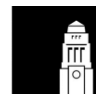

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Favell, A orcid.org/0000-0001-5801-6847 (2021) Integration: A Critical View. In: Zapata-Barrero, R, Jacobs, D and Kastoryano, R, (eds.) Contested Concepts in Migration Studies. Routledge Series on Global Order Studies . Routledge . ISBN 9780367634889

https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003119333

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Concepts in Migration Studies
edited by Ricard Zapata-Barrero, Dirk Jacobs & Riva Kastoryano
(Routledge forthcoming 2021)

Integration: A Critical View

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Related concepts:
“Assimilation”, “Acculturation”, “Inclusion”, “Participation”, “Incorporation”

Abstract (200 words)

Despite its centrality to debates on migration policy, the term "integration" is rarely scrutinized. Among policy makers it generally stands as a progressive conception of how receiving societies process, benefit from, and are changed by those migration/mobilities it classifies as wanted “im-migration”, usually as part of nation-building narratives. It is how a nation-state sees new members of its “society”, with its back turned to (assumed) borders established by “sovereign” immigration policy and control. This implies a methodological nationalism in all uses of the term, that rests in a functionalist vision of bounded (national) societies producing morally and politically emancipated individual “citizens”. The chapter lays out the concept in advanced liberal democracies, how it has been used (comparatively), and how it relates to, and encompasses, synonymous terms such as “assimilation”, “inclusion”, “incorporation”,“participation” and “acculturation”. The ubiquity of "integration" and its problematic relations with "multiculturalism" and "transnationalism", point to how it re-inforces colonial and (usually) racialized views on immigration. It is argued that migration studies may be reconceived as the study of *political demography*: how a world of territorialized populations, borders, and categories of migration/mobilities, citizens/aliens, and majorities/minorities, is sustained to uphold a global system of nation-states founded on massive global inequalities.

Bio (145 words)

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THERE IS perhaps no concept in migration studies so widely used, yet so loosely understood critically and conceptually, as "integration". Although an old fashioned sociological term and widely despised in critical race and multicultural circles, it is pervasively used by the media, politicians, policy makers, research funders, scholars and students, to designate both the process and end state by which Western societies imagine they will re-solder unity and cohesion after immigration or diversity (see MIPEX 2020; OECD 2018).[1] It has a peculiar aura as the preferred default concept at hand in relation to its many close synonyms. It seems more progressive than *assimilation*, broader than *incorporation* or *participation*, more systematic in its effects than *acculturation* or *inclusion*. In use, it can refer to anything from a strict adaptation to dominant white western ethno-cultural behaviour (Casey 2016), to an idealized mutual intercultural form of communication and recognition (Guidikova 2015). It quickly loses coherence, though, when disconnected from its historical rooting in the conceptualization of modern nation state building: of re-building a bounded social order from conflict and diversity as a form of modern progress (Favell 1998).

To think in terms of integration is to *think like a nation state* (Scott 1998). It is a way of conceiving the policy, legal and institutional means of shaping, regulating and directing economic and cultural processes of unity, cohesion building and

[1] A useful standard definition is provided by the influential Washington-based think tank, Migration Policy Institute (https://www.migrationpolicy.org/topics/immigrant-integration): "Immigrant integration is the process of economic mobility and social inclusion for newcomers and their children. As such, integration touches upon the institutions and mechanisms that promote development and growth within society, including early childhood care; elementary, postsecondary, and adult education systems; workforce development; health care; provision of government services to communities with linguistic diversity; and more. Successful integration builds communities that are stronger economically and more inclusive socially and culturally." It is also the central framing of all relevant EU policy (see https://ec.europa.eu/migrant-integration/main-menu/eus-work/archive/framework; European Commission 2020), and a core theme of Horizon 2020 funding (Horizon 2020).

inclusion that might take place within different sectors of society—such as education, the labour market, housing, political participation, inter-faith dialogues, health, social policy, and so on. Even more fundamental, though, is that integration is a core component of a standard linear narrative about "immigration" which, from the point of view of a receiving nation-state, seeks to delimit the question to one about the definitive movement of *particular kinds of* migrants across national borders: one which inevitably moves towards settlement, involvement in the everyday life and social institutions of the new host society, and the attainment of a fulfilled end state, that is usually referred to as "citizenship". As hesitancy over naming the process suggests, what we are talking about is essentially a euphemism for the process between arrival and the attainment of "full" membership of that society, whatever *that* is considered to mean. As Roger Waldinger suggests, this is the view of the nation-state with its back turned to the border (Waldinger 2015): im-migration has taken place, the border has operated and been affirmed in its crossing, and now the duly designated "immigrant" is subject to various opportunities and pressures that will "integrate" them into their new "home" society. Other kinds of people who have also crossed the border—such as tourists, business-visitors, truck drivers bringing goods, or illegal migrants—are excluded from this vision. They do not, by definition, need integration. The fact that all these other activities imply social interaction and "integration" in other senses—for example, as part of an "integrated" regional economy or cultural formations across borders—suggests that the "immigrant integration" being identified has a strong normative dimension to it, particular to the idea of the sovereign bounded nation-state (for related formulations, see Mezzadra and Neilson 2013; McNevin 2019).

Integration is thus a term central to nation-building, both at the borders in defining *who* belongs to the national population, and internally in terms of how effectively it binds all its members in some unified sense as citizens. The state asserts these powers by naming these processes and claiming sovereignty over them (Sayad 1996). This inherent *methodological nationalism*—inherent to research on "immigrant integration" (Favell 2001; Wimmer and Glick Schiller 2002)—is often lost from view as integration is applied more specifically to processes taking place in different sectors of society—such as a labour market, or local housing provision—or in apparently different spatial units—such as a city or neighbourhood.

The chapter proceeds through two sections. In the first, the scholarly and policy history of the term is presented in different national contexts and intellectual traditions. In this light, it ought to be clear what integration means, and where other terms should be found for social processes within or beyond this. In a second section, the chapter goes on to show how its operationalization in social science on post-immigration processes inevitably produces a series of problematic consequences, that leave nominally progressive scholars implicitly defending nationalist and arguably racist conceptions of Western society. This has been highlighted by a wave of new critical scholarship on integration. These critiques pose the question of whether integration can be decolonized as a concept: that is, used in a way that might disembed it from its colonial nation-building heritage and which may point towards a transnational, global or even planetary "integration" of society or peoples. This challenge is raised briefly in the conclusion.

Genealogies of integration

Many discussions of integration argue that it is an "essentially contested" term, open to be redefined in a more progressive direction. This has been apparent, for example, in intercultural model building on "refugee integration", which has revived the term while overlooking past critiques (Ager and Strang 2008; Gryzmala-Kaslowska and Phillemore 2017). Integration, though, has a relatively clear genealogy in sociological theory and its policy applications, that should imply a determinacy to its correct use.

Integration is a distinctly sociological concept, tied up with deducing what holds together a certain classical notion of a bounded, territorial society—a society of stable and structured institutions able to absorb change and novelty. It is inherently a conservative concept. There is no place for it in a society based on endemic conflict—such as in the Marxist tradition, where disintegration is a motor of change (Rex 1961)—nor in postmodern concepts of societies based on inherent mobilities and flux—such as the alternate sociology offered by John Urry, under the influence of geographical thinking (Urry 1999). Integration's distinct origin lies in the consensus based vision of society of the French sociologist Emile Durkheim. Its heritage is Durkheimian in two senses: both his sociological translation of the Kantian notion of the "integrated" citizen as the endstate outcome of modern, differentiated social structures that produce the free, fully emancipated, modern individual; and the notion of a well functioning society in which a harmonious consensus on abstract shared (constitutional)

values has been found to resolve conflicts that follow from diversity and individuals pursuing their own interests.[2] The Durkheimian solution of a functional modern social system does not automatically presuppose a nation-state. Durkheim indeed imagined an integrated European society as a more evolved version of national societies that might produce modern citizens at a higher, more abstract, level (Trenz 2011). Yet the historical form the social system took in his time, with the functional necessity of legitimating its population, borders and bureaucratic institutions (Torpey 2000), was the classic version of the nation-state-society, coming together at the end of the 19th century (Mann 1993).

The later functionalist sociology of Talcott Parsons in the US, which had extraordinary influence on progressive social policy thinking and programmes of modern development internationally for decades, essentially systematized Durkheimian thought about "successful modernity" as a generalization of the mid century American social system (Alexander 1986). Its influence was already felt in the "race relations cycle" developed by Robert E. Park and the Chicago School in the 1930s, charting the absorption in to the American mainstream of different immigrant groups through competition, conflict, accommodation and eventual assimilation; as well as more generally in notions of American assimilation as the dream of full and successful citizenship in a melting pot in which immigrants would gradually lose their ethnic distinctiveness, as they or their children found a place in mainstream society, politics and economy (Glazer

[2] This "constitutional" Kantianism is of course echoed in contemporary Rawlsian liberalism: Rawls (1993).

1983). By the 1960s, the most stark failing of this model was the American black population, whose emancipation from slavery had not delivered equal rights and recognition as citizens in the nation. The progressive "integration" of American blacks, as it came to be discussed, was thus counterposed to the practices and legal sanctioning of *segregation*, in schooling and public life, as a necessary step towards full emancipation. When, a year after the defining Civil Rights Act of 1964 to outlaw these practices and mandate integration policies in education and social policy, the notorious Moynihan Report (1965) suggested that civil rights alone would not even up race inequalities in the US, a fully Parsonian logic was used to identify at fault those cultural norms and practices of the "negro family" deviant from the fully integrated, ideal-type model of "normal" family life and social reproduction that enabled others to attain full membership in American society.

This *functionalist* paradigm of integration analysis—using an idealized theoretical model of integration to point out the "empirical" deficiencies of a particular minority group—can be seen returning repeatedly over the years in supposedly progressive policy research. This happens, for example, when arguments suggest that something like a "culture of poverty" or parochial "ethnic" ties are holding back a group from its full potential (Casey 2016; Portes and Landolt 1996), or a when it is argued that the tendency of a particular religious culture to reproduce backward practices (for example, towards women) is prevening this "ethnic" group from attaining successful "integration" (on this, see Korteweg 2017). The implication is that full individuality and

consciousness is not possible without falling into line with injunctions to leave behind cultural practices that hold back the individual from full development.

The colonial tone of this mode of thinking should be clear from this formulation. In Europe, the post-colonial heritage of Britain and France ensures that they are typically referenced as the earliest pioneers of "immigrant integration" (Favell 1998). Integration had been identified—explicitly so in French thought, implicitly in British—as the endpoint of a successful socialization of colonial subjects into their destiny as fully educated and civilized modern citizens of the Empire (Gildea 2019). Modern development theory simply continued this kind of model in the American post-war imperium: in seeking to lift up and out of their poverty, backwardness, and "pre-modern" culture, peasants, children or women in lesser developed societies everywhere (Geidel 2015). The US and other settler societies should be considered colonial power and "Empires" in this sense (Go 2012; De Grazia 2016).

It was the Civil Rights inspired sense of the word which saw it pass into British thinking on a post-immigration society, with its race equality legislation of the 1960s and 70s. In the definition of the then Home Secretary, Roy Jenkins, integration was not meant to be a flattening of cultural diversity, but rather the creation of equal opportunities in a tolerant, pluralist environment. It sought to distinguish it from the notion of assimilation to some singular national cultural identity, while seeking also remove the risk of segregation. The notion of self-fulfillment, however—the endstate of becoming a truly British citizen, albeit within a transformative pluralist diversity in which different "races" are

recognized as equal—is still retained. This “middle way” logic for integration as a manageable two way process has repeatedly been emphasized by its defenders, opposing a reactionary idea of (cultural) assimilation rooted in a fear of societal change, with a more radical idea of multiculturalism that might lead to cultural fragmentation (Joppke and Morawska 2003). This typological approach is reproduced in the famous two-by-two alternate schemes of “acculturation” proposed by social psychologist John Berry (2005), that has been a widely adopted heuristic of immigration scholars (i.e., Koopmans and Statham 2005; Bloemraad et al 2008), as well as in the many discussions emphasising distinct national “models” positioned between assimilation and multiculturalism (Heckmann and Schnapper 2003; Bertossi and Duyvendak 2012)

The liberal line on immigration and integration was devised in Britain as an alternative to the race conflicts and social breakdown threatened by the apocalyptic warnings in the late 1960s of by right wing politician Enoch Powell. It held as a consensus, anchored by a strict prior concern on immigration control, and the need for pluralism to be conceived in terms of a multi-racial and eventually multicultural vision of the nation (Modood 1992). However, the language of “immigration” and “integration” was strongly rejected through the 1970s and 80s, as minorities sought to stress their hyphenated Britishness, and a more fully reasoned notion of race-conscious multiculturalism—although one still bounded as distinctly “British” (Gilroy 1987).

Rather, it was in France that integration would come to be elaborated as a complete neo-nationalist assertion of the continued powers of European nation-

states to transform post-colonial and immigrant diversity into a single, unified society. Approaching its *bicentennaire* in 1989—in the face of serious challenges to traditions of secularism posed by the assertion of Islam in France—there was an extraordinary series of reflections and public debates on formulating an explicit "philosophy of integration" (Favell 1998; Bertossi 2020). It was the product of a new generation of centrist thinkers reacting against the radical anti-humanism of French thought in the 1960s (Ferry and Renaut 1985). The return to arch republican ideas of citizenship and public participation, with the emancipatory potential of identification with abstract principled ideas as the core of national belonging—that might resolder ties and national identity—was also very much a return of Durkheimian thought (Schnapper 1991).

This high brow philosophy was often taken as a French peculiarity—not least by the French, who revelled in their stereotyping of alternate national "models" in Europe: whether the racially "differentialist" British, the ethno-national Germans, or the Dutch inability to separate religion and the state (Todd 1994). Yet, in the years since, "integration" conceived in ways very close to the French philosophy of the 1980s—of diverse newcomers finding a place in a constitutional *pays d'immigration*—has come to be accepted as the dominant progressive "middle way" in nearly all European nations facing similar questions of immigration, minorities and diversity. Its strict connection with concepts of immigration and citizenship has helped define its key mission in re-affirming the historical civilising mission of European nation-states. While citizenship tests and proof of commitment to civic values is highly visible in the criteria developed across Europe as top-down, nationally-defined "civic integration", the

bottom up "intercultural" dimensions of integration also assert a coercive double sided imperative in the name of *modus vivendi*: that immigrants and what they bring will be welcomed, while having to adapt to their new home if they want to belong. EU policy texts have gone further to imagine a "three way process", where integration efforts by the migrant prior to moving (such as language learning) are encouraged, along with potential benefits to sending country development, through remittances and transnational links (European Commission 2011).

This triumph can be traced back to the early 2000s, and the geo-political threat of a "clash of civilizations" after 9/11. With growing populist resentment of immigration, official multiculturalism where it was found—particularly in its post-national, diasporic or transnational dimensions (Brah 1996)—started to come under fire. This was in effect canonized in interventions by politicians, such as David Cameron in the UK and Angela Merkel in Germany, declaring the end of multiculturalism as a policy goal (Lentin and Titley 2011). "Integration" was their acceptable default alternative. One by one, countries all across Europe have come to adopt variants of the French philosophy—including even in Britain, which for so long seemed to be rejecting the basic colonial idea of transforming immigrants into "good" citizens, in favour of a post-colonial approach (Parekh 2000). It is important to note that the French have always believed that the process of becoming a citizen has nothing to do with racial differentiation and is fully compatible with a modern, Durkheimian (and Rawlsian) notion of cultural pluralism: that *intégration* is defined as "full" *citoyenneté* and attainable by all

who submit to the modernization processes and form of belonging offered by the abstract, universal, constitutional (i.e., “French”) political nation.

The symptom of the integrationist turn was, in practical terms, the imposition everywhere of cultural and cognitive conditionality on access to citizenship. Immigrants should have to prove that they are not burdened with cultural beliefs and practices incompatible with national, unifying values (usually constitutional provisions); they should be able to show a clean criminal record and good moral standing; and they should be able to pass tests asking questions about national culture and history, and speak the language, in order to claim their right to be equal individual citizens of the nation. There has been much academic debate about the relatively attenuated, abstract nature of these requirements in terms of national specificities (Joppke 2011; Goodman 2014). Because these nations want to absorb diversity and have tried to modify nationality to remove ethno-cultural national particularities, the *constitutional* citizenship offered is said to depend more on a functional integration to the needs of living and working in a generic modern (European) society, and be less culturally coercive or intolerant that assimilationism of the past. But this has not made integration any *less* nationalist: it is still entirely hooked to the bordering process of defining linear immigration and the national affirmation of club membership marked by attaining full citizenship. What is interesting, though, is that there is more than a hint of a “post-race” future implied in both patriotic French universalism, and multi-racial Britishness celebrating its distinctiveness wrapped in a Union Jack. The progressive assertion of integration emphasizes this potential for all

European nation-states, and implicitly—via European "normative power" (Manners 2002)—for the whole world.

"Integration" thus appears to be the fully accepted term for describing progressive post-immigration processes everywhere. Discredited Western models of development, which projected the making of integrated colonial subjects patterned on white western settlers (see Kunz 2020), have come back into favour as societies redefine their modernity as nations in terms of the standard immigration to citizenship path, re-stated in constitutional terms. This can apply to settler states, who are not burdened by primordial ethno-cultural national definitions, as much as former ethno-cultural states seeking to adopt a globally acceptable form of constitutional nationalism (Meyer 2010). And while the process of nation-building in the US has continued to be discussed in terms of assimilation to an abstract American idea of citizenship and the generalized "mainstream" of successful middle class life, it is striking that "integration" there is increasingly adopted interchangeably as the term of choice (Brubaker 2001). This perhaps emphasizes the feeling that, as European nations and others have shifted their self-conceptions to become constitutional "countries of immigration", their inclusive, multi-racial, post-immigration, nation-building intentions can now be equated with America as the archetypal nation built on immigration (see Zolberg 2006 for a critique of what this myth really entails). Perhaps all these countries can become "just like the USA", at its idealized, Parsonian best (Favell 2016b)?

Pathologies of integration

The obvious criticism of integration in practice is that it is very difficult to distinguish from assimilation. Scholars may set up typologies distinguishing between assimilation, integration, multiculturalism and segregation, or project idealized intercultural interactions and communications between diverse peoples, but power relations are inherently asymmetric in any integration scenario marked by uneven levels of (self-)development. The balance of pressure will inevitably be on the new "immigrant" to find a place in the "host" society, and attain the kind of personhood that a modern nation state expects of all its citizens. Integration as an ideal invariably becomes a form of domination when it is applied. This becomes clear in the implications of integration when it is operationalized in empirical social science research.

It first needs to be noted that assimilation as a term can be relatively neutral in its implications. It is not even true that in classical American applications, such as Gordon (1964), that it necessarily denoted absorption into an "ethno-cultural" majority—for example White Anglo-Saxon Protestant culture. The cultural dimension is only one way of tracking assimilation. More likely it is to be a kind of structural assimilation—into socio-economic or educational attainment, or to positions in a labour or housing market —that might be quite separate for some groups or individuals to becoming culturally or ethnically like a white majority (Massey 1981). In more recent formulations, this colour-blind neutrality has been extended by conceiving assimilation as a statistical disappearance into a mathematically constructed "mainstream"—literally an average of all the population in different sectors of society (Alba and Nee 2003).

Interestingly, though, when Alba further developed this work in a comparative North American and European context with Nancy Foner—a book which represents the state of the art of quantitative empirical work on "immigrant integration"—they chose to term the process "integration" rather than "assimilation", gesturing towards its more positive two way ideal-type connotations (Alba and Foner 2015). In this, they side with all major national and cross-national quantitative studies on integration processes and effects in Europe (for example: Safi 2008; Kogan 2010; Demireva and Heath 2017; Kalter et al 2018; Understanding Society 2020). In practice, the terms work as synonyms, the only real difference being whether the measured absorption is into a singular "mainstream", or a social structure "segmented" in terms of a pre-existing ethnic/racial hierarchy (Favell 2021). The presence of historically stable stratification based on race—the post-slavery "color line" in the US—established patterns suggesting some immigrant groups might assimilate to roles and positions occupied by black Americans, while others become more like the white majority (Portes and Zhou 1993). However, particularly with arguments concerning inter-marriage and the break down or blurring of fixed ethnic and racial categories, there has been an emphasis on "post-race" assimilation in which the mainstreaming model is reasserted again (Alba et al 2017).

Alba and Foner present the sectoral attainment of ethnic minority and immigrant groups in the US, Canada, the UK, Netherlands, France and Germany, relative to a "native" national population. They eschew talk of national models or determination by particular political economy types (such as variations in

welfare states or labour market laws). They assume no international convergence or superiority of settler versus colonial heritage, presenting variable data patterns and outcomes. There is no emphasis on the normative idea of individualization, citizenship and nation-building in the full sense: rather groups' attainments is measured according to what might be considered a benchmark of integration among the existing population—in the labour market, income, housing, education, religion and secularization, political participation, and so on. The data is national, but in theory could be looked at in terms of different spatial units—for example a city.

The question is whether a positivist approach such as this can avoid normative implications (i.e., implicit methodological nationalism). The issues begin to arise when examining examine how groups are constructed statistically. In some countries, there are statistics on ethnic minorities or "racial" groups—according to designation or self-identification with a group. For example, in the UK, a "native" category of "White British" is constructed as a kind of "racial" group—a substantial majority—whose patterns and outcomes can be contrasted with various "Black", "Asian" and "Other" minorities. In the US, a one drop rule still essentially applies in identifying the "Black" minority—with dynamic incentives for other "non-White" groups to claim (or be attributed) any /all "ethnic" heritage in a similar way. In other countries—particularly in continental Europe—a more strict "race-blind" adherence to place of birth origins only enables the construction of "ethnic minorities" (Simon et al 2015). Someone who was born abroad, whose parents were born abroad, or grandparents were born abroad might be considered an "immigrant". To arrive at consolidated

numbers for minorities, Alba and Foner then follow a convention of distinguishing those from outside of Europe as the "immigrant" population—thereby also capturing Black or Asian British or Dutch with some family origin in the former colonies, as part of the minority population whose "integration" is being measured. By the same token, white European migrants in these same societies are not considered "immigrants" whose "integration" might be worth studying—or if they are, only selectively by nationality according to some (not fully stated) assumptions of lesser development (i.e., Polish in Britain *might* be, but French certainly are not). Similarly, the large numbers of Americans living in Britain—however long term, and even if not white—would never be considered. This uneven approach is defended as a pragmatic solution, as well as one conforming with national convention and the presence of visible (or audible) groups.

A first pathology here is obvious. A "minoritization" and "migranticization" has taken place in the state production of statistics, that is being reproduced by scholars and which might seriously distort the social identity of many individuals lumped into these groups considered subject to "integration" (Dahinden 2016). There is a good deal of sceptical work on identity that suggests many who are being so identified would not wish to be collectively identified this way, and attaching other measures of behaviour, culture, or social attainment to their minority and/or immigrant origins may be problematic. In post-Empire societies an even more obvious symbolic violence has taken place, when persons who moved *within* an Empire, as national subjects with automatic citizenship, are being re-designated, retrospectively, as "immigrants" on the basis of their skin

colour. This re-bordering of persons, who then fall foul of bureaucratic demands to prove their identity, was exactly the fate of members of the Black British Windrush generation, who have been deported as illegal immigrants despite having lived their whole lives as British citizens (Yuval-Davis et al 2019). Other long term residents—such as EU nationals in the UK during Brexit—have also suddenly become "immigrants" subject to "integration" requirements, when a new bordering line crossed them in the referendum. In their case national "integration" was irrelevant until they became "immigrants" and foreigners who now needed integrating (Gonzales and Sigona 2017)—their foreignness suddenly became visible and audible. Note, though, that East Europeans were often stigmatized as being "immigrants", even though legally they were free movers just like West European counterparts.

There is, however, another side to this production of minorities—revealing the sovereign power of the state to designate legitimate and illegimate members—that has been less extensively highlighted. While producing statistically visible minorities subject to "integration" as "immigrants", it also produces a fictional "majority", with its own myth producing powers regarding the nation. In Britain, this is a self-designated "White British" population, who will provide the averaged benchmark for "true" integration in any given sector of society. In France, it is a *français de souche*—a French person of French origin—somebody perhaps whose grandparents or (even) great-grand parents were (definitely) not born "abroad" (Tiberj 2005). These are the presumed "natives" of the society who must be, by definition, "automatically" integrated—at least their average

attainments are the benchmark of what it means to be a full, true "national" member of that society.

To say the least, this is a peculiar vision of contemporary liberal democratic societies—to assume its majority to be a putatively equal, harmonious, *successfully* integrated block—against which the difference and *lack* of integration of minorities and immigrants can be visualized—for example, in the labour market or educational attainment. It assumes there is no stratification, no internal conflict, no division within the nation, no conflict between classes: at a time when, in other contexts, class inequalities, polarization, urban/rural divisions, and any amount of fragmentation of majority populations is highly visible (Kriesi et al 2008). It sets up a *black box of whiteness* that we cannot by definition question—as it is the benchmark by which "immigrant" minorities are made visible in the analysis. It also presupposes that there was some pre-existing harmony before the "dis-integration" was produced by the "arrival" of a newcomer population: typically, a (false) assumption that before a certain point (often 1945 in European narratives) the nation was not ethnically and racially diverse, or in fact not also composed of migrants and foreigners. The pecularity here is that before that date, many of these same European nations were in fact cosmopolitan, multi-racial Empires that spanned the globe, built on racial hierarchies grounded in notions not of territorial nationality but de-territorial, universalising civilizations. The operation of reviving the civilising mission of colonial integration as a nation-building operation in a shrunken metropolitan state, anxious to re-define its borders and a singular population, here becomes obvious.

Quantitative scholars retort by saying they don't reify groups; that they have individual level data which can control for class, education, or x, y and z in their models across the national population, and *still* there is a residual variance based on minority racial or immigrant origin vis-a-vis the "natives". That's the (failure of) integration they are measuring! This is, in other words, a deficiency model—in which the scientist, albeit regrettably, finds the "ethnic minority" (they have themselves constructed statistically) to be deficient in some way linked to their so-called "ethnicity" (and often a combination of gender and culture, i.e. in Islam). The black box explanation here becomes a mirror of the racialized statistical production. Yet the assumption that such work is being put to good progressive nation-building (or, even, "multicultural") ends is generally unquestioned. The "integration into what?" question here being posed, in fact exposes the "normal" presumption of these societies and its institutions as otherwise white, bounded and unified—with immigration and diversity the "new" visible or audible "problem" that needs to be solved (Schinkel 2017; Valluvan 2017).

There is here, however, a second type of concern, inherent in the criteria being set up, as an implicitly Durkheimian progress towards an integrated, fully functioning modern society: that is, in which all individuals (of whatever background) have the opportunity to become fully capable, fully conscious, equal members (Sen 1999). In fact, in our modern national societies, those who are the most integrated—who most fully belong, in an ideal sense—are those who *least* have to prove they belong, and are the *least* subject to "integration" pressures.

This is a paradox of modernization in a context where highly advanced modern societies are integrated into a wider global social, culture and economic structures.

When immigrants are asked to integrate—for their own benefit, of course—they are supposed to—statistically at least—disappear into the mainstream. They may retain their "culture" or "identity" or whatever—but to do so they are required to attain various benchmarks structurally and constitutionally, that may prove they too are equal and free citizens. In some cases, the ethno-cultural component of such integration has become crudely obvious, as in citizenship tests.. A highly educated "native" of the country sometimes may not know all the answers—but immigrants *have* to know them to pass a formal line. This constantly having to prove it reinforces prejudice even when progressive in intent. The "us" and "them" logic at work here has been well noted as a kind of "bio-politics" of "good" citizenship (Tyler 2008; Anderson 2013). It can also be used to draw the "community of value" inside the nation in exclusionary ways, to exclude less normatively successful citizens of all kinds (typically single mothers, people with a criminal record, and so on).

The problem here is not just the content of these demands. If it is asked who are the most integrated, free and equal members of our society—who it might be supposed, embody the ideal of citizenship supposedly spelt out in these rules and benchmarks—then it will be seen that the most successful modern citizen is in fact one with a very *loose* obligation to many of the national criteria of membership being listed for newcomers as strict club membership rules. The

person who “belongs” most freely in our society, is in fact a free moving, mobile member of an elite, whose range of activities is unbounded if not global, and who can come and go as they please: taking all the benefits of national membership but also enjoying privileges anywhere and everywhere else; perhaps because of sheer wealth, or because they hold multiple memberships (i.e. passports), or some offshore special status (Harpaz 2019). This is but the proof that individualization in modernity and modernization has gone well beyond national membership—but also that such privileged identity is still nested in secure, unquestionable national membership (Kochenov 2019). The de-nationalization at work here is, ironically and cruelly, the exact opposite of the conditional nationalization being imposed on the hapless “immigrant” who has to prove themselves, everyday in their behaviour, allegiance and loyalty, as a good and worthy member of the nation, attaining its standards on every measure of integration found for them, and threatened with deportation if they don’t.

Two further points are worth noting. The integration being imagined—also statistically in basic benchmarks of integration into the “invisible” mainstream—is only an integration in the average, if not lowest, segments of our society. It is not integration into the free moving, global elites that is required. Since this kind of status is not imagined as relevant for an immigrant, there is a sense here—as Schinkel emphasizes (2019)—of a kind of racism at work. Modern nation-states patronise immigrants by imagining them to be sufficiently successful when they have attained the modest heights of the “ordinary” working classes in their own society—something that would be considered a failure by its own “natives”. Intercultural narratives, which imagine integration to occur when asylum

seekers make friends with equally marginalized "natives" in deprived urban contexts, make the same mistake.

Secondly, the simultaneously integrating yet differentiating dynamic—integrating newcomers to prove the strength and progressive unity of the nation—while also differentiating and stratifying to enable the free moving privileges of elite classes—is one highly functional to the contemporary world. It holds something together at a time when de-nationalising forces (represented, ironically, by the same elites of global capitalism) might otherwise be undermining the nation-state—as long has been feared they do (Strange 1996). There is, in other words, a symbolic projection onto immigrants of the ongoing work of nation buildling. Well integrated immigrants—wrapped in a national flag—are celebrated precisely to re-state what holds the nation together, at a time when it is flying apart.

Rather cruelly, something similar is at work with the projection of national issues of unity and "integration"—"levelling up", listening to their angry disaffected voice—in the anxious focus currently on redisovering the marginal, provincial, "left behind", "white working class" as the forgotten core of globalized Western societies. This presumed "indigenous", invariably white, "salt of the earth" population symbolically represents the "core" and "heartland" nation, speaking with angry voice against too much globalization—and its symptoms, of too much diversity, too much change, and far too much "immigration". They are the supposed root integrated population whose values will help locate the nation "somewhere" again (Guilluy 2014; Goodhart 2017). Yet, in reality, by any

Durkheimian measure, they are some of the *least* integrated members of the divided national society: displaying all the signs of alienation, marginalization, stigmatization and exclusion (i.e., *anomie*) that indicate the ongoing *dis-integration* of this very society. The elites of the nation meanwhile speak to and for them, in their (elected) name, with imposed national curricula and stirring patriotic rhetoric. Integration is always for the others, not for those who are already integrated.

Here there is a third area of concern. Could the symbolic nationhood on offer not transcend these points? Are there not real examples of successful minority individuals attaining elite national status? Surely—to stick to the UK example for a moment—the point holds true for nearly all advanced liberal democracies—the claim is not that to be successfully British it is necessary to be white? No, it is true: there is a "British dream", like the American one (Goodhart 2013). And, on the face of it, leaving behind homogenising averages and group based logic and focusing on individuals, these paths to attainment might be said to have been de-racialized. In the UK, there are South Asian ministers promoted to the cabinet. What is wrong with this kind of integration—at least as an ideal, while admitting that other structural, cultural and racial factors may be holding back the masses? More generally, what is wrong with celebrating the Olympic Gold Medal attainments of a multi-racial team, wrapped in a Union Jack? What, indeed, is wrong with the new Syrian asylum seeker family celebrating their new British citizenship in London, on a path to integration, with a BME ("Black or minority ethnic") mayor present, under a portrait of the Queen? Is this not at least the modern nation and the face of integration at its acceptable best?

What this kind of image is doing is celebrating the distinction of national citizenship: in effect celebrating the *brand* of Britishness, in a vision of "multicultural nationalism" (Modood 2019). This has been the staple view of "multiculturalism-in-one-nation" (Favell 1998), that extended on the proud notion of Britishness of Roy Jenkins' initial formulation, and was hegemonic until the anxieties around immigration and Brexit in recent years; one might even claim the London Olympics of 2012 as its zenith. In this view, immigration and integration *of the right sort* is fine for the nation. This branding process is, moreover, how a national distinction is articulated—how integration is vaunted as proof that the value of a British passport, and membership of this nation, is *superior* to others (Kochenov et al 2016). It is the affirmation of political membership of *this* club. Yet what this kind of nationalism does, however inclusive and multi-racial it is, is explicitly devalue the membership of others. What is attained by full and recognized membership of the club is by definition *not* available to all those who failed to gain entry: those who were not selected for the golden path, who failed the tests in a remote British output in Asia or Africa, who died trying to get to the island, or who had the wrong nationality, ethnic origin, religious beliefs, or lack of human capital, in the first place.

This is the well known argument about the birthright lottery and global inequalities (Shachar 2009). Integration for the few, inevitably, is exclusion for the many. In vaunting it, even as an ideal type, it sets up a standard opposed to other visions of (global, planetary) society where the rights of non-nationals, and both close-by and distant foreigners, might be stressed as equal to (national)

members (Favell 2016a). Even when they are long term residents, they should not need to be integrated in order to be equal. And, to be serious about global inequalities, this kind of treatment ought potentially apply to the casual visitors to the country, as much as to the global masses around the world excluded by border control. Only by evening up the rights and status of others here and there to gain access to what citizens of advanced liberal democracies get automatically by asserting their membership rights, can the global inequalities inherent in the institution of full citizenship as true integration ever be addressed (see also Carens 2015).

Decolonizing Integration?

In the light of these arguments, the colonial origin and implications of integration should be clear. The term needs decolonizing (Mayblin and Turner 2021). The notion of integration has been specific to Western modes of universalizing nation-building, and central to their post-war shift from nationhood as Empire to the Europe of territorial, re-unified nation-states. The power asymmetry involved in the transformational pressure exerted by receiving nation-states is always present, distorting an allegedly two-way or intercultural process; moreover, this "integration" cannot be measured without the danger of deficiency and stigma being attached to group identification, nor without normatively benchmarking of the "normal" "native" population, whose prior legitimacy is affirmed in the process. The recent tendency in migration research to claim multicultural transnationalism *and* integration are compatible (see, for example, Snel et al 2006; Erdal and Oeppen 2013) is subject to the same critique.

The suspicion is that these trends are linked to the alluring, but problematic, "post-racial" promise of "superdiversity" associated with refugee and new migrations: issues less constrained by the core question out of which contemporary thinking on integration essentially emerged in the US and Europe—the race question in the context of post-slavery and colonial rule.

Scholars in migration studies ought to be more rigorous, and work with de-nationalized and decolonized terms which, for example, would re-frame progressive local initiatives in inclusivity or participation in a multi-scalar way, that is, embedded in transnational, regional, global, and planetary formations, not national societal integration (for more discussion, see Favell 2022). They should be thinking autonomously, and of new terms for these processes labelled as "integration"—with its state-centred language that is so easily adopted for national branding purposes (two suggestions: Anderson 2019; Meissner and Heil 2020). While a theoretical case can be made for a redefinition of "integration", the historical baggage of the term suggests otherwise. Clarifying its implications and tracing the tensions is however a fruitful place for demonstrating the importance of what may be called a *political demography* of modern liberal democratic states: highlighting the effects of methodological nationalism, which continues to ensnare many scholars' and commentators' conventional notions of immigration and citizenship—whether they realize it or not.

6963 WORDS (including footnotes)

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