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WORKING PAPER

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The Coproduction of Knowledge on Immigrant Integration in EU Policy and Academic Research[1]

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This work sets upon itself to rethink and problematize the narrative on immigrant integration in contemporary Europe, or what I call the *integrationist paradigm*. The present paper discusses the trends in research measuring "immigrant integration" and parallels it with developments in this policy field at EU level. I examine to what extent is social scientific integrationism comparable with EU policy discourses on integration, and how the two mutually influence each other. The first part offers a background of the involvement with the problem of integration in both social research and the EU. I then proceed to introduce some of the main ways in which integration-related knowledge circulates between research and EU institutions. I proceed by discussing the indicators and categories used to measure integration in research published in migration-related journals and monographs, followed by a discussion of how integrationism differs in the two spheres.

Keywords: European Union, integration policy, integrationism, knowledge, social sciences, indicators

Of all migration and diversity-related aspects, the idea of *immigrant integration* in its ideal form – as a line of thought that attempts to resolve the "ethnic dilemmas" of nation-states under conditions of cultural diversity (Favell, 2014, p. 82) – is the least controversial one. It enjoys a wide consensus, both in the academic realm and in society at large. Unlike immigration itself, which prompts a multitude of polarizing reactions and contestations among the public, immigrant integration is, on the contrary, a desirable outcome and a frequent recourse when governments seek to appease immigration-related anxieties. The demand for more, better or more successful integration, contrary to immigration, is rarely the subject of controversy in public discourse; it is only its "lack" or "failure" that find their place in heated debates. Of course, integration policy is still, in the context of the immigration and asylum debate, a highly politicized public issue, and as such controversial (Scholten & Verbeek, 2015). However, even when there are opposing positions which contest each other's approach to integration, for example, disagreements between the Left and the Right over a more pluralist or a more

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assimilationist path to integration, this is still a controversy from *within* the shared imaginary of integration, which does not disrupt the consensus on its desirability. The controversy is in the migrants' supposed failure to integrate, and occasionally, in *how* to integrate them properly while remaining in liberal-democratic lines; but never in the idea that they *must* integrate. In Favell's (2014, p. 77) approximate words, there is a certain universal appeal in the concept of integration, one probably reinforced by its comforting vagueness. It triggers positive, warming images: of harmony, of progress, of something self-evidently better than its opposite "disintegration" as chaos, breakdown, decay, decomposition of a "society" that cannot easily be imagined differently than as an integrated whole.

Integration is currently at the top of political agendas across the Global North, and most notably in Northwestern-European countries like the Netherlands (Blankvoort et al., 2021; Yanow & van der Haar, 2013), Germany (Brown, 2016), France (Favell, 2001b), and Denmark (Rytter, 2019). Considering the influence of this hegemonic region of Europe, in the context of an unequal East-West divide with respect to EU decision-making (Epstein & Jacoby, 2014), it is no wonder that the urgency of the question of integration found its way in EU institutions as well. The EU has increasingly been attempting to impose authority in the management of diversity at national level. Among its most potent instruments in this respect are generous funds allocated both to national and local authorities to introduce integration policies, and to social research to develop indicators for measuring integration, compare and recommend "best practices" in terms of policy-making, and identify problematic segments of the population where policy efforts should be directed.

From the sheer amount of research measuring integration in the past several decades, it appears that researchers readily accepted the invitation to aid in building social cohesion, remaining unapologetic about the normative assumptions of this political project. Immigrant integration – otherwise called "assimilation", "incorporation"[2], "insertion", "social cohesion", "acculturation", "adaptation"[3] – enjoys a wide acknowledgment in the social sciences. Research in this field is among the most productive areas in disciplines such as sociology, economics, social psychology and the interdisciplinary fields of migration studies and ethnic and racial studies (some seminal works include R. D. Alba & Nee, 2003; Joppke, 2007; Portes et al., 2005; Zhou, 1997). "Social cohesion" is repeatedly lauded in this literature as a desirable state of society conditional upon the integration of immigrants, while immigration and diversity have been argued to threaten this state, by eroding social solidarity and trust (e.g., Alesina & La Ferrara, 2000; Gundelach & Traunmüller, 2014; and most famously Putnam, 2007).

This work sets upon itself to rethink and problematize the narrative on immigrant integration in contemporary Europe, or what I call the *integrationist paradigm*. The present paper discusses the trends in research measuring "immigrant integration" and parallels it with developments in this policy field at EU level. I examine to what extent is social scientific integrationism comparable with EU policy discourses on integration, and how the two mutually influence each other. The

[2] "Assimilation" and "incorporation" are more typical for US scholarship, whereas "integration" seems to be the preferred term in Europe.
[3] For consistency, the term "integration" will be used throughout this paper, except in direct citations.

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first part offers a background of the involvement with the problem of integration in both social research and the EU. I then proceed to introduce some of the main ways in which integration-related knowledge circulates between research and EU institutions. I proceed by discussing the indicators and categories used to measure integration in research published in migration-related journals and monographs as well as in EU-developed indicators, followed by a discussion of how integrationism differs in the two spheres.

Method and data

The present study relies on a genealogical analysis of discourse as a methodological tool (Carabine, 2001; Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1983; Foucault, 1984; Hook, 2007). It draws from a dataset that encompasses both published social scientific research on integration measurements and official policy documents addressing the issue of immigrant integration released by EU institutions. In the case of EU integration policy, the key institutions include chiefly the European Commission (EC) (especially through its Directorate-General on Migration and Home Affairs (DG HOME)), and to a lesser degree, the Council of the EU and the European Parliament (EP). Aside from policy documents, the data includes a number of press statements by EU officials, minutes of meetings of science-policy committees discussing integration measurement, as well as documents related to funding schemes targeting integration (policy-relevant) research and to other infrastructures created by EU institutions, such as knowledge platforms dedicated to best practices in integration policy.

For the case of the social scientific measurement of integration, aside from EU-produced statistics and indicators (e.g., through EUROSTAT), the paper relies on a selection of publications in the four most highly ranked (in terms of citation scores) international scientific journals in the field of migration, as well as a selection of books explicitly focusing on integration published by the IMISCOE (originally "International Migration, Integration and Social Cohesion in Europe", later renamed in "International Migration Research Network"). The four best ranked journals (on 12 March 2020) which together comprise the dataset are: *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* (JEMS), *International Migration Review* (IMR), *Comparative Migration Studies* (CMS), and *Migration Studies* (MS). Two of them are based in the UK, one in the Netherlands and one in the US. The dataset comprises of around 300 publications published between 2016-2020 to afford us a glimpse into a portion of the influential research on integration. The screening of titles and abstract was undertaken to identify "integration research" papers, where the criterion was that authors explicitly frame their research in this sense. The same criterion was used in the selection of book-length publications by the IMISCOE Research Network, published through Amsterdam University Press and Springer. The exhaustive list includes 29 research monographs, edited volumes, and research reports published since IMISCOE was formed (2006-2021). IMISCOE is chosen as the representative epistemic community of migration and integration scholars in Europe (originally founded as an EU funded project). Its influence on migration research in the European context is argued by Levy (2020) to be so high that one can speak of an "IMISCOE effect" in the development of the research field.

Integrationism in policy and research

The discourse on "integrating immigrants" has historically been a product of a process of exchange between scholars and policymakers. Before the figure of the immigrant entered the political and scholarly debates, the idea of integration developed in the context of the philosophical, and later sociological, fascination with *society* as an object of science. There were three particularities about *society* as the focal object of the emerging discipline of sociology. First, social theory embraced a quasi-organicist and simultaneously a container notion of society, that imagines it as a wholesome, closed, static and unified body composed of parts (be it individuals, groups, or institutions) that harmoniously unite in an organic totality (Schinkel, 2017, p. 39). Second, the assumed wholeness and orderliness of "society" rendered it readily identifiable with the (nation)state – an entity that also assumes clear boundaries, integrity, stability and unification. This view remains notably dominant in the case of current integration research, as many scholars have shown (e.g., Favell, 2014; Lavenex, 2005; Thränhardt & Bommes, 2010). Finally, the third peculiarity of this modern concept of an integrated society was its clinical approach. Social theory becomes obsessed with the health of society, devising methods to diagnose society's ills, constantly searching for spaces that threaten its integration, "a social hypochondria of constant self-observation" (Schinkel, 2017, p. 64; see also Valluvan, 2018). Initially concerned with the integration *of* society as a whole, later theorists of integration become much more interested in the relations between the individual and society, i.e. in the integration *into* society (see Schnapper, 2007). The focus then fell on those individuals or groups who were deemed "asocialized persons who are *in* society but not *of* it" (Merton, 1968, p. 142). Before "integration" became almost exclusively attached to those constructed as "migrants", its subjects were those regarded as fragile, immature, unproductive or otherwise deviant, often excluded from civil rights: women, children, the poor, the colonized, indigenous or racialized minorities, patients in psychiatric institutions, criminals and prisoners (Schinkel, 2017, p. 62; Wieviorka, 2014).

Whereas this explains the roots of the idea of an integrated *society*, the conception of integrating *migrants* developed to a large extent in the context of the newly emerging immigration regimes in the early 20th century North America and, later, in post-war Europe. In the social sciences, the formation of the concept of "immigrants" and the question of their "assimilation" first emerged in the US in the so-called Chicago School of Sociology, where it formed a central research focus of representatives such as Robert Park and Ernest Burgess (see also M. Andersson & Schmidt, 2020). Early US assimilation studies were interested in European immigrants who arrived by the late nineteenth and early twentieth century as well as their children. The classical assimilation model, developed by Milton Gordon (1985) based on Park's work, remained hugely influential until it was abandoned in the early 1990s. Gordon posited the well-known "melting pot" hypothesis – a process towards unification where all groups eventually lose their distinctive ethnic, cultural and religious characteristics and "melt" into the white middle class, or "Anglo-conformity", as he called it. The model of "segmented assimilation" (Portes & Zhou, 1993) attempted to amend the classical model, to indicate that immigrants sometimes "assimilate" only into specific parts of society, based on race or ethnicity and class. However, this theory retained the classical organicist vision of society as an integrated whole (see Schinkel, 2017) and white

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Anglo-Protestant "society" as the ideal type, and so did the competing theory of "neo-assimilation" by Alba and Nee (2003). They define assimilation in a manner centered around "ethnicity" as "the decline of an ethnic distinction and its corollary cultural and social differences" through an "assimilation into a mainstream", that is, the white middle class. Segmented and neo-assimilation theories remain dominant in discussing immigrant and minorities "assimilation" in the US.

In Europe, both the study of immigrants and of their integration developed much later, considering the continent only became self-fashioned (and reluctantly so) as an "immigrant destination" from the second half of the twentieth century. A discourse on "immigrant integration" became dominant from the 1980s as the "sensible", centrist position emerging from the post-1960s clash between an intolerant and xenophobic assimilationism and an anti-racist radical cosmopolitanism (Favell, 2014). Integration then was discussed in similar ways as today: authors, for example, problematized immigrant criminality (Killias, 1989) and their (lack of) contribution to the labor market (Schmitter, 1980), expressed concerns for the "persistent" attachment of Muslims to Islam (Azouz, 1990), investigated the change in "ethnic" identity (Schierup & Ålund, 1986), and scrutinized the children of immigrants, i.e. the "second generation" (Castro-Almeida, 1979). As the study of migration grew out to be identified as an established (interdisciplinary) field in its own right (King, 2015; Pisarevskaya et al., 2019), the research on integration of migrants came to be seen as one of "migration studies'" central themes. Every good textbook that overviews the state of the art invariably dedicates significant portions to this issue (e.g., Bommes & Morawska, 2005; Brettell & Hollifield, 2015; Castles et al., 2014). During the 1990s and the early 2000s, there was an explosion of works measuring the "integration" of immigrants and discussing "best practices" in terms of policymaking (Favell, 2014). This coincides with the increased interest in this topic in publications by the European Commission. These works define *integration* in a way that provokes more questions than it answers, as "the process through which immigrants and refugees become part of the receiving society" (Castles et al., 2002, p. 115; Penninx, 2019). In Castles et al.'s (2002, p. 115) own words, the concept is so "vague and slippery" that it "seems to mean whatever people want it to".

As the issue of migration slowly became politicized in the 1990s until it took a central position in political debates already in the late 2000s, EU institutions have actively sought to have a say in the governance of diversity and cross-border mobility. The main strategies for influencing migration and integration debates include policy-making, legislation and public outreach (campaigning), as well as a strong financial impetus for knowledge producers and member states alike. For many decades since the founding Treaty of Rome (1958), European nation-states were reluctant to cede control over matters of border control, national membership and the rights of non-citizens. Although earlier (largely non-binding) intergovernmental directives provided guidance with respect to non-citizens and their rights and obligations,[4] it wasn't until the 1990s

[4] This includes, for instance, the 1977 (1983) European Convention on the Legal Status of Migrant Workers (ETS No. 093) and the 1992 Convention on the participation of foreigners in public life at the local level (ETS 144), as well as the numerous conferences of European Ministers responsible for Migration Affairs since 1980. The Council of Europe – an intergovernmental body that is not an EU institution – was a pioneer in advancing the integrationist agenda to a supranational level, notably with respect to the rights of non-citizens.

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that the governance of mobility and diversity was formally "Europeanized" (c.f. Block & Bonjour, 2013; Favell, 2001a; Rosenow, 2009). Some of the turning points in this respect are the Maastricht Treaty (1992) and the 1996-97 Intergovernmental Conference (IGC) in Amsterdam. Member states saw mutual advantage in joining forces to deal with new perceived threats to security and social cohesion. The 1999 Treaty of Amsterdam and the drafting of the Tampere Programme the same year officially opened up national legislation targeting immigrants as a new policy field at the EU level. However, controlling migration and managing asylum proved to be more pressing matters than integration at the time, and it wasn't until 2003 that the first coherent policy instrument – Communication on immigration, integration and employment – was issued by the Commission to address that particular issue. The 2004 Common Basic Principles for Immigrant Integration Policy confirmed the integration of TCNs as an area of mutual concern whose significance goes beyond national borders, as "the failure of an individual Member State to develop and implement a successful integration policy for migrants can have in different ways adverse implications for other Member States".[5] Since the signature of the Treaty of Lisbon in 2007, European institutions have been mandated to "provide incentives and support for the action of Member States with a view to promoting the integration of third-country nationals".[6] It was in this decade that we witnessed not only a full-blown Europeanization of integration policy, but also the politicization of "integration", i.e. the construction of diversity management as a political problem.

The decade to follow saw the adoption of two major policies, the 2011 European Agenda for the Integration of TCNs and the 2016 Action Plan on Integration, as well as the initiating of major funding schemes intended to support EU's goals to introduce and support integration measures in the member states. The EU defines integration as "a dynamic, two-way process of mutual accommodation by all immigrants and residents".[7] Such vague and overly broad definition certainly leaves room for interpretation. Like other terms that are easily recognizable but have no fixed or agreed upon meaning, *integration* is a floating signifier, not unlike words such as *community, development,* or indeed, *race* (c.f. Hall, 2021). The only way to know what the interlocutor means when using this term is to look at the indicators, or parameters they use when they theorize, evaluate, measure, or legislate this phenomenon. Not unlike scholarly research, EU institutions also speak of "social, civic and cultural integration".[8] For the European Council, integration measures should be based on a "balance between migrants' rights […] and duties" (European Pact for Integration and Asylum, 2008). But throughout the past two decades, the weight shifted from the former to the latter, as concerns with the social status and notably gainful employment of migrants that predominated in earlier documents were joined by more securitarian and identitarian concerns in more recent discourse.

[5] *Common Basic Principles for Immigrant Integration Policy*, Council of the European Union, 2004.
[6] European Website on Integration, EC. Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/migrant-integration/eu-grid/eu-strategy_en
[7] *Common Basic Principles*, 2004.
[8] *Framework Programme on Solidarity*, 2005.

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The circulation of knowledge between EU policy and research

The European Union has largely been neglected in the literature on integration policy. The few empirical studies that have approached integration from a de-naturalizing perspective have predominantly focused on national cases (e.g., Favell, 2001b for Britain and France; Schinkel, 2017 for the Netherlands). Perhaps one reason for this lack is that, from the perspective of a policy analyst, the European Union has no competence to regulate migrant integration and therefore, apart from several directives, official EU policy is largely non-binding. However, this does not mean that the EU has little to say on the subject. Quite the contrary, EU discourse on migrant integration has been powerful in subtly steering both national policies and political attitudes towards integration (Geddes & Achtnich, 2015; Pratt, 2015). This has been accomplished not only by establishing itself as a moral authority on the matter, but also through elaborate financial schemes involving both programmatic and commissioned research. Such funding, in addition to supporting the dispersion of integration policy measures across member states, has also had its role in shaping a social scientific research agenda that, on its part, helped legitimize and normalize integrationist political strategies. Overall, the enormous growth in research networks and research institutes dependent on EU funding has been remarkable, with terms of strict policy relevance increasingly being dictated by the European Commission to researchers (Favell, 2014, p. 92). Hence, the role of EU policy in the production of knowledge and the establishing of hegemonic discourses on integration is currently center-stage.

One obvious way in which the EU helps shape the repertoires of knowledge on "integration" is through its interaction with academic knowledge producers. The problematic nature of knowledge produced in government- and EU-funded research has been extensively discussed by scholars (e.g., Bakewell, 2008; Skilbrei, 2021), who outline how the pressure for "policy-relevant" research and the sheer availability of funding which comes with conditions tied to policy goals draw researchers into aligning with political agendas and producing knowledge that serves government objectives. This relationship is all the more controversial in times when such objectives are increasingly related to surveillance, denial of rights, pro-nativist and anti-immigrant campaigns and a general climate of scapegoating immigrants and minorities.

Funding bodies wield significant power in determining what is worth investigating and on what terms. At the same time, policy-makers are increasingly expected to base their policy on scientific evidence (Scholten, 2018), which provides additional impetus for governments to take a proactive role in research agenda-setting. Since the issues of migration and immigrant integration gained traction in the political sphere, research in this field has proliferated like never before. Much of this research, produced in a bid on the part of researchers not only to preserve access to funding, but also to remain relevant (Skilbrei, 2021), is then being used by policy-makers to legitimize "migration management" and integrationist narratives. Such practices, which depend on funding arrangements among other factors, draw researchers into a spiral of complicity with power, where the problematization of mobility and diversity is normalized.

As a major funder of European research, the EU has an important role in influencing the content, and not merely the volume, of knowledge on immigrants and minorities. The European Union has been releasing substantial funding for research into migration and integration issues through

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actions such as the Horizon 2020 program. For instance, following the "refugee crisis", 11 million euro in the H2020 was dedicated to research aiming "to understand migration but also to develop effective policies for managing the influx and integrating migrants in the society and economy".[9] This funding then sprouted, among others, an unprecedented number of research projects measuring the integration of migrants. In addition to incentivizing a large production of new knowledge in this field through direct funding, EU institutions act as (co)patrons of initiatives such as the Migrant Integration Policy Index (MIPEX) and OECD/EU indicators of integration. Since the early 2000s, the European Commission has been playing an active role in planning Europe-wide research, for example through its successive Framework Programmes (including Horizon 2020, which funds the present study), with a special focus on improving the collection of basic and comparable statistics. Geddes and Achtnich (2015) show how the European Commission uses the knowledge it generates to develop a greater role for the EU, and to legitimate that role as an actor in the area of integration policy.

The measurement of integration

Research on immigrants relies on the measurement of indicators (variables) that together are assumed to represented the integratedness of the immigrant group under question. Immigrants are judged integrated when they are, for instance, gainfully employed, when they refrain from crime, send their children to school, do not depend on welfare, speak the official language, become secular or retain their religious practices within their private sphere, control their sexual reproduction, and refrain from keeping links with their countries of origin (including by not engaging in diaspora organizations and "ethnic mobilization"). Migrants here don't necessarily need to shed their particularities, but should at least keep them "at home". "Failure to integrate" is then a verdict reached by the researcher when (s)he has found deviance among the immigrant group along any or all of the norms measured. The group – ethnic, racial, religious – is always the unit of analysis here, and appropriately, these are predominantly large-N quantitative studies as the only kind that can claim the ability to capture group-level tendencies. This type strongly coincides with the "strong" usage of integration discussed earlier. One typical such study would measure, for instance, whether the "acquisition of host country human capital, such as obtaining equivalent qualifications, good language skills, or naturalization, explains differences in labor market integration between migrants" (Zwysen, 2019). Another kind would measure "assimilation" in terms of "educational attainment" (Clarke, 2018) or "intergenerational assimilation of completed fertility" (Wilson, 2019). Integration is expected to somehow bring order, whether in the migrants' lives or in wider society. There is always an almost militant dedication to the cause of preserving "social cohesion". Thus, a perception of migration and diversity as a disorder, as a disruptive force, as something that needs to be remedied, is always lurking in integration work.

It is particularly interesting to see what kind of variables are being used to "measure" the phenomenon variously called "integration", "assimilation", "acculturation", "incorporation" and "adaptation", because it shows how authors constructed the issue and which traits and behaviors

[9] Source: http://www.h2020.md/en/commission-invest-%E2%82%AC85-billion-research-and-innovation-2017

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they think make an immigrant "integrated". In consistence with Favell's (2019) and Schinkel's (2018) arguments, most integration papers in the dataset constructed it – in disregard of social theories – as an un-social, individualized concept, where integration is a trait or a "state of being" (Schinkel, 2018) of those labeled migrants, rather than of society as a system. Some of the most typical factors used include the convergence of migrants' and natives' employment rates and wages, language competency, success in education (especially of children of immigrants), and "intermarriage". Studies exploring structural factors and the social context in which migrants arrive, that potentially significantly account for the "lagging behind" of non-white minorities, are less common. This matters, because the burden of fitting into society is predominantly placed on the shoulders of certain groups – Muslims, blacks, browns, Eastern Europeans – which are a priori constructed as especially problematic (Schinkel, 2018), even if many of them are native-born citizens.

Immigrants' attitudes and values are often measured through surveys to capture what researchers call "cultural integration". This construction follows the logic of national integration policies, where the commitment to "liberal values" as a condition for the entry, settlement and citizenship of immigrants is a common practice (Neureiter, 2019). And because the national imaginary rose out of a colonial-imperial global order, old colonial tropes such as the idea of linear progress, the spectrum of "civilizedness" and, of course, racial hierarchies also tend to find their way in research. A notable example which repeatedly resurfaces throughout the dataset is positioning the liberal ideal, with its assumed universality and unquestioned moral superiority, as a reference point against which various "failures" ascribed to "migrants" are measured (e.g., in Adman & Strömblad, 2018; Kalmijn & Kraaykamp, 2018; Kretschmer, 2018; Neureiter, 2019). Examples include problematizing Muslims' attitudes towards homosexuality (e.g., Kalmijn & Kraaykamp, 2018) or former-Yugoslav migrants' "traditional" attitudes towards gender roles (e.g., Kretschmer, 2018) as "empirical support" for their lack of "cultural integration". These constructions have too much of an orientalizing (Said, 1979) flavor, pinning the allegedly backwards East with its "narrow-minded attitudes" (Adman & Strömblad, 2018) against the allegedly civilized West, lauded for its "modern and egalitarian attitudes" (Kretschmer, 2018) and a "high tolerance culture" (Adman & Strömblad, 2018). The hegemony of this trope of Western progress keeps Western social scientists locked in a Eurocentric, biased and prescriptive mindset reminiscent of the colonial era cosmology.

It is interesting to pause for a moment to consider the load carried by such terms as "marrying *out*" (R. Alba et al., 2018, emphasis added) or "outmarrying" (McDoom, 2019). When a significant number of people from an "ethnic minority" "marry out" – meaning, they marry people from outside of their "ethnic group" – this is said to be a strong indicator that they have, indeed, "assimilated". The first thing to note is that such a discussion can only take shape from within a discourse reifying ethnicity (or race) as a clearly bounded, uncontested and not in the least ambiguous community, whose members are all supposed to share some common characteristics, like language, religion, home country ("nation"), genetics, or "culture". It is, furthermore, telling that "marrying out" always involves the white reference group as the "out" to which immigrants marry – "intermarriage" between members of two different minoritized or miganticized groups seems to be irrelevant for integration purposes. What this means is that a

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migrant can only be considered "integrated through marriage" when the tendency is to "merge" into white families. This betrays the researchers' own silent normative assumptions of what an "integrated society" *should* look like and what "migrants" *should* lean towards: whiteness as normalcy. In a particular biopolitical tone, the fertility of immigrants – so called "fertility assimilation" – is being measured as a factor of integration in a number of publications, where groups such as Muslims and those with Latin American origins are being problematized for having too many children. The authors (Smith & Brown, 2019) of one such paper, lamenting the lack of precision in identifying the "*genuine* third generation" (emphasis added), suggest that this problem should be remedied by discarding "self-reported ethnic identity" in favor of "grandparental nativity", implying that researchers know better than the researched subjects how the latter identify. In this circular reasoning, not only are the objects of study denied any agency and are ascribed an identity they explicitly reject, but racialized minorities are simply not allowed to "shed" their ancestors' immigrant past and are denied belonging by a technical intervention on the part of researchers.

As is perhaps most obvious with the significant attention paid to the issue of "immigrant integration" and the examples of categorizations, a trend towards addressing national policies and political programs when formulating research was identified. For instance, many of the papers focusing on Netherlands on the topic of integration constructed Muslims as a particular group in need for "integration", in congruence with the government's targeting of "non-Western allochthons" in integration policy, which in practice translates to migrants from predominantly Muslim countries (Yanow & van der Haar, 2013). Similarly, Mexican "unauthorized" migration is a major focus both in latest US-focused publications and of the US government under the Trump administration. One look at the most researched types of migrants and research topics also suggests a significant overlap with central political concerns. The disproportionate focus in the dataset on "labor migrants" and "economic integration" responds to the states' neoliberal concern with the "fiscal impact of immigration" (L. F. Andersson et al., 2019), referring to the value of immigrants for income and tax revenues and the risk of their dependence on welfare programs. Similarly, the high interest in immigration policy and management coincides with it being currently high at every Western country's political agenda.

EU develops its own indicators for measuring integration, largely in relation to data compilation by its statistical bureau, Eurostat. The development of such indicators was a goal agreed by integration ministers in the so-called Zaragoza declaration adopted in 2010, based on conclusions from the *Common Basic Principle on Immigrant Integration policy* (2004). The indicators agreed and measured in Eurostat surveys include: education (educational attainment, share of early leavers, share of low achievers), employment rates, social inclusion (poverty rate, health status, median income, property owning), active citizenship (naturalization rate, long-term residence, political participation). This differs from social research indicators in that it does not include "cultural integration" indicators, such as adherence to liberal values or feelings of belonging. However, the Zaragoza Declaration is careful to mention further indicators that "Member States consider important to monitor (although comparable data is currently lacking)": language skills, experiences of discrimination, trust in public institutions, voter turnout among the population

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entitled to vote, and sense of belonging.[10] Thus, while Eurostat measurements remain confined to standard socio-demographic measurements, EU institutions, much like social researchers, have a hard time refraining from mentioning boundary-making paradigms that measure identity and belongingness.

A convergence of integration imaginaries?

A crucial difference between EU and social-scientific integrationism was – until very recently – to be seen with respect to one particular aspect: the subject of measurement. Who is in need of integration (who should be measured) and in what terms is this population defined is a political and not merely a methodological choice. In research, subjects of integration research are, first of all, invariably *ethnicized* (and less often, racialized) groups. In the case of Muslims only (and rarely also Jews), ethnicization is replaced by the criterion of religious affiliation. As in much of social research that still relies on "methodological nationalism (Wimmer & Schiller, 2003), all of these constructions are naturalized as pre-existing, undisputed and clearly delineated. Ethnic groups are represented as relatively homogenous, long-standing communities or diasporas, with a shared history, norms and customs that members undoubtedly identify with.

Secondly, subjects of integration research are invariably *migranticized* (as per Dahinden, 2016), regardless of the fact whether they are "migrants" in the sense of having crossed international borders to settle in another state for a prolonged period of time. A major portion of research on integration concerns not immigrants themselves, but their children, and sometimes grandchildren. This grouping of people otherwise born and bred in the "host country", is most often called "the second generation" (or "third" and in a few instances even "generation 1.5"), or alternatively, "descendants" and "children of immigrants". A category that overlaps with this is "persons with migration background", that covers both recently arrived non-citizens and their offspring. These terms invites scrutiny not only because they define native-born citizens in terms of the immigrant status and ethnic background of their (grand)parents, but also because they associate them predominantly with problems of "integration". This is all the more controversial in light of the fact that they often don't view themselves as neither immigrants, nor "problematic" (Schneider, 2016). Labelling the children of immigrants as immigrants is not only analytically and conceptually wrong, but also politically charged. What it implies is: an immigrant is not someone who is not a citizen, or not born here, or simply someone who migrates, but someone who is different from what is constructed as mainstream society and someone who is, based on this difference, excluded from the imagined national community (Dahinden 2016). When social scientists invent methods to find a portion of the population that, despite not being immigrants themselves, can plausibly be related to immigration and then discussed for their failures to thrive, they not only facilitate anti-immigrant claims by interest groups, but they also reinforce the trope of the "unassimilable immigrants", that even after generations spent in their "host countries", continue to "lag behind". This is a dangerous discourse because it opens space for racist claims that, ultimately, some "ethnic" and "racial"

[10] European Ministerial Conference On Integration (Zaragoza, 15 and 16 April 2010), draft declaration. Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/migrant-integration/library-document/declaration-european-ministerial-conference-integration-zaragoza-15-16-april-2010_en.

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groups are inherently less capable of the ways of the West (see also Korteweg, 2017; Schinkel, 2018). That there were no examples in the dataset (and probably not many beyond it) studying the offspring of whites who emigrated from a Western country, and that, indeed, every "second generation immigrant" seems to be a non-white and/or non-Christian person with (imagined) origins in the postcolonial "Global South", shows how the concern is not with migrancy as the condition of having immigrated from one place to another. Rather, what is at stake is migrancy as wild, feral, dangerous and a signifier for non-belonging. Indeed, whites are "dispensed" from the expectation to be integrated, as Schinkel (2018) so eloquently argued, but also from being constructed as "second generation", and often from migrancy altogether (whence "expatriates", "transnational elites" and similar terms distinguishing these from "immigrants" across class/race lines).

For a long time, EU policy focused on a very different subject of integration, one narrowly and rather clearly defined as "third country nationals" (TCNs), defined as individuals with a non-EU citizenship. While the terms "migrants" and "immigrants" are used frequently in earlier policy documents, TCNs has thus far been the binding term and the only one that is used in official titles. The term "migrants", therefore, never encompassed intra-EU migration, nor naturalized citizens and their children. However, the 2020 Action Plan, introduced upon the start of the EC Presidency of Ursula von den Layen, brought about a major novelty in the definition of the subject of integrationism by including, in addition to TCNs, "EU citizens of migrant background". This category of people is defined as:

> nationals of EU Member States who had a third-country nationality and became EU citizens through naturalisation in one of the EU Member States as well as EU citizens who have a third country migrant background through their foreign-born parents.[11]

The EC doesn't dwell too much on why it was thought necessary to widen the scope of this integration agenda, saying only that "the challenge of integration and inclusion is particularly relevant for migrants, not only newcomers but sometimes also for third-country nationals who might have naturalised and are EU citizen". With or without a "migration background", EU citizens have access to rights that far exceed those of non-citizens. The 2020 Action Plan is careful to include a footnote in this respect, saying that these new subjects of integrationism "cannot be subject to the fulfilment of integration conditions in order to access their rights linked to EU citizenship", including rights of entry and residence. The EC finds it necessary to emphasize this precisely because, as was argued earlier, a number of integration measures promoted by the EU and implemented at national level (e.g., pre-departure measures, integration tests and citizenship tests) effectively act as migration control.

For a long time the EU integrationist discourses resisted the trend in scholarship to identify naturalized persons and the children of non-citizen migrants as subjects in need of integration. As was discussed in Chapter VI, these two groups are usually referred to in research as "people with migration background" and "second generation immigrants", respectively. While the 2020 Action Plan resists the usage of the latter, it does appear that the explosion in integration

[11] *Action Plan on Integration*, 2020, p. 1.

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measurement in research that was witnessed in the last decade has had some effect in shaping the political discourse in EU institutions. The inclusion of EU citizens as subjects of integration policy has important implications in many of the ways we already discussed in the case of academic discourses. Chief among them is the creation of a hierarchy of European citizenship. It implies that even naturalized citizens or citizens born and bred in the host country cannot be considered to belong because they are viewed as members of *a priori* defined problematic groups. These are groups that are seen to carry cultural "baggage" that persists over generations. Knowing that discourses on "alien culture" are nowadays imbued with racialized meanings, it is most worrying that the EU embraced this trend. Another implication is that the subject of EU population management in integration policies is now fully "migranticized" (as per Dahinden, 2016), as the qualifier for subjects of integrationism is no longer their absence of EU citizenship, but their presence of "migration background". It is worth considering whether the proliferation of research on immigrants and the institutionalization of "migration studies" as a field in its own right had some effect on this new discourse adopted by the EC.

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