

## **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 overarching 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.