

Master Thesis

Beyond One's Willingness to Integrate

Investigating the Impact of Perceived Justice and Institutional Legitimacy on the Social Integration of Asylum Migrants within the Dutch Asylum System



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Abstract

This master's thesis explored the relationship between perceived justice, institutional legitimacy, and social integration among asylum seekers in the Netherlands via quantitative research. Data is derived from a previous study for the 'Legacy project', which assessed compliance with return decisions. For this study, however, this concept has been exchanged for the social integration component to discover any connections with perceived justice, institutional legitimacy, and one's asylum status application. Through statistical testing, it has been found that not four dimensions as mentioned by Esser cover the term social integration (culturation, positioning, interaction, and identification), but two. These are, within this study, referred to as integration activities and integration attitudes. The dimensions served as a foundation to understand migrants' integration process. Findings revealed accepted asylum seekers score higher on integration activities if they believe in restricting individuals' freedom to live wherever they prefer. Contrary to this, they also believe the Netherlands does not do enough to help asylum seekers. While the study's findings are limited to significant results, it highlights the partial influence of factors such as distributive justice and approved application status on migrants' social integration trajectory within Dutch society.

Keywords

Asylum, Integration Activities, Integration Attitudes, Institutional Legitimacy, Perceived Justice

1 | Introduction

In recent years, the Netherlands has witnessed a significant increase in the number of asylum applications, drawing attention from public, policy, and political sectors (Bakker et al., 2016). The influx has led to a growing recognition of the necessity to increase the inclusion of migrants into Dutch society, also known as the multifaceted concept, called integration (Esser, 2006). Successful integration is a key contributor to the security and stability of both migrants and the host society (IOM, 2012). The focus on this holds particular significance for individuals who have been granted asylum, as they are expected to establish themselves as long-term residents. In addition, it is important to facilitate the integration of migrants with a pending status, as they may eventually receive a positive outcome and be granted a permit. Arguably, integrating rejected migrants, who are supposed to return to their home country, could be substantial also as a significant number continue to reside in the country irregularly without any intention of going home.

By evaluating a migrant's eligibility for a residence permit, the Immigration and Naturalization Department (IND) relies on laws and regulations outlined in the European Convention on Human Rights (2013) and the Refugee Convention Act of 1951. Within these frameworks, migrants are granted refugee status when they meet the criteria of being *“unable or unwilling to return to their country of origin owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion”* (UNHCR, 2010). Consequently, the principle of non-refoulement plays a fundamental role in protecting refugees, as it prohibits their return to a situation where they may face inhumane treatment (OHCHR, 2018). Because of this, integrating migrants from the early stages of their arrival holds significant importance. Research by Seethaler-Wari (2018) supports this, highlighting reception, accommodation, and the host town they settle in play substantial roles in shaping the integration trajectory. Hence, these early stages are key to setting the foundation for successful integration.

In the Netherlands, during the procedure, asylum seekers are accommodated in asylum seeker reception centers (ASRC) managed by the Central Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers (COA). Lately, migrants are staying longer than desired in these centers. This is partly because of the insufficient capacity of the IND to handle applications within the designated timeframe, which does not contribute positively to integration trajectories in the early stages (IND, 2022). Prolonged stays in ASRCs are holding back effective integration results and could have detrimental effects due to a decrease in the quality of life (Laban et al., 2008; Bakker et

al., 2014; Daams et al., 2019). In addition, even after migrants receive a positive decision on their application, they continue to be accommodated in ASRC. The reason for this is due to housing shortages and delays in placements from municipalities (Coello Eertink, 2019; Leiler et al., 2018).

The impact of these lengthy stays could have implications for the perceived justice and institutional legitimacy migrants experience in the Dutch asylum system. This period of uncertainty can lead to a loss of legitimacy for individuals who (still) lack citizenship or residence permits, potentially resulting in exclusion from society (Bakewell & Landau, 2018). When legitimacy is absent, individuals are less likely to comply with rules as they do not view them as morally just or fair. This could lead to distrusting laws and regulations, resulting in a reduced willingness to adhere to them (Jackson et al., 2012). Furthermore, if migrants perceive migration control policies as strict or unfair, it can further erode the overall legitimacy of the state (Van Houte et al., 2021). In this absence, individuals may seek alternative means to navigate or bypass the rules, undermining the authority and efficacy of the government (Jackson et al., 2012). This decline can subsequently diminish the willingness and cooperation of migrants to actively engage in the integration process because when individuals feel their presence is not acknowledged by society, it can weaken their motivation. It can even lead to an impact on overall migration control, as migrants may choose alternative methods of mobility (Schuster, 2011; Reneman & Stronks, 2021).

In the report of 'Met beleid van start' results have shown perceived procedural justice is linked to identification and institutional trust among permit holders (Huijnk et al., 2021). It does however not analyze if these effects occur during migrants' stay at COA locations, or if these results will be observed if asylum seekers are still in the asylum process or even for those that have been rejected. Therefore, the significant concern lies in comprehending the impact of all these factors on the integration of migrants, with a focus on those that have been granted asylum. To address this issue, the following research question is explored: *How does the perceived (in)justice of the Dutch asylum system impact the social integration of asylum seekers with different legal statuses (residence permit holders, asylum seekers in the procedure, rejected asylum seekers) during their stay in asylum seeker reception centers?* By delving into this further, insights were gained into the relationship between these factors, shedding light on potential areas for improvement.

This study holds relevance and potential benefits for various stakeholders involved. It presents perspectives that have the potential to enhance Dutch integration programs for policymakers. By identifying correlations between perceived justice, institutional legitimacy,

the status of asylum application, and social integration, policymakers can gain a better understanding of migrants' perceptions and experiences. This knowledge can lead to improved integration policies and, ultimately, foster a more positively integrated migrant population.

Exploring this specific topic is not only pertinent for policymakers but holds scientific significance also, particularly when considering asylum seekers' perceptions of justice and institutional legitimacy within the context of reception. This examination sheds light on how these factors influence integration for individuals seeking asylum. It should be noted that the process of integrating migrants into societies has already been extensively studied by scholars (Heath & Schneider, 2021; Esser, 2003; Portes & Rumbaut, 2001). According to the works of Portes and Zhou (1993) and Portes and Rumbaut (2001), migrants' relationships are closely tied to their status, which is then again influenced by the reception context. The way these individuals are received by the host country affects their integration outcomes. In their study, however, they did not consider the role of perceived justice and institutional legitimacy of the admission procedures.

Tyler (1990) examined the concept of integration, not just for migrants but among all individuals of society, through the lens of procedural justice. Jackson et al. (2012) referred to Tyler's research and associated legitimacy with his work, highlighting that while individuals may not always agree with the laws, legitimacy relies on the public's recognition of the desired social outcome that encourages compliance and respect. Perceived justice and legitimacy foster this social integration and cohesion. It can be considered, when having high institutional legitimacy, migrants, too, will integrate better. In addition, Jackson et al. (2012) explored the relationship between procedural justice and compliance, uncovering that individuals who feel the system is fair and have a strong sense of obligation, are more inclined to follow legal guidelines (Jackson et al., 2012).

Despite this existing research, migrants' perceptions of justice, institutional legitimacy, and the status of their asylum procedure required further investigation. By addressing this research gap, and exploring these concepts, this study has the potential to significantly advance the understanding of the determinants of integration and can contribute to the development of more refined theoretical frameworks.

The upcoming chapters of this research paper are structured as follows. First, a thorough literature review is provided, focusing on integration, institutional legitimacy, and perceived justice within the asylum procedure. Following, a description of the methodology and data collection is presented. In the subsequent section, the results of this study are analyzed and described, leading to the conclusion and discussion.

2 | Theoretical framework

A comprehensive understanding of the concepts proposed in the introduction will be further explored in the literature review that follows. This section specifically directs its attention toward social integration, institutional legitimacy, perceived justice, and the interconnected causal relationships of these concepts. Furthermore, additional literature on the utilization of control variables is discussed. To augment the theoretical framework, a series of hypotheses have been formulated which are portrayed in a conceptual model.

2.1 | Social integration

Immigrant integration is of concern for various Western countries, as it impacts not only their economic and social progress, but also the social cohesion, group relations, and the well-being of those involved (Heath & Schneider, 2021). The term integration has a broad and complex meaning which may vary depending on the scholarly perspective. According to Berry (2011), integration is defined as a process and set of outcomes which “*involves the maximal learning and memory by individuals and minimal forgetting of earlier-established ways of living*”. Esser (2006) conceptualizes integration as inclusion into the host society and exclusion from one’s ethnic group. In this study, social integration, as described in Esser’s (2003) earlier work, is of particular relevance and refers to the incorporation of immigrants into an existing social system. This definition is used further in this research and it includes the acquisition of language skills, rights, social acceptance, inter-ethnic relationships, identification with the host country, as well as participation in the education system, labor market, and public and political life. Social integration can, according to Esser (2003) be further categorized into four dimensions; *culturation*, *positioning*, *interaction*, and *identification*.

The process of *culturation* is closely connected to the acquisition of knowledge necessary for meaningful and successful action and interaction, leading to the development of valuable capabilities associated with human capital. The acquisition of these abilities can be influenced, to some extent, by the opportunity individuals have access to from an early stage. This factor may impose limitations on the effectiveness of *culturation*, as highlighted by Esser (2003). It suggests that when migrants find themselves in a society different than their own, they engage in the process of adapting and adopting the practices of the new culture. Both minority and dominant groups are transformed in this reciprocal exchange (Berry, 2008). According to Zwahlen et al. (2018), this aspect emphasizes intercultural encounters and the willingness to embrace societal norms.

Positioning involves having access to rights such as citizenship and voting, as well as meeting educational standards. Moreover, the ability to establish and maintain relationships with others through participation in social clubs or events with the dominant group contributes to one's position within society (Esser, 2003; Zwahlen et al., 2018). This indicator is closely connected to cultururation, as the acquisition of capabilities can enhance migrants' prospects for better positions and opportunities (Esser, 2003).

Interaction refers to the creation of social relations between individuals of different ethnicities, such as friendships and marital relations that transcend national borders. It influences traditional daily routines and establishes relationships gained through socialization (Esser, 2003). Friction may arise within these relationships due to differences in culture, which can lead to tension that can only be resolved through successful cultururation (Esser, 2003). Effective interaction can be achieved through conflict-free exchanges and the establishment of deep and structured social relationships (Zwahlen et al., 2018).

While interaction, positioning, and cultururation refer to different aspects of social integration, it is important to recognize they are intricately connected and interdependent. Cultururation serves as the foundation that enables successful interaction and positioning to take place. These three dimensions are deeply intertwined, each relying on and influencing the others in the context of migrants' integration into a new society.

The final indicator highlighted by Esser (2003) is *identification*, which entails adopting the characteristics and behaviors of the dominant group to establish a sense of similarity and emotional connection with the society being integrated into. Emotional embedding, also known as collective identification, can generate a sense of satisfaction and belonging, fostering solidarity and identification within a cohesive society (Zwahlen et al., 2018). However, the establishment of emotional ties relies on the perception of living in a particular community as an enjoyable experience (Esser, 2003).

Continuing the discussion of identification, which is contrary to the above, the integration paradox may also come into play, leading to a situation where highly educated migrants tend to distance themselves from society despite their educational and structural advantages. They may struggle to develop a strong emotional connection and sense of similarity with the dominant group, leading to a decreased orientation towards the host society. This paradox suggests being a higher-skilled migrant does not always guarantee better integration outcomes, which highlights the complexity of social integration (Verkuyten, 2016). Identification mostly represents an internal process with limited influence from external factors, unlike the other indicators (cultururation, positioning, interaction) that rely also on

external facilitation such as the adaptation from the host society, migrant recognition, and the willingness to interact.

By adding to the concept of integration, Hübschmann (2015) emphasizes it is a two-way process, with both the migrant (learning a new language and culture) and mainstream society sharing responsibility (treating migrants as equal). This perspective aligns with the contextual aspect of reception presented by Portes and Rumbaut (2001). Successful integration is linked to the reception of the host country, which is influenced by the extent of similarities shared in terms of background, language, religion, and physical appearance. Migrants who possess similar traits are often viewed more favorably, which could provide faster integration. In addition, despite background being perceived as a personal attribute, values, and prejudices can be constructed resulting in discrepancies based on nationality which potentially influences integration (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001). This effect has the ability to impact migrants' sense of belonging and acceptance.

The integration process is not solely influenced by the perception of the host country. Bakker et al. (2014) emphasize the type of residence status granted to migrants can also have a significant impact. Their research indicates that the specific residence status directly affects socio-economic integration. For example, refugees with temporary refugee status often encounter more difficulties compared to those who have obtained citizenship. This situation can be even more challenging for individuals who have not received any form of permit, whether it be temporary or permanent. The acquisition of citizenship, therefore, is considered vital for achieving successful integration (Bakker et al., 2014).

To gain an understanding of the factors influencing the social integration of migrants, it is necessary to explore additional concepts. The next concept that holds significance is institutional legitimacy, which is explained below.

2.2 | Institutional legitimacy

This section explores institutional legitimacy and its implications for migrant integration, providing insights into the complex dynamics and factors involved in this process. Legitimacy, as described by Ruef and Scott (1998), is not a recent phenomenon and can be traced back to Max Weber, who highlighted the differentiation between social norms and laws.

Beetham (1991) cites this concept as follows: *“where power is acquired and exercised according to justifiable rules, and with evidence of consent, we call it rightful or legitimate”*. When the authority of the nation-state is seen as legitimate, it must have *conformity* to

established rules. This conformity can only be feasible if three conditions are met: the *justifiability* of rules concerning shared beliefs, explicit approval, and power relations. These components collectively contribute to the legitimacy of the state, playing a significant role in legal, political, and social aspects of society and therefore the legitimacy of the state in terms of integration (Beetham, 1991).

According to Leerkes and Kox (2017), legitimacy is established when laws or institutions are deemed rightful and justifiable, granting the state the authority to act as a sovereign power. Legitimacy is reflected in people's adherence to rules based on their belief in the moral correctness of such actions (Leerkes et al., 2017). This connects to the study of Jackson et al. (2012), which was briefly mentioned in the introduction. They found that institutional legitimacy moderates the effect of procedural justice on compliance.

Jackson et al. (2012) observed there are two pathways from trust to compliance. The first pathway operates through the influence of procedural fairness of the police, which impacts moral alignment. The second pathway operates through citizens' sense of obligation to adhere to the law (Jackson et al., 2012). Kelman's (2006) research was cited in their studies, highlighting the significance of identification with authorities and emotional connection based on shared values as mechanisms linking legitimacy to moral behavior. While the primary focus of these studies revolved around enhancing the social integration of citizens within society, it is worth considering these frameworks may also be applicable to individuals awaiting permits or those that have been rejected (non-citizens).

2.3 | Perceived justice in the asylum procedure

Building upon the discussions of social integration and institutional legitimacy, this section investigates perceived justice. This concept can be divided into procedural and distributive justice and is closely connected to legitimacy. Procedural justice refers to the perception that the procedures followed in the asylum procedure are fair, while distributive justice relates to the perception that the outcome of this process is fair. It assesses when procedures are felt as just, migrants might feel a stronger obligation to integrate. When this sense of accountability is lacking, the government endures non-compliance with rules, where legitimacy problems could arise (Tyler, 1990).

Asylum seekers' perceived justice links to honesty, respect for the rights of citizens, and efforts toward justice. *“People define the fairness of a procedure (...) to its outcome reflects the influence of instrumental and normative aspects of experience on their judgement in*

whether they have received a fair procedure” (Tyler, 1990). Furthermore, in later work, Tyler argues when decisions are perceived as fair, the willingness to cooperate with the rules of society increases, which causes improved integration outcomes (Tyler, 2003). As both procedures and outcomes are important in this study, they have been further clarified.

As mentioned, procedural justice relates to a fair procedure. It emphasizes rules should be enforced by trusted actors in ways that are considered legitimate and fair (Leerkes et al., 2017). This model addresses the ability of the legal system of a nation-state to encourage individuals to comply with the law. Public opinions of law enforcement are subjective and influence how individuals view the authorities. These views are to some extent influenced by individuals’ perceptions of the fairness of rules, thus institutional legitimacy (Tyler, 2003). Procedural justice is further divided into the perceived quality of decision-making and interpersonal treatment. The primary factor of the experiences of treatment is shaped by how migrants are treated by authority. Whereas with the quality of decision-making, the importance rests on the participation of the process. Individuals will be more content with a specific method if it allows them to contribute by explaining their situation to the government (Tyler, 2003).

Distributive justice examines the perceived justice of outcomes, which can be seen as the perceived adherence to rules that interest the common good (Leerkes et al., 2017; Beetham, 1991). It focuses on outcomes of attitudes or policies and, as said by Sager (2012), on constructing and restricting migratory strategies as this notion presents unequal distributions and moral principles to justify inequalities.

Theories regarding the distributive model address the identification of justice, principles for allocation, the site of justice, and the conditions that increase justice claims. Sager (2012) provides five examples of allocation principles: equality, sufficiency, priority, desert, and entitlement. When translating these principles to migratory examples, *equality* suggests all individuals should have equal opportunities to migrate and have access to benefits associated with migration. *Sufficiency* emphasizes the provision of resources at a level that meets basic needs. *Priority* involves giving preference to specific groups or individuals based on certain criteria, such as urgent humanitarian needs. *Desert*, in the context of migration, considers qualifications, work experience, or language skills as factors determining eligibility. Finally, *entitlement* focuses on legal and moral rights, such as citizenship. A comprehensive theory combined will establish policies that are entangled with global, national, social, and political institutions (Sager, 2012; Hodgson, 2010).

Wellman (2008) adds to the principle of allocation that migrants have a fundamental right and freedom to choose their settlement location. Nonetheless, it is recognized this may

not always align with the best interests of the receiving state. Therefore, migratory policies are established to regulate and guide these movements of migrants, ensuring the state can address its interests and priorities. This freedom of association is mostly combined with distributive justice. According to Wellman (2008), a crucial assertion is that while migrants do possess allocation rights, the state maintains the right to safeguard its migration policy by rejecting potential migrants. This viewpoint highlights the state's prerogative to protect its interests and exercise control over the admission of individuals (Wellman, 2008).

2.4 | The effects of perceived justice and legitimacy on social integration

The connection between perceived justice and legitimacy can play a significant role in promoting positive integration outcomes. When individuals perceive fairness in both justice and legitimacy, it can contribute to better integration. According to research conducted by Leerkes and Kox (2017), compliance becomes easier when individuals perceive laws as just. In this context, the objective characteristics of the asylum procedure, such as its length or complexity, can influence the perception of legitimacy. Consequently, this view can impact overall migration control, as migrants could opt for alternative methods of mobility (Schuster, 2011; Reneman & Stronks, 2021). Furthermore, deterrent strategies aimed at controlling migration are only effective when migrants perceive these strategies as fair (Leerkes & Kox, 2017).

As stated, perceived justice has an impact on social integration. For instance, if an individual is granted a residence permit, the perception of a just procedure strengthens the sense of obligation to integrate into the host society. Particularly, when individuals have obtained a residence permit through an extensive process that required effort, such as studying the language or passing an integration exam. Migrants' sense of obligation to integrate will then most likely be strengthened. This commitment is further accentuated when they perceive the integration process and associated expenses as fair, reinforcing their commitment to making sincere efforts (Böcker & Strik, 2011).

Campesi (2015) highlights many migrants, although residing in detention centers, express criticism of the admission requirements. In this context, migrants often feel reduced to a state of "*bare life*" and subjected to "*absolute power*", perceiving migration as a "*de-facto punishment*". As of this, the legitimacy of the state will decrease when migrants are housed in detention centers and/or when they disagree with the outcomes of their asylum application.

Conversely, institutional legitimacy will increase if migrants are treated well during their procedure (Campesi, 2015).

The role of perceived justice in the integration process can have a distinct influence that is not solely mediated by legitimacy. Empirical research has shown that positive connotations and intergroup relations are associated via the contact theory, whereby prejudice can be mitigated through intergroup contact (Özkan et al., 2021). It is plausible that migrants are more willing to integrate because they identify with the mainstream more. Therefore, research will also be executed without the context of institutional legitimacy to analyze these consequences.

2.5 | The influence of external variables

To enhance the internal validity of the research and minimize the impact of confounding and other variables, several control variables are established based on their believed influence on the results. These control variables are age, level of education, gender, region of origin, length of stay, and asylum status.

Previous research by Leão et al. (2009) has indicated that migrants who arrive at a higher *age* may experience decreased mental and physical health. Moreover, it could be harder to learn the language of the host country. Another critical context to understand is *gender*, as migration experiences can be gender specific. Boyd and Grieco (2003) mention studying migration as a gender-specific topic may create different outcomes depending on whether someone identifies as male, female, non-binary, or other.

Additionally, *education* could potentially influence integration. Esser (2006) cites a higher level of education in the country of origin constitutes an advantage in migrant families. Another influence on the results could be the *region of origin* due to different norms, values, and traditions which can slow down the sense of belonging in, and identification of the host country (La Barbera, 2015). Religion correlates with the source country and is crucial in integration as some migrants might not accept common customs such as social relations in mainstream society due to disparities in, for example, Christian or Islamic countries (Martikainen, 2006). However, because the religion of respondents is not examined in the survey, the region of origin is only used for this concept.

The *length of stay* in the Netherlands has the potential to impact the outcomes as well. Migrants who have been in the Netherlands longer might feel more at home than those that have just arrived as they have already been socially integrated (Martinovic et al., 2009). Furthermore, *asylum status* is included as a control variable in this study, acknowledging its

potential influence on an individual's willingness to integrate, as discussed earlier (Bakker et al., 2014).

2.6 | Hypotheses and Conceptual Model

Based on the literature review, four hypotheses were formulated that focus specifically on the Netherlands. These assumptions are shown below and have been explained in summary with regard to the literature.

Hypothesis 1: The perceived justice of the asylum procedure has a positive effect on the indicators of social integration. This hypothesis suggests that perceiving fairness and justice in the asylum procedure enhances social integration, as it creates a sense of obligation and commitment among individuals to integrate into the host society, resulting in better integration outcomes.

Hypothesis 2: The perceived justice of the asylum procedure exhibits a stronger positive effect on Esser's indicator of identification than the other indicators (culturation, positioning, and interaction). This hypothesis is derived from Esser's conceptualization of social integration which suggests the perceived justice of the asylum procedure has a greater influence on migrants' emotional identification with the host country than the other factors mentioned. It suggests a positive and enjoyable perception of living with the host community is closely tied to the perceived justice experienced, fostering emotional embedding and a sense of belonging.

Hypothesis 3: The relationship between the perceived justice of the asylum procedure and social integration will be weaker when the institutional legitimacy of the Dutch state is included. This hypothesis was developed based on literature discussing institutional legitimacy and its impact on migrant integration. It is mentioned that institutional legitimacy, defined as the rightful exercise of power according to justifiable rules, plays an essential role and influences the relationship between perceived justice and social integration.

Hypothesis 4: The positive effect of perceived justice of the asylum procedure on social integration is expected to be more pronounced among migrants who have been granted approved asylum status. Based on the understanding that the perception of justice in the asylum procedure can significantly impact social integration outcomes for migrants with an approved asylum status, this hypothesis suggests going through an extensive process to obtain a residence permit strengthens migrants' sense of obligation to integrate into the host society. The perceived justice of the integration process, especially for migrants with approved asylum status,

reinforces their commitment to making genuine efforts toward integration because they feel the obligation to do so.

The hypotheses depicted in Figure 1, propose that perceived justice (X) directly affects integration outcomes (Y). Institutional legitimacy serves as a mediating variable, potentially indirectly influencing the independent variable. Approved asylum status is included as a moderator, allowing for a more nuanced analysis of factors influencing the integration outcomes.

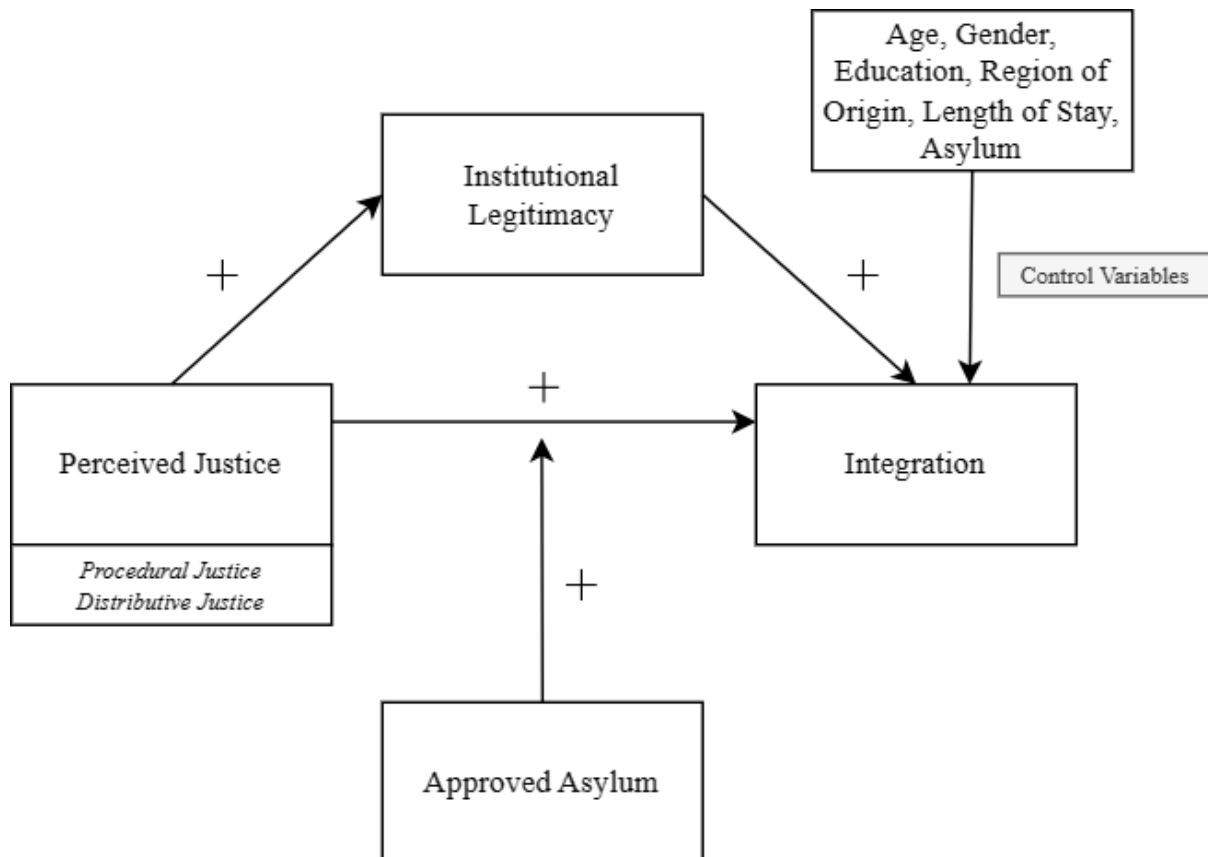


Figure 1: Conceptual model

3 | Methodology

3.1 | Data

Erasmus University Rotterdam previously conducted a survey about the experience of the Dutch asylum procedure between February 9, 2022, and November 5, 2022, for the ‘Legacy project’ that assessed compliance with return decisions. The research took place while participants were residing in ASRCs and were administered through both online (n=433) and paper-based (n=8) forms to facilitate data collection. The total sample size of the study

comprised 441 participants (N=441). The survey was made available in nine¹ languages to ensure accessibility to a diverse range of participants.

A series of items pertained to topics of return migration, integration, and well-being have been assessed in the questionnaire. For this study, the emphasis has been directed toward social integration. Findings have explored the impact of this with the concepts of perceived justice and institutional legitimacy. Furthermore, the approved asylum was examined to check for potential influences. Lastly, the control variables age, gender, education, region of origin, length of stay, and asylum status have been included to account for external factors that may affect the relationship between perceived justice and social integration.

3.2 | Operationalization

To operationalize the abstract concepts discussed in the literature review, specific variables and indicators were employed to provide concrete measurements. The upcoming section provides a detailed description of how the concepts are measured within their specific context.

Integration

The dependent variable *integration* is evaluated through multiple questions which are selected in view of the theoretical framework. Together, they form the general variable of social integration. The phenomenon of integration can be, according to the existing theory of Esser, fragmented into four distinct dimensions. The specific item, the indicator they belong to, as well as the answer options, can be found below.

- Culturation:
 - 60.3: Taking courses in the Dutch language (yes/no)
 - 60.4: Learning about the Dutch culture and political system (yes/no)
 - 61: How well can you speak Dutch (recoded to not at all-very well)
- Positioning:
 - 60.1: Enrolling in education or training (yes/no)
 - 60.2: Looking for jobs or voluntary work (yes/no)
 - 60.11: Applied for recognition of my qualifications (diplomas) in the Netherlands (yes/no)
 - 60.12: Looked for work within the last four weeks (yes/no)
- Interaction:

¹ Available languages: Dutch, English, French, Somali, Turkish, Arabic, Dari, Farsi, and Tigrinya

- 60.5: Making friends in the Netherlands (yes/no)
- 62: How often do you spend time with Dutch people outside of the asylum seeker center? (recoded to never-every day)
- Identification:
 - Q70: People in my situation feel at home in Dutch society (recoded to strongly disagree-strongly agree)
 - Q71: People in my situation are comfortable with their children growing up in Dutch society (recoded to strongly disagree-strongly agree)

To ensure accurate data analysis on the dimensions of social integration, missing values in the sub-questions of question 60 were recoded as 0. In this case, a value of 0 does not indicate a missing value but signifies respondents did not participate in the specific activity being queried. Additionally, questions 61, 62, 70, and 71 were recoded, as shown in the answer options above, in the opposite direction to maintain consistent interpretation with sub-questions 60. As a result of this, higher values now indicate better integration.

The study initially planned to include additional indicators of identification with the Netherlands. However, these indicators were excluded from the analysis as they were found to represent a separate dimension unrelated to the main focus of the study.

Perceived justice

The independent variable, perceived justice, was operationalized through the utilization of two key concepts as clarified in the literature review. These models of procedural justice and distributive justice have both been operationalized by a previous researcher. Procedural justice is assessed using a collection of questions with a Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of $\alpha = >.91^2$, as stated in the 'Legacy project'. Some questions of this concept contained: "During my asylum procedure, the institutions involved gave me good information on how the asylum procedure works in the Netherlands"; "I think that the Dutch asylum system ensures an objective and unprejudiced decision-making process"; "In my opinion, professional staff involved during my asylum procedure generally really listen to me"; and "The IND carefully and thoroughly researched my asylum claim". Responses to these items ranged from 1 to 5 (strongly disagree to strongly agree). All questions used can be found in Table A (appendix 1). Higher values indicate that the system aligns with perceived procedural justice.

² A Cronbach's Alpha of $\alpha \geq 0.9$ is seen as an excellent internal consistency

Distributive justice is operationalized through the utilization of two proxy variables (DJ1 and DJ2) that capture the extent to which the asylum system aligns with distributive fairness. DJ1 is measured through the question: “In my opinion, all people should be free to live where the living circumstances are best for them”, a high score refers to no open borders. DJ2 is measured through: “In my opinion, states like the Netherlands have the responsibility to accept more asylum seekers than they currently do”, a high score refers to the Netherlands doing enough for asylum seekers. Responses ranged from 1 to 5 (strongly agree to strongly disagree). Higher values mean that the current state of the system is aligned with perceived distributive justice.

Institutional legitimacy

Institutional legitimacy is measured by whether the Netherlands meets the perceived legitimacy. The question used for the analysis is: “In my opinion, the government of the Netherlands generally has the right to control migration”. Responses to this variable ranged from 1 to 5 (strongly disagree to strongly agree). Higher values indicate that the Netherlands adheres to perceived institutional legitimacy.

Other variables

In addition to the main variables, other items such as approved asylum and controlling variables are conceptualized. (*Approved*) *asylum* was assessed with: "Have you received a decision on your asylum application, or has the IND informed you of their intention to reject it?". This item was developed with subsequent follow-up questions. A previous researcher categorized the responses into a new variable, distinguishing between approved, pending, and rejected outcomes.

Age was assessed in years using a 13-category scale, ranging from 18-19, 20-24 to 65 or older, including options for ‘do not know/no answer’ and ‘under 18’. An age filter was used to only include participants aged 18 years and older. As a result, five respondents were excluded from further analysis, leading to a revised sample size of N=436.

Gender was operationalized via the response options male, female, other, and do not know/no answer. To facilitate the interpretation and comparison of gender-related findings, the variable was recoded into a dummy (male/female) for further analysis. ‘Other’ and ‘do not know/no answer’ were recoded as missing. This recoding simplified the interpretation and enabled a clearer understanding of the gender distribution and its implications within the study.

To assess the *education* level, respondents were asked the question, "What is the highest level of education that you have completed?" Answer options ranged from 1 (no formal education) to 5 (university-level education). The included 'do not know/no answer' option was recoded as missing as it does not contribute to the analyses. For the regression, this variable was recoded into a dummy and categorized as low-skilled and high-skilled for a better understanding of its effect.

Region of origin is measured with the question "In what country were you born?". The countries have been categorized into dummies with the regions Asia, Africa, Europe, the Americas, and the Middle East. The full list of countries and which region they belong to can be found in Table B (appendix 2).

The last control variable, *length of stay*, has been measured through the following question: "How long have you lived in the Netherlands in total? (If you have lived in the Netherlands more than once, you can add up the periods of time)". Answer options ranged from 1 (less than a year) to 5 (more than 10 years). Additional options such as 'I no longer live in the Netherlands' and 'do not know/no answer' have been recoded as missing as these answers do not explain the length of stay. Furthermore, this variable has been recoded into a dummy categorized as 'shorter than 1 year in the Netherlands' and 'longer than 1 year in the Netherlands' for the regression analyses.

3.3 | Method

Firstly, a correlation matrix was generated to examine the relationship among the items measuring social integration. This analysis aimed to determine whether the questions are connected. Given the existence of multiple ordinal variables, Spearman's coefficient was used to analyze the matrix. Secondly, a factor analysis was conducted with varimax rotation to explore the underlying structures of items and determine if they could be categorized into the indicators of cultururation, positioning, interaction, and identification, as initially hypothesized.

Lastly, multiple linear regressions have been executed each exploring different aspects of social integration. In the first stage, regression models were run without institutional legitimacy to establish a baseline understanding of direct effects. The second stage introduced institutional legitimacy to analyze any indirect influences. In the third stage, interaction variables with approved asylum and the independent variables were created. This was done without the variable of institutional legitimacy to try and answer the last hypothesis.

Within the control variables, females, shorter than 1 year in the Netherlands, the Middle East, high-skilled migrants, and rejected asylum have been used as reference groups. In addition, bootstrapping was employed in the regression analyses due to the limited number of responses. By mimicking the characteristics of the original dataset, this option enhanced the precision of population estimates. However, it is worth noting the calculation of significance may vary slightly each time the analyses are executed (Field, 2018).

3.4 | Validity and reliability

It is important to acknowledge potential social desirability bias in respondents' answers. Given the sensitive nature of this subject, respondents might have disclosed information so it would not jeopardize their application for a residence permit. Despite explicitly stating in the survey's introduction that it is completely anonymous and governmental institutions would not have access to the data, individuals may still have concerns that could cause bias which could potentially impact the construct validity of this research.

When considering internal validity in the context of measuring the relationships between perceived justice and social integration, it is important to understand this relationship may be interchangeable, whereby social integration could potentially influence the perception of justice as well. Furthermore, it could be that other unaccounted factors, such as the length of the asylum procedure or the different shelter locations, could pose a risk of influencing the results.

External validity has been compromised to a certain extent due to the heavy underrepresentation of respondents with a low educational level. This limitation could cause concern regarding the generalization of the findings.

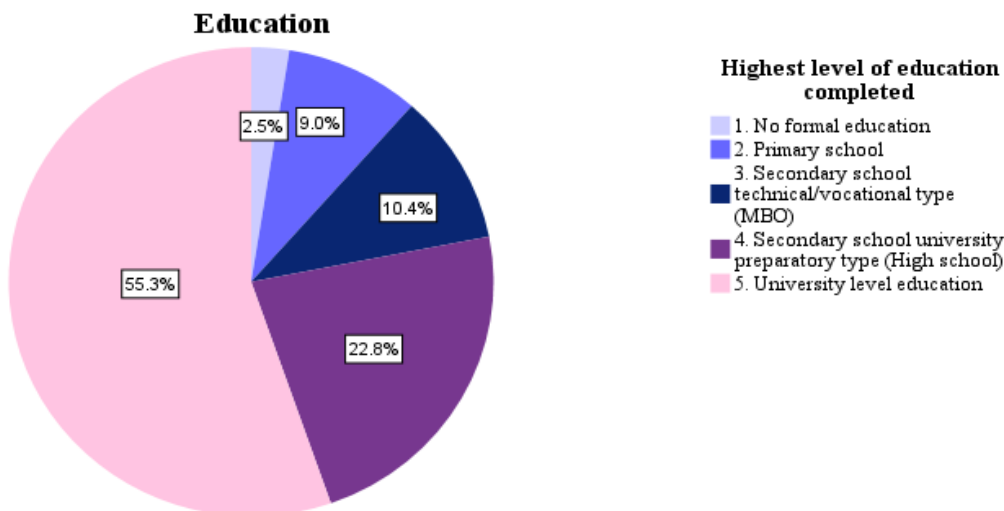
By maximizing reliability, newly derived scales saved from the factor analysis were assessed for internal consistency using Cronbach's Alpha. However, the reliability of these findings may be affected by the small sample size and the considerable amount of missing values. These factors have the potential to introduce errors and limitations during data analysis. Lastly, the regression analyses were checked for multicollinearity, but it was found no centering was necessary since the variance inflation factor (VIF) was below 10 and the tolerance was above 0.2 (Field, 2018).

4 | Results

4.1 | Descriptives, Correlations, and Factor Analysis

This study aimed to investigate various aspects of social integration among individuals aged 18 and above. The participants' age distribution ranged from 18 to 65+ years, with a majority of 78.2% falling within the age range of 18 and 39 years old. In terms of gender, more men have filled out the questionnaire, whereby 284 identified themselves as male, 75 as female, 5 as other, and one individual expressed uncertainty about their gender. There were 71 missing values for this variable. The respondents' regions of origin, as categorized before, were Asia, Africa, Europe, the Americas, and the Middle East. Most participants (66.0%) came from the latter region, marking this as the largest group within the sample.

Based on 356 valid responses, Figure 2 illustrates educational backgrounds. Although a small portion of participants lacked formal education, the majority had successfully completed university level. Consistent with existing literature, it is worth mentioning that having obtained a higher level of education provides advantages for migrant families.



Note: N=356, Missing=80

Figure 2: Representation of completed education among respondents

To discover the status of asylum applications, respondents were queried about their application process. Table 1 it shows a significant number of individuals are still awaiting a decision on their Dutch residence permit from the IND. It, however, should be kept in mind over half of the respondents did not specify if their permits are either approved, pending, or rejected, which could potentially influence the results.

TABLE 1: Status of residence permit

<i>Status</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Valid Percent</i>
<i>Approved</i>	42	9.6	19.6
<i>Pending</i>	148	33.9	69.2
<i>Rejected</i>	24	5.5	11.2
<i>Total</i>	214	49.1	100
<i>Missing</i>	222	50.9	
<i>Total</i>	436	100	

In addition to exploring the asylum statuses among respondents, the relationship between the social integration variables has been examined through a correlation matrix (appendix 3, Table C). These variables were chosen based on their relevance to the concept of social integration as explained by Esser's indicators cultururation, positioning, interaction, and identification. The literature provided a comprehensive understanding of these indicators and their significance in studying this concept. The analysis of the correlation matrix yielded statistically significant results, highlighting a robust association with social integration. It, however, does show questions 70 and 71 have a weaker correlation with the other items but have a strong relationship with each other ($r = .622, p < .001$). To ensure reliability and validity, dummy variables have been created to measure the internal consistency ($\alpha = .857^1$). This coefficient shows confidence in reliability and confirms all these items are connected to social integration.

To follow up on these results, a factor analysis was conducted to explore the underlying structures of social integration. Based on the *Eigenvalues*, the analysis revealed the presence of two dimensions, rather than the four distinguished in the literature review. To enhance interpretability, the results were subjected to varimax rotation whereby both dimensions were saved for further analyses.

Dimension one revealed the connection between the sub-questions 60, along with questions 61 and 62. Hence, these variables were merged, resulting in an $\alpha = .828^3$. Upon closer examination, it became evident these items are about activities undertaken regarding the integration process. The correlation matrix and the factor analysis confirm they have a strong association, validating their close connection within one specific dimension. This dimension, involving elements of cultururation, positioning, and interaction, will therefore be referred to as 'integration activities'. Dimension two revealed the connection between questions 70 and 71. As previously observed in the correlation matrix (appendix 3, Table C), there is a strong

³ A Cronbach's Alpha of $\alpha \geq 0.8$ is seen as a good internal consistency

correlation between these variables ($r = .622, p < .001$)⁴. These items link to attitudes migrants have of the Dutch society regarding integration. Corresponding to the literature, it connects to the identification indicator from Esser (2003). Dimension two will therefore be referred to as ‘integration attitudes’. To conclude, based on the performed analyses, social integration will thus be further discussed in these two dimensions.

Although already evaluated by the previous researcher, it is still important to evaluate the reliability of procedural justice. In the ‘Legacy project’, it was stated this scale has an $\alpha > .91$. Upon own inspection, the reliability analysis yielded an $\alpha = .902$ ⁵, confirming internal consistency. This significantly enhances the reliability of the measurement for further interpretation.

To depict the variables used in this study, Table 2 presents descriptive statistics, providing an overview of all their characteristics.

TABLE 2: Descriptives

	<i>Total sample (N=436)</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Min</i>	<i>Max</i>	<i>SD</i>
Dependent variables					
Activities scale*	436	0	-1.290	3.679	1
Attitudes scale*	436	0	-4.023	2.696	1
Independent variables					
Procedural justice	299	2.992	1	5	.906
DJ1 (no open borders)	189	1.418	1	5	.779
DJ2 (NL does enough)	190	2.511	1	5	1.022
Mediator					
Institutional legitimacy	195	3.692	1	5	1.024
Control variables					
Age	395	4.205	1	12	1.925
Gender (male)	359	.791	0	1	.407
<u>Education**</u>					
Low-skilled	78	.219	0	1	.414
High-skilled	278	.781	0	1	.414
<u>Length of stay**</u>					
< 1 year	230	.528	0	1	.500

⁴ The Cronbach's Alpha coefficient for this dimension could not be calculated as it comprises only two items, which is below the recommended threshold of at least three items for reliable estimation

⁵ A Cronbach's Alpha of $\alpha \geq 0.9$ is seen as an excellent internal consistency

> 1 year	206	.473	0	1	.500
<u>Region of origin**</u>					
Asia	41	.133	0	1	.340
Africa	44	.142	0	1	.350
Europe	32	.104	0	1	.305
Americas	9	.592	0	1	.492
Middle East	183		0	1	
<u>Asylum**</u>					
Approved	42	.196	0	1	.398
Pending	148	.692	0	1	.463
Rejected	24	.112	0	1	.316

*= Scales are saved from the factor analysis, and therefore have been standardized which resulted in the portrayed descriptives

**= The frequency function was used on dummy variables to calculate the actual statistics (rather than including all respondents with the descriptives method that would not give its actual samples)

4.2 | Multiple Regression Analyses

Multiple regression analyses have been conducted using the function of bootstrapping, as mentioned earlier. Integration activities and integration attitudes have both been separately analyzed and are presented in Table 3, with and without the inclusion of institutional legitimacy. The first observation made, contrary to what was found in the literature, is that there is no statistically significant relationship measured between procedural justice, DJ1 (no open borders), DJ2 (NL does enough), institutional legitimacy, and integration activities and attitudes. This suggests the variables are not observed to have a meaningful impact on social integration after controlling for other factors that are included in the model. While integration activities have a slight positive effect on social integration, and integration attitudes have mostly a slight negative effect, no significance is found. Meaning hypothesis one ‘*The perceived justice of the asylum procedure has a positive effect on the indicators of social integration*’, hypothesis two ‘*The perceived justice of the asylum procedure exhibits a stronger positive effect on Esser’s indicator of identification than the other indicators (culturation, positioning, and interaction)*’ and hypothesis three ‘*The relationship between the perceived justice of the asylum procedure and social integration will be weaker when the institutional legitimacy of the Dutch state is included*’ have been rejected.

TABLE 3: Regression integration activities and attitudes

Variables	Model A		Model B		Model C		Model D	
	(Activities)		(Activities)		(Attitudes)		(Attitudes)	
	β	SE	β	SE	β	SE	β	SE
Constant	.545	.599	.765	.620	1.242*	.595	.640	.649
Procedural justice	.074	.107	.084	.107	-.087	.126	-.113	.120
DJ1 (no open borders)	.038	.116	.048	.116	.023	.124	-.005	.126
DJ2 (NL does enough)	.014	.093	.014	.093	-.229	.121	-.229	.117
Control variables								
Age	-.080	.055	-.077	.056	.101	.055	.092	.056
Male	-.155	.245	-.150	.246	-.287	.258	-.299	.251
Longer than 1 year in NL	.706***	.194	.693***	.196	-.776**	.261	-.742**	.253
Asia	.347	.272	.355	.273	-.287	.358	-.310	.345
Africa	.070	.314	.093	.307	.293	.299	.230	.287
Europe	.300	.308	.263	.321	.329	.335	.429	.335
Americas	-.732	.478	-.757	.479	.852*	.432	.920*	.431
Low-skilled	-.550*	.244	-.591*	.248	.626*	.288	.739*	.301
Approved	.282	.330	.316	.340	.352	.410	.257	.427
Pending	.054	.261	.058	.262	.016	.374	.004	.385
Mediator								
Institutional legitimacy			-.077	.088			.209	.108

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .01$,

Model A and B are based on 985 samples (bootstrapped); Model C and D are based on 977 samples (bootstrapped)

Reference groups: Female, Shorter than 1 year in NL, Middle East, High-skilled, Rejected

In a robustness check, separate regressions were conducted for the dependent variables of integration activities and integration attitudes including institutional legitimacy⁶. The results revealed no significant differences in integration activities (appendix 4, Table D). However, for integration attitudes (appendix 4, Table E), a significant difference was observed with DJ2 (NL does enough). The negative relationship (Model E: $\beta = -.238$, $p = .026$) suggests migrants who

⁶ No differences in significance were found without the mediator institutional legitimacy, therefore they have been left out from the tables in the appendix.

possess a negative attitude towards Dutch society tend to believe the Netherlands does not do enough for asylum seekers. This links to what Esser (2003) stated on the concept of identification, whereby specific actions undertaken by the host country regarding the integration trajectory, are approved.

To further explore the integration activities and attitudes of migrants, regression analyses were conducted with interaction variables of approved asylum and perceived justice (Table 4). These analyses aimed to test the final hypothesis, which involved examining the impact of approved asylum on the integration process.

First, status holders who score higher on integration activities are more likely to agree people should not live freely wherever they want (Model E: $\beta=.676$, $p=.003$). This positive correlation suggests that individuals who score better on integration activities tend to have a higher preference for restricting people's freedom to choose where to live. This result aligns with the concept of entitlement discussed by Sager (2012), where citizenship is associated with distributive justice and the allocation of resources and opportunities within a country. Thereby, the migratory rules of the Netherlands are considered to be fair by those with an approved asylum status (Beetham, 1991).

Second, which is contrary to the previous finding, is that status holders who score higher on integration activities are less inclined to agree the Netherlands does enough for asylum seekers (Model E: $\beta=-.454$, $p=.049$). The result links to Wellman (2008), whereby he stated a country has its right to protect migration policies, and because of this, there is a lack of further integration actions by the government. This also links to Leerkes and Kox (2017), whereby it is mentioned that when considered legitimate, the state has sovereignty. No significant results were measured when analyzing integration attitudes.

Based on these findings, hypothesis four '*The positive effect of perceived justice of the asylum procedure on social integration is expected to be more pronounced among migrants who have been granted approved asylum status*' can be partially accepted. A strong positive correlation was discovered between integration activities and the interaction variable of status holders and DJ1 (no open borders). Conversely, a negative interaction was observed between permit holders and DJ2 (NL does enough). However, no significant evidence was found for the interaction of permit holders with procedural justice nor the interaction variables with integration attitudes.

TABLE 4: Regression with interaction variables

Variables	Model E		Model F	
	(Activities)		(Attitudes)	
	β	SE	β	SE
Constant	.702	.584	1.327*	.610
Approved Asylum	.187	1.077	-.133	1.158
Procedural justice	.071	.116	-.104	.132
DJ1 (no open borders)	-.064	.114	.009	.133
DJ2 (NL does enough)	.061	.096	-.232	.132
Approved*Procedural justice	.083	.319	.113	.348
Approved*DJ1 (no open borders)	.676**	.276	.067	.335
Approved*DJ2 (NL does enough)	-.454*	.255	-.002	.294
Control variables				
Age	-.085	.054	.105	.058
Male	-.200	.252	-.287	.256
Longer than 1 year in NL	.637**	.190	-.769**	.257
Asia	.453	.279	-.313	.337
Africa	.106	.305	.280	.282
Europe	.238	.312	.255	.327
Americas	-.697	.485	.858*	.429
Low-skilled	-.591*	.257	.626*	.282

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

Model E is based on 984 samples (bootstrapped); Model F is based on 977 samples (bootstrapped)

Reference groups: Female, Shorter than 1 year in NL, Middle East, High-skilled, Rejected

Although not the focus of this study, some control variables have shown significant results. Their inclusion in this research served to account for any potential confounding factors and are elaborated on below.

First, there was a strong positive effect found with ‘longer than one year in the Netherlands’ and integration activities (Table 3: Model A: $\beta = .706$, $p < .001$; Model B: $\beta = .693$, $p < .001$). This indicates that migrants who have stayed in the Netherlands for longer than one year are more likely to engage in integration activities than those in the country for less than one year (reference group). On the other hand, for integration attitudes, a strong negative effect was found (Table 3: Model C: $\beta = -.776$, $p = .004$; Model D: $\beta = -.742$, $p = .005$). Suggesting that migrants who have resided in the Netherlands for longer than one year tend to have negative

attitudes or feelings toward Dutch society. This finding aligns with the concept of the integration paradox by Verkuyten (2016), which was argued in the literature review but contradicts the statement of Martinovic et al. (2009) whereby longer stays are connected to feeling more at home.

Second, the results indicate that low-skilled migrants exhibit a lower likelihood of integrating through engagement in activities (Table 3: Model A: $\beta=-.550$, $p=.030$; Model B: $\beta=-.591$, $p=.029$) than high-skilled migrants (reference group). This is linked to what Esser (2006) said, whereby higher-educated migrants have advantages in a new society (compared to lower-skilled migrants). However, this finding contradicts the trend observed in integration attitudes whereby low-skilled migrants display a higher likelihood of having positive attitudes towards Dutch society (Table 3: Model C: $\beta=.626$, $p=.027$; Model D: $\beta=.739$, $p=.013$).

Lastly, migrants from the Americas are more likely to have a positive attitude toward Dutch society (Table 3: Model C: $\beta=.852$, $p=.037$; Model D: $\beta=.920$, $p=.020$) than those from the Middle East (reference group). This could potentially be, as mentioned before, due to the differences in norms and values with the Middle East and having more likeliness with Dutch society (La Barbera, 2015).

To provide further insights into the statistical results of control variables from the regression analyses with interaction variables, they have been further discussed. First, significance was observed with 'longer than one year in the Netherlands' in both integration activities and integration attitudes. Similar results were obtained in both Table 3 and Table 4, reinforcing the robustness of these findings. In terms of integration activities, there was a strong positive effect, indicating migrants who stayed in the Netherlands for longer than one year are more likely to engage in integration activities (Table 4: Model E: $\beta=.637$, $p=.003$) than those in the country for less than one year (reference group). Contrary with integration attitudes, where a strong negative effect was found (Table 4: Model F: $\beta=-.769$, $p=.006$).

Second, which again has similar results to Table 3, in Table 4 low-skilled migrants are less likely to be integrated through the means of undertaking activities (Model E: $\beta=-.591$, $p=.018$) than high-skilled migrants (reference group). This contradicts with integration attitudes, as low-skilled migrants are more likely to have a positive attitude towards Dutch society (Table 4: Model F: $\beta=.626$, $p=.020$).

Lastly, in Table 4, similar again to Table 3, migrants from the Americas are more likely to have a positive attitude towards Dutch society (Model F: $\beta=.858$, $p=.034$) than those from the Middle East (reference group).

5 | Conclusion

Due to the complexity of social integration, this thesis aimed to examine the relationship between perceived justice (procedural justice and distributive justice) and the willingness to socially integrate into Dutch society. In addition, this study tried to observe the potential impact of the institutional legitimacy of the Netherlands and the asylum status within these concepts. It aimed to address the previously established research question *'How does the perceived (in)justice of the Dutch asylum system impact the social integration of asylum seekers with different legal statuses (residence permit holders, asylum seekers in the procedure, rejected asylum seekers) during their stay in asylum seeker reception centers?'*

To capture the multifaceted nature of social integration, the study drew upon Esser's definition whereby this concept was divided into cultururation, positioning, interaction, and identification. During statistical testing, however, only two dimensions emerged, leading to the reformation of the indicators into integration activities (formerly referred to as cultururation, positioning, and interaction) and integration attitudes (formerly referred to as identification). Perceived justice has been measured via procedural justice (focused on fair process) and distributive justice (focused on fair outcome of the process). Lastly, institutional legitimacy was tested through one's opinion on migration control of the Netherlands.

No significant overall impact was found in the main models on integration activities and attitudes. Only in a separate analysis, without considering other variables, a small but significant negative effect was observed between DJ2 (NL does enough) and integration attitudes (Table E, appendix 4). This suggests the observed significance may not fully capture the effects of other variables. Consequently, the first three hypotheses were not supported due to their lack of significance.

During the analysis of integration activities, it was found that approved permit holders and DJ1 (no open borders) exhibited a positive interaction effect, demonstrating a significant impact when compared to the reference group of non-permit holders. Meaning that status holders, who score higher on integration activities, agree that individuals cannot live freely wherever they want and that some form of restrictions should be managed. This observation aligns with hypothesis four and is consistent with the underlying concepts of distributive justice and compliance. Meanwhile, a negative effect is evident with DJ2 (NL does enough), meaning that status holders that score higher on integration activities, mostly believe the Netherlands does not do enough for asylum seekers. This negative effect does not align with the hypotheses

and are inconsistent with theories pertaining to distributive justice and compliance. More on this can be found in the discussion.

It is important to acknowledge the findings are limited to the significant results obtained in the study and may not cover all factors influencing social integration among migrants in ASRC. As a result, there is insufficient evidence to fully answer the research question. However, within the context of this study, it is found that integration attitudes toward the Dutch asylum system are partially influenced by factors such as distributive fairness and having obtained a residence permit.

6 | Discussion and limitations

The introduction emphasized the need for further scholarly inquiry into the concepts of perceived justice, and institutional legitimacy in the context of migrants' social integration. The study tried to contribute to filling the research gap by examining the experiences and perceptions of migrants within the reception context, shedding light on how these concepts influence the integration process.

The study did not yield many statistically significant results, indicating a lack of strong evidence to support the need for increased investments in social integration from a policy perspective. While additional variables may have some impact, it is not expected to lead to substantial improvements in the social integration of migrants. Similarly, in terms of scientific relevance, the lack of significant results suggests scholars should not solely focus on investigating the influences of perceived justice and institutional legitimacy to enhance integration.

If, in any case, more research on these concepts is preferred, this study provides a potential foundation for continued investigation and deeper exploration of these concepts to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing the successful integration of migrants. Additionally, it might be interesting to look at this topic more in an objective manner, whereby migrants' trust in the Dutch government, as well as seeing whether the decision time of the IND and the (changes of) ASRC have any influences on this concept.

The present study has several important concerns that need to be addressed considering its limitations. Firstly, the limited number of respondents in the study is a critical factor. Despite employing bootstrapping in the regression analyses to mitigate potential biases, the smaller sample size raises concerns about the generalizability of the findings to the broader population of asylum seekers. Furthermore, the limited number of respondents might have influenced the

analyses, resulting in the identification of only two dimensions of social integration instead of the four mentioned in the literature review.

Additionally, the decision to incorporate the variable asylum as an interaction variable instead of employing a split case approach was driven by the limited number of respondents. This approach aimed to explore the potential moderating effect of asylum status on the relationship between perceived justice and social integration. While this decision allowed for the examination of this specific aspect, it is essential to acknowledge it may have limitations and should be interpreted within the context of the study's constraints. In addition to this, it might be interesting to investigate reasons why residence permit holders that undertake more activities believe people should not live freely wherever they want. It could be this is because they do not want to jeopardize their own position within the host country by granting this freedom to other migrants.

Thirdly, recoding the gender variable as a dummy variable poses a limitation. By categorizing individuals as either male or female, the study overlooks the experiences and perspectives of those who identify outside the traditional binary gender system. Caution should be exercised when generalizing the results, as they may not fully capture the diversity within the population of asylum seekers.

Furthermore, the recoding of questions 61 and 62 into dummies for ease of analysis and interpretation leads to the loss of nuanced information. By changing response options into broader categories, some detailed insights into language proficiency and the frequency of interactions with Dutch individuals may have been overlooked. This limitation should be considered when understanding the findings related to these variables.

The predominance of younger, highly educated males among the survey respondents is another important aspect to note. This demographic skew introduces a potential bias and restricts the generalizability of the findings to a more diverse population of asylum seekers. The experiences and integration outcomes of other demographic groups, such as older individuals or those with lower levels of education, may not be fully represented within this study. However, it should be noted that this overrepresentation could potentially be due to more asylum seekers being male.

The negative effects observed in the interaction between status holders and DJ2 (NL does enough) regarding integration activities present an intriguing point of discussion, as it contradicts existing theories. One possible explanation is that some asylum seekers view themselves as the only 'worthy refugees' and thus oppose the promotion of open borders. However, they may also hold the belief the Netherlands should provide greater support to

asylum seekers, such as facilitating family reunification. In this case, increased integration efforts may stem from the process of integration itself rather than perceiving the asylum procedure as unfair. It is through the integration process that individuals may become aware of certain aspects of the asylum procedure they consider unjust. Exploring this assumption further in future research would be worthwhile.

Furthermore, as previously stated in the methodology, the research initially intended to examine additional indicators of identification with the Netherlands. However, these indicators were not included in the present analysis due to their distinct dimensions. It is important to highlight future research has the potential to delve deeper into these indicators, while also including trust, as demonstrated in the 'Met beleid van start' report. Such investigations could offer insights into the various factors influencing identification and trust within the context of social integration.

To address the above mentioned, future research with larger sample sizes is recommended if a better understanding of perceived justice, institutional legitimacy, and social integration is favorable. A more extensive and diverse sample would enable a better analysis and enhance the generalizability of the findings. Moreover, exploring additional dimensions of social integration could provide a more comprehensive understanding of the relationship between the perceived justice of the Dutch asylum system and social integration among asylum seekers.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Operationalization Perceived Justice

TABLE A: Scale procedural justice

Question	Operationalization Procedural Justice
Q15	During my asylum procedure, the institutions involved gave me good information on how the asylum procedure works in the Netherlands
Q16	During my asylum procedure, the institutions involved gave me good information in writing on how the asylum procedure works in the Netherlands
Q17	During my asylum procedure, the institutions gave me enough information about updates on my asylum application
Q18	During my asylum procedure, I had enough opportunity to explain my situation to the IND
Q19	The IND carefully and thoroughly researched my asylum claim
Q30	I think that the Dutch asylum system ensures an objective and unprejudiced decision-making process
Q32	People who support my asylum case (e.g., lawyers, nongovernmental organizations, and friends) think that the Dutch asylum procedure is fair
Q20	If I have a question about my asylum application, the institutions involved can help me find answers
Q21	If I have a problem or a complaint about my asylum procedure, the institutions involved can help me find a solution
Q34	Generally, I feel that I am treated respectfully and politely by professional staff involved during my asylum procedure
Q35	In my opinion, professional staff involved during my asylum procedure generally really listen to me
Q37	In my opinion, professional staff involved during my asylum procedure generally try to be helpful and flexible to meet my individual needs
Q38	In my opinion, professional staff involved during my asylum procedure are generally sensitive to the different cultural needs of asylum seekers
Q42	I have/had access to the health care I need during the asylum procedure

Appendix 2: Origin

TABLE B: Crosstab country born and region of origin

Country born	Region of origin					Total
	Asia	Africa	Europe	Americas	Middle East	
Afghanistan	0	0	0	0	13	13
Algeria	0	3	0	0	0	3
Armenia	0	0	1	0	0	1
Azerbaijan	1	0	0	0	0	1
Bangladesh	2	0	0	0	0	2
Belarus	0	0	1	0	0	1
China	3	0	0	0	0	3
Colombia	0	0	0	4	0	4
Côte d'Ivoire	0	1	0	0	0	1
Egypt	0	11	0	0	0	11
Eritrea	0	3	0	0	0	3
Ethiopia	0	2	0	0	0	2
Gambia	0	1	0	0	0	1
Germany	0	0	1	0	0	1
Ghana	0	1	0	0	0	1
Iran	0	0	0	0	39	39
Iraq	0	0	0	0	3	3
Jamaica	0	0	0	2	0	2
Jordan	0	0	0	0	3	3
Kazakhstan	1	0	0	0	0	1
Kenya	0	2	0	0	0	2
Kuwait	0	0	0	0	1	1
Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	0	2	0	0	0	2
Morocco	0	3	0	0	0	3
Netherlands	0	0	1	0	0	1
Nigeria	0	3	0	0	0	3
Pakistan	0	0	0	0	8	8
Panama	0	0	0	1	0	1
Philippines	1	0	0	0	0	1
Russian Federation	9	0	0	0	0	9
Saudi Arabia	0	0	0	0	6	6
Seychelles	0	1	0	0	0	1
Sierra Leone	0	1	0	0	0	1
Somalia	0	4	0	0	0	4
Sri Lanka	1	0	0	0	0	1
Sudan	0	2	0	0	0	2
Syrian Arab Republic	0	0	0	0	103	103
Trinidad and Tobago	0	0	0	2	0	2
Turkey	0	0	28	0	0	28
Turkmenistan	1	0	0	0	0	1
Uganda	0	3	0	0	0	3
United Arab Emirates	0	0	0	0	4	4
Uzbekistan	1	0	0	0	0	1
Yemen	0	0	0	0	24	24
Zimbabwe	0	1	0	0	0	1
Total	20	44	32	9	204	309

Appendix 3: Social integration correlation

TABLE C: Correlation Matrix

	<i>ET</i>	<i>JV</i>	<i>DL</i>	<i>CP</i>	<i>MF</i>	<i>RQ</i>	<i>FW</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>TS</i>	<i>FH</i>	<i>CG</i>
<i>ET</i>		.513**	.501**	.410**	.444**	.329**	.258**	.462**	.364**	.213**	.297**
<i>JV</i>	.513**		.512**	.505**	.517**	.311**	.382**	.591**	.446**	.263**	.354**
<i>DL</i>	.501**	.512**		.578**	.556**	.347**	.273**	.651**	.486**	.214**	.317**
<i>CP</i>	.410**	.505**	.578**		.634**	.371**	.321**	.593**	.510**	.357**	.412**
<i>MF</i>	.444**	.517**	.556**	.634**		.314**	.374**	.582**	.574**	.350**	.342**
<i>RQ</i>	.329**	.311**	.347**	.371**	.314**		.356**	.272**	.157**	.239**	.210**
<i>FW</i>	.258**	.382**	.273**	.321**	.374**	.356**		.343**	.346**	.103*	.151**
<i>SD</i>	.462**	.591**	.651**	.593**	.582**	.272**	.343**		.762**	.412**	.519**
<i>TS</i>	.364**	.446**	.486**	.510**	.574**	.157**	.346**	.762**		.391**	.418**
<i>FH</i>	.213**	.263**	.214**	.357**	.350**	.239**	.103*	.412**	.391**		.622**
<i>CG</i>	.297**	.354**	.317**	.412**	.342**	.210**	.151**	.519**	.418**	.622**	

* $p \leq .05$; ** $p \leq .001$

ET= Enrolling in education or training; JV= Looking for jobs or voluntary work; DL= Taking courses in the Dutch language; CP= Learning about culture and political system; MF= Making friends in the Netherlands; RQ= Applied for recognition of my qualifications; FW= Looked for work within the last four weeks; SD= How well can you speak Dutch? (recoded); TS= Time spent with Dutch people (recoded); FH= Feeling at home in NL (recoded); CG=Children growing up in NL (recoded)

Appendix 4: Regression independent variables

TABLE D: Regression integration activities independent variables separately

Variables	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3		Model 4	
	β	SE	β	SE	β	SE	β	SE
Constant	.847	.600	.950	.572	.953	.556	.765	.620
Procedural justice	.071	.104					.084	.107
DJ1 (no open borders)			.057	.102			.048	.116
DJ2 (NL does enough)					.023	.088	.014	.093
Control variables								
Age	-.065	.052	-.069	.051	-.081	.050	-.077	.056
Male	-.153	.244	-.160	.245	-.136	.243	-.150	.246
Longer than 1 year in NL	.656**	.190	.674**	.193	.695**	.195	.693***	.196
Asia	.394	.272	.447	.246	.420	.254	.355	.273
Africa	.078	.303	.094	.305	.134	.302	.093	.307
Europe	.256	.304	.329	.311	.342	.324	.263	.321
Americas	-.610	.442	-.576	.394	-.652	.433	-.757	.479
Low-skilled	-.689**	.235	-.687**	.245	-.606*	.234	-.591*	.248
Approved	.313	.319	.388	.350	.381	.342	.316	.340
Pending	.013	.251	.090	.278	.111	.274	.058	.262
Mediator								
Institutional legitimacy	-.066	.090	-.076	.085	-.066	.088	-.077	.088

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$,

Model 1: based on 980 samples (bootstrapped); Model 2: based on 989 samples (bootstrapped); Model 3: based on 981 samples (bootstrapped);

Model 4: based on 985 samples (bootstrapped)

Reference groups: female, shorter than 1 year in NL, Middle East, High-skilled, Rejected

TABLE E: Regression integration attitudes independent variables separately

Variables	Model 5		Model 6		Model 7		Model 8	
	β	SE	β	SE	β	SE	β	SE
Constant	.056	.639	.004	.637	.477	.647	.640	.649
Procedural justice	-.125	.124					-.113	.120
DJ1 (no open borders)			-.082	.123			-.005	.126
DJ2 (NL does enough)					-.238*	.106	-.229	.117
Control variables								
Age	.081	.057	.072	.056	.086	.055	.092	.056
Male	-.253	.237	-.275	.236	-.280	.235	-.299	.251
Longer than 1 year in NL	-.697**	.235	-.690**	.263	-.715**	.242	-.742**	.253
Asia	-.323	.339	-.439	.332	-.399	.345	-.310	.345
Africa	.293	.289	.247	.313	.185	.285	.230	.287
Europe	.361	.310	.372	.294	.346	.299	.429	.335
Americas	.640	.413	.530	.401	.830*	.409	.920*	.431
Low-skilled	.880***	.269	.885**	.282	.702*	.278	.739*	.301
Approved	.194	.424	.092	.433	.154	.416	.257	.427
Pending	.038	.371	-.085	.386	-.086	.369	.004	.385
Mediator								
Institutional legitimacy	.211	.109	.205'	.118	.197	.104	.209	.108

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$,

Model 5: based on 983 samples (bootstrapped); Model 6: based on 985 samples (bootstrapped); Model 7: based on 979 samples (bootstrapped);

Model 8: based on 980 samples (bootstrapped)

Reference groups: female, shorter than 1 year in NL, Middle East, High-skilled, Rejected