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The role of social capital in the economic integration of highly skilled migrants
The case of young professional new immigrants from Argentina in Israel

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Abstract

Following the shift to a knowledge-based world economy, the need for skills was translated into a global race for talent. Though high-skilled migration flows represent a growing trend, their economic integration mechanisms remain under-researched. As the literature on low-skilled migrants and refugees show, entering into a foreign labor market is hindered by social, cultural, and information barriers, thus building social capital is a predominant coping strategy. Even though obstacles are not less tough for high-skilled migrants, I state they can endure immigration as a positive experience because of their socioeconomic position and the quality social capital they generate.

This paper has examined the social capital strategies high-skilled migrants build and use to integrate into the receiving country's labor market on a group of 20 young professionals new immigrants from Argentina living in Israel. Through a qualitative, in-depth study I've demonstrated how they cope with absorption obstacles by creating different forms of social capital, employing three mechanisms – Relating, Fitting and Adapting - to improve their position socially and professionally. While the first strategy groups the types of networks immigrants build or are challenged to form in their process of socioeconomic integration, and the second refers to the adjusting of skills needed to enter and progress in the labor market, the last one focuses on the adaptation process on a mental and emotional level for a long-term successful absorption.

These findings provide overreaching insights to further the study of migrants' economic integration, contributing to theoretical innovation. First, I've shown that using a micro-level approach offers a better understanding of what migrants experience and do, and so insights on how actions affect absorption outcomes. Second, when previous authors identified capital types available, this work takes a step forward disclosing how are built and activated to reach economic integration. Last, I've spotlighted the nuances of high-skilled migrants' strategies when dealing with professional development challenges, putting this population under the research radar.

The growing trend of high-skilled migrants reveals the need to address the challenge of fostering a successful and sustainable socioeconomic integration. Considering how vital their contribution is to the local economy, policymakers should grasp the findings to update and improve absorption policies in the receiving destinations.

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Introduction

During the last decades, the world witnessed a rapid growth of the global economy, which was a cause and consequence of the improvement of communications and transportation means, reduced trade barriers, and internationally mobile capital. The amplification of the globalization process was reflected in increased migration flows, mainly of those searching for new and better economic opportunities in the developed world. As previous research shows, for a migration process to be successful, migrants have to be integrated into the labor market and be valued by natives as contributing to the economy and development of the country (Cohen & Kogan, 2007; Heilbrunn et al., 2010). However, entering into a foreign labor-market tends to be challenging because of the multiple constricting objective and subjective obstacles a migrant face along the process, including language, social, cultural, and information barriers (Borjas, 1987; Chiswick, 1990, 1991; Evans & Kelley, 1991; Nee et al., 1994; Valenzuela, 2000; Card, 2001; Esses, et. al, 2001; Venturini & Villosio, 2002; Birjandian, 2004; Swirsky & Kapla, 2005; Heilbrunn & Kushnirovich, 2007, 2008; Offer, 2007; Raijman & Kemp, 2010). That's why building useful, strong, and sustainable social capital - understood as the aggregate of resources a person can access due to the network of relationships he possesses (Bourdieu, 1986) - appears to be the predominant strategy migrants use when trying to overcome the difficulties and pursue a successful economic integration (Lin, 2001; Aguilera & Massey, 2003; Drever & Hoffmeister, 2008; Ryan et al., 2008; Ryan, 2011; Lancee, 2010; Piracha et al., 2014). While these ties provide migrants with access to information, connections, and influences, social capital can compensate for the inadequacy of human capital to the local market needs and reduce the social and cultural distance with the local population, softening the entry into the receiving society and economy.

Considering it, this study will research the types, uses, benefits, and outcomes of social capital high skilled immigrants have to integrate into their host country labor market. Specifically, the research will focus on how young-professional new-immigrants from Argentina build and use their social capital to enter Israel's labor market.

The thesis has both a theoretical and an empirical purpose, in the attempt to close the prevailing gap in the literature. The existing literature has focused on the labor market integration of low-skilled and low-socioeconomic background migrants while having

under-researched how professionals integrate into the host country economy. Even more, most of the studies on migrants' social capital use quantitative research methods, neglecting the actors' own experience from the theoretical understanding of the phenomena. Regarding the Israeli empirical case, only a few studies had researched absorption trends of Western populations, as most of the research has been done on the bigger migratory flows from the former Soviet Union and Ethiopia. Thus, this study came to close this gap by focusing on high-skilled and highly-educated migrants, coming from non-Anglo Saxon Western countries, using qualitative research methods to allow a deeper understanding of their integration strategies. On the one hand, this study aims to identify the patterns of how social capital is built and used within high-skilled immigrants' population during their economical integration process, to spot which types of networks and resources allow better outcomes. On the other hand, researching Argentinean young professional new immigrants in Israel allows studying a specific population that doesn't fit in the classic Western/Eastern stereotypes: they have occidental-standards' background but their human capital was created in developing non-English speakers countries. Identifying social capital's types, uses, and outcomes' patterns will allow improving Israel's absorption policies. To do so, the research will aim to answer (1) What types of social capital are available to young-professional new-immigrants of Argentinean origin in Israel?; (2) Can social capital support the labor-market integration of young-professional new-immigrants and if so, how?; (3) What type of work is available to young-professional new-immigrants using different types of social capital?

To answer the three research questions and complete the existent gap in the literature, a qualitative study will be performed. A sample of 20 Argentinean young professionals will be selected through the snowball method, choosing those who have (a) immigrated to Israel between 2009 and 2019 (olim hadashim), (b) completed tertiary education before migration, and (c) not moved out exclusively for work reasons. The data will be gathered through in-depth semi-structured interviews with open-questions questionnaires until reaching data saturation and analyzed with open coding techniques. Developing qualitative research on how young-professionals build and use their social capital during their workforce integration process allows, not only understanding the nature, intensity, and durability of those networks but also to consider the motivations,

opportunities, and obstacles they have encountered in the way, what can help to redesign absorption policies to improve migrants socio-economic integration.

This research will have three main contributions. First, most of the existing literature on immigration in general and in migrants' social capital in particular is founded on macro-structural perspectives and use quantitative research methods; hence there is a relatively low presence of the immigrants' voice in the research. Because of the general understanding that macro approaches in immigration theories have more explanatory strength, there is not enough research that focuses on a micro analysis from the migrants' perspective. Through a qualitative study, I propose to bring the immigrants' own voices to the center of the research, aiming to disclose not only their perception on reality and the experiences lived, but to find out how the strategies and actions the actors choose to make affect their immigration process and integration outcomes. Second, it's clear from the literature review that previous authors that studied immigrants' social capital for labor market integration have focused on low-skilled immigrants and refugees from low socioeconomic backgrounds. However, as high-skilled migratory flows represent a growing global tendency, I propose to research how professional middle class migrants build and use their social capital in their process of economic integration in the receiving country. Considering the differences in social, human and cultural capital each group could possess and be exposed to given the dissimilar socioeconomic position, the adaptation techniques as well as their expectations and interests while migrating tend to differ. Thus, the existent research findings may be not transferable to high-skilled migrants, and hence a more focused study on this particular population is required. The third contribution refers to the Israeli immigration context. Literature largely centers on immigration and integration of the former Soviet Union and Ethiopian migrants, being the biggest waves during the last years. My research will focus on a different population that hasn't been properly studied yet in the Israeli context, providing empirical innovation to the existing literature. Besides being Western countries' immigrants' absorption trends under-researched, they are usually considered as one homogeneous group even though there are significant differences between them according to their particular characteristics and the circumstances of migration. By studying the adaptation and integration strategies new immigrants from Argentina develop and put into practice, I aim to answer Amit's (2012) call to perform qualitative, in-depth researches on the different populations of

Western migrants in Israel to examine the particularities of each experience. Thus, this work intends to contribute to the Israeli immigration research body in the search for broader but deeper insights regarding the nuances in migrants' integration processes and outcomes.

The study starts with a literature review on immigration and social capital, focusing on what has been done and the gaps this research aims to fulfill. First, the theoretical part of the chapter reviews what other authors have said about immigrants' social capital for labor market integration, divided into three parts. The first subchapter is centered on immigration literature, with a focus on work immigrants and professional relocation. The second one rebuilds the different definitions, types, and properties of social capital that are present in the contemporaneous literature, starting with Bourdieu's classical definition and including a broader perspective from more recent authors. Last, I scan existing literature on barriers and opportunities to immigrants' integration into the labor-market, highlighting studies about the intersection of immigration, occupation, and human and social capital. The second part contemplates an empirical literature review on immigration and absorption in Israel, including as well a subchapter on high-skilled migrants' trends and an appendix on Argentineans immigration and absorption particularities. The second chapter describes the methodology chosen for the study and explains how it serves the research aims. Once the data is gathered and analyzed, the third chapter comprises the insights from the qualitative study while answering the three research questions. The last chapter shares the discussion on the findings and the final conclusions, including open questions for further research and policy recommendations.

Literature review

Immigrants' social capital for labor market integration

A theoretical perspective of migration movements

With the improvement of communications and transportation means, during the 20th century, there was an exponential increase of national and international migration[1] flows, which was accompanied by a flourishing theoretical development. Contemporary migration theories belong to a highly fragmented field. First, they are usually grounded in particular historical, geographical, and sociopolitical contexts and therefore are difficult to generalize. Second, migration research has developed two different pathways, as it is distinct between the causes and effects of the phenomena. Third, migration is a multidimensional phenomenon that was studied from micro and macro perspectives.

Considering the origins and the causes of migration movements there are two predominant paradigms in the immigration literature: micro-individual and macro-structural approaches. Drivers for migration were first explained at the micro-level, focusing on rational individual decision making based on costs and benefits analysis, being Larry Sjaastad its referent. In his paper from 1962, Sjaastad stated that migration is an investment that increases human resources productivity, and therefore the costs and returns derived from migration can be calculated (Sjaastad, 1962). Based on this proposition, Everett Lee (1966) published his General Schema for Migration, which explains migration trends over time. Lee´s model postulates that migration results from an individual calculation based on the perception of the negative factors at the place of origin and the positive ones at the destination, including personal contacts and information networks. According to this model, migration increases with time for two reasons. First, growing economic disparities between the developed and developing world turn the calculation in favor of the destination place even more frequently. Second, migration drives migration itself, as once the first migrants overcome the obstacles, it becomes easier for new waves to follow. As I will further develop along with this work, this idea was later on explained through social capital theories applied to

[1] Following Alan Simmons' (1987) conceptualization, there are three major dimensions to define migration: a change in residence, a shift in employment, and a shift in social relations. Simmons' characterization broadened the pre-existent definition based mainly on the first dimension, allowing the development of macro-structural studies that place migration in its particular historical context.

immigration: establishing networks with the older generation of immigrants proved to be useful for newcomers to access information, resources, and job opportunities within the host society, smoothing the first steps during the absorption process. Following this study's findings, this appears to be also true for Argentinean migrants in Israel, as bonding relations with pre-established immigrants were not only used to incentivize migration but to offer better outcomes regarding their economic integration.

In the same line of studying the evolution of migration movements from the micro-level, some authors assure that migration is not an isolated phenomenon but a component of the theory of demographic transition and therefore it is tied to other demographic behaviors (Zelinksi, 1971; Gregory and Piché, 1985; Mertens, 1995).

Even though the micro-individual approach is broadly accepted in the literature, other researchers believe that migration should be understood from a macro-structural approach, considering the global context where migration is only one of the multiple international flows, including also the capital, goods, services, and knowledge. Akin Mabogunje (1970) was the first to propose a framework that considers migration as a systemic phenomenon rooted in a system of interdependent variables, including the economic and social environment, political factors, technology, the role of information, and the continued feedback with the place of origin. This global understanding of migration started in the last decades of the century but became popular in the 2000s, when international migration flows were studied through the prism of globalization, with a focus on transnational networks (Schiller et al., 1992; Faist, 2000; Vertovec, 2009) and the idea of migration as a response to demand for labor in a globalized economy (Petras, 1981; Wood, 1982; Simmons, 2002). When considering the ties between the origin and destination place, there are two main approaches to understand the relationship between migration and development. On the one hand, some authors believe that migration, considered as a way to reallocate resources from pre-industrial or rural societies to developed and urban labor markets, will eventually restore the balance between them (Todaro, 1969; Massey, 1988). From a more critical point of view, several authors consider that globalization and migration do not lead to the development of the developing world as the classic development theory states but helps reinforcing its structure and differentiation. According to Burawoy (1976), the ‘circular migration’ is based on the principle of geographical separation of the processes of labor force reproduction from those of maintenance, where the domestic economies must continue

to function as today as a social security system for those who have emigrated and entered into an unstable and unprotected foreign labor market. This situation, which surges after the reorganization of the industrial production worldwide, instead of progress produces a proliferation of supply of labor-intense, low-skilled and low-wage jobs (Sassen, 1988). Even though migrants still face these challenges when entering into a foreign labor market, building strong, social capital - as I will explain later - appears as one of the main strategies to neutralize this phenomenon. Following this study's findings, not only but specifically high skilled migrants can use leveraging networks to avoid deskilling and downward social mobility and even progress professionally in the host country economy.

As Piché (2013) explains, the migration networks theories represent a key contribution that mediates between micro and macro approaches, understanding migration as the result of collective actions involving migrants and non-migrants. Several authors have highlighted the role of the family and the domestic household as central in the links between places of origin and destination as well as between individual actors and socioeconomic structures (Stark and Bloom, 1985; Boyd, 1989; Stark, 1991; De Haas, 2010). Moreover, as this study will further develop, this approach allows explaining the self-perpetuating characteristic of migration: the existing and belonging to networks, as creates social capital, increases the probability of new migrants' waves by diminishing the costs and increasing the benefits (Massey, 1990; Palloni et al., 2001). As I'll pursue to demonstrate throughout this study, relating to others – both peer migrants and the local population – not only provides emotional and pragmatic support smoothing the entryway to the host society but can offer access to highly-valuable economic resources. Thus as migrants' networks can be a useful strategy for socioeconomic integration, when successful may also act as an amplifier of these global movements, making them an object worthy of being researched.

Migration theories not only focus on the drivers to leave the place of origin but also on its effects. The literature is fragmented between micro and macro approaches with significant differences regarding the impact on the developed and developing world. Methodologically these studies are controversial, as even when effects should be measured in the medium or long-term most of the empirical researches have a short-term perspective (Goldin et al., 2011).

As Piché (2013) highlights in his literature review "Contemporary Migration Theories as Reflected in their Founding Texts" there are two dimensions to analyze the microeconomic effects of immigration: on the one hand, the economic impact at the individual level of the migrants; and, for the other, its effects on non-migrant populations and native-born citizens of the destination countries. Because of the general acceptance of Sjaastad´s (1962) thesis, migration's individual positive economic effects have not been researched enough in developed countries. Regarding the effects on the native labor market, there are two main arguments in the literature. While some claim immigrants take natives' jobs (Piché, 2013), others assure that immigrants´ impact on natives´ job opportunities is insignificant (Card, 2009) or even, if it does have a negative effect, is only on other migrants populations and on least skilled workers (Borjas, 1990). However, as Wilson and Portes (1980) demonstrate, the labor market is heterogeneous and migrants may be incorporated in different ways. Even though most of them find employment in the secondary labor market – associated with low wages, insecure and manual jobs, and low levels of unionization - migrant workers don't necessarily belong to the bottom of the socioeconomic pyramid. As the authors conceptualized, they can be incorporated into the labor market through ethnic enclaves, immigrants-concentrated areas that generate business opportunities for migrants to serve their own ethnic market needs or work for other immigrants (Portes, 1981; Light, 1972).

From a macro-structural approach, immigration effects have been linked to the needs of western capitalism. On the one hand, Marxist studies such as Castles and Kosack's (1972) highlight the negative effects of immigration to developed countries as it reinforces a hierarchical structure of employment with immigrants at the bottom of it. Other studies, however, point out the beneficial effects of migration at a macroeconomic level, as it improves labor-force participation rates, the quantity, and quality of economic, cultural and social capital, and promotes growth, innovation, and tax revenue (Carter and Sutch, 1999; Goldin et al., 2011). In developing countries, emigration's main effect is measured through remittances, the financial thread that keeps connected the home society with the host country. Even though transnationalism studies underline the fact that migrants can be agents of development (Faist, 2008; Vertovec, 2009; Ratha and Silwal, 2012), the cash flows' impact, however, will depend on the existence of investment opportunities in the region, on the socioeconomic position of the beneficiary

households and if migration is seasonal or permanent (Oberai and Manmohan, 1980; Skeldon, 2008; Portes, 2009; De Haas, 2010).

Migration effects can also be assessed from a sociopolitical prism. On the one hand, the political effects of immigration have been addressed from the perspective of refugee movements' studies and its internal and external effects (Zolberg, Suhrke, and Aguayo, 1986; Legoux, 2006). On the other hand, migration literature has also studied its impact on diversity, minority/majority relations, and identity politics (Castles, 1993; Piché, Renaud, Gingras, 2002; Richard, 2004).

Even though migration theories' main focus was to understand drivers and effects of migration patterns, it has a third use: design, evaluate, and justify migration policy choices, which goes from restrictive models to those advocating free circulation of persons, with those in-between claiming to consider as an integral component of migration policy (Carens, 1987; Pécoud and Guchteneire, 2009; Ghosh, 2000; Tapinos, 2000; Piché, 2009).

Even though there are multiple theories, rather than competing, each approach brings insights that together permit us to understand migration processes. Migration cannot be explained from solely one approach, but as a multifactorial and multidimensional phenomenon which incorporates three main elements: origin and destination; micro, meso, macro and global analysis levels; and economic, social and political dimensions (Piché, 2004).

Today it's broadly accepted that migration trends are intrinsically related to political, social, and economical global developments. However, it cannot be denied that each migration story answers, alongside macro-level structures, to individual decisions backed with personal needs and desires. This study will therefore study migrants' integration strategies from the subjects' angle, but framing the individual experiences within lens considering a broader perspective. Aiming to understand how social capital can be built and used to leverage the economic integration of new immigrants, this study will focus on a micro-level dimension of immigration, considering the interests, opportunities, and challenges that migrants themselves take into account during their migration and absorption process, without forgetting how the interviewees' experiences dialogue with global high-skilled migration trends. Even though there are a few studies focusing on the migrants' perspective, those researches are underrepresented as still the

quantitative methodology and the macro-level analysis dominates the field. This work aims to contribute to closing this gap.

Social capital theory: definitions, types and uses

Social capital, a sociological concept first developed in the 80s (Bourdieu, 1986), has gained intellectual popularity during the last decades. The concept has been applied in multiple disciplines, including sociology, economics, psychology, and public health, mainly as a means to understand the relative strength of communities and the importance of networks between its members (Lin, 2001; Pooley et al., 2004; Roberts, 2004). Social capital theories have been used in a varied array of fields, including labor market and employment (for example Brinton, 2000; Fernandes, 2006; Barr, 2009; Kashefi, 2012 Chua, 2014), social work (Loeffler et al., 2004; Mathbor, 2007; Ersing and Loeffler, 2008), and was even incorporated in social policy and development studies (Schuller et al., 2000; Leonard, 2004; Farrell, 2007; Popple, 2006; World Bank, 2009).

Even though it won popularity within the Academy with Coleman (1993) and Putnam (1995, 2003) studies, Pierre Bourdieu was the first who coined and analyzed the sociological concept of social capital. In *The forms of capital* (Bourdieu, 1986), Bourdieu assures that it is impossible to explain the structure and functioning of the social world unless we consider the creation, reproduction, and distribution of cultural and social capital, besides solely the economic capital as recognized by the classic economic theory. Social capital, as first defined by the French academic, "is the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition" (Bourdieu, 1986:249). The volume of these symbolic and material resources possessed by each agent depends on the size of the network of connections he has and on the volume of other types of capital he owns, because of its exchangeable faculty. Bourdieu uses the concept of social capital to explain social inequality, as it is considered another stock held by the elite for exclusionary and control purposes (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992).

Based on Bourdieu's first studies, other researchers started to redefine the concept of social capital and apply it in a varied array of theoretical and empirical fields. In other funding text James Coleman (1988) proposes a social capital conceptualization from a

theoretic perspective that merges Bourdieu's sociological framework with an economist perspective, defining it by its function. In his study on high school dropouts, he describes social capital as a resource for action embodied in relationships among persons, emerging from closure in the social structure. Like other forms of capital, social capital is productive, as it provides actors with resources they can use to achieve their interests. Away from Bourdieu's elitist conception, Coleman considers that all social relations and social structures facilitate some form of social capital. He identifies three: obligations and expectations, information channels, and social norms. Similar to Coleman, Burt (1992) accentuates the contingency of social capital on the social structure. However, he argues that social capital results from the existence of structural holes, as, like Granovetter (1973), considers that weak ties are beneficial for an actor in the pursuit of resources.

Bourdieu and Coleman are considered the intellectual fathers of the concept. However, it has become more popular after Putnam's (1993) investigation on Italian democracy, where he considers social capital as essentially composed of trust, reciprocity norms, and civic engagement networks. It is Putnam's version of social capital that tends to dominate the academic discussion, which adds the civic component to the classic definition.

After the funding texts of Bourdieu, Coleman, and Putnam, recent authors conceptualized social capital from different theoretical frameworks. Following the work of Granovetter and Burt, Lin (2000) defined social capital as the quantity and or quality of resources an actor can access or use as well as its location in a social network, considering not only the resources involved in social relations but also their characteristics. Portes (1998) goes a step forward in the disaggregation of the concept as he understands social capital through three dimensions, considering the recipients (the actors who make claims), the sources (those who agree to the recipients' demands), and the resources themselves.

Despite the variety of definitions surrounding social capital, there are three components - network structure, trust and reciprocity, and resources – common to all of them (Glanville and Bienenstock, 2009). In their comprehensive typology, the authors assert that the different existent forms of social capital stand along a four-ax continuum: (a)

dense to dispersed social networks, (b) level of trust and/or reciprocity, (c) level of resources, and (d) micro to macro.

Along this continuum, researchers identified several types of social capital to differentiate the existent forms of it. Putnam (2003) has identified eight types of social capital: formal and informal; dense and dispersed; turned inward and turned outward; and bonding and bridging. However, the academy broadly accepted the existence of three: bonding, bridging and linking (Gitell and Vidal, 1998; Cote and Healy, 2001; Szreter and Woolcock, 2004). Bonds describe relations between people based on a sense of common identities, such as family, close friends, and people who share the same culture or ethnicity. Bridges are weaker links amongst people who are dissimilar in a provable way, such as age, socio-economic status, education, and ethnicity, including distant friends, colleagues, and associates. Linkages are connections to people or groups further up or lower down the social and power ladder, including ties with organizations and institutions that assist in getting support from people in authority or provide access to services, jobs, resources, or further networks. Lin (2001) redefines bonding and bridging relations as heterophyllous (between dissimilar actors) or homophilous (between similar actors). While bonding refers to the strongest connection, linking, even though is the weakest type, produces the most valuable outcomes, as provides access to power structures and institutions. Unlike bonds, bridges and links allow contact with new ideas, values, and perspectives, and, therefore, provide more valuable resources (Lin, 2001; McPherson et al., 2001; Woolcock, 2001; Szreter and Woolcock, 2004). Considering this, and building on Granovetter's and Bourdieu's concepts of 'social location' and 'social distance', Ryan (2011) suggests re-thinking the dichotomy of bonding and bridging social capital instituted by previous authors (Lin, 2001; Fernandez and Nichols, 2002; Nannestad et al., 2008). She proposes addressing these networks' nature through vertical and horizontal ties, considering the relationship between the actors, their relative social locations, and their available and realizable resources. Vertical social capital refers to networks between individuals with dissimilar social backgrounds who have access to different knowledge and resources, whereas horizontal social capital describes ties among individuals with similar social backgrounds, knowledge, and resources (Ryan, 2011; Patulny, 2015). Even though there is enough literature analyzing and characterizing the different types of social capital, it is still under-researched the strategies through which these ties are built and used to fulfill the

actors' interests. The present study aims to continue the theoretical discussion deepening not only in how the different types of social capital are constructed and mobilized but also identifying the range of outcomes reached through each of these networks, focusing on its effects on migrants' economic integration.

Ryan's framework is specifically useful when studying migrants' social capital, as in this study. As I'll further disclose, new-coming migrants tend to face language, cultural, social, economic, and information gaps regarding the receiving country's population. Relating to others appears to be the best strategy to cope with the many challenges when trying to integrate into a new society, as these networks provide them with resources – like hard-to-reach information, useful contacts, and job opportunities – which couldn't have access to another way. Many researchers tend to associate bonding social capital with co-ethnic contacts while bridging social capital is understood as access to networks and individuals from host societies (Li, 2004; Drever & Hoffmeister, 2008; Nannestad et al., 2008; Lancee, 2010; Laurence, 2011). However, as recent studies show, the dichotomy based on ethnicity and nationality can't explain alone the usefulness of social capital for migrants (e.g. Ryan et al., 2008; Ryan, 201; Patulny, 2015). As Ryan demonstrated, social networks for migrants are not static, but evolve over time, as migrants tend to experience social, economical, and geographical mobility within the local society that expose them to new networks and different types of resources (Ryan, 2007; Ryan et al., 2008; Ryan & D'Angelo, 2017; Ryan, Lopez Rodriguez, & Trevena, 2016). Through this research, I aim to demonstrate that social capital dynamism is not only theoretically relevant to understand its nature, but it possesses a significant impact in its empirical uses and outcomes especially regarding immigrants' economic incorporation. As this study's findings prove, more integrated immigrants enjoy further connected networks and therefore provide them with access to higher-quality and better-paid job opportunities, which could contribute to forming a virtuous circle benefiting other migrants as well.

Even though it is a flourishing field in the literature, there is still no agreement on how to measure social capital. In a try to operationalize the theoretical definitions of social capital and apply it in empirical researches, Keith Brook (2005), from the British Office of National Statistics, has developed one framework to measure it. His index is composed of five dimensions, including social participation, civic participation, social

networks and social support, reciprocity and trust, and views of the local area, with several indicators for each one.

There is a debate in the literature regarding whether social capital is a positive asset that fully provides benefits or can also bring with it negative elements (Putnam, 2000; Hero, 2003). From an individual viewpoint, some studies suggest that the support provided by social capital is useful to overcome adversities, including emotional and economic hardships (Edin and Lein, 1997; Bassuk et al., 2002; Hawkins and Abrams, 2007). From a macro perspective, social capital can facilitate economic opportunities, transactions, and growth because they allow actors to profit from resources such as information, knowledge, and influence held by others (Lin, 1999; Mouw, 2003; Ioannides & Loury, 2004; Sabatini, 2009). The positive impact is stronger in communities that developed bridging and linking social capital and the need to build these heterophyllous networks is even more urgent in economically or racially segregated environments (Leonard, 2004; Beaudouin, 2007; Mathbor, 2007). However, some authors point out negative aspects of social capital, as it may be time-consuming, affect mental health function and obstruct employment acquisition or retaining (Caughy et al., 2003; Beaudouin, 2007).

In an attempt to contribute to closing the existent debate, this study proposes disaggregating which outcomes can be reached with different types of social capital available to new migrants during their economic integration process. Even though the findings of this work strengthen the positive effects' thesis, as I'd further disclose in the next chapters, each relating strategy offers particular resources that lead to diverse results, which may be more or less beneficial according to the migrants' stage during the integration process, as well as their particular interests, skills, and priorities. As this study claims, there is no universal answer regarding whether social capital is beneficial. Instead, there are multiple strategies that, after assessing each particular context, could be applied to provide migrants with sustainable and high-quality outcomes.

Barriers and opportunities to immigrants' integration into the labor-market

For a migration process to be considered successful, migrants' groups have to be integrated into the labor markets and host societies and be valued by natives as contributing to the economy and development of the country (Heilbrunn et al., 2010). Because of its determinant factor in the integration and economic impact of immigrants and their families in the place of destination, migration studies have researched

migrants' incorporation and performance in the host country's labor market as a core element of their theoretical and empirical work (for example Cohen & Kogan, 2007; Reitz, 2007; Gorodziesky and Semyonov, 2011; Logan and Rivera Drew, 2011; Raijman, 2015). According to the existing literature, there are three main indicators to assess immigrants' economic integration. Labor force participation shows immigrants' success ratio in securing a job, occupation attainment measures whether the position fits the employers' skills and knowledge, while earnings represent an indicator for migrants' economic wellbeing (Raijman and Tienda 1999). However, entering into a foreign labor-market is challenging because of the social distance between migrants and the receiving society population, characterized by language obstacles, cultural misunderstandings, ethnic and religious differences, and gaps in human and social capital (Evans & Kelley, 1991).

There are multiple theoretical approaches to study migrants' labor market integration. The succession model considers that the social and occupational mobility of migrants is a result of successive immigration waves, and the socioeconomic position of each group in the host country will be tied to the time of its first arrival (Shibutani & Kwan, 1967; Park, 1974). From an ecological perspective, researchers pointed out that the socioeconomic position and level of achievement of migrants groups are determined by the opportunities' structure in the local labor market, emphasizing that all ethnic groups face the same objective obstacles in the process (Logan, 1978; Parcel & Mueller, 1983; Lewin-Epstein & Semyonov, 1986). Others explain the different integration results among groups using a human capital framework. Quality and compatibility of human capital will determine the employment opportunities in the host country. Employers tend to favor applicants educated in standardized and vocation-specific systems, which hinder opportunities for immigrants coming from less developed countries, as there is a significant direct relationship between economic power and the quality of education systems (Borjas, 1987; Semyonov & Lerenthal, 1991; Topel, 1999; Alba & Nee, 2003; Constant, Gataullina & Zimmermann, 2006; Damelang et al., 2019). However, even though there is a consensus in the literature that lack of proper skills hinders employment chances, foreign educational credentials do not assure migrants a successful economic integration (Weiss et al., 2003; Kogan, 2007; Cohen-Goldner and Eckstein, 2008).

In their study on Ethiopian and FSU immigrants to Israel, Heilbrunn, Kushnirovich and Zeltzer-Zubida (2010) review the objective and subjective barriers encountered by immigrants in the host country labor market as studied in the literature. They highlight that both low-skilled and high-skilled migrants have to deal with obstacles that derive from the inadequacy of their human capital and their status of immigrants in a context of competition typical of modern labor markets (Borjas, 1987; Card, 2001; Esses, et. al, 2001; Venturini & Villosio, 2002) and the specific situations of the macro-economic environment (Kreinin, 1965). Moreover, all migrants face objective barriers such as the challenge of lack of social networks in the host country (Birjandian, 2004; Heilbrunn & Kushnirovich, 2008), lack of local working experience (Birjandian, 2004; Daneshvary et. al, 1992; Kreinin, 1965; Nee et al., 1994), along with differences in mentality (Birjandian, 2004; Heilbrunn & Kushnirovich, 2007; Kreinin, 1965) and language difficulties (Chiswick, 1990, 1991; Evans & Kelley, 1991; Heilbrunn & Kushnirovich, 2007; Nee et al., 1994; Offer, 2007; Raijman & Kemp, 2010; Swirsky & Kapla, 2005; Valenzuela, 2000). Even those who have entered the labor market tend to suffer from a lack of adequate work because of the host country's labor market structure (Kogan, 2007; Valenzuela, 2000).

Some migrants may fail to enter the labor market because of personal resource disadvantages, meaning that they possess fewer resources in terms of human and social capital than needed. However, labor market disadvantage represents a bigger challenge as is a result of racial, gender, or any other kind of discrimination against a migrant group – which can increase in case they are a visible minority - and is not related to their productivity or skills (Burstein, 1994; Light and Rosenstein, 1995). Some subjective barriers that specific groups of migrants may face in a context of labor market disadvantage are prejudice (Burstein, 1994; Heath & Cheung, 2007; Kalleberg & Søresen, 1979; Kreinin, 1965; Valenzuela, 2000), extra costs of work searching (Rogers, 1997; Rouwendal, 1998; Zaretsky & Coughlin, 1995), availability of information sources (Birjandian, 2004; Daneshvary et al., 1992; Offer, 2007), lack of adequate education or professional skills (Birjandian, 2004; Borjas, 1985; Daneshvary et al., 1992; Duleep & Regets, 1999; Enchautegui, 1998; Freidberg, 1995; Kreinin, 1965; Offer, 2007; Swirsky & Swirsky, 2002), and the lack of initial settlement resources and distance to the requested workplace (Birjandian, 2004; Valenzuela, 2000).

Immigration, and specifically the challenging economic integration, generate stress factors such as uncertainty about the future (Jacobson, 1986; Atkinson et al., 1986; Shalit, 1977; Beiser & Hou, 2001; McGoldrick & Cooper, 1990) and a feeling of exclusion (Mays et al.1996). That's why coping with immigration-related barriers depends on the possession and use of personal and social resources (Antonovsky, 1979; Ben-Sira, 1985; Price et al., 1992). As the findings of this work demonstrate as well, many studies have shown that social capital can positively influence migrants' labor market integration in the host country: social networks can compensate for the lack of human capital and formal qualifications, help individuals to obtain employment and even get better wages (Lin, 2001; Aguilera & Massey, 2003; Drever & Hoffmeister, 2008; Lancee, 2010; Piracha et al., 2014).

However, the effectiveness and benefits of social capital in migrants labor market integration will depend on the stage on their career development (Lancee, 2016), as well as on the type of social capital available for each actor (e.g., Lancee, 2010; Marfleet & Blustein, 2011; Phillimore & Goodson, 2006). On the one hand, bonding networks are useful when securing housing and employment, mainly within established ethnic communities (Li, 2004; Cheung & Phillimore, 2014). Nevertheless, strong ethnic ties may produce a counter-effect since bonding social capital tends to come with closed-off migrant communities with a low level of social and economic resources. As migrants only access very restricted information and resources, they can not rely on social networks to benefit from local cultural knowledge, and therefore their job opportunities tend to be limited to low-skilled positions. Thus this type of social capital might even impede migrants social and economic integration (Lancee, 2010; Marfleet & Blustein, 2011; Phillimore & Goodson, 2006; Nannestad et al., 2008; Cederberg, 2015; Allen, 2009; Ryan et al., 2008; Ryan, 2011). On the other hand, bridging social capital, which refers mainly to links with the native community, was proved to be more beneficial for the labor market integration. Vertical networking can provide valuable cultural knowledge and market information, better employment opportunities, and higher wages positions in the host countries' labor market, opening the possibility for social mobility (e.g., Aguilera & Massey, 2003; Behtoui, 2007; Drever & Hoffmeister, 2008; Lancee, 2010, 2016; Cederberg, 2015; Lancee, 2016; Nannestad, et al., 2008). In a try to overcome the inconsistency in the literature, Gericke demonstrated, through a qualitative study on Syrian refugees in Germany, that vertical bridging social capital is

the most valuable type to find adequate jobs, whereas horizontal bonding ties are a better resource to provide access to low-skilled work or to lead to underemployment (Gericke et al., 2018).

Even though previous authors have already studied whether social capital benefits immigrants' economic incorporation into the host country's society, it is still under-researched the ways these networks are formed and mobilized by the actors. This study will therefore focus on the social capital building strategies high-skilled immigrants acquire to overcome the subjective and objective obstacles along the labor market integration process. Besides advancing the theoretical conversation regarding which type of relations provide immigrants with access to better resources and outcomes, this qualitative research aims to add significant practical insights to the discussion.

Immigration and absorption trends

High skilled migration and high skilled migrants

During the last decades, the globalization and delocalization of the production of goods and services together with technological developments affected the world economic structure and, with it, has developed new demographic and migratory trends. The shift to a knowledge-based economy focused on the service sector has raised the importance of education and skills, since highly skilled workers are – more than ever- central players to move forward the knowledge frontier, stimulate economic growth, enhance productivity, and promote development. The economies' need for skills was translated into a global race for talent, being the highly skilled migration flows one of the main developments in recent international labor migration patterns (Castles, 2007; Shachar, 2011; Kerr et al., 2016; Guhlich, 2017). According to the OECD Migration Data Brief, between 2000/01 and 2015/16, the share of migrants with a high level of education rose from 27% to 35% for those born outside of the OECD, and from 21% to 30% for those born in an OECD country. In the meantime, as the share of non-OECD migrants with a low level of educational attainment substantially decreased, in 2015/16, there were more tertiary-educated foreign-born migrants in OECD countries than low-educated ones, which is a complete reversal of the situation at the beginning of the century (OECD, 2019).

The economic valorization of human capital has shaped the immigration regulations of national states. As Castles explain, differentiated migration regimes were set up: while

low-skilled workers are obstructed, excluded, or even persecuted, highly skilled populations are encouraged to be mobile (Castles, 2007). The criteria for gatekeepers to select migrants do not lay anymore on ethnic and cultural backgrounds, but mostly on education certificates and high-demand skills. Professionals' migration has been a subject of increasing liberalization at a national, regional, and multilateral level at a point that owning certain skills became the only way to legally immigrate to most developed counties, raising the already existing inequalities within migration flows (Sassen 1988, 2000, 2001, 2008; Scott, 2006; Lavenex, 2008). The new migration trends are the result of the interaction of multiple drivers: governments introducing policies to ease the migration processes of qualified people and even offering political membership in return; private companies pursuing scarce talent and demanding relocation to get senior positions; and educated individuals seeking better opportunities for their personal and professional development (Castles, 2007; Shachar, 2011; Kerr et al., 2016; Guhlich, 2017).

Even though highly skilled immigration represents today an increasingly significant phenomenon within global migration processes, its presence in the literature research dates back to the 1970s. Research on this topic was developed across diverse disciplines, including economy, geography, sociology, and anthropology. However, as it was studied mainly from macro-economic approaches, researchers have only focused on the economic impact in both sending and receiving countries. During the hype of development theory, the literature and the public discourse were busy describing the process of highly qualified people moving from developing to developed countries as a phenomenon of "brain drain/gain" with threatening consequences for the firsts and outstanding benefits for the later, deepening the inequalities among the regions (Fortney 1970; Portes 1976).

Throughout the 1990s there was a general understanding that skilled migration is not a one-way process but a repetitive sequence of cross-border movements, blurring the line between sending and receiving countries. Even more, was discovered that the "brain circulation" can also contribute to the sending countries' development through remittances, the establishment of businesses, and the application of technologies and knowledge acquired abroad (Gaillard, 1997; Docquier and Rapoport, 2007; Muhirwa, 2012; Guhlich, 2017). As Guhlich points out, it was only in recent years that researchers started to study the migrants' experiences, the agency capacity to shape their own

migration process, and the impact on their biographical and career pathways, instead of considering skilled migrants as mere carriers of knowledge which was outsourced from one place to another (Favell et al. 2008; Muhirwa, 2012; Guhlich, 2017). As this generation of studies reveals, highly-skilled immigration is not a uniform, upgrading, frictionless, and successful phenomenon like previous researches showed. They demonstrate that skilled migrants can move for reasons other than the global labor market needs and are not always demand-driven; the majority of them suffers from deskilling, underpayment, or professional reorientation in the destination country; and often experience downward or contradictory social mobility[3] (for example Liap and Vouyioukas, 2009; Liversage, 2009; Riaño, 2012; Trevena, 2013; Nohl et al., 2014). My research will contribute to this recent micro analysis trend which understands the migration processes from the migrants' perspective by adding to the discussion the social capital component, as existent studies have focused on different aspects of migrants' economic integration such as biographical pathways, cultural and human capital, and family networks.

This approach allowed not only resignifying migrants' experiences but to criticize and rethink the whole category of high skilled migration and its binary differentiation from other types of migration movements (Scott, 2006; Verwiebe, 2008; Favell et al., 2008; Favell and Recchi, 2011; Freitas et al., 2012).

First, this conceptualization usually ignores migration waves that are not driven by economic reasons, even when highly skilled migrants are involved. This is why some authors recommend differentiating between "highly skilled migration" – a certain migration path - and "highly skilled migrants" – individual characteristics - as these two do not always overlap (Kofman, 2000; Kofman and Raghuram, 2005). The thesis will focus on Kofman and Raghuram's category of highly skilled migrants and not migration, as the case study population do not immigrate because of talent-scouting regulation but following other motifs, and they are not always incorporated in the host country labor market through skilled job positions even though they have tertiary education. Second, recent literature highlights the need to deconstruct the traditional understanding of highly skilled migrants as members of the elite, considered a

[3] While *downward social mobilit*y refers to the phenomena of lowering of one's social class, the term *contradictory social mobility*, firstly introduced by Rhacel Salazar Parreñas (2001), describes a situation where despite factually lowering the socioeconomic position, the persons' life quality improves. This is the case of migrants who suffer from deskilling in the host country since despite being employed in a low skilled job they are exposed to better opportunities as they have moved to a more developed country.

"transnational capitalist class" (Sklair, 2009) or "expatriates" (Hannerz, 1996) who enjoy living abroad and have the freedom to choose to come back home. As studies and data sets show, not only those at the top and the bottom of the social ladder but people from all social classes with different education levels and skills are being attracted to global cities in search of a better future. Far from what was believed decades ago, as European migration trends prove, it is now an increasingly middle-class phenomenon starring mainly university graduates who are not only specialized in science and technology fields as the OECD used to consider back in the 1990s[5] (Verwiebe, 2008; Favell et al. 2008; Smith and Favell, 2008). The thesis will focus on these "middling transnationals" (Conradson and Latham, 2005) – people with completed tertiary education and skills in different academic and professional fields, who did not move out exclusively for work reasons - because, as the authors point out, even though the migration processes of well educated middle-class individuals are growing phenomena worldwide, it is still under-researched.

Immigration waves and differential migrants' integration in Israel

Since its origins, Israel has been an immigrant society. Even before the establishment of the State in 1948 Israel has received massive immigration waves both relative to its total population and in absolute numbers. The majority of Israel's population is composed of third, second, or first-generation Jewish migrants who arrived from all over the world to establish and live in the Jewish nation-state. However, even though the immigration policies, the public discourse, and the literature consider mainly those who arrived through the Law of Return, there are other types of Israeli immigrants who are usually ignored: non-Jewish immigrants and refugees, labor migrants, illegal residents, descendants from Israel, returning Israelis and non-immigrant citizens. Contemporary Israel is, in fact, a multi-ethnic society inhabited by groups of Jewish immigrants from all over the world, together with the local Arab population and labor migrants who recently arrived both legally and illegally (DellaPergola, 2012; Semyonov & Gorodzeisky, 2012).

As the literature show, migration plays a central role in Israelis daily life, politics economics, culture and academy (Sicron, 1957; Eisenstadt, 1954; Bachi, 1977; Schmelz

[5] The OECD's Canberra Manual consider the highly skilled "Human Resources in Science and Technology" (HRST) as people who have either "a) successfully completed education at the third level in an S&T field of study; b) not formally qualified as above, but employed in a S&T occupation where the above qualifications are normally required". The definition is focused on highly skilled employment opportunities and employability capacities.

et. al, 1991; Leshem & Shuval, 1998; Ben-Rafael & Steinberg, 2009; DellaPergola, 2012). Through a brief literature review, I aim to discern those characteristics and trends that make Israel a particular immigrant society, even when lately started to also become part of the global migration tendencies. Immigration literature has focused so far in building typologies of the different immigration waves, drivers of immigration and how the State's policies created differential integration by country of origin.

To understand Israel's particularities as a destination country it is necessary to point out that, especially during the first years of its history, Israel's population depended on Jewish immigration movements (Schmelz, 2007; DellaPergola, 2012). Even though the literature have examined different pull and push drivers of the phenomena, Jewish immigration to Israel has been one of the central goals of the Zionist ideology (Elroy, 2004) and therefore the Israeli law always understood it as a "returning Diaspora" to the homeland (Semyonov and Lewin-Epstein, 2003). According to the Law of Return (1950)[7] and the Citizenship Law (1952)[8], "every Jew has the right to come to this country as an oleh". By providing immediate citizenship, financial and institutional support for smooth integration and actively encouraging Diaspora immigration, Israel applies the principle of *jus sanguinis* to attract and include Jewish immigrants, while impeding non-Jewish immigration (Semyonov & Gorodzeisky, 2012).

As Semyonov and Gorodzeisky (2012) point out, Jewish immigration inflows explain half of the Israeli society's demographic growth since the establishment of the State and, with it, its heterogeneity and socioeconomic inequalities' patterns. The successive waves of immigration were characterized by different drivers and absorption policies that caused differential integration processes whose consequences are still perceived today.

Several typologies explain Israel's major immigration inflows from the last century to the present but there is a general understanding that there were four to five periods that brought with them Jewish migrants from different origins and for diverse causes. Following Amit and Semyonov's (2006) typology, the first wave during the pre-statehood era (1900-1948) was characterized by Central and Eastern European Ashkenazi Jews who were pulled to Palestine for Zionist ideological reasons. As they built the State, the Ashkenazi immigrants controlled the privileged positions among the

[7] The Law of Return, 5710 - 1950
[8] The Citizenship and Entry into Israel Law, 5712- 2003

newly created institutions and remained the Israeli elite until today (Semyonov & Gorodzeisky, 2012).

The second mass immigration wave came right after the State's establishment (1948-1952) when the main driver was, both for Holocaust survivors and those pushed from the Muslim countries after the Independence War, seeking refuge in the Jewish homeland. Because of the massive and heterogeneous nature of this wave, together with the lack of resources of the young State and the new immigrants, the absorption process was challenging and the consequences unequal. To provide jobs and housing, development towns were established in the social and geographical periphery of the country. North African and Middle Eastern immigrants were disproportionally sent there, originating the persisting socio-economic inequalities between Sephardic and Ashkenazi Jews (Semyonov & Gorodzeisky, 2012).

Between 1952 and 1989 there was a period of sporadic immigration from every corner of the globe influenced by the push and pull social, political, or economic factors in migrants' home countries. The easing of the former Soviet Union border policies, the Iranian revolution, and Latin America's dictatorships are a few examples of the events that shaped immigration streams during this third wave (Semyonov & Gorodzeisky, 2012; DellaPergola, 2012; Shorer-Kaplan, 2017; Mualem, 2017; Bokser Liwerant, 2016). Because of the sporadic nature of these inflows and the higher economic and human capital the immigrants brought with them, the integration process was more successful than in the earlier period (Semyonov & Gorodzeisky, 2012).

The fourth wave (1989-1995) describes the mass immigration from the former Soviet Union after its downfall, as Israel became the most viable escape option for Jews and their families. It was a turning point in Israel's migration history and its absorption policies, as a 4.5 million inhabitants' country received a million immigrants in less than a decade (Semyonov & Gorodzeisky, 2012). To be able to deal with this massive influx, Israel adopted a direct absorption policy, where instead of providing housing, job, and language education like before, each migrant received a bundle of cash, subsidies, and services ("basket of absorption"[9]) opening the possibility to choose their own mode of incorporation with government support but lower control (Doron and Kargar,

[9] The "basket of absorption" included a lump sum of money that varied depending on the size of the family, housing subsidies, the Hebrew language subsided education, job retraining programs, tax exemption, and free tertiary education for young immigrants.

1993; Semyonov & Gorodzeisky, 2012). Because of the high human capital those immigrants had, the direct absorption policy was expected to better answer their needs and allow a frictionless integration into Israel's society and economy. However, because of the complexity to fit their professional and scientific skills into the Israeli labor market, most suffered from deskilling, downward social mobility and are still behind Native-born Israelis in the attainment of senior positions and high wages (Raijman and Semyonov, 1995; Gorodzeisky and Semyonov, 2011). Alongside the massive migrants' influx from the former Soviet Union, around 100.000 Ethiopian Jews were brought by Israeli authorities to provide them a better life quality, but, because of their low education and low skilled background, Ethiopian immigrants faced severe difficulties in their socio-economic integration (Raijman 2009; Offer 2004; Semyonov & Gorodzeisky, 2012). The massive nature of these migratory flows together with the contradictory characteristics of the incoming populations generated a rich source for social research on immigrants' differential absorption and integration trends and challenges (for example Heilbrunn, Kushnirovich and Zeltzer-Zubida, 2010; Yakhnich, 2013; Korem & Hoernzczyk, 2013; Gamliel et. al, 2013; Lissitsa, 2014; Maulem, 2017; Arieli et. al, 2018; Ben Simon et. al, 2019; Haisraeli, 2019), that unfortunately was not continued for other migrants' backgrounds. This study aims to follow up on the conversation by focusing on another significant immigrant population.

Even though the massive influxes finished with the FSU and Ethiopian immigration from 1995 to the present there was a sporadic but stable immigration movement from a variety of countries, mainly Western such as the United States, Canada, France, South Africa, Argentina, and Brazil. These migrants came with high human capital and professional skills, which allowed them to integrate relatively successfully into Israeli society (Semyonov & Gorodzeisky, 2012). Different quantitative studies have shown that these waves from the Western developed world came for ideological and religious reasons, which explains why they have experienced high life satisfaction even when many still face complications in their cultural and social integration (Amit and Riss, 2007; Cohen, 2007; Semyonov et others, 2007; Raijman, 2009; Amit, 2012). Immigrants from Latin American origin, however, were pushed out of their home countries because of a feeling of lack of personal and economic security, and therefore labor market integration is the main factor to measure their satisfaction and long-term stay in Israel (Rein, 2004; Degani and Degani, 2004; DellaPergola, 2008, 2009; Amit, 2012; Bokser Liwerant, 2016). Even though immigration and integration trends of Soviet and Ethiopian migrants were broadly researched, there has been insufficient attention to Western origin migrants. As Amit (2012) pointed out in her quantitative study on life satisfaction among immigrants from United

States, France, and Argentina, there is a need to further study these populations using qualitative methods to explore the complexities of their absorption process. This paper comes to answer the gap in the literature, starting with providing a deeper understanding of the incorporation and integration trends of Argentineans' migrants. With recent migration influxes coming to today developed Israel because of its increasing attraction power (DellaPergola, 2012), Israel's approach to immigration and absorption policy changed a decade ago from a categorical universalism to a selective orientation (Shpaizman, 2013). As Shpaizman explains, Israel recently joined the global race for talent (Shachar, 2006) and with it, the model in which all immigrants were entitled to government support regardless of their economic and educational status (Gal, 2008) was gradually replaced by one in which highly skilled immigrants are granted with better benefits and assistance in employment search, alongside with the privatization of vocational training. Recent efforts to encourage emigrates to come back home are part of this shift to a skill-focused immigration policy that considers immigrants like an economic tool that should contribute to the State's growth and rely less upon government assistance. This transition not only reflects Israel's incorporation into the current global migration trends but mainly the shift Israel experienced from being a passive migrants recipient country to one with a strong attraction power. Today the causal focus of immigration lays in Israel's opportunities, and not in the sending countries' changing reality. In this new context is especially relevant to pursue a thorough study of the strategies used by high-skilled immigrants to integrate into Israel's society and economy, as the findings may provide useful insights for immigration and absorption policies' design.

Immigration and integration characteristics of Argentinean migrants

Argentina's immigrants are one of the biggest flows within the Western countries' immigration influxes. They arrived both in the third and the fifth wave (Amit and Semyonov, 2006) in sporadic and unorganized patterns.

Unlike other migrants from the West, quantitative studies showed that Argentineans' drivers to immigrate to Israel were no ideological or religious but economical (Rein, 2004; Degani and Degani, 2004; Amit, 2012). Even though Jewish Latin American migrants preferred Israel over other options because of cultural and symbolic factors of attachment to the homeland (DellaPergola, 2008), the fact is that Israel ranks significantly better than their home countries in the Human Development Index. Thus the decision to immigrate follows the international immigration trend of people who

relocate from less developed to more developed countries in search of better opportunities (Bokser Liwerant, 2016). The recurrent cycles of instability reflected in economic, political, and insecurity events act as pullers that drove the Jewish community out of Argentina, reaching its peak during the violent dictatorship period between 1976-1982 (Davidi, 2018) and the political and economic crisis in 1999-2002 (Rein, 2004).

According to a survey conducted by Degani and Degani (2004), Argentinean migrants choose Israel instead of any other developed destination country because of the economic benefits and support they would receive from the government, which reinforces the weight economic factors have in their migration decision.

Following Amit's (2012) findings on her multivariate analysis of life satisfaction among Western Immigrants, Argentineans have the lowest human capital even though their Hebrew proficiency is higher than other groups. However, their integration into Israeli society took longer because being not enough engaged with established religious communities. Her research proved that even though Western immigrants are normally considered as one homogeneous crowd, there are significant differences between each immigrant group according to their characteristics and the circumstances of migration. As the author itself highlights, qualitative studies on each separate group are needed in order to examine the particularities of the integration process.

My thesis aims to close the existent gap both in the theoretical and the empirical literature. As previous researches demonstrated through quantitative studies, the principal motif of Argentineans' migration to Israel is economic. Therefore, their economic integration is the most accurate indicator of measuring success in their absorption process in the receiving country. Studying the resources they have and the outcomes they got during their labor market integration process through a qualitative, in-depth study is therefore essential to better understand their challenges and improve immigration and absorption policies in light of the findings.

Methodology

To examine the types, uses, benefits, and outcomes of social capital high skilled immigrants have to integrate into their host country labor-market, and specifically the strategies and resources young-professional new-immigrants from Argentina build and use to enter and develop within Israel's workforce, the present study uses a qualitative methodology that allows an in-depth examination of this particular social phenomenon through the angle of view and the subjective perceptions of the individuals involved.

Most of the existing literature on migrants' social capital use quantitative research methods; hence there is a relatively low presence of the immigrants' voice in the research. Because of the general understanding that macro approaches in immigration theories have more explanatory strength, there is not enough research that focuses on a micro analysis from the migrants' perspective. Aiming to complete the existent gap in the literature and to allow a better understanding of the phenomenon through the subjective perceptions of the individuals, this study will use a qualitative research approach, employing an interpretive-constructivist paradigm (Age, 2011). This paradigm seeks to understand the world from the point of view of those who live it (high-skilled young immigrants in the case of this research), and assumes that the meaning given to the various situations is set by social actors. How meanings are constructed and anchored in the behaviors and language of social actors is at the center of this paradigm's research and is therefore particularly suitable for many qualitative studies in sociology. Studies that examine social reality from the point of view of those who act and experience it reveals the structures of subjective meaning and the inter-subjective assumptions that emerge from the data gathered throughout the research. Developing a qualitative study based on the interpretive-constructivist paradigm on how young-professionals build and use their social capital during their workforce integration process allows, not only understanding the nature, intensity, and durability of those networks but also to consider the motivations, opportunities, and obstacles they have encountered in the way, what can help to redesign absorption policies to improve migrants socio-economic integration.

To gain a better understanding of the complex phenomena of how young-professional new-immigrants in Israel navigate the early stages of their professional career in their host country, the study uses first-hand in-depth information applying a Life Story

research strategy (Dex, 1987; Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach & Zilber, 1998; Ladkin, 2002; Zilber, Tuval-Mashiach, & Lieblich, 2008). This method seeks to understand the subjective truth of a particular narrator on the assumption that the way she/he chooses to tell the story of her/his life reflects the meaning given to the phenomena experienced. According to this approach, the researcher is the one who analyzes the rich and complex data shared by the narrators and defines the 'story line' through her/his theoretical conceptualizations.

The case

To examine how high skilled immigrants build and use their social capital to integrate into the host country labor-market this study focuses on the case of young professional new immigrants from Argentina. They represent a population whose presence in Israel has been increasing during the last years because they consider the Mediterranean country as an oasis for better opportunities for personal and professional development.

Though Argentina is the migrants' reception center of Latin America, since the 1960s it started to experience a rise in emigration, focused on the United States, Europe, México, Israel, Australia, and Canada. Historically, massive unemployment, hyperinflation, and political repression were the pull out factors that motivated the population to leave its own country. According to the International Labour Organization, in Argentina exists a structural trend of migration among the middle and middle-high income sectors with a high level of education that maintains an emigrants flow of 2-3% of the total population every year (Pellegrino, 2002).

The historical pattern of Argentineans' pull-out factors from their homeland explains why, in the last decade, there was a significant increase in emigration flows accompanying the socioeconomic and political challenges presented. According to the latest data published by the UN in 2019, Argentina has 1,013,414 emigrants, which represent 2.27% of its population. Between 2017 and 2019, the total number of Argentine emigrants increased by 36,205 people, 3.7%. The profile is, in general, middle class and high-skilled professionals. According to a UADE University survey, the main reasons for the increase in emigration lay on the recurrent economic crises, the search for better possibilities for professional development, high tax pressure, and insecurity. The main destinations for Argentines who emigrate are Spain (25.65%) and

the United States (21.24%). Israel represents the 8th most chosen destiny among Argentinean immigrants, representing 3.77% of the total emigrant population[11].

The unstable situation in Latin America in general and Argentina in particular that led to a rising number of young professionals leaving their home country in the search of better opportunities was also felt in Israel. According to the Jewish Agency statistics for 2018, 1,644 new-immigrants arrived from Latin America, an increase of 5% over the year before, being young adults. Most of them came from Mexico (+24%), Argentina (+19%), Venezuela (+14%) and Brazil (+3%).

As previous researches demonstrated through quantitative studies, the main motif of Argentineans' migration to Israel is economic. Therefore, their economic integration is the principal indicator to measure the success in their absorption process in the receiving country. Studying the resources they have and the outcomes they got during their labor market integration process through a qualitative in-depth study is then essential to better understand their challenges and improve immigration and absorption policies in light of the findings.

Data Collection

The study's data was collected through life story interviews with twenty young-professional new-immigrants from Argentina in different stages of their economic integration process, aiming to have a deep understanding of the experiences they went and are going through.

The data was collected through 20 in-depth semi-structured interviews with an open-questions questionnaire until reaching data saturation. A sample of 20 Argentinean young professionals was selected through the snowball method, choosing those who have (a) immigrated to Israel between 2009 and 2019 (*olim hadashim*), (b) completed tertiary education before migration, and (c) not moved out exclusively for work reasons. For the sample was considered theoretical similarity and difference to enrich the properties of each category while focusing on the target population (Glaser and Strauss, 1967), assuring there is diversity in demographics, human capital, profession, and the

[11] "Due to the pandemic, the desire to emigrate of many Argentines increased: they seek economic stability, professional development, and less tax pressure", 25/07/2020, Infobae - https://www.infobae.com/economia/2020/07/25/por-la-pandemia-aumento-el-deseo-de-emigrar-de-muchos-argentinos-buscan-estabilidad-economica-desarrollo-profesional-y-menos-presion-tributaria/?fbclid=IwAR2ABWF4JP2BLzUAbWkVsb5TC3Q9EqJrhp9t7uAeRA9AQDMGaEfKvaJlGRI

stage they are in the economic integration process. The interviewees were chosen through the snowball technique, as it is a very specific and difficult-to-reach population (Taherdoost, 2006). The sample was built following the theoretical sampling technique (Charmaz, 2006), so the actual size was defined when theoretical saturation was reached instead of aiming for population representativeness.

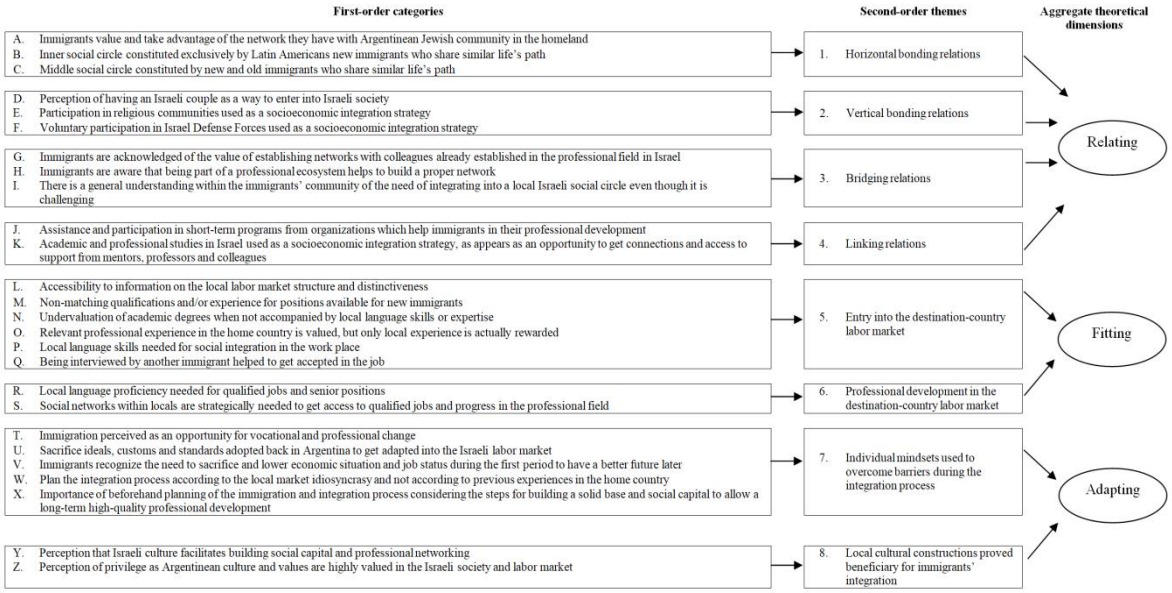
For the data collection was chosen to conduct in-depth semi-structured interviews, "used in an attempt to understand the complex behavior of members of society without imposing any a priori categorization that may limit the field of inquiry" (Fontana and Frey, 1994), being consistent with a grounded theory approach. The interview guide included aspects of the immigrants' work experiences in Israel, job searching strategies, and the role of social networks in the process. The basic questionnaire also covered questions referring to their background and demographic information. The critical incident technique (Flanagan, 1954) was employed to draw out the interviewees' job-seeking and job-integration behavior by asking them to provide examples of relevant situations in those processes, considering the behavior of significant-others involved, obstacles they have encountered and coping strategies to overcome them, aiming to collect relevant insights of their economic integration and role of social capital during it.

The interviews lasted between an hour and an hour and a half and the participation in the study was grounded on informed consent by all the participants. To guarantee that the participants feel in a trusted environment to share their personal experiences and perceptions, several elements were considered, including conducting the conversations in their mother tongue, using pseudonyms to protect the confidentiality, and respect each interviewee's privacy by allowing them to choose which question they are comfortable answering.

Data Analysis

The analysis of the data followed established procedures for qualitative methodology (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Locke, 2001), and consisted of a series of steps. The data were coded and analyzed using inductive content techniques during the ongoing data collection, which allowed identifying gaps and continuing the collection until theoretical saturation.

Figure 1 – Data Structure



Using an interpretative approach, the participants' narratives were openly coded in four consecutive steps. The analysis aimed to search for patterns that allow decoding the subjective meanings of the experiences narrated (Age, 2011), to build a theoretical framework from the data and key themes that emerged from the field. The first step in the analysis was to code the interviews' transcripts looking for exact words, expressions, and descriptions of critical incidents used by the participants to explain their personal journey into socioeconomic integration in Israel. In the second step, the first-order codes describing the micro-dynamics of job searching as experienced by each one of the interviewees' were connected across interviews, looking for higher-level joints. The key themes that appeared recurrently among conversations were collapsed into first-order categories, as showed in Figure 1. Supporting data for these categories is illustrated in Figure 3, through the selection of representative quotes extracted from the interviews, after being translated from the original Spanish. During the third step of the analysis, a further stage of generalization was achieved by identifying patterns and associations between the first-order categories and constructing several conceptual bundles representing the second-order themes. It was a non-linear process, as it required an ongoing conversation between the first-order categories and the higher-level themes until achieving the desired conceptualization of the data that emerged from the field. The process was done in light of existing literature and terminology, which permitted improving sensitivity and recognizing nuances in the data, making comparisons, and

confirming findings (Corbin and Strauss, 2008). Once the themes were adequately categorized, links among them were identified to reorganize and regroup the second-order themes into aggregate theoretical dimensions. The process of collapsing the key themes into abstract theoretical dimensions demanded a recursive analytic work back and forth, considering the first-order categories, the theory, and the research questions, to assure they together represent the different but complementing mechanisms needed to explain how high-skilled immigrants can succeed in their socio-economic integration in the receiving country.

This analysis technique allowed moving forward from the specific life stories of the participants as narrated in the interviews to a more general understanding of the phenomenon, during a process of open coding, categorization, and abstraction. The ultimate goal was to conceptualize, starting from the critical incidents' identification, the different types of social capital available for Argentinean migrants and how they are mobilized when trying to enter successfully into the workforce.

Three theoretic dimensions emerged from the analysis: ‘Relating’, ‘Fitting’, and ‘Adapting’. The first aggregate theoretical dimension groups the different types of networks immigrants build or are challenged to form in their process of socioeconomic integration, including a wide arrange of examples of bonding, bridging, and linking ties that emerged from the data. The second dimension that comes out from the analysis refers to the adjusting of skills and capital that immigrants need to do to enter and progress in the labor market. Finally, the third dimension focuses on the adaptation process immigrants have to perform in front of themselves and the local society on a mental and emotional level for a successful absorption. The three dimensions together represent the flow that a high-skilled immigrant goes through while trying to find a qualified job and integrate into the host society. The dimensions can come one by one or coexist simultaneously, as these are three processes that together answer the question of what mechanisms are relevant for migrants’ integration into the labor market.

Findings

The data revealed three main strategies young-professional new-immigrants from Argentina appeal to enter Israel's workforce and develop professionally: Relating, Fitting and Adapting. These different types of social capital **arise** from the special status of Argentinean immigrants. While some strategies are incorporated intuitively into new-immigrants' routines, others involve a daily struggle to build. These three types of social capital have their specific uses and therefore differ in the outcomes each of them can generate. Even though the strategies are continual and overlapping, they were differentiated for analytical purposes.

First, immigrants form multiple types of networks in their process of social and economic integration, including a wide arrange of bonding, bridging, and linking ties. Even if the participants were not always able to identify the different types of relations they work on daily, the analysis suggests that immigrants are aware of the multiple uses they can make from the ways they relate with others and how the social capital they build may affect the outcomes in their approach into the local labor market. The second dimension suggested by the data refers to the Fitting strategy, meaning the adjusting of skills and capital that immigrants need to do to overcome the obstacles that hinder their entry to the labor market. Even if the barriers and the coping strategies vary according to the step where the immigrants are within the integration process, work experience, language knowledge, and relevant contacts represent recurring and challenging themes. Finally, the third dimension – Adapting - focuses on the adaptation process immigrants have to perform in front of themselves for a long-term successful absorption. If the first strategy reminded the way immigrants relate with others and the second one the interactions with the local labor market standards and particularities, the last one refers to the different approaches required along the integration process on an individual, mental and emotional level.

The three dimensions together represent the different types of social capital that a high-skilled immigrant needs to build and put into practice while trying to find a qualified job and integrate into the host society. The dimensions can come one by one or coexist simultaneously, as these are three processes that together answer the principal question that lead the research: Which mechanisms are relevant for migrants' integration into the labor market? Below, I describe the findings in greater detail.

Figure 2 - Data structure

First-order categories	Second-order themes	Aggregate theoretical dimensions
A. Immigrants value and take advantage of the network they have with Argentinean Jewish community in the homeland	1. Horizontal bonding relations	Relating
B. Inner social circle constituted exclusively by Latin Americans new immigrants who share similar life's path		
C. Middle social circle constituted by new and old immigrants who share similar life's path		
D. Perception of having an Israeli couple as a way to enter into Israeli society	2. Vertical bonding relations	
E. Participation in religious communities used as a socioeconomic integration strategy		
F. Voluntary participation in Israel Defense Forces used as a socioeconomic integration strategy, as the army offer a first encounter with local social codes besides building relations with Israelis		
G. Immigrants are acknowledged of the value of establishing networks with colleagues already established in the professional field in Israel	3. Bridging relations	
H. Immigrants are aware that being part of a professional ecosystem helps to build a proper network		
I. There is a general understanding within the immigrants' community of the need of integrating into a local Israeli social circle even though it is challenging		
J. Assistance and participation in short-term programs from organizations which help immigrants in their professional development (eg. Gvahim Career Center, OLEI, HOP, MASA)	4. Linking relations	
K. Academic and professional studies in Israel used as a socioeconomic integration strategy, as appears as an opportunity to get connections and access to support from mentors, professors and colleagues		
L. Accessibility to information on the local labor market structure and distinctiveness	5. Entry into the destination-country labor market	Fitting
M. Non-matching qualifications and/or experience for positions available for new immigrants		
N. Undervaluation of academic degrees when not accompanied by local language skills or expertise		
O. Relevant professional experience in the home country is valued, but only local experience is actually rewarded		
P. Local language skills needed for social integration in the work place		
Q. Being interviewed by another immigrant helped to get accepted in the job		
R. Local language proficiency needed for qualified jobs and senior positions	6. Professional development in the destination-country labor market	
S. Social networks within locals are strategically needed to get access to qualified jobs and progress in the professional field		
T. Immigration perceived as an opportunity for vocational and professional change	7. Individual mindsets used to overcome barriers during the integration process	Adapting
U. Sacrifice ideals, customs and standards adopted back in Argentina to get adapted into the Israeli labor market		
V. Immigrants recognize the need to sacrifice and lower economic situation and job status during the first period to have a better future later		
W. Plan the integration process according to the local market idiosyncrasy and not according to previous experiences in the home country		
X. Importance of beforehand planning of the immigration and integration process considering the steps for building a solid base and social capital to allow a long-term high-quality professional development		
Y. Perception that Israeli culture facilitates building social capital and professional networking	8. Local cultural constructions proved beneficiary for immigrants' integration	
Z. Perception of privilege as Argentinean culture and values are highly valued in the Israeli society and labor market		

Figure 3 – Representative Data

Second-Order Themes and First -Order Categories	Representative Data
Overreaching dimension: *Relating*	
1. Horizontal bonding relations	
A. Immigrants value and take advantage of the network they have with Argentinean Jewish community in the homeland	A1. "Contacts within the Argentinean Jewish Community is one of my main resources here, as represent a big proportion of my regular clients" A2. "My parents' friends from Argentina helped me to meet useful contacts once in Israel"
B. Inner social circle constituted exclusively by Latin Americans new immigrants who share similar life's path	B1. "It is naturally easier for me to feel related and be more authentic with people who share my language and cultural codes" B2. "According to the people I hang with in my day-to-day, I feel I've brought a piece of Argentina to Tel Aviv"
C. Middle social circle constituted by new and old immigrants who share similar life's path	C1. "New immigrants form a small society within the Israeli society and that makes even more difficult the social and economical integration" C2. "As Hebrew is still a barrier, my social circle is limited to other immigrants like me"
2. Vertical bonding relations	
D. Perception of having an Israeli couple as a way to enter into Israeli society	D1. "Having an Israeli husband helped me to plan a proper strategy to enter into the local labor market by using his inside knowledge" D2. "My Israeli husband and his family opened to me every door possible and helped me to integrate both socially and economically. Thanks to them I live in a 100% Israeli environment and I don't have relations with other Latin Americans and either speak Spanish out of work"
E. Participation in religious communities used as a socioeconomic integration strategy	E1. "Participating in Chabad´s community in Córdoba made my integration process easier, as I already had relations and common interests with people in Israel" E2. "In Israel, one can enjoy world-class opportunities, and at the same time keep belonging to a community"
F. Voluntary participation in Israel Defense Forces used as a socioeconomic integration strategy, as the army offer a first encounter with local social codes besides building relations with Israelis	F1. "Being in the Army was essential in my integration process as there I´ve adopted Israeli social codes" F2. "Joining the Army was the best decision I took since immigrating to Israel; the friends I met there are my safety net today"
3. Bridging relations	
G. Immigrants are acknowledge of the value of establishing networks with colleagues already established in the professional field in Israel	G1. "Here everything works by word to mouth and at the beginning I didn't know anyone, which made it even more difficult to find job opportunities" G2. "I understood that if I wanted to stay in Israel, I needed to build a network of contacts to find a job in my area of interest. I started looking for other immigrants like me, mainly participants of MASA programs, that also worked in communications, marketing, and cinema to understand, first of all, how the market works here"

H. Immigrants are aware that being part of a professional ecosystem helps to build a proper network	H1. "Once I got my first job was easier to progress and be accepted in better positions because I´ve already started building a professional network in Israel" H2. "Being part of a workplace that allows networking is always important to progress in the professional career, but for immigrants is essential, so we have to dedicate time and resources to building it"
I. There is a general understanding within the immigrants' community of the need of integrating into a local Israeli social circle even though it is challenging	I1. "Interacting with native Israelis allowed me to know the local idiosyncrasy and internalize cultural and social codes" I2. "I choose to live with Israeli roommates, even if it meant to take some distance from my comfort zone, the Latin American immigrant community, aiming to start integrating into the real Israeli society"
4. Linking relations	
J. Assistance and participation in short-term programs from organizations which help immigrants in their professional development (eg. Gvahim Career Center, OLEI, HOP, MASA)	J1. "A friend of mine recommended to me joining Gvhaim, and I didn't understand why, as he was still unemployed after finishing the course. But after doing it myself I've realized that the people you meet there, including the Human Resources experts, the organization staff, the other participants and the Alumni community, is the real value of the program" J2. "Even though I didn't find a job through the Absorption Center's Employment Committee, I did learn about the local labor market and how to face job interviews to reach Israeli standards through my one-on-one meetings with Meir Lopatinsky, the Head of Employment at the Jewish Agency"
K. Academic and professional studies in Israel used as a socioeconomic integration strategy, as appears as an opportunity to get connections and access to support from mentors, professors and colleagues	K1. "The best thing I've got from doing my Masters in Israel was the useful professional advice I received from my professors; they opened to me lots of doors in the labor-market" K2. "As an immigrant, doing training and updating courses is not only an investment to be a better professional but a better connected one. Doing courses is the best way to meet new colleagues and maybe your future boss"
Overreaching dimension: *Fitting*	
5. Entry into the destination-country labor market	
L. Accessibility to information on the local labor market structure and distinctiveness	L1. "The best advice I was given was to do an exhaustive research about how the labor market works here before starting looking for a job. I've met with lots of Israelis and long-time Olim to have a better understanding of where, how and what to look for" L2. "I knew nothing about the labor market in Israel and was very difficult for me to find information from official sources. All I know now I've learned from watching how was my social circle's workplace and environment"
M. Non-matching qualifications and/or experience for positions available for new immigrants	M1. "In every interview I had for entry-level positions I was told I was overqualified and too old, while also struggled to get opportunities for better jobs" M2. "I was overqualified for every job opportunity it was presented to me at the beginning. Why should I be a telemarketer when I have a BA in Economics?"
N. Undervaluation of academic degrees when not accompanied by local language skills or expertise	N1. "Academic degrees are asserted by language. It is preferable to start with an unrelated or low-qualified job, but one that allows you to learn Hebrew. Then yes, you have the way open to find the work that you came here to do" N2. "In the beginning, I sent my CV everywhere but didn´t get responses at all, time after time. I decided to start asking Human Resources why, and I understood the problem was I haven't studied here, and my year in Israel was not enough to trust my skills"

O. Relevant professional experience in the home country is valued, but only local experience is actually rewarded	O1. "After I got my first job in Israel I was able to look for better opportunities and higher salaries, as already had local labor experience in my résumé" O2. "I´ve got where I am now because of my skills, but the seal of approval given by my Israeli colleagues and the experience I've earned here was what allowed me to arrive at the first place"
P. Local language skills needed for social integration in the work place	P1. "The job searching process is difficult for foreigners, as Israelis will always be in an advantageous position while having the same skills and experience just because of the language proficiency" P2. "I don't need fluid Hebrew for my day-to-day job, but my limited language skills do hinder the social integration with my boss and coworkers"
Q. Being interviewed by another immigrant helped to get accepted in the job	Q1. "Even if I arrived at my first job interview through a job bank, I got accepted because the interviewer was Latin American. He felt identified with my own story and didn't doubt to offer me the opportunity to start a life here" Q2. "As soon I entered the hotel to try my luck, the concierge took me to the Human Resources office. When my former boss heard I'm Argentinean he said 'I am from Uruguay, and you are going to work with me'. Five minutes later he called me back for an interview with the Head of HR, who was from Venezuela. Being both Latin Americans they knew about my work ethics and instantly offered me a senior position at the hotel's restaurant even when I didn't have any experience or language"
6. Professional development in the destination-country labor market	
R. Local language proficiency needed for qualified jobs and senior positions	R1. "When I arrived I experienced a clash between what one brings from Argentina and what one can aspire to here. The lack of Hebrew continues to limit me to junior positions, even though I have years of experience and academic studies" R2. "After ten years here I am finally judged equally in job interviews. Without the high level of Hebrew I have now, even with the contacts I´ve made and the experience I've accumulated, I´d never been hired in a senior position in a leading tech company like the one I am t"
S. Social networks within locals are strategically needed to get access to qualified jobs and progress in the professional field	S1. "Today, I am the Chief of Nutrition at a Geriatric Hospital thanks to the professional contacts I was able to make in my work environment during the past years. A good network is 'the' strategy to get to the highest positions" S2. "Although the Israeli labor market is more stable and there are many opportunities, it takes effort and the help of contacts to access a qualified job"
Overreaching dimension: *Adapting*	
7. Individual mindsets used to overcome barriers during the integration process	
T. Immigration perceived as an opportunity for vocational and professional change	T1. "After spending a year here I realized that in Israel I could have opportunities that back in Argentina are non-existent. In Argentina, the offer of careers available is very limited. In Israeli universities, there are more options, and the studies are much more practical and oriented to the real world Finally, I succeeded to study and work in the field I always wanted" T2. "Starting a professional career at 30 is very valid in Israel, in Argentina is not"
U. Sacrifice ideals, customs and standards adopted back in Argentina to get adapted into the Israeli labor market	U1. "I knew that my social status was going to drop from what I had in Argentina, but in the future I will be better here" U2. "Since I was a little girl I dreamt of becoming a notary. After talking with colleagues working in Israel, I realized that it is too difficult to revalidate my degree and understood that my professional development in

	Israel has to be a different one"
V. Immigrants recognize the need to sacrifice and lower economic situation and job status during the first period to have a better future later	V1. "To be able to integrate I did things that I would never have done back in Argentina" V2. "I chose to have a low quality of life now to have a better life in the future than I could ever have in Argentina"
W. Plan the integration process according to the local market idiosyncrasy and not according to previous experiences in the home country	W1. "Back in Argentina, I have worked as a nutritionist many years, but in kitchens, when in Israel every job opportunity I found asked for experience with patients. It took me a while to realize I should adapt to my profession's situation here while seizing the comparative advantage that made me different from Israelis" W2. "I got my first qualified job thanks to the proper use of my network. Until then, I had searched through traditional channels and had failed. When I understood the idiosyncrasy of the labor market in Israel, I managed to make the change in my mindset and strategy, and there I got what I was looking for from the beginning"
X. Importance of beforehand planning of the immigration and integration process considering the steps for building a solid base and social capital to allow a long-term high-quality professional development	X1. "Judging by where I am today I can say that my integration was a success. And that is because I planned my first 5 years of Aliyah thinking about building the foundations and social circles that allow me a long-term quality professional development" X2. "When I realized I wanted to stay in Israel after a year with a Student Visa, I made a plan to find a job that will make worthy the immigration process. If not, I was ready to pack and go back home"
8. Local cultural constructions proved beneficiary for immigrants' integration	
Y. Perception that Israeli culture facilitates building social capital and professional networking	Y1. "If you ask for help, you receive it" Y2. "It is not a State-secret to share a contact here or open someone else some doors. Information is more open and shared than in Argentina, and there is not such a feeling that there´s always an economic interest behind"
Z. Perception of privilege as Argentinean culture and values are highly valued in the Israeli society and labor market	Z1. "Being an Argentinean Ashkenazi Jew in Israel makes me feel privileged. There is a very positive stigma regarding Argentineans here, which makes every interaction with locals much better, both at university and my workplace" Z2. "Argentineans' distinguished cleverness, our ability to negotiate and seize opportunities make us closer to Israelis and differentiate us, positively, from immigrants from other countries"

Relating: Building social capital for socioeconomic integration

The findings of this study have shown that relating to others is the main and unavoidable strategy new-immigrants must develop when trying to incorporate into the host country's society and economy. As the literature demonstrates, besides emotional support needed to cope with immigration-related obstacles (Edin and Lein, 1997; Bassuk et al., 2002; Hawkins and Abrams, 2007), social capital can also facilitate economic opportunities, transactions, and growth because networks allow actors to profit from useful information, knowledge, and influence held by others (Lin, 1999; Mouw, 2003; Ioannides & Loury, 2004; Sabatini, 2009). Previous studies already showed that social capital can positively influence low-skilled migrants' labor market integration in the host country, as social networks can compensate for the lack of human capital and formal qualifications (Lin, 2001; Aguilera & Massey, 2003; Drever & Hoffmeister, 2008; Lancee, 2010; Piracha et al., 2014). However, as the data gathered in this research suggests, the possession of qualitative connections is also relevant and required for high-skilled immigrants.

In line with the existing literature (Gitell and Vidal, 1998; Cote and Healy, 2001; Lin, 2001; Nannestad et al., 2008; Fernandez and Nichols, 2002; Szreter and Woolcock, 2004; Ryan, 2011), high-skilled new immigrants from Argentina in Israel possess different types of social capital, including both vertical and horizontal ties. As the analysis implies, homophilous relations (considering other Argentinean pairs, Latin American immigrants, and non-native Israelis) are easier to build, but less useful for socioeconomic integration, while heterophyllous bonds with the local society, professional colleagues, and relevant institutions can provide better resources while creating and developing these relations represent the real challenge.

Horizontal bonding relations

According to this study's findings, horizontal bonding relations are the most common type of social capital possessed by new immigrants. Bonds describe close and strong relations between people based on a sense of common identity, culture, or ethnicity. Horizontal bonding relations represent the most basic type of social capital one can build when relating to each other as its core lays on the shared life path. This type of connection refers to ties between individuals with similar social backgrounds, knowledge, and resources (Ryan, 2011; Patulny, 2015).

Horizontal bonding relations are present in every new immigrant's social circle, constituting the basis of their social integration in the host country. The study's participants have highlighted building and putting into practice strong bonds with new and old immigrants, especially from Latin American origins. These relations tend to be the closest ones immigrants have in Israel, as are based on shared experiences, culture, and values. Immigrants' social circles are constituted almost entirely by homophilous relations, as their main bonding ties are with other new and old immigrants like them who share a similar life path. *"It is naturally easier for me to feel related and be more authentic with people who share my language and cultural codes"*, explained Florencia (28), when asked why her inner social circle is constituted exclusively by Latin American new immigrants.

Following the data analysis, I claim that these bonds, which form the social structure that accompanies new immigrants in their daily life, are effortless to build and maintain, as are reciprocal and mutually beneficial. They usually start in the government-funded absorption centers right after immigration and continue accompanying migrants across the integration process they go through together, as described by Ariel (28): "*During Ulpan* (Hebrew school for new immigrants) *I didn't only learn the language but met the friends that form my inner social circle until today*".

Though participants highlighted how important is to "*have brought a piece of Argentina"* (Luciana, 30) to Israel for mental and emotional support, this research – reinforcing existing literature - shows that horizontal bonding ties hinder social integration within the local community, which has a direct negative impact in the economic arena. As previous authors have demonstrated, strong ethnic ties may produce counter effects, as bonding social capital normally comes with closed-off migrant communities with low levels of social and economic resources (Lancee, 2010; Marfleet & Blustein, 2011; Phillimore & Goodson, 2006; Nannestad et al., 2008; Cederberg, 2015; Allen, 2009; Ryan et al., 2008; Ryan, 2011). Even when homophilous relations are useful to overcome day-to-day hardships, the findings of this study show that migrants' access to local information, resources, and social networks is strictly limited and their opportunities for professional and economical development are lowered. When some participants recognized how problematic these relations are, others reinforced their decision of building strong horizontal bonding ties within migrants. "*Even though*

some people may see this as an obstacle, we don't see any problem with having a 100% Latin social circle. Our friends are the family we choose to build in our new home", assured Alan (31), who immigrated with his wife.

According to Nicolás (36), however, "*new immigrants form a small society within the Israeli society and that makes even more difficult the social and economical integration"*. The findings of this study have shown that different social and cultural codes, language barriers, and dissimilar experiences going through obstruct creating bonding relations with native Israelis, and therefore accessing high-quality resources and influences. The challenge is even deeper when the interaction between the populations is limited to certain spaces and environments that not every immigrant succeeds or chooses to belong to, such as the university, army, or a high-qualified workplace.

One way immigrants found to access better locally-connected networks with more information and resources was through activating connections that brought from their belonging to the Jewish community back home. Following the analysis, even if building new social roots in the host country within other immigrants proved to be the most chosen strategy to overcome difficulties and guarantee a soft landing and absorption process, I claim that keeping strong relations with the Jewish Community in Argentina provide more useful connections and pragmatic support once in Israel, thus offering better integration outcomes.

The analysis suggests that besides the relations immigrants build in the host country, they value and take advantage of the network they already have within the Argentinean Jewish Community in the homeland and the connections it offers after arriving in Israel. One of the reasons why people decide to immigrate to Israel lays in the understanding that there will be a safety net waiting for them, as Maia (29) described: *"When took the decision to leave Argentina, I knew Israel was the best choice. Not only because of the benefits and the rights provided by the government but mainly for the strong social fabric constituted by other immigrants, friends from home, relatives, and lots of acquaintances from the Jewish community that will be waiting for me. I knew I was coming to a safe place"*.

Like Maia, other immigrants count on the emotional and pragmatic support provided by the Argentinean community already established in the country. Distant connections – both own and borrowed - from school, synagogue, and the Jewish Community Center can be transformed, during the integration and absorption process, into an adoptive family, offering from a home feeling during the Holiday season to practical information and advice when trying to start a new life abroad. Sebastián (34), who made Alyiah to Haifa, was welcomed by his uncle´s friends. Regarding his experience, he said: *"I´ve never seen them before, but they opened the doors of their house as if I was one more of their children and even helped me to find my first job here"*. Jonathan (35) also exploited his own connections from Argentina as well as his parents´, being active members of the Jewish Community there: *"My parents' friends from Argentina helped me to meet useful contacts once in Israel"*.

As the findings of this study have shown, keeping the connections between the homeland and the host country is seen by some immigrants not only as an exhaust valve in case someday need to come back but mainly as a supply of resources, connections, and information to develop professionally in Israel. *"Contacts within the Argentinean Jewish Community is one of my main resources here, as represent a big proportion of my regular clients"*, explained Matías (32), who became an entrepreneur after immigration.

I claim that, unlike bonding relations with other new migrants, connections with long-time immigrants provide better resources for successful socioeconomic integration. Even if they represent horizontal bonding ties since they share the same social background, because of the time living in Israel, the stage where they are in the integration process, and the networks they've already traced within the local society, this population is closer to be native Israelis, and therefore connections formed through the Jewish Community from Argentina may represent better outcomes as can offer resources proper of actors in a substantially different social location. As demonstrated in the analysis, despite the emotional support may be stronger in closer connections within immigrants with similar biographies, a far relation with someone living longer in the country could provide better benefits for both social and economical integration into the host society. As each type of horizontal bonding ties has different uses and applications, both types of relations are needed for a successful landing as an immigrant. However, to

guarantee better integration outcomes, I´d recommend investing in building social capital through relations that increase the scope, quantity, and quality of connections, resources, and influences available. According to this study findings, I can assert that using the Argentinean Jewish Community as a shortcut for better connections appears to be a solution to the challenge of relating to native Israelis through bridging and linking strategies.

Vertical bonding relations

The analysis showed that new immigrants are also interested - when possible - in building and using vertical bonding relations, as are aware of the comparative advantage relating closely with Israelis may represent in their socioeconomic integration process. This type of ties refers to close and strong relations between people based on a sense of common identity, culture, or ethnicity, but who have dissimilar social backgrounds (Patulny, 2015; Ryan, 2011). Because of being located in a better socioeconomic position, these actors enjoy different quantity and quality of resources and knowledge that can be shared with the immigrants. In this case, the bonds are established with native Israelis, meaning there is a significant social distance between the parts, but there is still a common ground that allows establishing a close relation. As emerged from this study, there are three sources from where to build this type of ties: establishing a romantic relationship with a local or the shared belonging to a certain institution like the Israel Defense Forces or a religious community. According to the data gathered for this research, even though immigrants are aware of the benefits of vertical bondings, a small percentage declared enjoying this relating strategy, as it is harder to implement than the first one.

As the findings suggest, having an Israeli couple appears to be the most helpful strategy to build vertical bonding relations, although maybe the most difficult to achieve. Even though any participant declared having intentionally looked for native partners, there was a general agreement that their relationship meant much more than a romantic bond, as it embodies the ultimate strategy for social integration. Dating an Israeli couple allowed new immigrants to improve their Hebrew language skills, mix with the local population, and be exposed to more and better connections, being an *"unbeatable way to enter into the real Israeli society"*, as described by Matías (32). "*Thanks to them (my husband and his family) I live in a 100% Israeli environment"*, recounted congruently

Tamara (30), who, unlike most immigrants, expressed feeling completely integrated as she doesn't have any other Latin Americans in her social circle. Even though the vertical bond is established with the partner itself, the relation acts as an exponential multiplier of relations by allowing the creation of other vertical connections, as the couple´s family, friends, colleagues, and acquaintances can also be reached by the immigrant.

Besides being a strategy for social integration into the local community, dating a native proved to have positive outcomes in the economic arena as well. *"Having an Israeli husband helped me to plan a proper strategy to enter into the local labor market by using his inside knowledge, even when he comes from a very different professional field"*, declared Laura (38), when explaining how she felt their relationship helped to get her first high-skilled job positions in Israel. As emerged from the data, through the partner's connections and knowledge on the local labor market codes and opportunities, immigrants with this type of vertical bondings possess a clearer panorama of what to expect and where to look for a job, independently of the stage in the labor market integration process where they are.

The findings of this study have shown that another way to establish vertical bonding relations - that are easier to implement when planed - relays in the belonging to central institutions in the Israeli society that may serve as a proper environment to build significant bonds. Voluntary participation in both religious communities and the Israel Defense Forces are perceived by immigrants as successful socioeconomic integration strategies.

In line with existing literature that assures that immigrants who came to Israel for religious reasons experience higher life satisfaction after migration even when they face difficulties in their cultural and social integration (Amit and Riss, 2007; Cohen, 2007; Semyonov et others, 2007; Raijman, 2009; Amit, 2012), the data of this research suggests that actually, those who belong to religious communities enjoy from an easier integration process because of the vertical bondings they build within that framework. Participants who were involved in religious settings back home identified it as a successful relating strategy once in Israel, as Ariel (28) expressed: *"Participating in Chabad's community in Córdoba made my integration process easier, as I already had relations and common interests with people in Israel"*. The religion, similar values, and

shared belonging to a cared institution by each part proved to serve as the common ground needed to build strong, close, and meaningful relations with native Israelis positioned in a better social location. These vertical bonds allow those who build and use them to enjoy *"world-class opportunities"* while still "*keep belonging to a community"* as Alan (31) highlighted when referring to the benefits of participating in a Modern Orthodox Jewish synagogue after immigrating to Jerusalem. I claim that, even if there is a significant social distance between each part of the bond, the common identity allows the immigrants to enjoy the connections, information, and influences owned by other members of the community, who are rooted in Israel for a longer time and, therefore, possess higher-quality resources and knowledge useful for cultural, social and economic integration.

Joining the Israeli army was defined by the research participants who choose to do it as *"the best decision I took since immigrating"* (Uriel, 25). The Israel Defense Forces are the core institution of Israeli society, and, by participating in it, immigrants can enjoy a taste of what it looks like to be a native. *"Being in the Army was essential in my integration process as there I´ve adopted Israeli social codes"*, assured Leandro (30), who besides learning Hebrew in mother tongue level, the 18 months spent in the IDF represented an accelerator program to discover how to feel, behave and think as his Israeli pairs. His experience proved that after joining voluntarily the army, he was recognized by the society culturally closer to Israelis, which years later was translated into better opportunities for making friends and establishing long-lasting connections. For Uriel (25), the experience of serving the Nation acted as the framework where he built the *"safety net"* that support and assist him until today. The army environment and values of comradeship permitted him to develop emotionally close bonds with Israelis his age, which another way is not likely he would´ve connected with. Even more than strong friendships, this study suggests that immigrants emerged from the IDF with relevant networking that provided thriving outcomes in the job integration process. Ilan (30) assures that he intentionally planned his participation in the Israeli army when immigrating as he knew it will be a flourishing setting to network and create connections. Similar to other interviewees' experiences, Ilan's strategy proved successful as he got accepted in a senior position within the Israeli government through the recommendation of his superiors in the IDF.

Vertical bonding ties, like described before, provide immigrants with close, strong, and long-term relations while also connecting them with Israelis owning resources and knowledge because of their higher position in the social scale. Even when the data imply that the three strategies provide successful outcomes, I argue that participation in religious communities appears as the less useful approach still the easiest to implement. Belonging to a religious institution can path the way to social integration, but the networking will still be within a limited circle from a determined socioeconomic and cultural background, so its effects on economic integration may be narrow. Even more, the bonds established in the synagogue tend to be less long-lasting and reliable than those built from a basis of friendship, comradeship, or love, as the common grounds are weaker there. Therefore I claim that participating in the army or having a local couple seems to be the most successful strategies to build vertical bonds in Israel. Because of the IDF's melting pot identity and the connections' multiplier character of love relations, these sources of social capital provide a wider range and scope of possible networks and therefore more opportunities and better outcomes both in social and economic integration. The difference between both strategies lies in the way they can be incorporated into other relating approaches immigrants use: while the first strategy demands lots of emotional and physical effort but with according planning can be almost guaranteed, the second one's success is independent of immigrants' conscious intentions.

Bridging relations

As emerged from the analysis, bridges are another type of relations Argentinean immigrants try to build and put into practice as part of their relating strategy. These heterophyllous ties (Lin, 2001) are weak links amongst dissimilar people who are different in a provable way, such as age, socio-economic status, education, and ethnicity. As migrants, bridging relations are particularly needed since can provide access to networks and individuals from host societies (Drever & Hoffmeister, 2008; Lancee, 2010; Laurence, 2011; Li, 2004; Nannestad et al., 2008). In this case, bridging relations are made with native Israelis, who are significantly dissimilar to new immigrants regarding their background, socio-cultural codes, and stage in their professional development. Participants showed to be aware of the benefits it can provide to them establishing useful networks with the local population both in the professional and personal sphere, as a strategic method to improve their integration. In line with the

literature (Lin, 2001; McPherson et al., 2001; Woolcock, 2001; Szreter and Woolcock, 2004; Ryan, 2011), the findings of this study suggest that because of the relative social distance between the parts, these connections act as bridges that allow the immigrants to reach local values, viewpoints, and information, and therefore, provide more valuable resources than bondings during the process of socioeconomic integration.

Following the analysis, I claim that building vertical bridges with locals is the main strategy immigrants have to get access to the host society and the particular resources, knowledge, and cultural codes that seem to only be available for natives. *"Interacting with native Israelis allowed me to know the local idiosyncrasy and internalize cultural and social codes",* explained Florencia (28), regarding why she thinks establishing bridges with Israelis her age was beneficial in the absorption and integration process. Establishing connections with the local population, even when they are weak and sporadic ties like those forged in informal settings like bars, parties, or dating applications, proved to have helped new immigrants to gain an enhanced understanding of the local culture. Besides assisting in the social integration, the data showed to have produced positive outcomes also regarding economic integration, as these informal networks were sometimes translated into relevant contacts for professional opportunities, information on how the local labor market works, and better preparation to face job interviews. Julieta (29), as most of the research participants, recognizes the benefits of making use of these bridges: *"You can never know who the person is you´ve randomly started talking at the beach. As an immigrant, I learned to relate with as many Israelis as possible. Being part of the local society and being at least aware of their codes can help you when writing a CV and find job interviews, without even mentioning the much needed emotional support they can give you".*

Because of its benefits, the findings of this study have shown that there is a general understanding within the immigrants' community of the need of integrating into a local Israeli social circle even though it is challenging when the language and the social distance are still a barrier. *"I choose to live with Israeli roommates, even if it meant to take some distance from my comfort zone, the Latin American immigrant community, aiming to start integrating into the real Israeli society",* expressed Florencia (28), when asked how she overcame this difficulty. Among other coping strategies, the data showed that immigrants tend to choose Israeli roommates, use dating applications, work in a place with locals´ majority, go to unknown people´s houses for Shabbat dinner and

participate in as much as possible social and cultural events organized for young people by NGOs and local governments. *"Getting out of the comfort zone is the only coping strategy that works for an immigrant who really aims to be integrated"*, sentenced Diego (32), summarizing the perspective of most of the research´s participants.

Even more than creating bridges with other Israelis, I allege that establishing professional networks is as needed as challenging for new immigrants trying to integrate into the host country labor market. Immigrants are aware of the value of generating bridging relations with colleagues already established in the professional field in Israel because networks and personal contacts are a quintessential part of the Israeli society and economy. Laura (38) experienced it first hand after making Aliyah: *"Here everything works by word to mouth and at the beginning, I didn't know anyone, which made it even more difficult to find job opportunities"*. Nicole (24), who was first with Student and Working Visas in the country after deciding to immigrate, understood the challenge Laura talked about and the need to find her way into a professional network in Israel. *"I understood that if I wanted to stay in Israel, I needed to build a network of contacts to find a job in my area of interest. I started looking for other immigrants like me, mainly participants of MASA programs, that also worked in communications, marketing, and cinema to understand, first of all, how the market works here"*, shared Nicole during the interview. As suggested by the analysis, establishing a professional network serves two main purposes: understanding the particularities of the local market in ones' vocation and relating to people who can offer access to high-quality job opportunities in the country. According to the data, interpersonal and acquaintances' relations and connections from previous internships experiences in the country appear to be some of the most employed strategies to create these nets even before getting the first job in Israel, but reaching established colleagues through Facebook's specialized groups proved to offer the best outcomes considering the near future economic integration. *"After feeling lost for a few months, I looked for colleagues working in my field in Israel. Through Facebook, I met a Latin professional that immigrated a long time ago, and she became a kind of my mentor here. She shared with me everything she knew about our profession, how to revalidate my university degree and even led me to my first relevant job interview"*, recalled Carolina (31) about her own experience.

Even if establishing bridges with colleagues offers positive outcomes regarding mapping the labor market and the opportunities available, the findings of this study demonstrate that immigrants are aware that being part of a professional ecosystem is the best-relating strategy to build a strong, resourceful and long-term network. *"Being part of a workplace that allows networking is always important to progress in the professional career, but for immigrants is essential, so we have to dedicate time and resources to building it"*, expressed Ilan (30), who even though considers himself *"privileged"* he recognizes how much effort he put in developing and maintaining the networks that led to the Senior position in the governmental agency where he works today. Regarding the benefits of networking from inside the workforce, Laura (38) commented: *"Once I got my first job was easier to progress and be accepted in better positions because I´ve already started building a professional network in Israel"*. Following this research's findings, I can assure networking at the workplace create connections with access to relevant and updated information on the labor market, inside data on open positions, as well as recommendations and references for future jobs, facilitating not only high-quality opportunities but mainly the possibility to develop a career in the long term. As Laura explained, in line with other interviewees' experiences, the connections she has made in the places she worked during the last years represent the main resource she has built for successful economic integration and professional development processes in the host country.

Linking relations

According to this analysis, generating linkages is the last – and least frequent – relating strategy immigrants use for their socio-economic integration in the host country. Linking relations represent the most vertical type of heterophyllous ties, as they are connections to people, groups, or institutions further up or lower down the social and power ladder (Gitell and Vidal, 1998; Cote and Healy, 2001; Szreter and Woolcock, 2004). As emerged from the data, Argentinean new immigrants in Israel try to generate linkages with locals positioned further up in the sociopolitical scale aiming to access economic support, assistance services, job opportunities, and further well-established networks. They tend to do it through participation in programs organized by government and private organizations that assist immigrants, as well as networking during academic and professional studies in Israel. Even when they have proved to provide successful outcomes regarding quality job acquisition, these ties are usually

short-term and are effort and time-consuming. That's why linkages, even though they are useful, are least chosen by immigrants as part of their relating strategy.

On the one hand, immigrants build resourceful networks by asking for assistance and participating in short-term programs organized by NGOs and government agencies that help immigrants in their professional development. Israel´s Ministry of Aliyah and Integration offer, through the multiple Absorption Centers established around the country, both employment search services and meetings with experts to assist recently-arrived immigrants to integrate into the local economy. Even though most research participants complained about the inaccuracy of the information provided and lack of close accompaniment in the economic integration process, what they do remark was the high-quality connections they made via these governmental agencies and the practical resources and knowledge they accessed through them. *"Even though I didn't find a job through the Absorption Center's Employment Committee, I did learn about the local labor market and how to face job interviews to reach Israeli standards"*, commented Jonathan (35) on his experience, who accessed, through the Absorption Center of Tel Aviv, to establish a productive linkage with the Senior Employment Consultant and Advisor at the Jewish Agency.

Considering that government agencies, both in Israel and abroad, are not sufficient to satisfy the immigrants´ demand for information and advice, in recent years several non-governmental and non-profit organizations surged to close the existent gap, especially regarding support for professional integration in the local labor market for high skilled new immigrants. Gvahim, Hire Olim Project, and OLEI are some of the NGOs that help new immigrants to become fully integrated into the Israeli society and economy. Besides offering Job Exchange services, these organizations provide workshops and one-on-one meetings with Human Resources professionals that offer participants with resources and knowledge of the local labor market, as well as being an environment conducive to networking with Israeli experts and other immigrant colleagues.*"Participating in Gvhaim´s workshop helped me to find a job, as I learned how to adapt my resume to what the Israeli market wants"*, commented Ariel (28), regarding the valuable resources he got from Gvahim paid course. Others, like Diego (32) and Mariano (41), enjoyed HOP and OLEI´s Job Exchange services as they are tailored to immigrants´ needs and skills, focusing on foreign language positions in the workforce. But above all, participants highlighted the experts they met through these

frameworks, the institutional resources they were offered, and the possibility to be part of a growing professional network formed by both locals and immigrants. "*A friend of mine recommended to me joining Gvhaim, and I didn't understand why, as he was still unemployed after finishing the course. But after doing it myself I've realized that the people you meet there, including the Human Resources experts, the organization staff, the other participants, and the Alumni community, is the real value of the program"*, added Ariel (28). This study's findings show that even if these linkages do not provide capital for social integration, for those who are not able or willing to build stronger heterophyllous connections like vertical bondings or bridges, participating in this kind of programs offer the possibility to access local professionals and colleagues with high-quality resources and knowledge that may produce handy outcomes in the job searching and economic integration process.

Studying in Israel represents another strategy new immigrants utilize to generate linkages with people located further up in the social and power ladder. Even though the main purpose is to gain new skills and knowledge and increase the human capital, participating in academic and professional studies in the host country is also being used, according to the data, as a socioeconomic integration strategy, because it embodies an opportunity to get connections and access to support from mentors, professors and colleagues.*"Choosing to study in Israel turned definitely into my comparative advantage"* recognized Leandro (30), who values, more than the learning itself, the close contact with the teaching staff he received during and after his Masters in Tel Aviv University. In the same line, Alan (30) commented: *"The best thing I've got from doing my Masters in Israel was the useful professional advice I received from my professors; they opened to me lots of doors in the labor-market"*. While some participants remarked on the vertical bondings created with Israeli students, others, especially those who did international programs, do not consider the University as an environment conducive to creating friendships with locals. However, as the data suggests, there is a general agreement about the useful linkages that can be created with colleagues and professors, inside and outside the classroom. In this regard, Laura (38) observed: *"As an immigrant, doing training and updating courses is not only an investment to be a better professional but a better connected one. Doing courses is the best way to meet new colleagues and maybe your future boss"*. The Israeli government offers scholarships for BA and MA studies, professional courses, and vocational

training as part of the set of benefits every immigrant receives together with citizenship. Therefore, even though studying in a foreign language may demand lots of effort, time, and willpower, this relating strategy is open to everyone interested in taking advantage of the linkages and the resources and knowledge they can lead to.

Fitting: Adjusting skills and capital for labor insertion

The findings of this research evidenced another type of social capital built and used by high-skilled new immigrants during their ongoing process of economic integration in the host country, which can be conceptualized through the Fitting strategy. According to this strategy, immigrants experience an adjusting process of their skills and capital to overcome the obstacles that hinder their entry to the labor market.

As demonstrated in the literature, immigrants face several objective and subjective barriers during their socioeconomic integration process. The cultural and social distance between migrants and the receiving society (Evans & Kelley, 1991; Birjandian, 2004; Heilbrunn & Kushnirovich, 2007), lack of social networks (Birjandian, 2004; Heilbrunn & Kushnirovich, 2008), the inadequacy of human capital to the market needs and structure (Borjas, 1987; Card, 2001; Esses, et. al, 2001; Venturini & Villosio, 2002), language obstacles (Chiswick, 1990, 1991; Evans & Kelley, 1991; Nee et al., 1994; Valenzuela, 2000; Swirsky & Kapla, 2005; Heilbrunn & Kushnirovich, 2007; Offer, 2007; Raijman & Kemp, 2010), and even discrimination (Light and Rosenstein, 1995; Burstein, 1994; Heath & Cheung, 2007; Kalleberg & Søresen, 1979; Kreinin, 1965; Valenzuela, 2000) make entry into a foreign labor-market a real challenge.

As emerged from this qualitative study, Argentinean new immigrants tend to face similar objective barriers, while the subjective obstacles are less frequently presented. But instead of paralyzing them in their integration process, they have developed particular strategies that allow them to overcome those challenges. According to the data, besides relating with others to create high-quality social capital, immigrants need to implement their Fitting strategy during their socioeconomic integration process, meaning adjusting their skills and capital to the needs and demands of the local labor market.

The barriers and the coping strategies immigrants implement along the way vary accordingly to their stage in the integration process, but the data suggest that inadequate

work experience, lack of local language skills, and the challenge of putting into practice the connections built represent recurring and challenging themes during the undergoing labor insertion in the host country.

Entry into the destination-country labor market

Even when the literature mainly highlights the challenges low-skilled immigrants face in their socioeconomic integration process, entry into a foreign-labor market seems to be even more difficult for high-skilled immigrants, as this study data suggests. The clash between expectations and reality, as well as the gap between the market and self-esteem in the home country and the host society's valuation, add additional difficulty to the already enough complicated labor insertion. Being economic reasons the principal push out factor for Argentinean migrants (Rein, 2004; Degani and Degani, 2004; Amit, 2012), frustration is the first feeling the research's participants mentioned when asked about their job-searching experience in Israel. *"In Argentina, I had a good job. I immigrated because I wanted to live here and I was confident that there were better opportunities, but I arrived and could not get a job in my profession. It was very frustrating at first"*, expressed Laura (38). Nicole (24) was even harsher: *"I put myself a deadline: If I can´t find a worthy job soon, I am going back home"*, shared after commenting she looked for a career-related position for a few months without successful outcomes.

According to this research's analysis, when trying to look for a qualified job in a foreign country, one of the main obstacles regards the accessibility to information on the labor market structure and its distinctiveness. Previous researchers have reported it as part of the subjective barriers immigrants face (Daneshvary et al., 1992; Rogers, 1997; Rouwendal, 1998; Zaretsky & Coughlin, 1995; Birjandian, 2004; Offer, 2007). *"As soon as I arrived in Israel I entered every bar and hotel in my neighborhood until someone hired me a few hours later. But now that I want to work in my profession, I have no idea where to start from"*, commented Jonathan (35) on his experience, remarking the *"abysmal difference"* he encountered between the resources and information needed to look for a low-skilled position and a qualified job. Almost unanimously, participants remarked how difficult was for them - as new immigrants - to find accurate information on how their profession works in Israel, if there is a need to revalidate their university degree, which are the popular means to look for a job, what

are the conventions on résumés' writing and how one is expected to behave in work interviews. Additionally, the language barrier turned more complicated to access data on wages standards, labor laws, and employees' rights. After complaining about the complete lack of help from governmental agencies dedicated to assisting immigrants during their absorption process, Nicole (24), in line with other participants, explained that she made use of her social circle's experiences to get the information she was unable to find in conventional platforms. *"I knew nothing about the labor market in Israel and was very difficult for me to find information from official sources. All I know now I've learned from watching how was my social circle's workplace and environment"*, she related. Carolina (31), to avoid facing the challenge of trying to access the information herself, planned her labor insertion process even before immigrating: *"The best advice I was given was to do exhaustive research about how the labor market works here before starting looking for a job. I've met with lots of Israelis and long-time Olim (immigrants) to have a better understanding of where, how and what to look for"*. Laura (38), who also felt challenged as she *"didn't know where to look"*, found her answer in Facebook groups. As the findings of this study suggest, for those who don't possess yet relevant social capital, surfing the internet and social media proved to be the best strategy used to access information on the local labor market and, on the way, network with colleagues and other professionals in the host country.

In contrast to the existing literature, that claims immigrants suffer from inadequacy of their human capital to the market needs and structure as they tend to be under-qualified in comparison to accepted standards in the developed world (Borjas, 1987; Card, 2001; Esses, et. al, 2001; Venturini & Villosio, 2002), the data of this research suggest that high-skilled new immigrants from Argentina are likely over-qualified for the Israeli labor market. As emerged from the analysis, another obstacle immigrants face in their labor insertion process refers to the non-matching qualifications and/or experience for positions available for new immigrants. "*In every interview I had for entry-level positions, I was told I was overqualified and too old, while also struggled to get opportunities for better jobs"*, commented Mariano (41). His experience, shared by other immigrants, can be explained by the particular structure of the Israeli labor market and society. Because of the mandatory military service, Israelis join the labor force later than their pairs in other countries. Between ages 18-22, most of the Jewish population serves in the army or national service, are therefore the commencement of academic

studies is postponed until age 23-26, graduating only at 27-30. As a result, most students have completed their studies and are at the beginning of their journey in the labor market at age 31-34 (Fucks, 2015). Argentineans, who start studying and working at an earlier age, arrive at Israel with academic degrees and work experience which doesn't match with the requirements for entry-level positions available for the age range, as the local labor market is adapted to the average Israeli times and qualifications. *"I was overqualified for every job opportunity it was presented to me at the beginning. Why should I be a telemarketer when I have a BA in Economics?"*, asked herself Tamara (30).

Besides the particular structure of the Israeli labor market, this research implies that the lack of language proficiency and employers' unfamiliarity with education institutions abroad may be the answer to Tamara's question. In Israel, only a very few academic degrees require to be revalidated to be accepted in the local labor market. Saying that the literature that assures employers tend to favor applicants who were educated in standardized and vocation-specific systems hindering employing opportunities for immigrants coming from less developed countries – like Argentina- (Borjas, 1987; Semyonov & Lerenthal, 1991; Topel, 1999; Alba & Nee, 2003; Constant, Gataullina & Zimmermann, 2006; Damelang et al., 2019) appears less relevant to the Israeli case. However, the data of this study demonstrate that, as fellow researchers showed, foreign educational credentials do not always assure migrants a successful economic integration (Cohen-Goldner and Eckstein, 2002; Weiss et al.,2003; Kogan, 2007). This research's findings suggest an explanation: even when foreign academic degrees are officially recognized in the host country, immigrants experienced undervaluation of their studies abroad when their formal knowledge was not accompanied by local language skills or expertise. "*In the beginning, I sent my CV everywhere but didn´t get responses at all, time after time. I decided to start asking Human Resources why, and I understood the problem was I haven't studied here, and my year in Israel was not enough to trust my skills"*, commented Laura (38), even after she had approved the exigent test in the Hebrew language to revalidate her BA in Nutrition. Mariano (41) possesses a degree that, according to the local law, there is no need to certify his skills to work as a professional in Israel. However, he had a similar experience. *"Academic degrees are asserted by language"*, he assured, in line with the narrations of other research participants. *"It is preferable to start with an unrelated or low-qualified job, but one*

that allows you to learn Hebrew. Then yes, you have the way open to find the job that you came here to do", related Mariano regarding the strategy most of the immigrants interviewed used to overcome the human capital gap they experienced after arriving in Israel. In the same line, Luciana (30) is troubling with finding a Law-related job, even if she has lots of experience in her area. *"I knew I couldn't find a job as a lawyer without proper Hebrew, so in the meantime, I started looking for jobs in kindergartens and coffee shops. Even if I've spent years studying and working in my profession, I understand that now the priority is to invest in learning the language, to get to my dream job someday in the future".* Like them, other participants commented having chosen to work in kindergartens, babysitting, coffee stores, and customer service to learn and improve the Hebrew skills before even starting looking for a position in their profession, assuming it will be less challenging then.

This strategy proved to be successful because, as suggested by the data, local language skills are needed for social integration in the workplace, even when the job itself does not require Hebrew. *"I don't need fluid Hebrew for my day-to-day job, but my limited language skills do hinder the social integration with my boss and coworkers"* commented on this regard Carolina (31) who works in the Latin American department of a local tech company. Even those research participants who were hired in their jobs because of their other languages' skills agreed on the importance of having a basic level of Hebrew to enter the local workforce. *"The job searching process is difficult for foreigners, as Israelis will always be in an advantageous position while having the same skills and experience just because of the language proficiency"*, observed Julieta (29), who also highlighted that the fact of not being a native English speaker represents an additional challenge for Latin American immigrants. *"I don't see the effort I make in learning Hebrew in my American friends, they feel they don't need it as much as I do"*, summarized Nicole (24), regarding the disadvantageous position of Non-Anglo speakers in the labor insertion process. As emerged from the data, new immigrants tend to look for positions that ask for their mother tongue skills or where at least local language proficiency is not a requirement. However, because they are aware of the need for a basic knowledge of Hebrew to perform better in job interviews and connect with coworkers, Argentinean immigrants, as part of their fitting strategy, acknowledge the self-necessity to invest time and effort in learning street-level Hebrew

by participating in free or subsidized courses, language exchanges and even informal encounters with the local population.

As emerged from the data, another objective barrier migrants face during the labor insertion process refers to the lack of working experience in the country. The findings suggest that while relevant professional experience in the home country is valued, only local experience is actually rewarded. *"After I got my first job in Israel I was able to look for better opportunities and higher salaries, as already had local labor experience in my résumé"*, commented Laura (38), whose several years working in kitchens and hospitals in Buenos Aires were almost non-considered when she started looking for a qualified job in Israel. This research's findings show that getting the first job in the country, even when it is unrelated or low-skilled, seems to be the most popular strategy among the immigrants, as there is a general understanding that they need some local experience to gain the employers' trust and progress into better positions, independently of their professional career back home. In the same line, Julieta (29), who worked as a kindergarten assistant and babysitter until she found a Graphic Designer position, noted: *"I´ve got where I am now because of my skills, but the seal of approval given by my Israeli colleagues and the experience I've earned here was what allowed me to arrive at the first place"*. This study shows that not having professional experience in the host country is an objective barrier to enter the market forces, but once inside, the quantity and quality of job opportunities, including better conditions and wages, are exponentially increased.

Apart from finding a way to access information on the labor market, learning the local language, and having some kind of first job experience in the country, the research' data suggest that being interviewed by another immigrant proved to be a successful strategy to overcome the barriers faced when trying to enter a foreign workforce. *"Even if I arrived at my first job interview through a job bank, I got accepted because the interviewer was Latin American. He felt identified with my own story and didn't doubt to offer me the opportunity to start a life here"*, commented Mariano (41), remarking the feeling of kindness and solidarity among immigrants. Jonathan (35) had a similar experience when trying to get his first job in the country: *"As soon I entered the hotel to try my luck, the concierge took me to the Human Resources office. When my former boss heard I'm Argentinean he said 'I am from Uruguay, and you are going to work with me'. Five minutes later he called me back for an interview with the Head of HR,*

who was from Venezuela. Being both Latin Americans they knew about my work ethics and instantly offered me a senior position at the hotel's restaurant even when I didn't have any experience or language". While this strategy is independent of the subject's will or effort, being interviewed by a fellow immigrant is more frequent than it looks like, considering the wide range of existent networks connecting between them and the long-lasting presence of Latin Americans in the country. However, in line with existing literature (Phillimore & Goodson, 2006; Nannestad et al., 2008; Ryan et al., 2008; Allen, 2009; Lancee, 2010; Marfleet & Blustein, 2011; Ryan, 2011; Cederberg, 2015), the findings of this study s that, despite the strategy appears to offer successful outcomes, job positions acquired through other immigrants tend to be less qualified and worse paid, as the information and resources they have access to are not the same quality as native Israelis'.

Professional development in the destination-country labor market

Previous authors have studied the barriers immigrants face when entering into a foreign labor market. The next step, meaning developing and advancing in a professional career, does not represent a minor challenge. Despite this, it remains under-researched. As emerged from this analysis, possessing local language professional proficiency and qualitative vertical networks is even more important to progress in the career rather than to insert in the host-country workforce.

The findings show that, if for labor insertion having some Hebrew skills were recommended for social integration in the workplace, to access qualified jobs and senior positions having local language proficiency seems to be compulsory. *"When I arrived I experienced a clash between what one brings from Argentina and what one can aspire to here. The lack of Hebrew continues to limit me to junior positions, even though I have years of experience and academic studies"* commented Mariano (41), who assured there are no senior positions in the market for non-Hebrew speakers, as having mother-tongue English appears to be not enough for managerial placements in the Israeli workforce. The strong need for local language proficiency to progress in a professional career abroad can be observed through the research's data: every one of the participants who works in a senior position related to their profession assured to have a high-level of Hebrew. *"After ten years here I am finally judged equally in job interviews. Without the high level of Hebrew I have now, even with the contacts I´ve made and the experience*

I've accumulated, I'd never been hired in a senior position in a leading tech company like the one I am today" expressed Leandro (30) who assures that local language professional proficiency he acquired during his Masters' studies in Israel proved to be an indispensable resource to advance in his professional career. "*My professional skills would have never been enough without the Hebrew"* declared Laura (38) who after 7 years in the country and intensive ongoing language classes, got accepted in an important senior position, summarizing the feeling experienced by most of the interviewees with successful stories.

The study's findings suggest that while a local language professional proficiency is required to pass qualified job interviews and get accepted in senior placements, high-quality social networks within locals are strategically needed to access in the first place to these positions. *"Although the Israeli labor market is more stable and there are many opportunities, it takes effort and the help of contacts to access a qualified job"* commented Tamara (30), now a regional manager for a local fintech company with a worldwide presence. *"Without good networks pulling the strings is very difficult to progress in a professional career here"*, continued, while relating how, after months looking for jobs through the Absorption Center's Employment Committee, finally get the opportunity to be interviewed where she works now through her Israeli brother-in-law's colleagues network. *"The best positions are only available through nepotism"* expressed pessimistically Diego (32), who still struggles to get a qualified job because he *"doesn't know the right people yet"*. From a more optimistic perspective, Laura (38) shared that *"a good network is 'the' strategy to get to the highest positions"*, not because of nepotism or favoritism, but because the senior placements are less frequently published, and are only spread by word to mouth. *"Today, I am the Chief of Nutrition at a Geriatric Hospital thanks to the professional contacts I was able to make in my work environment during the past years"*, she assured, remarking how strategically important is to build high-quality social capital within local colleagues to advance in the professional career.

Adapting: personal and social resources to cope with absorption obstacles

To guarantee a long-term socioeconomic integration in the host country is not enough to relate to the right people and fit ones' skills and qualifications to the local labor market to find the way into a professional career abroad. Following the study´s findings, I argue

that absorption success will also depend on the immigrants' ability to adapt to the new situation on an individual, mental, and emotional level. To cope with immigration-related barriers and the challenging economic integration, immigrants have to possess and implement a series of personal and social resources (Antonovsky, 1979; Ben-Sira, 1985; Price et al., 1992).

As emerged from the analysis, adapting the own mindset to overcome the barriers and leverage the presented opportunities, as well as taking advantage of the locals' culture and values that facilitate the whole process, is the third strategy high-skilled immigrants need to put into practice when trying to insert into the host-country labor market.

Individual mindsets used to overcome barriers during the integration process

Understanding that Argentineans' drivers to immigrate to Israel are predominantly economic (Rein, 2004; Degani and Degani, 2004; Amit, 2012), a professional labor insertion is the main worry of high-skilled new immigrants. As emerged also from this research's data, most of them relocate to Israel - a more developed country than their homeland - in search of better socio-economic opportunities (Bokser Liwerant, 2016), considering that *"Argentina's reality is not encouraging"* (Julieta, 29), *"There are no job opportunities"* (Mariano, 41), and *"Staying in Buenos Aires was a waste of time, bearing in mind that my age is the best time to develop professionally"* (Nicole, 24). Due to the high weight of the economic factor and the high expectations placed on access to opportunities in Israel, the findings of this study have shown that immigrating with a flexible and open mindset is a must to overcome barriers and push oneself into a long-term successful absorption into the host-country society and economy.

In the search for economic integration, as emerged from the data, immigration is perceived as an opportunity for vocational and professional change. Even when skilled migration literature demonstrates that the majority of immigrants suffers from deskilling, underpayment, and downward or contradictory social mobility (Liap and Vouyioukas, 2009; Liversage, 2009; Riaño, 2012; Trevena, 2013; Nohl et al., 2014), this study shows that Argentineans professional new immigrants tend to experiment it as a positive transition. First, when normally immigration offers the possibility, to begin with, a clean slate, immigrating to Israel allows doing it even at an older age, because of locals' different timings due to mandatory army service. *"Starting a professional career at 30 is very valid in Israel, in Argentina is not"*, expressed Alan (31), who decided to

continue his studies in Israel after experiencing a vocational change. Like Alan, lots of participants agreed on their perception of Israel as a land of opportunities, both for academic and professional careers. As raised by the data analysis, even if it may be explained by the benefit of government-subsidized studies, the fact that the academic and labor market is more developed, varied, and better paid than in Argentina is the main reason for this phenomena. *"After spending a year here I realized that in Israel I could have opportunities that back in Argentina are non-existent. In Argentina, the offer of careers available is very limited. In Israeli universities, there are more options, and the studies are much more practical and oriented to the real world. Finally, I succeeded to study and work in the field I always wanted",* commented Carolina (31), now an expert in cyber-security and counter-terrorism, an under-developed field in Argentina. When several interviewed immigrants have used immigration as an opportunity for a vocational change leveraging Israel's market a wider range of options, others had to do it out of need. Some of them, like Maia (29), Laura (38), Julieta (29), Nicole (24), and Leandro (30), made slight deviations within their profession, adapting their selves to the local market, the job offers, and the Israeli needs. *"In Israel, the audiovisual field works differently than what I was used to. But fortunately, I've managed to recreate the way I sell myself and change my professional career without further academic studies, and found a job that combines the Israeli more logistic emphasis with my own artistic and content experience from Argentina. Now my possibilities are endless",* described Nicole (24) her own experience. Others, inspired by Israel's start-up and innovation ecosystem, discovered in entrepreneurship a way out to unemployment, deskilling, and underpayment. *"When I understood I wasn't able to get a senior position in my field because of my language barriers, I decided to reinvent myself and start offering Business Development consultancy services for non-Hebrew speakers",* shared Mariano (41). *"In Argentina, my mentality was not so open to being self-employed. I got the entrepreneurial spirit in Israel",* added Nicolás (36), summarizing the shared perception of Israel as an opportunity for positive changes and beginning new paths.

For a smooth and fruitful integration process in the long-term, the findings have shown that immigrants should adopt a positive and constructive attitude, including sacrificing ideals, customs and standards embraced back in Argentina to get adapted into the Israeli labor market. Argentinean Jews normally belong to the higher socioeconomic classes and therefore enjoy a quality of living that is above the average, including private

schooling and healthcare, weekend houses inside the Jewish Community´s country clubs, and a thriving cultural and leisure routine. As new immigrants, most of the participants expressed the distress experienced at first when lost the privileges and comforts they were used to back home. *"I knew that my social status was going to drop from what I had in Argentina, but in the future, I will be better here"*, commented Florencia (28), who even before immigrating knew that her socio-economic position will be hindered because of the lack of language skills and professional contacts but, as the other interviewees, believes that in the long-term the quality of living she could afford for herself will be superior. On a more personal level, Nicolás (36) remarked: "*Friendships and family meetings are not like I was used to. I don´t have the social circle I had in Argentina and not either the one I wished to build here, but with my wife we decided to face it with a smile and use the opportunity to generate another type of relations, adopting as much as we can the Israeli way"*. Besides cultural and social standards, professional and career development ideals also need to be readapted to the new conditions. *"Since I was a little girl I dreamt of becoming a notary. After talking with colleagues working in Israel, I realized that it is too difficult to revalidate my degree and understood that my professional development in Israel has to be a different one"*¸ mentioned Luciana (30), regarding not yet her vocational change, but her understanding of the much needed flexible mindset to overcome immigration difficulties.

To guarantee a successful integration process, mainly in the short-term period after immigration, adapting to the local socio-cultural standards and customs may not be enough. As emerged from the data, immigrants recognize also the need to sacrifice and lower economic situation and job status during the first period to have a better future in the long term. *"To be able to integrate I did things that I would never have done back in Argentina"*, said Nicolás (36), who, like other new immigrants, experienced the need to do low-skilled jobs not only to integrate but to make the ends meet. Despite being highly skilled professionals with academic degrees, work experience, and some language skills, most participants had temporarily worked in positions never imagined doing in their comfort zone back home, including delivering food, telemarketing, cleaning, and serving clients in shopping malls. However, instead of approaching this situation as if they are suffering from deskilling or downward mobility (Liap and Vouyioukas, 2009; Liversage, 2009; Riaño, 2012; Trevena, 2013; Nohl et al., 2014),

Argentinean immigrants in Israel tend to perceive it as a *"temporary sacrifice"* for future better times. *"I chose to have a low quality of life now to have a better life in the future than I could ever have in Argentina"*, stated Sebastián (34). *"The difference is that whatever I do here, I am the owner of my destiny. I can invest in my future knowing I will be able to reap the fruit of my effort. Even if I fell in the socioeconomic ladder, just the social stability and economic tranquility I have in Israel worth the sacrifice"*, remarked Luciana (30), summarizing a general feeling among Argentinean new immigrants.

As shown in the findings, planning the integration process according to the local market idiosyncrasy instead of previous professional experiences in the home country is another strategy that has to be adopted into the immigrants' mindset for a successful labor insertion. The analysis of the qualitative data suggests that learning about what are the market specifications and needs, which are the positions that are being demanded, and how locals tend to find about job opportunities is important, but incorporating it as part of the holistic mindset when facing immigration-related barriers has proved to be essential. *"Back in Argentina, I have worked as a nutritionist many years, but in kitchens, when in Israel every job opportunity I found asked for experience with patients. It took me a while to realize I should adapt to my profession's situation here while seizing the comparative advantage that made me different from Israelis"*, commented Laura (38), who adapted herself to the local market instead of trying to continue the professional path started in Argentina. To succeed in the Israeli labor market, Laura, in line with other research's participants, understood that the best strategy was to take some distance from what her comfort zone was in Argentina and, using the resources and skills developed back home as a comparative advantage, to apprehend the labor insertion process through a local perspective. Similarly, Ilan (30) noted that he finally found a professional job when he switched from Argentinean job-searching strategies and adopted the popular local approaches. *"I got my first qualified job thanks to the proper use of my network. Until then, I had searched through traditional channels and had failed. When I understood the idiosyncrasy of the labor market in Israel, I managed to make the change in my mindset and strategy, and there I got what I was looking for from the beginning"*, commented on his experience.

Last but not least, the analysis suggested the huge importance of beforehand planning of the immigration and integration process considering all the steps for building a solid

base and social capital to allow a long-term high-quality professional development. *"When I realized I wanted to stay in Israel after a year with a Student Visa, I made a plan to find a job that will make the immigration process worthwhile. If not, I was ready to pack and go back home"*, commented Nicole (24), who adopted the planning strategy to make sure Israel has feasible opportunities for her professional development even before officially immigrating. *"Judging by where I am today I can say that my integration was a success. And that is because I planned my first 5 years of Aliyah thinking about building the foundations and social circles that allow me a long-term quality professional development"*, explained Ilan (30), who carefully decided to join the Army in the International Relations division and continue with his academic studies in Israel, as a strategy to build useful connections for his future professional development. As shown in the research´s findings, even if creating the right opportunities and building high-quality social capital may be challenging, adopting a planning strategy to the mindset and establishing tasks and deadlines along the way demonstrated to have provided facilitating factors for a smoother economic integration.

Local cultural constructions proved beneficiary for immigrants' integration

When adopting an Adapting strategy, the findings of this study show that immigrants not only have to adjust their personal resources to the new mindset but also to learn how to leverage the local cultural constructions that may facilitate the integration process. As emerged from the data, new immigrants are benefited by the Israeli culture in two main ways: on the one hand, the openness of the society that makes easier the Relating strategy, and on the other, the perception that Argentinean values and work ethics are highly appreciated in the country and specifically in the labor market.

As suggested by the analysis, despite how challenging may be to create useful vertical ties for economic integration purposes, there is a shared perception among immigrants that Israeli culture actually facilitates building social capital and professional networking. *"If you ask for help, you receive it"*, assured Julieta (29), who managed to build a strong and boosting net of colleagues even when she arrived without any professional connections. The sense of community, mutual responsibility, and caring for one another is reflected in the openness to share contacts, accept a meeting for a coffee with an unknown colleague, or starting a helpful dialogue with strangers in Facebook groups. *"It is not a State-secret to share a contact here or open someone else some*

doors. Information is more open and shared than in Argentina, and there is not such a feeling that there´s always an economic interest behind", commented Nicolás (36), who noted that the Israeli culture was what allowed him to start entrepreneurship in a foreign country. However, even though the Israeli culture facilitates networking, the findings suggest that for the relating strategy to be fruitful immigrants should adopt the local mindset, meaning asking loudly for help, actively participating in meetings and events, and proposing different ways to keep the relations flourishing over time.

Even when new immigrants face multiple objective and subjective barriers when trying to enter into a foreign labor force, there was a unanimous agreement among the research participants that the fact of being Argentinean eased those difficulties. As this study findings have shown, there is a general perception of privilege among high skilled young immigrants from Argentina as Argentinean culture and values are highly valued in the Israeli society and labor market. In this regard, Florencia (28) commented: *"Being an Argentinean Ashkenazi Jew in Israel makes me feel privileged. There is a very positive stigma regarding Argentineans here, which makes every interaction with locals much better, both at university and my workplace"*. *"It is learned in Argentina, it is esteemed abroad"*, assured Nicolás (36), who, like most of the interviewees, had experienced positive prejudices regarding his work ethics for the fact of being born in Argentina. *"Argentineans' distinguished cleverness, our ability to negotiate and seize opportunities make us closer to Israelis and differentiate us, positively, from immigrants from other countries"*, described Leandro (30), who believes that his personality is highly appreciated in Israel because of its similarity to the locals´. As suggested by the participants, Argentinean culture is valued in Israeli society because of the cultural closeness and in the labor market because of the recognized work ethics. As emerged from the data, Israelis value Argentineans because they are *"hard and fast workers"*, *"intelligent"*, *"kind and empathic, always smiling"*, "*flexible and with great skills for problem-solving"*, *"honest and trustful"*, *"responsible and cordial when needed"* and *"good with interpersonal relations"*. But, to take advantage of the so valued Argentinisms, I argue that immigrants need to invest effort and hard work to prove the stigma is real. As Carolina (31) said, "*As immigrants, we face many difficulties, but we also bring with us lots of resources and skills from abroad. In Israel, they really appreciate what we bring from Argentina, but we need to value ourselves as much as they do to leverage the advantage we have"*.

Discussion

This paper has examined the social capital strategies high-skilled migrants build and use to integrate into the receiving country's labor market on a group of young professionals new immigrants from Argentina living in Israel. Through a qualitative, in-depth study I've demonstrated how they manage to cope with immigration and absorption obstacles by creating and putting into practice different types of social capital, employing the identified mechanisms – Relating, Fitting and Adapting - to improve their position both socially and professionally.

First, the findings of this study have shown that Relating to others and forming multiple types of networks is the most frequent and useful coping strategy available to migrants during their economic integration process in the receiving society. Previous studies already showed that social capital can positively influence low-skilled migrants' labor market integration in the host country, as social networks not only provide emotional support (Edin and Lein, 1997; Bassuk et al., 2002; Hawkins and Abrams, 2007) but can also facilitate economic opportunities as the access to broader resources, influences and information can compensate for the lack of human capital and formal qualifications (Lin, 1999, 2001; Mouw, 2003; Aguilera & Massey, 2003; Ioannides & Loury, 2004; Drever & Hoffmeister, 2008; Sabatini, 2009; Lancee, 2010; Piracha et al., 2014). As I've demonstrated through this study, this thesis is even stronger for high-skilled migrants. Considering that migrants' expectations on their professional economic integration are the main indicator of a successful immigration process, investing in building social capital through relations that increase the scope, quantity, and quality of connections, resources, and influences available and hence ease the access to high-quality job opportunities is quintessential. Even though homophilous relations are the most frequent and easy-to-build social capital type accessible to new immigrants, these relations can only be activated to facilitate the first steps in social integration in the receiving society and enter the labor market through low-skill or entry positions. However, to access higher wages and related-job opportunities, and even more, to guarantee a professional development in the local labor market, the study has proved that establishing vertical bonds and bridges with long-term migrants, natives, and, especially, colleagues, are the best strategy to participate in sustainable, strong and qualitative networks providing access to rewarding outcomes.

The second coping mechanism identified in this study, the Fitting strategy, refers to the process of adjusting skills and capital to the demands and particularities of the local labor market. As shown in the literature (Borjas, 1987; Chiswick, 1990, 1991; Evans & Kelley, 1991; Nee et al., 1994; Valenzuela, 2000; Card, 2001; Esses, et. al, 2001; Venturini & Villosio, 2002; Birjandian, 2004; Swirsky & Kaplan, 2005; Offer, 2007; Heilbrunn & Kushnirovich, 2007, 2008; Raijman & Kemp, 2010), immigrants – like this research´s case population - face several barriers during their socioeconomic integration process. But even when the existent research highlights the challenges low-skilled immigrants face, the findings have shown that entry into a foreign-labor market seems to be even more difficult for high-skilled immigrants. For professionals and tertiary education graduates, the expectations to get employed in a relevant job arise along with the human capital gap of positions available for non-native language speakers and, consequently, with frustration feeling. However, the study demonstrated that Argentinean high-skilled migrants, instead of feeling overwhelmed and paralyzed, have developed coping mechanisms to overcome the obstacles that hinder their entry to the receiving society's economy. Investing time and resources in improving their Hebrew skills as well as getting ascertainable local working experience in any field proved to be a successful mechanism to overcome classic objective barriers obstructing the entry to the workforce, like lack of trust of local employers and non-matching qualifications for positions available for immigrants. Even more, to beat the information gap and hence access to high-skilled job positions, migrants learned how to put into practice the quality networks built or, when unavailable, managed to do their own market research with the help of social media and other open-source investigation strategies.

Finally, the third dimension – Adapting - focuses on the adaptation process immigrants have to perform on an individual, mental and emotional level for a long-term successful absorption. As the findings have shown, due to the high weight of the economic factor and the high expectations placed on the professional development in Israel (Rein, 2004; Degani and Degani, 2004; Amit, 2012; Bokser Liwerant, 2016), planning the immigration process beforehand but executing the plan with a flexible and open mindset is a must coping mechanism, not only to overcome barriers, but to leverage the opportunities presented along the way. In this line, this in-depth study demonstrates that even high-skilled migrants, with already acquired academic and working experience

from back home, perceive immigration as a chance for vocational change and innovation, being it one of the main strategies to adapt themselves to the receiving economy's structure, needs and offers. Even more, re-adapting social, cultural, economic and professional standards, ideals and perspectives to the new context – instead of self perceiving the situation as suffering from deskilling and downward mobility (Liap and Vouyioukas, 2009; Liversage, 2009; Riaño, 2012; Trevena, 2013; Nohl et al., 2014) - proved to guarantee successful socioeconomic integration outcomes in the long term.

These findings provide three overreaching insights to further the study of migrants' coping strategies for economic integration, contributing to theoretical innovation both in the literature niche that intersects immigration, occupation, and social capital, as well as in the empirical research body that studies immigration waves in the Israeli history. First, I've shown how applying a micro-level approach in immigration studies offers a better understanding not only of migrants' adaptation experiences but also of what do they do, providing hence deeper insights on the actors' actions and choices that affect the process's outcomes. Second, even though there is an extended literature on migrants' social capital, research was mainly focused on identifying the types of capital available, whereas this work takes a step forward into disclosing the ways in which those are actually built and put into practice to reach full economic integration. Last, the findings demonstrate that, even when literature tends to relate to immigration as a traumatic and challenging process, it can be a positive experience depending on the actors' socioeconomic position and the quality of the social capital they are able to generate. These points are further elaborated below.

Most of the existing literature on immigration theories and integration trends is founded on macro-structural perspectives using quantitative research methods, where the migrants' voice in the research is underrated. Even though micro-level approaches may have less explanatory strength and generalization capability, this study has proved that studying the phenomena from the actors' perspective provides useful practical insights, as allows disclosing what migrants' experience and what do they do along the process. Analyzing migrants' socioeconomic integration in the receiving country through an in-depth study has permitted them to learn the actions and strategies they can access, which ones are more or less challenging to activate, and whereas can provide better and sustainable outcomes.

This micro-level approach has allowed going a step forward in the literature that intersects immigration, occupation, and social capital. When existent research on migrants' social capital has mainly focused on identifying the types of capital available and a general understanding of the possible benefits of each of them, the findings of this study succeeded to reveal how these connections are actually built, who are the real actors involved in the other side of the bonds, bridges, and links identified by previous authors, and how migrants can put this capital to work for their own interests. Through a thorough in-depth analysis of migrants' own experiences, actions, and strategies, this study's findings offer a closer image of the mechanisms available to cope with socioeconomic integration obstacles in the receiving country, as well as a better understanding of which types of social capital are recommended generating, developing and maintaining to obtain long-term successful outcomes. Even more, when existing literature focuses on types of social capital useful to overcome the barriers hindering the entry into a foreign labor market, the next step - meaning developing and advancing in a professional career - remains under-researched. The micro-level approach used in this study not only proved relevant to have a deeper understanding of the strategies migrants use to enter the labor market but also to unveil the connections, skills, and mechanisms required in the different stages of the absorption process, providing relevant and innovative insights for migrants' full economic and professional integration in the long-term.

Finally, the findings demonstrate that immigration and integration processes don't have to be necessarily related to traumatic experiences and difficulties, but can also be considered through a perspective of agents' doing and adaptation skills. Existing literature on immigration trends, and especially those researches on Israel's immigration history, has always framed immigration and absorption processes through the obstacle lenses, highlighting the numerous barriers and challenges migrants have to face and cope with along the way. This trend is also present in skilled migrants' research, as authors usually show why the majority of immigrants suffer from deskilling, underpayment, and downward or contradictory social mobility in the receiving country, even though they used to be experienced professionals in their homeland. This study shows that there is another way to experience immigration, where the absorption and integration stages are perceived as an enriching transition. As the findings have proved, the integration process in the receiving country may be a positive experience: when

migrants enjoy a good socioeconomic position, invest time and resources in building strong and sustainable social capital, and understand how to properly activate the three identified strategies in favor of their interests, the adaptation capacities appear to be higher and the outcomes reached much better.

Limitations and suggestions for future research

The socio-political and cultural embeddedness of this study reveals the limitations of generalizing from the findings. Even though Israel has recently joined the global race for talent (Shachar, 2006; Shpaizman, 2013) and therefore the case chosen has theoretical and empirical relevance when studying highly-skilled migrants trends, this study was conducted in a very specific social, cultural, and political context, considering the historical development of immigration in the country. Israel's active immigration policies, government-supported absorption basket, and the broadly accepted culture of receiving Jewish immigrants may generate a specific context that, despite the objective and subjective barriers migrants face, not only allows them to develop integration strategies but also facilitate to successfully incorporate into the host society and economy. Aiming to enrich this work's findings and to offer a more comprehensive framework of economic integration strategies used by high-skilled migrants and their outcomes, future studies may be needed to examine other cases where the government and the cultural gaze perform different roles regarding receiving immigrants' policies and practices.

Further, this study was done on a limited sample of 20 young high-skilled migrants coming from different academic and professional backgrounds. Follow-up researches should be done to confirm the relevance of the findings in bigger populations - including also a broader age-range and time in the receiving country - to discover the nuances across variables that weren't taken into account in this preliminary investigation, such as gender, age, and profession. To better understand the implications of these results, future studies could also address comparative analysis among multiple Latin American and Western immigrants' groups, identifying singularities and revealing the differences among them. Even more, to enhance this work's findings, future researches could be wanted to deeper the understanding of the social capital dynamism and integration strategies' outcomes in the medium and long term, which this study couldn't consider because of the methodology chosen.

Conclusions and practical implications

The growing trend of high-skilled migrants worldwide and in Israel in particular since the selective orientation shift in its immigration and absorption policy, reveals the imminent need to address migrants' challenge to enter into the foreign labor market and foster a long-term socioeconomic integration. Considering that migrants' successful contribution to the local economy is not only vital for their daily survival, self-esteem, and personal and professional development but also shape the way natives value and embrace immigration affecting multiple spheres of the community life, practitioners and policymakers should grasp the findings of this study to update and improve absorption policies in the receiving destinations.

When existing, as in the Israeli case, immigration and absorption benefits tend to be costly, but the budget is not always distributed and applied in the most efficient and effective way. Much of the efforts that governments and organizations invest in migrants' integration rely on local language learning, labor market basic information, and vocational training, while specialized researchers have demonstrated that building strategic and quality interpersonal connections, specifically with the receiving society, is the best strategy to pursue a successful socioeconomic integration. Following this study findings', once it is demonstrated how social capital is actually built, which types of networks provide migrants with access to better outcomes, and what are the strategies migrants develop to adapt to and interact with the local labor market, I'd encourage governments to apply the insights to redesign the services provided to those populations and improve their economic integration and support their professional growth.

Even when mastering the local language is quintessential for a thriving absorption process, governments can do much more if interested in easing migrants' challenges and providing embracing programs for a better experience and successful outcomes. Understanding that social-distanced relations with locals and colleagues provide better socioeconomic integration possibilities in the long-term, policymakers could incentive migrants to set down in native-populated areas and develop infrastructure that allows them to participate in social activities so both populations could interact and provide migrants with access to locals with higher social or economic level through mentoring programs. As vertical bonding contacts within migrants are also beneficial, mainly in the first stage of job-seeking and building support networks, policymakers should also

incentive networks between new and old migrants. Policymakers should build policies aimed to incentivize strategic and high valued Relating's networking as well as encouraging migrants to pursue their Fitting and Adapting strategies with a broad array of policy tools. But more important, considering that social capital is dynamic, the policies should be flexible as well, guaranteeing they are adaptable to the different stages of migrants' integration process into the receiving country society and economy.

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Annexes

Annex 1 - Interviewees' profile

	Gender	Age	Place of birth	Place of residence	Education	Date of immigration	Employment situation
1	M	35	Buenos Aires	Tel Aviv	MA (Argentina)	2019	Employed, low-skilled job, not related
2	M	32	Buenos Aires	Ramat Gan	MA in course (Israel)	2018	Employed, junior position, not related
3	F	38	Buenos Aires	Tel Aviv	MA (Argentina)	2012	Employed, senior position, related
4	M	41	La Plata	Ashkelon	MA (Argentina)	2015	Employed, self employed, related
5	F	29	Olivos	Tel Aviv	BA (Argentina)	2019	Employed, junior position, related
6	M	32	Buenos Aires	Tel Aviv	BA (Israel)	2012	Employed, self employed, related (vocational change)
7	F	24	Buenos Aires	Tel Aviv	BA (Argentina)	2019	Employed, junior position, related (vocational change)
8	M	30	Buenos Aires	Jerusalem	MA (Israel)	2011	Employed, senior position, related
9	F	30	Buenos Aires	Jerusalem	BA (Argentina)	2018	Employed, low-skilled job, non related
10	F	29	Buenos Aires	Tel Aviv	BA (Argentina)	2015	Employed, senior position, related (vocational change)
11	F	30	Rosario	Hod HaSharon	BA (Argentina)	2013	Employed, senior position, related
12	M	34	Buenos Aires	Kiryat Motzkin	BA (Israel)	2013	Employed, senior position, related (vocational change)
13	F	28	Bahía Blanca	Jerusalem	MA in course	2018	Employed,

					(Israel)		junior position, related
14	M	25	Buenos Aires	Giv'at Shmuel	BA in course (Israel)	2015	Employed, low-skilled job, non related (vocational change)
15	M	28	Córdoba City	Jerusalem	BA (Argentina)	2018	Employed, senior position, related
16	F	31	Buenos Aires	Givatayim	MA (Israel)	2017	Employed, junior position, related
17	M	30	Buenos Aires	Rehovot	BA (Israel)	2010	Employed, senior position, related (vocational change)
18	M	31	Buenos Aires	Jerusalem	MA (Israel)	2017	Employed, junior position, related (vocational change)
19	M	36	Buenos Aires	Rishon LeZion	BA (Argentina)	2014	Employed, self employed, related
20	M	30	Buenos Aires	Jaffa	BA (Argentina)	2017	Employed, junior position, related

Annex 2 – Questionnaire guide for semi-structured interviews

Prior to migration
How was your life like in Argentina before immigrating?
How did you experience your opportunities and constraints in your home country before migration? Can you share with me some specific situations that exemplify what are you saying?

Immigration and integration process
When did you immigrate?
Why did you choose to immigrate? Why specifically to Israel?
Can you tell me how your immigration process was? Can you share with me some specific situations that exemplify your process?
Can you tell me how your integration process was? Can you share with me some specific situations that exemplify your process?
Did you feel supported by your social network?
Which persons are particular important to you: friends, family, or members of other social communities? Why?

Labor market integration
Which was your first job in Israel? Do you remember the process of how did you get it? How much would you say is related to your field of studies?
What is your current employment situation? How much would you say is related to your field of studies? How satisfied are you with your job position?
What did you know about Israeli society and labor market before making Aliyah? Where did you get that information? How accessible it was? Was this information useful when looking for a job?
What strategy did you use to look for jobs?
Did anyone in particular support you during the job integration process?
Did you receive help from anyone in particular to find your current job?
Can you identify someone who helped you get to the place you are now? How you'd define your relationship with him/her? Can you share with me some examples to better understand those connections?
Which barriers and obstacles did you face during your job searching process?
How did you manage to deal with them? How successful you consider the process was? Can you share with me some specific situations that exemplify your experience?
Which experiences were, with hindsight, important during the job integration process?
How much would you say you feel integrated into Israeli society?
Which resources and connections that you think helped you to integrate into Israeli society did you bring with you from home? Which resources and connections did you build once in Israel?
How were your resources, education, and skills able to be used after migration? Can you share with me some specific situations to exemplify your experience?
What advice would you give to recently arrived migrants on finding employment in Israel?