration of refugees.

Refugees' legal framework, life experiences and economic outcomes

This section will show how the specific legal framework and life experiences of refugees might influence their labour market outcomes.

In terms of the legal framework, it is important to notice that before a person is granted refugee status they are an asylum seeker. This is significant for labour market outcomes as many states only grant limited access to various social rights, including the right to work, to asylum seekers (Andersson and Nilsson, 2011). Specifically, according to the EU reception conditions directive, a member state must allow asylum seekers to access the labour after 12 months but recent modifications to the directive have set the restricting period to a maximum of 9 months. The new directive becomes applicable the 21st of July 2015.⁵

Correspondingly EU member states have different conditions regarding labor market access to asylum seekers and different access times (European Migration Network, 2013). For example, in the UK an asylum seeker might get legal access to the labour market only after 12 months, this permit is not automatic and it is limited to those occupations on the Shortage occupation list (Home Office, 2014). In France the time period is 12 months and access is restricted, as applied to other foreigners. In specific an employment authorization is offered only if there is not a French national or European national or foreign national who holds a work authorization who can be employed (European Migration Network, 2013). These types of legal barriers can potentially have negative effects on labour market outcomes once they

⁵ http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/what-we-do/policies/asylum/reception-conditions/index_en.htm

are granted refugee status. As well asylum procedures could be lengthy and some might take 4 or 5 years to receive a decision⁶. It is argued in the academic literature that a long period of unemployment might result in a depreciation of skills and thus make re-enter employment harder (Edin and Gustavsson, 2008) As such these lengthy procedures and limited access to the labour market might have an effect on refugee outcomes. Interesting research arising from this perspective could ask if labour market outcomes can be explained due to the length of the decision and whether the person worked during that waiting period.

In terms of life experiences it has been reported that refugees many times go through traumatic experiences in their home countries as well as during their journeys to Europe. (ECRE, circa 2007) This type of tragic journeys and life experiences can ultimately have an effect on the labour market outcomes of refugees in the host country. Interestingly there are economic studies linking bullying to negative economic outcomes (Drydakis, 2013). As such, there is evidence that traumatic experiences might have negative consequences for labour market outcomes. In addition to the effects on their personal health, due to their unique experiences they might lose their documents, such as diplomas, birth certificates and so on (Lamba, 2003). This might severely restrict their chances to enter the labour market as refugees might be unable, for safety and legal reasons to return or contact their countries of origin and therefore might not be able to obtain diplomas or certificates from their countries of origin.

⁶ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/immigration-statistics-april-to-june-2013/immigration-statistics-april-to-june-2013#asylum-1>

It is arguable then that the refugees' legal framework and life experiences might affect refugees' labour market outcomes. These types of considerations are rarely taken into account in labour market integration theories, or in studies explaining labour market outcomes.

Literature gaps

The author has found two specific gaps and this paper will attempt to advance understanding of them. First, the specific role of integration policies and identity in the labour market outcomes of refugees is an under researched topic. For this reason in the analysis section an attempt to link both theories will be made and more specifically apply the linked theories to derive further questions about the labour market outcomes of refugees. Another important gap in the literature are studies focusing on the economic outcomes of refugees that dig more in depth in the refugee experience. This paper then will advance the notion that refugees have unique characteristics and will present a framework to better analyze and understand the refugees' experience.

Next, the methodology will explain how the paper will proceed.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

This paper will use a comparative case study method. In specific the “method of difference” will be used in order to compare differences related to refugee labour market integration between the UK and France. According to Hopkin (2002) this method “involves studying two very similar cases, which differ only in respect of the variables whose relationship to each other one is studying”(p.252). Although gaining absolute isolation of variables and finding strong and clear causal relationships is especially difficult in the social world, this paper aims to provide at the least an interesting comparison of two countries that have similar characteristics.

As was noted during the introduction of the paper, specific unemployment and over qualification data related to refugees is not readily available. This paper will rely on statistics of third country nationals and compare them to those available at either the total or native population. More than providing exact statistics on refugee outcomes, the main purpose of this paper is to compare the main barriers that have been identified by previous literature in the two countries and to find commonalities and differences among them in order to provide conclusions, present a framework to analyze barriers and provide suggestions for further research.

The main addition to the literature the paper aims to better understand refugee outcomes by analyzing how institutional, structural and individual barriers might interact given the specific experiences of refugees.

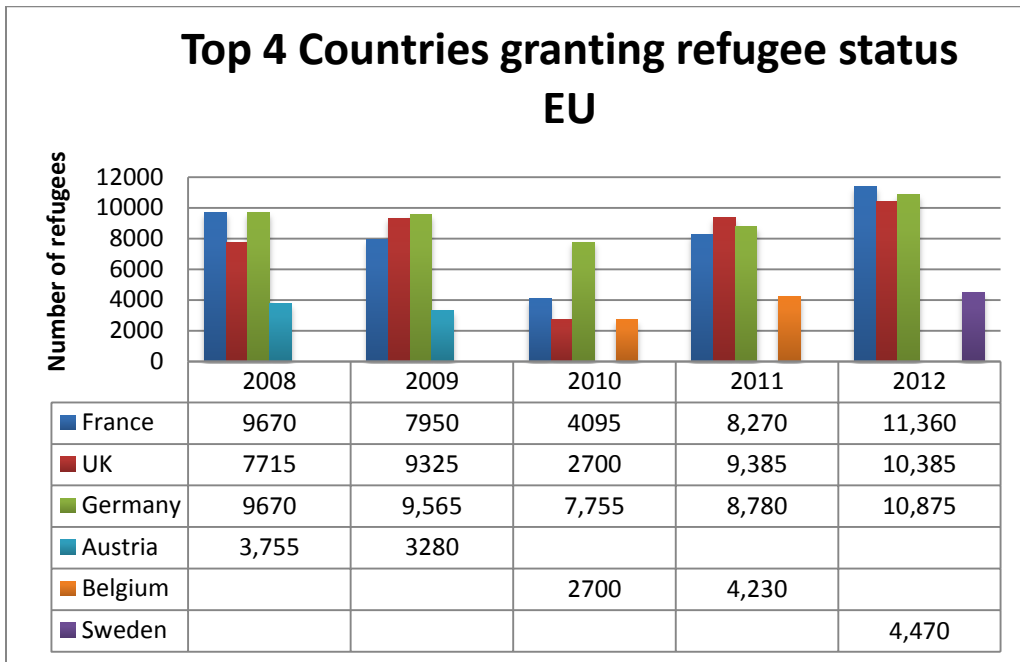
Data sources

Data from secondary sources will be used. Data from the Eurostats, from the national governments and data provided by previous research will be used and analyzed. In specific due to a lack of official numbers focusing on refugees' employment outcomes this paper will rely on previous studies that have measured refugees labour market outcomes, usually through small n surveys. Also it will rely on studies conducted before to identify the main barriers for refugee integration.

Why the UK and France

In recent years the UK and France have consistently been in the top 3 countries granting refugee status in the EU along with Germany. This is significant for this paper as its focus is examining the refugee population; as such the countries that have been accepting most refugees in recent years seem like an appropriate and timely focus for this study.

In addition, by examining the top 4 EU refugee granting member states, it was found that France and the UK had similarities in various macro variables that the author considers important to understand the labour market outcomes of refugees. The graph below summarizes the number of persons that have been granted refugee status recently.



EuroStats newsletters data.

**2010 only first instance decisions recorded.*

In specific, they have arguably the most similar macro variables; such as: GDP, GDP per capita, total population, total unemployment levels and total and percentage number of refugees and foreign-born persons.

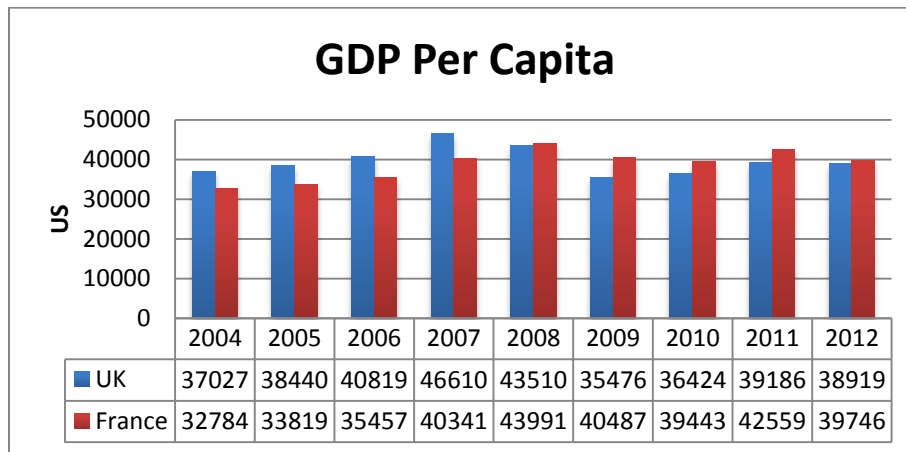
Macro Similarities UK and France

Namely, the following are the similar variables:

- Total population
- GDP per capita and (GDPs)
- Unemployment rates for the native population
- Quantity of foreign born population (both as a percentage and in net numbers)
- Similar quantity of refugee population (both as a percentage of population and in net numbers)

The following graphs, obtained using World Bank⁷ and Eurostat databases and newsletters will showcase the similarities in the above mentioned macro variables.

GDP per capita (current US\$)⁸



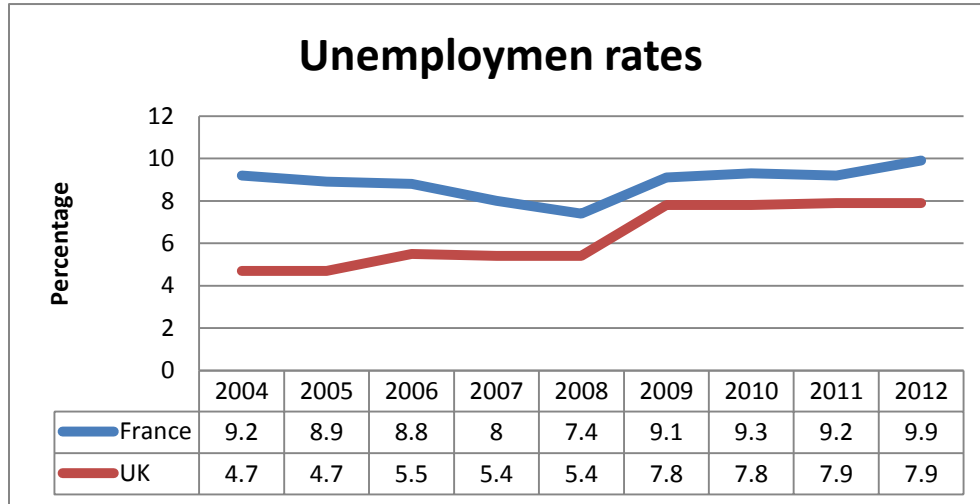
Data: World Bank

As it can be seen the GDP per capita of both countries have been close and had similar trends from 2004 to 2012. France seems to be doing better after 2008 but they still remain close with similar overall trends.

⁷ <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator>

⁸ GDP per capita is gross domestic product divided by midyear population. GDP is the sum of gross value added by all resident producers in the economy plus any product taxes and minus any subsidies not included in the value of the products. It is calculated without making deductions for depreciation of fabricated assets or for depletion and degradation of natural resources. Data are in current U.S. dollars

Unemployment, total (% of total labor force) (modeled ILO estimate)⁹



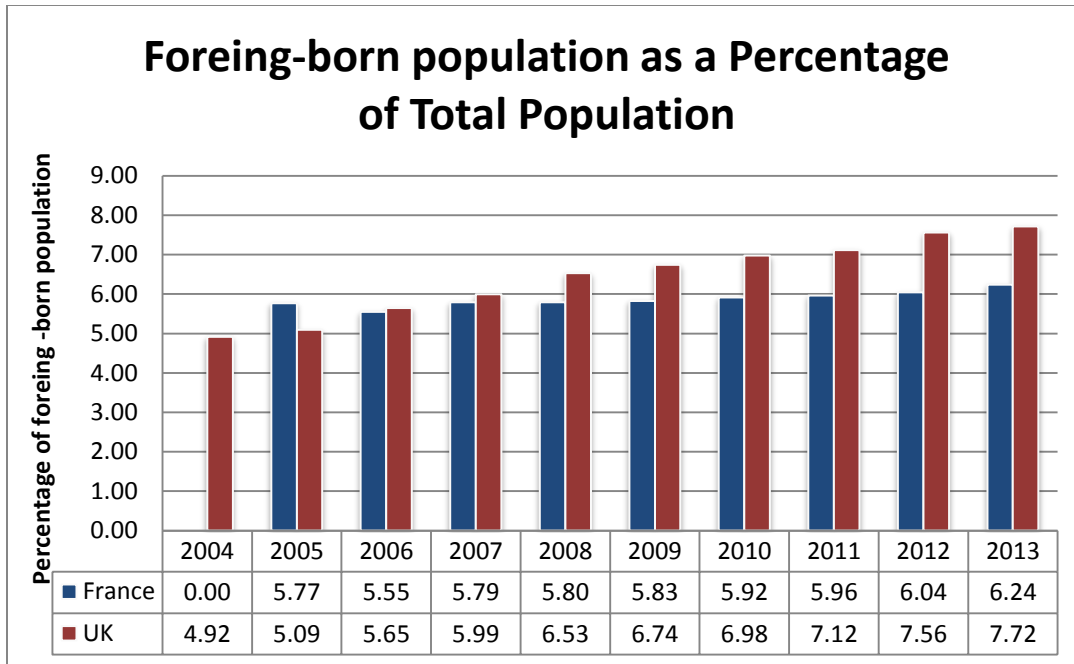
Data: World Bank

It is evident here that France has had higher unemployment rates, but that since 2008 they have been closer, as the UK unemployment rate has increased since 2009.

Foreign born Population

Within the countries in the EU that host-most foreign-born populations, the UK and France have similar numbers of foreign born as a percentage of their overall population. When comparing the numbers of foreign born, it is evident that the UK hosts slightly more foreign-born population.

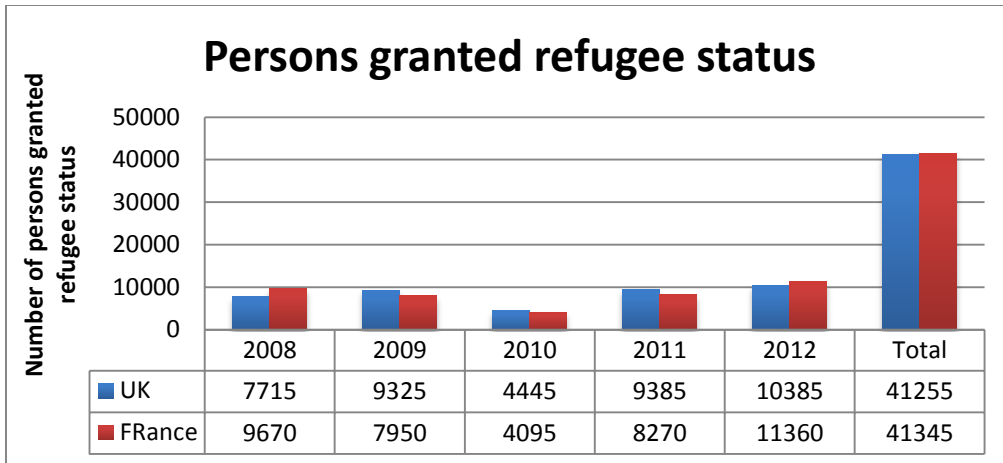
⁹ Unemployment refers to the share of the labor force that is without work but available for and seeking employment



Data: Eurostat Statistical databases

Number of refugees

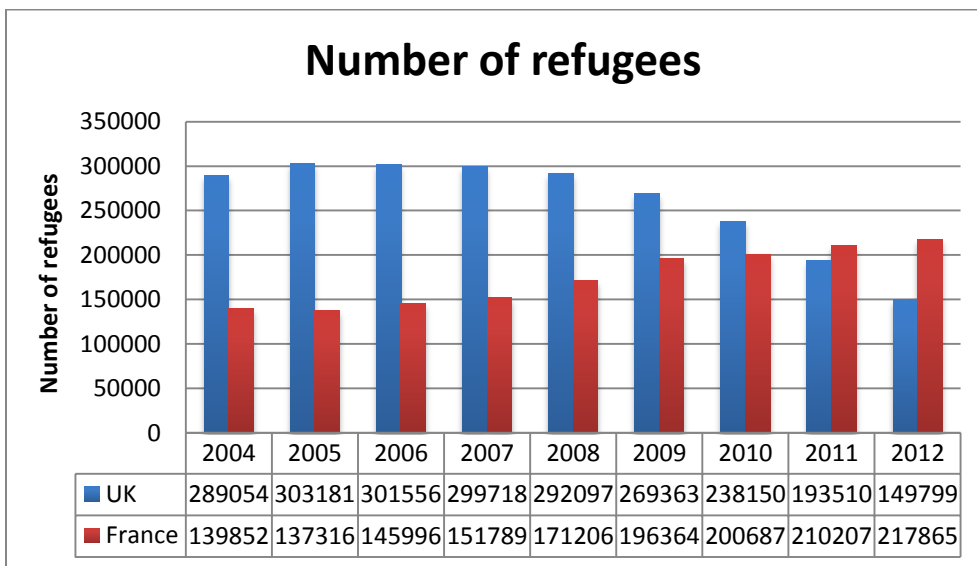
As well, recent trends regarding refugees exhibit similarities. In specific the persons granted refugee status in recent years have been similar in both countries. This is important for the study as it showcases that both countries might have to respond to similar numbers of new refugees. Here there is no clear trend, as sometimes France has higher numbers and sometimes the UK has higher numbers. Despite this as it can be seen from the total numbers in the graph below, France has granted refugee status to more persons than the UK overall but only by a small margin (90 persons).



*2010, only first instance decisions

Data: Eurostats newsletters on asylum decisions

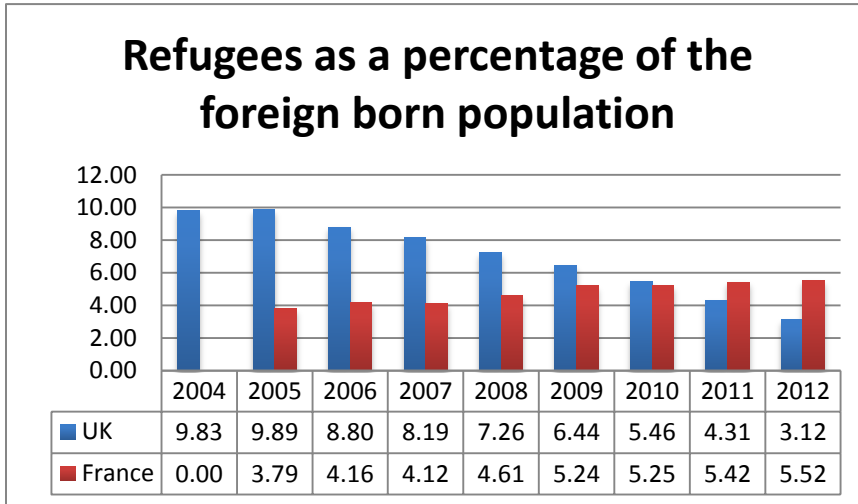
It is interesting to see that despite similar refugee granting numbers, the UK has been decreasing their stock.



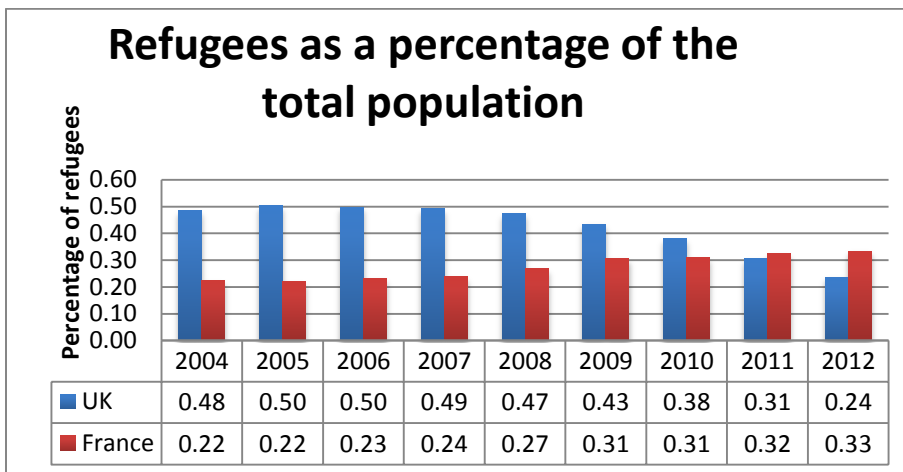
Data: World Bank.

Another interesting figure to consider is refugees as a percentage of the foreign born population. As it can be seen in the UK the percentage of refugees has been

decreasing and in France increasing. This could mean that those statistics referring to the non EU-born could more accurately depict the situations of refugees in France, as they are a higher proportion of the non-EU born in France than in the UK.



Data: Refugees: World Bank, Foreign born (EU and non EU born): Eurostats.



Data: Refugees: World Bank: Total population: Eurostats.

Refugee population by country or territory of asylum¹⁰

Another important factor to take into consideration are the countries of origin. They could be important as they could create different capital endowments in refugees, or some of the skills might be more transferable from certain countries of origin than others.

Even though the countries of origin listed below are not refugee specific, it is important to notice that among the positive protection decisions, refugee status is the most common. So it could be assumed that the top three countries mentioned also apply to refugees. The two graph below showcase this fact.

Largest groups granted protection status										
	2012	%	#	2011	%	#	2010	2009	%	#
UK	Iran	14.4	2100	Iran	13.8	1985	Zimbabwe	Zimbabwe	35.8	4485
	Pakistan	9.8	1425	Sri Lanka	8.1	1160	Iran	Afghanistan	14.3	1785
	Sri Lanka	8.4	1220	Afghanistan	7.1	1020	Pakistan	Eritrea	9	1125
France	Rusia	11.2	1610	Sri Lanka	11.6	1245	Kosovo	Sri Lanka	17.7	1845
	Sri Lanka	10.2	1460	Russia	11.4	1220	Russia	Russia	10.3	1075
	Dem Rep of Congo	8.3	1185	Kosovo	7.6	820	Bangladesh	Mali	6.5	680

Data: Eurostat News letters

**The 2010 shows the top three countries of asylum applications, but this does not necessarily mean that the same nationalities were given protection*

¹⁰ Refugees are people who are recognized as refugees under the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees or its 1967 Protocol, the 1969 Organization of African Unity Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa, people recognized as refugees in accordance with the UNHCR statute, people granted refugee-like humanitarian status, and people provided temporary protection. Asylum seekers--people who have applied for asylum or refugee status and who have not yet received a decision or who are registered as asylum seekers--are excluded. Palestinian refugees are people (and their descendants) whose residence was Palestine between June 1946 and May 1948 and who lost their homes and means of livelihood as a result of the 1948 Arab-Israeli conflict. Country of asylum is the country where an asylum claim was filed and granted.

***Protected persons not only refer to refugees but also other types of protection, although most applicants are given refugee protection.*

This graph exemplifies that refugees make up the highest percentages of persons granted protection. Other forms of protection include, humanitarian reasons, subsidiary protection and resettled refugees.

	2009			2010			2011			2012		
	total	refugee	%	total	refugee	%	total	refugee	%	total	Refugee	%
Fance	10415	7950	76.33	5115	4095	80.06	10740	8270	77.00	14325	11360	79.30
UK	12510	9325	74.54	6460	4445	68.81	14360	9385	65.36	14570	10385	71.28

Data: Eurostat newsletter of asylum decisions.

2010 data is based only on fist instance decisions.

In the UK the three countries listed in the top 3 cite English as an official language, Pakistan, Zimbabwe and Eritrea. In the case of France only two countries are French speaking, Democratic Republic of Congo and Mali.

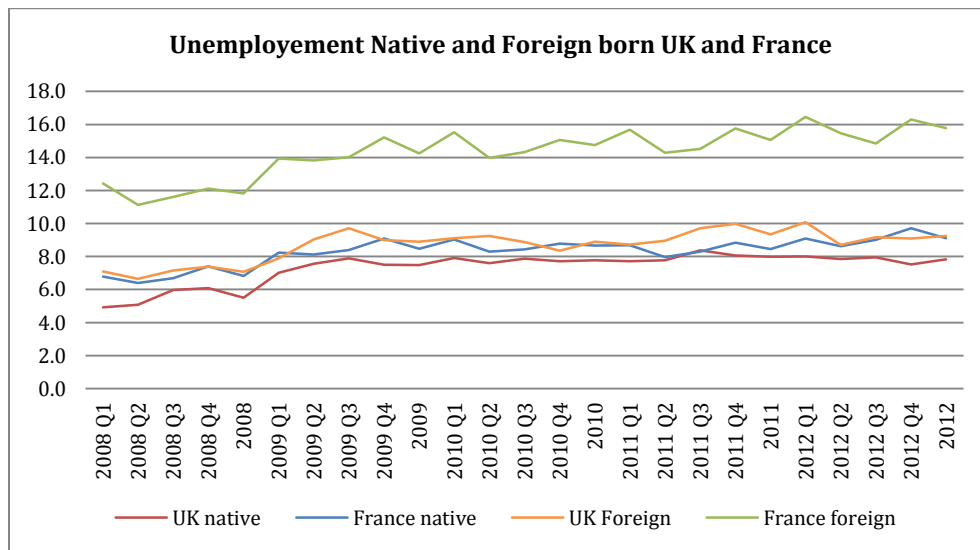
Adding the available numbers we find that in the UK 7,035 persons came from countries where English is an official language, where as in France only 1,865 persons came from French speaking countries. This could be important as it is argued that language plays a fundamental role in entering the labour market and could help explain differences in labour market outcomes between refugees.

Differences in labour market outcomes

As was mentioned above the labour market outcomes of the foreign born population which includes refugees varies between the UK and France. The following graph based on OECD statistics showcases the unemployment rates from 2008 to 2012 of

both the foreign born and native-born population. It is evident from the graph that the unemployment rate of the foreign born in France is significantly higher than both the native unemployment in France and the foreign unemployment in the UK.

This means that both in relative and absolute terms, the foreign born in France have higher unemployment rates.



Data: OECD databases

Data from Eurostat helps to confirm the above-mentioned trends. For example in the table below we can see that the unemployment rates from non EU born in the UK were lower (almost half) than in France from 2009 to 2011 for both the population of 25 to 54 and from 55-64.

Unemployment Rates of Non EU born						
2009		2010		2011		
25-24	55-64	25-24	55-64	25-54	55-64	

UK	9	8	9	9	9	9
France	17	13	17	13	18	12

Data: Eurostat datasets.

As well it is interesting to look at the over qualification rates, also gathered from Eurostat datasets.

	<i>Over qualifications of Non EU born</i>					
	<i>2009</i>		<i>2010</i>		<i>2011</i>	
	<i>25-24</i>	<i>55-64</i>	<i>25-24</i>	<i>55-64</i>	<i>25-54</i>	<i>55-64</i>
<i>UK</i>	25	25	27	25	29	25
<i>France</i>	30	20	30	19	30	21

Data: Eurostat datasets.

Here it is interesting to see that France had higher over qualification for all years among the 25-54 range but lower in all years for the 55-64 ranges. This could point to different options, for example that in the UK the older populations see their skills more downgraded, or that in France the foreign born are less educated, therefore there is less over qualification.

The results that both over qualification and unemployment seem to be higher in France for Non-EU born would point to accept those hypotheses that predict such trends. For example that because more refugees come from countries where English is spoken their employment is higher. Or that due to higher number of foreign-born persons in the UK, a lean government, and multicultural ideas, the refugees are more accepted, more able to find connections from their countries of origin. Also, different migrant compositions could help to explain the differences in labour market outcomes. For example if France accepts more non- economic migrants than

the UK this could help explain the seemingly big differences in labour market outcomes between the UK and France. In order to accept or reject those hypotheses directly related to refugees, more specific primary data would need to be collected.

Another limitation to accept those hypotheses is that, as was claimed in the introduction, specifically for the UK there seems to be evidence that refugees have lower market outcomes than other types of migrants, this leaves open the possibility that among refugees the differences between the UK and France might not be as big as the above rates suggest. Another important consideration for France is that it appears that refugees and family migrants have similar outcomes and that a big proportion of foreign born in France are refugees. This could suggest that the unemployment levels and over qualification levels quoted above for France could reflect those of the refugees more accurately.

The above analysis is inconclusive for refugees, due to the recognized gap on specific data on the unemployment and over qualification levels among refugees, as well as specific demographic and human capital characteristics. In order to have a more accurate analysis better data is needed. This view is shared by a portion of the literature that urges governments to collect specific data for refugees and other types of migrants through censuses and other means.

The next chapter then, will analyze previous studies in the UK and France in order to gather a more qualitative understanding of what seem to be the main barriers in

both countries. It will look at the specificities of each case to then compare them, find commonalities and draw conclusions.

CHAPTER 4: ANALYSIS

The integration of refugees into the labour market is a complex issue. As will be explained in this section, there are numerous factors that have been argued to play a role in the integration of refugees in the labour market in the UK and France. Different factors interact in complex and varied manners. Some of the factors are related to the refugees' human capital before migrating, some of them after migrating and yet others can be attributed to the legal, institutional and structural conditions of the host, origin and possibly, transit, countries.

Previous studies UK

Battu, Harinder and Zenou Yves (2009) argue that there is evidence that if non-whites do not adopt the culture of the white majority they might face a penalty on their employment outcomes. This can be explained because most jobs are secured through social networks and a rejection of white culture will limit ones social network and this result in higher unemployment than the white majority. These findings are also supported by other studies, Constant and Zimmerman (2008) in Germany or Pendakur and Pendakur (2005) in Canada. Both of these studies support for this theory as they argue that the acculturation or the adoption of white culture by non-white results in higher employment. At the same time the non-adoption of white culture results in lower employment rate.

In a study done by the Centre on migration policy and society at Oxford university (2004) finds that there are three major areas which affect the integration of refugees into the labor market, the individual skills of the refugee, the labor market

of where he/she is living and the policy framework which might impede or facilitate labor market integration.

Relating to the individual factors the main areas affecting the integration are: education, country where qualifications obtained, English Language Fluency and years since arrival in the UK. They also note that English language barriers might be the most significant factor and that it affects nationalities differently.

Referring to labour market factors, they identify that discrimination based on legal status might affect employment outcomes, but also that refugees' job search techniques might not be effective. In terms of discrimination, some employers might feel fear of hiring refugees, as they are afraid of being persecuted if the legal status of the refugee can lead them into trouble. They also claim that in general refugees' working conditions are poorer than those experienced by ethnic minorities in general.

Some aspects of the UK Policy framework seem to have an effect on the integration of refugees. For example as was mentioned before asylum seekers are only permitted to work in the UK, after twelve months in limited occupations. This is perceived as a problem as inactivity in the labor market might lead to depreciation of their skills and ultimately make it harder for them to enter the labor market once they are accepted as refugees. Also status affects access to some programs such as active labor market programs and others. The report also finds that there are

problems with English training in the UK, regarding the quality of the language training, the co-ordination and the funding. Also there are problems related to the delays of documentation issuance, such as the National insurance number. This hinders refugee's labor market integration, as they are not allowed to enter the labor market because of such documentation issues.

The report then concludes that these identified barriers are mutually reinforcing barriers and that some employment barriers are general for migrants and some barriers to enter the labor market for all entrants are also common to refugees.

Another study, "Employment, Skills and Training Needs of Refugees, Asylum seekers and recent migrants in Haringey", by the Working Lives Research institute at the London Metropolitan University in London, 2007.

They find out through interviewing organizations, refugees and conducting focus groups that the most significant barriers for labor market integration of refugees are the following:

- Period of economic inactivity due to having to wait for status
- Lack of asset base
- Rely on their own community and particularly on their family
- Have problems with progressing their English (some also lack basic literacy in own language)

- Experience high levels of dependence on benefits
- Have difficulties with workplace culture
- Are despondent about the lack of skilled work opportunities
- Are reluctant to take minimum wage work
- Have unrealistic expectations of the labor market
- Experience discrimination and prejudice- especially in terms of race and/or religion
- Have difficulties obtaining references and passing security checks
- Feel their skills and experience are not appreciated
- Are unemployed while those in work are often stuck in low-paid jobs

Also they acknowledge the high conditions of inequality and unfavorable levels of social mobility present in the UK. These are underlying structural factors that could play a role in the situation of refugees and their labor market integration.

One more study in the UK commissioned from the Home Office in 2010 finds similar barriers as those identified by previous studies. Among them the level of English, the level of education in the home country, and the health situation of the refugees were identified as important for employment integration. They also emphasized the importance of the post-decision period for refugee integration and highlighted that those who were not able to find employment eight months after the decision was made usually had a harder time accessing employment after.

Previous literature in France

As it has been recognized by the UNHCR (2013d) there are not many studies focusing on the labor market integration of refugees. Nevertheless the UNHCR (2013d) conducted a comprehensive report focusing on the integration of refugees in France. And one of the main topics of the report was employment. Some of the main findings of the report will be explained next. The UNHCR quotes the desire of the government, specifically the words of Manuel Vans, French minister of the interior to upgrade the asylum system in France which is considered to be in a state of crisis, specifically highlighting the long time it takes to process applications and also the lack of housing availability and support. The French minister also identifies that these are the results of 30 years shortcomings of integration policy.

Some of the specific barriers that were mentioned related to the labour market integration of refugees were the instability of the housing. For example refugees were worried about where they would be spending the night and sometimes having to move from one to the other did not give them the necessary stability to focus on finding a job or on thinking about a job strategy.

Another barrier was the reliance on the institutional framework as opposed to a social network for finding a job. In this sense then they had to go through the same formal institutions that helped every unemployed person find a job in France. They felt that the response did not specifically meet their needs as refugees. For example it is mentioned that sometimes they were asked to bring documents and this was a

barrier for them since, for the legal barriers of them being a refugee they sometimes could not contact their home governments as they were sometimes persecuted by the governments of their country, and thus had difficulties providing the necessary documentation.

Another major problem that was faced was the lack of diligence from the part of the French authorities to grant the 10-year temporary leave on time. After an asylum seeker has been accepted as a refugee, they are supposed to get their permit after 3 months. It was quoted that many times this was not given within the tree months; in this case they got another temporary three-month permission to stay. This created confusion among employers, as they did not know the situation and some feared about the legal status of a refugee.

Regarding language skills they also mentioned that learning the French language was a major issue and barrier to employment, but that it was imperative for them to get work first as they felt they could improve their language skills through work as given their limited social networks they could not practice French. It was also mentioned that courses provided by the French government only came after six months of being granted refugee status and some of them considered the training too basic. As, well as was mentioned in the UK, they felt that the post decision period was especially stressful as it brought about rapid changes in terms of accommodation, documentation and other practical matters.

Comparison UK and France

It has to be acknowledged that those studies might be biased and that primary research could help to triangulate results. That being said the sources seem to be credible as they come from recognized organizations, therefore the conclusions made here could have their inherent bias, as the author gathered no primary data.

Nevertheless, by analyzing the information from previous studies common barriers could be broadly classified as human capital, institutional and structural. Human capital characteristics might be inherent to refugees themselves and therefore they might vary greatly between France and the UK. For example due to more refugees coming from countries that already spoke English language was not considered as widespread in the UK while in France it was more widespread. So the compositions of refugees might change the intensity of the human capital barriers experienced in a country. At the same time, some institutional barriers such as a lack of public housing in France seemed to be important for refugees' employment outcomes but the intensity was higher in France than in the UK. So both human capital and institutional barriers can differ in intensity due to the nature of the refugees themselves or the institutional arrangements of the host country. What seems to be interesting is that barriers related to social or structural factors seemed to be similar in both countries. For example the recognition of foreign experience and education from employers was identified as a problem, and more that an institutional problem, it was perceived as a structural barrier. Therefore what can be considered a human capital barrier could also be affected by social or

institutional factors. And therefore, changing those social and institutional factors could help to improve both the human capital and the acceptance from the host society. The table below helps to see how the human capital barriers could be affected by structural and institutional factors. More importantly, the government could also improve structural barriers through their own institutions. So a complex picture arises, where human capital, institutions and structural barriers interact.

Language		
	Social/Structural	Institutional
France	Due to the lack of language they might be seen as outsiders	Training provided only comes after six months of being given status
How it could be improved	Could be improved by sensitizing employers, also through making society more tolerant to refugees, changes in integration policy	Providing training before, as soon as possible after decision is made, also could be provided for asylum claimants
UK	Lack of language might have strong feelings of being outsider and for the natives might	The quality of training might not be of high standards
How it could be improved	Sensitizing employers towards differences and increasing tolerance	Providing better training,

Foreign Education and Home country experience		
	Structural social	Institutional
UK	Perception that education and skills acquired abroad is not up to standard	Official recognition is possible, but structural barriers could diminish the positive impact this might have
How it could be improved	Improving understanding and acceptance of foreign credentials among employers	Provide more relevant information to employers
France	Perception that education and skills acquired abroad is not up to standard	Official recognition is possible, but structural barrier might diminish the

		positive impact this might have
How it could be improved.	Improving understanding of foreign credentials among employers	Provide more relevant information to employers

Based on the findings from France and the UK it was also found that the period post asylum was a period of stress for refugees; as they had to leave public housing acquire new documents and other life events. This could play a role also on their labour market outcomes. Based on this, is important to extend the above-applied analysis to different periods of refugee experience time frame and analyze the institutional, structural and human capital interactions at each stage. As well, each time period is not isolated, but what is experienced in an earlier stage could have an effect on a later stage. The following framework could provide a more systematic understanding of the specific refugee situations and could ultimately lead to better allocation of public resources aimed at the integration of refugees as their problems are better understood and contextualized.

Country of Origin-Pre migration underlying factors.		
Structural Barriers	Institutional	Human Capital
Discrimination against certain groups? Is the refugee from those discriminated groups and does this affect acquiring human capital or labour experience?	Might not have a good educational system or restricted to certain groups (women, minorities, clans)	Due to discrimination or a deficient education system or both the person might not possess adequate social capital.

Asylum Journey.		
Structural Barriers	Institutional	Human Capital
Countries of transit, how are refugees treated,	Governments, or organizations, either	Did the person suffer loss of human capital due to a

discriminated, abused?	facilitating or restricting movement and thus making journeys more dangerous or lengthy	long journey or traumatic experiences
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Pre asylum decision at the host country		
Structural Barriers	Institutional	Human Capital
Asylum seekers discriminated against in general, kept on detention centers? Is this stigma carried forward once asylum decisions are made?	Might not have access to the labour market as an asylum seeker and other rights, this might lower human capital. Lengthy procedures could diminish social capital.	Could suffer loss of human capital due to prolonged periods of unemployment due to limitations of labour market entrance

Post Asylum decision at host country		
Structural Barriers	Institutional	Human Capital
Are refugees seen as a burden? Are foreign credentials and experience recognized by employers?	System of support for adaptation? Housing, training, language courses?	Is human capital improvement possible amidst practical barriers such as finding employment or housing

Most studies focus on the post asylum period, and therefore could be missing interesting and important factors to explain the labour market integration of refugees by failing to study and recognize the underlying factors of the refugees experience in their pre-asylum, asylum journey and pre migration periods. In this sense then, this paper suggest that current theories explaining the integration of refugees into the labour market might be missing the interactions between barriers as well as between time stages. This framework could guide a more systematic analysis to draw more accurate results.

Identity and labour market integration: national and international application

From the analysis it seemed that to understand the structural barriers to integration, a useful theory is identity economics. The notion of being an insider or an outsider of a group could be detrimental to the economic outcomes of a person. It seems as well from the evidence than in the UK and France this could be of importance. Therefore this paper suggests that analyzing, how institutions or policy affects the notion of identity in a country could play a role in the integration. Even though this paper does not apply this concepts to the case studies, it suggest that its application might cover gray areas on what is currently known about refugee labour market integration.

Also this theory could be applied at the international stage between developed and underdeveloped nations. Is it possible that developed nations believe they are part of a “group” of nations and as such, they share “western” values and “identities” and underdeveloped nations, and their citizens, are part of another group of nations with different values and identities. Could this explain underemployment or lack of recognition from the part of employers, as they believe that the experience gathered in less developed countries is not of the same quality and relevant in host nations.

Suggestions for further research

The labour market integration of refugees is an interesting topic and further research could increase the understanding of the topic. Some areas that could be explored even further are:

- The asylum period and how it impacts refugees' outcomes: As it has been mentioned some asylum countries give rights of employment sooner or under different conditions. It would be interesting to measure if and how they play a role in the integration of labour market outcomes to those that are given refugee status.
- Are the qualifications and previous labour market experiences of refugees actually lower in quality than those of the host countries? Could we examine things such as curriculums and other indicators to see if a BA Engineer graduated in Africa is really different than a BA Engineer in graduated in France. Are curriculums and quality really that different? Or is this a myth?
- Are refugees more identified with their host countries than other types of migrants and does this play a role in their final integration into the labour market?
- What role does integration or other types of policy play in the creation of the host country identity? How does that identity see refugees and migrants? How are they perceived and could this perception be tied to a national identity?

These topics of further research would help to understand the integration barriers of refugees more clearly.

CONCLUSION

The analysis seems to point that institutional, human capital and structural barriers do play a role. Institutional barriers could be improved through better allocation of resources and more effective public administration. For example improving the asylum decisions times and the timeliness of subsequent documentations. As well issues related to the health of the refugees in the UK or the housing situation in France could be improved through better allocation of public resources or better designed policies. In terms of human capital, it seems that refugees both in France and the UK have a high willingness to learn and to enter the labour market; so providing better assistance could help to increase human capital. But even if those human capital and institutional barriers are overcome there is evidence that even high skilled refugees possessing host country human capital face non-institutional barriers to enter the labour market. So this points that the answer might lie somewhere beyond the institutional and human capital understanding. Also, it is important to notice that most studies focus on explaining refugee integration by studying mainly the post decision period and therefore the framework provided could lead further research on those barriers at different time periods.

The notion of identity comes in handy and could help shed some light in that gray area. For example if refugees are seen as “outsiders”, “different” or a “burden” by the host society and by other migrants they might face barriers to enter the labour market. This structural/social barriers could be tackled through public policy, by encouraging the notion that refugees and migrants in general are a positive addition

and not a detriment to the nation. Therefore raising awareness about refugees, who they are and the importance of their labour market integration might be a significant public policy. Public policy could encourage all members of a nation to value migration and respect diversity. Prominent Canadian immigrant scholar J Reitz (2012) advances a similar view. He argues that in Canada major actors in the country: the government, the civil society and the business sectors all accept the notion that immigration is beneficial to the country. According to him this is the main factor that makes the Canadian case “exceptional”. He recognizes that other factors such as the points based system and multicultural policy play a role but for him the most important characteristic is the widespread belief and acceptance of migration as a positive force for the country.

In the same way this paper concludes and advances the notion that the role of identity must be further researched and most importantly examining how through public institutions a nation sees itself and sees others might play a role in the integration of refugees into the labour market.

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