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## 8. Integration in migration societies\*

Frank Kalter<sup>†</sup>

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### 1. INTRODUCTION

Migration is – along with fertility and mortality – one of the three fundamental demographic processes, and it constantly changes the composition of societies. Contrary to widespread and populist assumptions, it has always been a significant social phenomenon. At the overall international level, migration has not really increased in relative terms in recent decades (De Haas et al. 2020, p. 4). However, it is true that migration directions have become concentrated. Some regions in the world, including Western Europe, North America, but also the Middle East, have recently experienced a rapidly growing share of migrant populations and a concomitant increase in ethnic diversity (De Haas et al. 2020, p. 6). In many countries, the descendants of former immigrants, the second and later generations, make up large proportions of the younger population (Jonsson et al. 2018). In various places, the formerly so-called ‘majority’ has now become more of a ‘minority’ (Crul 2016). All of this leads to a plethora of interesting phenomena and questions that address the basic sociological problem of social integration.

It is therefore not surprising that the topic of ‘migration and integration’ has become one of the booming subfields of sociology in recent years. For example, if we look at the *European Sociological Review*, which is the leading sociological journal in Europe in terms of impact factor, we find that about 23 percent of all research articles published before the end of 2009 already contain the word ‘immigrant’; for those published in 2010 or later, this is even true for 42 percent.<sup>1</sup> The topic has also been prominent for a long time in top American sociological journals.

It is also true, however, that the boom has been accompanied by a great diversity of theoretical and methodological approaches, especially since the topic of integration touches on many different aspects and many neighboring disciplines. Given the societal importance and policy-relevance of the issues involved, the need for shared standards and a common core for an integrative perspective, two important ingredients of ‘rigorous sociology’ (see the introduction chapter by Raub, De Graaf & Gërkhani in this *Handbook*), are particularly urgent and obvious. Certainly, some developments in this area cannot be regarded unequivocally as useful contributions. Still, a closer look reveals that overall, there has been clear progress.

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<sup>1</sup> Percentages calculated using the search option at <https://academic.oup.com/esr/issue>, accessed June 30, 2020.

Part of the topic's rise in leading journals is due to the fact that research questions in the field of migration and integration often fit seamlessly into the mainstream approaches of other research fields that have already developed relatively high standards. Obvious examples are labor market research or social stratification research. The quality of migration-related integration research has thus benefited from many scholars based in other fields who occasionally become 'integration researchers'. They recognize the fact that the populations under study have become increasingly diverse as a result of recent immigration and that direct or indirect migration experience or ethnicity are important social categories to consider.

However, it would be completely misleading to consider research on integration in societies experiencing migration only as a special case of research in other substantive areas. The other part of its visible success certainly results from the fact that it has clearly developed into a research field in its own right, contributing specific theoretical mechanisms, specific methodological challenges and solutions, and, not least, specific perspectives, questions, and new challenging puzzles.

In this chapter, I identify essential components of what can be considered an integrative common core or a basic toolbox of rigorous migration-related integration research. I outline how it complements research in other fields and provides new perspectives and emphases. I begin with a brief discussion of the concept of integration and some traditional theoretical frameworks. Then I take a look at the example of structural ethnic inequality research, which is one of the best-studied fields, to show how migration-related categories and aspects fit with standard approaches in the field. I then generalize this interplay of migration-specific and domain-specific standard mechanisms in a more systematic way by disentangling the main theoretical building blocks within an abstract scheme. This allows for a more precise specification of what rigorous integration research has to offer and how it can enrich domain-specific approaches within an integrative framework. This helps not only to systematize the field and the research logic, but also to point out some shortcomings of current research practice. In the following section, I demonstrate the potential of a stronger emphasis on processes of evaluation and recognition, as well as on dynamic interactions that produce integration as an emergent macro feature. A more explicit consideration of these aspects could further improve integration research in terms of 'rigorous sociology', since not only a general theory-integrative perspective, but also an explicit treatment of the micro-macro link belongs to its fundamental components.

## 2. UNDERSTANDING INTEGRATION

### 2.1 Conceptualization

In the practice of empirical integration research, a more general concept of 'integration' is often not explicitly referred to. As a rule, the term is used tacitly and defined only implicitly, operationalized through the indicators and methods of analysis. This is remarkable, considering that 'integration' is a key sociological concept, closely related to the idea of 'social order'. It is deeply rooted in classical sociological thought, for example, in the works of Herbert Spencer, Emile Durkheim, or Talcott Parsons. This is a reminder that the concept of integration is by no means limited to migrants and their descendants.

In fact, in classical sociological thought, it is predominantly used at the macro-level of entire societies. In a much-cited contribution, Lockwood (1964) proposed a basic distinction between ‘system integration’ and ‘social integration’. The former means ‘the orderly or conflictful relationships between the parts [. . .]’, the latter ‘the orderly or conflictful relationships between the actors’ (Lockwood 1964, p. 245). Both perspectives seem indispensable for sociology. At the actor level, I prefer to speak of ‘individual integration’ to avoid confusion with ‘social integration’ as one of the sub-dimensions of individual integration (see below).

In addition to the micro-level of individual actors and the macro-level of systems such as whole societies, the term can also be applied to several meso-level entities, especially groups (see the chapter by Raub, De Graaf & Gërkhani on linking different levels of analysis). At the group level, at least three different sub-perspectives can be distinguished: (1) groups as smaller subsystems for which questions of system integration arise, e.g., whether a sports team is integrated; (2) groups as corporate actors (e.g., clubs), which may or may not be integrated into a larger overall system (e.g., associations), similar to individual actors; (3) groups as social categories, i.e., aggregates of individual actors defined by characteristics (e.g., female older workers). Here, integration is understood as a statistical aggregate of individual actor integration; I propose the term ‘categorical integration’. Indeed, in everyday quantitative-empirical-analytical research on integration, this type is the one most often studied, with immigrants and their descendants as the categories of focus. Although the theoretical emphasis is usually on individual integration, the prevailing regression approaches basically capture integration in terms of statistical aggregates.

But what does the integration of actors or categories of actors into a society mean? At least since the seminal work of Gordon (1964), it has been clear that integration is not a monolithic concept but must be broken down into different dimensions that do not necessarily correlate with each other (Alba & Nee 1997). In empirical-analytical research, it is now common to distinguish between at least the three broad dimensions of structural, social, and cultural integration (Jonsson et al. 2018; Van Tubergen 2020, pp. 377–379). Roughly speaking, structural integration refers to positions in core social domains, social integration to social relationships, and cultural integration to knowledge, skills, norms, values, attitudes, and beliefs. Sometimes a cognitive-cultural and an emotional-cultural subdimension are distinguished (Esser 2006; Kalter 2008). Each dimension of integration contains many other specific and interesting aspects, so integration research is about many different things: educational attainment, labor market positions (structural), friendship structures, social networks, partnership relationships (social), language skills and cultural knowledge (cognitive-cultural), religion, identity, democratic values (emotional-cultural), to name a few. The list can easily be extended. Furthermore, there are some issues, such as health, that are obviously related to integration but may not fit seamlessly into any of the broader categories.

The question of what exactly is to be understood by integration of (categories of) actors in any of these diverse spheres of society and life remains open. Explicit attempts to clarify the more general understanding of integration are rare but become necessary when different aspects of integration are compared in a broader framework. For example, in their book *Strangers No More*, Alba and Foner (2015) consider evidence on integration processes in different spheres of life in three countries and propose the following more general definition:

‘Integration’, as we understand it, refers to the processes that increase the opportunities of immigrants and their descendants to obtain the valued ‘stuff’ of a society, as well as social acceptance, through participation in major institutions such as the educational and political system and the labor and housing market. (Alba & Foner 2015, p. 5)

In other parts of the research literature, the term integration is found to be composed of the triad of ‘participation’, ‘recognition’, and ‘chances’ (Foroutan 2019).

In my opinion it is useful to interpret this explicitly in terms of a resource-theoretical framework (Kalter 2008): integration is about access (‘participation’) to key assets or resources (in the broadest sense – e.g. human capital, social and cultural capital, values, attitudes, skills, etc.) to which society or other actors ascribe value (‘recognition’), so that opportunities for a good and equal life (‘chances’) in these very areas arise. Individual integration thus runs through two basic processes: the acquisition of goods that are socially recognized or valued, and the social recognition or valuation of goods that actors possess. Opportunities are then a consequence of both.

This understanding ties directly to Coleman’s (1990) social theory which posits that actors are linked by interest in and control over goods, resulting in relative power structures and relative values of goods. The social valuation of goods depends on social production functions (Lindenberg 1989; Kalter & Granato 2002), which, on the one hand, depend on (changing) technical conditions and, on the other hand, are subject to explicit social construction and negotiation processes. Thus, the concept is linked to a number of more general theoretical mechanisms, which I will further collate and discuss below.

## 2.2 Frameworks and Starting Points

The beginnings of systematic sociological research on migration-related integration issues lie in the Chicago School of the early twentieth century. The overall framework is usually referred to as ‘classical assimilation theory’ (CAT) and has its roots in the works of Robert E. Park, William I. Thomas, Ernest W. Burgess, and many of their collaborators. Briefly, the basic idea is that a particular form of integration, ‘assimilation’, is, in principle, an inevitable outcome of intergroup processes in the wake of immigration, mainly just a matter of time or generations following certain typical phases. A vivid and perhaps the most famous example of this kind of thinking is the so-called ‘race relations cycle’ (Park 1950). It identifies four phases that are considered to be the typical course of intergroup relations: after immigration, there is an initial phase of intergroup ‘contact’ that leads more and more to ‘competition’ for scarce resources, then to ‘accommodation’, i.e., stable coexistence, and finally to ‘assimilation’. Other prominent sequence models include the ecological ‘invasion-succession cycle’ or the ‘three-generation assimilation cycle’ – all of which see assimilation as fundamentally a progressive and irreversible process (Price 1969).

It is noteworthy that even in these classic contributions, the term assimilation does not imply abandoning all ethnic characteristics and traits on the part of immigrants and their descendants, but rather the entry into a ‘mainstream’ that changes as a result of the immigration processes themselves; assimilation is used as a counter term to ‘Americanization’ (Alba & Nee 2003, p. 19). An important milestone in the development of CAT is also the book *Assimilation in American Life* by Gordon (1964). He presents the concept of assimilation as a multidimensional one, with a natural order between these dimensions.

Acculturation, which is the adoption of the cultural patterns of the host society, is seen first, and it is followed (or sometimes not followed) by structural assimilation, which Gordon sees as the entry into ‘social cliques, clubs, and institutions of the core society’ (Gordon 1964, pp. 70–71). Once structural assimilation has occurred, he argues, five other sub-dimensions of assimilation, ‘marital’, ‘identity’, ‘prejudice’, ‘discrimination’, ‘civic’, will naturally follow.

Classical assimilation theory identified important conceptual components of integration research and was the dominant paradigm in the first half of the twentieth century. However, it has been increasingly and strongly criticized for various reasons (Alba & Nee 1997; Feldmeyer 2018). Empirically, the cycle models proved neither universally valid, nor progressive, nor irreversible – and assimilation did not always prove inevitable (Esser 2004). In particular, the ideas were ill-suited to understanding new empirical phenomena of immigration to the United States in later decades or from other contexts, such as Europe. This has to do in no small part with their theoretical quality and status: basically, classical assimilation theory can be seen as a mere generalization of descriptive patterns observed among European immigrants to the United States in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. However, it did not systematically identify the mechanisms that might explain these patterns (for a general discussion on social mechanisms, see Manzo’s chapter on analytical sociology).

In light of this critique, two important theoretical perspectives developed. One is ‘segmented assimilation theory’ (SAT), as advocated by Portes, Zhou, and Rumbaut (Portes & Zhou 1993; Portes & Rumbaut 2001). Among the key messages of this view is that ‘mainstream assimilation’ along the lines of CAT is only one possible outcome among others. In addition, there is also a risk that cultural assimilation will place some children of immigrants in a worse position, a scenario referred to as ‘downward assimilation’. On the other hand, some groups may be better off if they retain their ethnic culture and networks, through so-called ‘selective acculturation’. The three basic pathways may vary for different groups, and the overall process would thus be rather one of ‘segmented’ assimilation. It is emphasized that the particular outcome depends on several factors, some of which are related to the specific immigrant groups, others to the host society environment. These include the selectivity of the first generation of immigrants, especially in terms of human capital, the ‘modes of inclusion’ of the host society, e.g., legal policies and social acceptance of immigrants, or family composition. There is also a focus on intergenerational acculturation patterns, opportunity structure in structural areas, and social capital embedded in ethnic communities (Portes & Rumbaut 2001, pp. 44–69). Although not always presented in full detail, these key ideas offer important starting points for detecting more general social mechanisms. Particularly in the contributions of Alejandro Portes, his general interest in economic sociology (Portes 2010) or general social capital theory (Portes 1998) is clearly present.

The second theoretical strand is ‘new assimilation theory’ (NAT), as developed in particular by Alba and Nee (Alba & Nee 1997, 2003; Nee & Alba 2013). It can also be understood as an attempt to adapt thinking about integration processes to new social conditions, especially the growing ethnic diversity due to new immigration patterns in the US. It disagrees with SAT regarding some major substantive conclusions, but it agrees with its basic methodological orientation by trying to relate to more general theoretical frameworks and to elaborate causal mechanisms. It is emphasized that assimilation

cannot be seen as a universal, inevitable outcome in the sense of a Durkheimian ‘sociological law’ (Alba & Nee 2003, p. 38). Rather, it is dependent on conditions; it is a possible, and as Alba and Nee would argue, still the most common and most likely empirical outcome; often it is best understood as the unintentional result of individual actions and strategies.

Alba and Nee explicitly see their new assimilation theory as embedded in the theoretical framework of New Institutionalism (Alba & Nee 2003, p. 37), to which they have also made more general contributions (e.g., Nee 1998). The basic ingredients are the idea of goal-directed action by individual and corporate actors relying on bounded rationality, important boundaries arising from cultural beliefs, and institutional constraints. Among informal institutions, social networks and the norms they contain are considered particularly relevant. Another focus is on the concept of ‘capital’ and its various forms (Alba & Nee 2003, pp. 35–59; Nee & Alba 2013).

Thus, in these prominent approaches, there are already clear indications of a rich, more general sociological toolbox that can be used to identify genuinely integration-related explanatory mechanisms. The challenge is to integrate them coherently with the main specific mechanisms in the various research fields that touch on particular aspects of integration. In the next sections, I develop analytical schemes in which these different mechanisms can be located.

### 3. THE EXAMPLE OF STRUCTURAL ETHNIC INEQUALITY RESEARCH

A vivid example of how migration-related integration research can fruitfully merge with the domain-specific state-of-the-art without losing its autonomy is research on ethnic inequalities in the education system and the labor market. Despite the multidimensionality of integration, these two structural areas of integration still account for a large share of visible empirical integration research. This emphasis on the structural dimension is partly due to its substantive importance, as education and work are core areas that provide key resources that are important for many other areas of life; thus, the traditional view is that the structural areas are the key dimension of integration (Gordon 1964). In part, the weight given to education and the labor market is certainly also a matter of data availability: large data sets are needed to study ethnic minorities, and existing large-scale data sets, such as census data, cover just these structural aspects comparatively well.

The natural starting point for ethnic inequality research is general social inequality and stratification research (see also the chapter by Jæger on cultural capital and educational inequality). Here, much mainstream research has followed the heuristic scheme of the so-called OED triangle, that is, the theoretical and empirical relationships of class of origin, class of education, and class of destination (Breen 2004; Breen & Müller 2020). Ethnic inequality research has explicitly or implicitly extended this scheme by adding additional pathways from migration-related categories that lead to the MOED diagram shown in Figure 8.1 (Kalter et al. 2007; Heath et al. 2008).

This scheme is helpful in identifying the parts that are genuinely migration-related and the more general parts of the analytical endeavor. The questions of how much the class

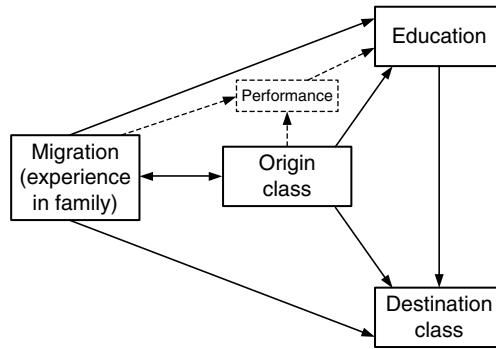


Figure 8.1 The MOED diagram

of origin affects education ( $O \rightarrow E$ ), how much education affects the class of destination ( $E \rightarrow D$ ), and how much the class of origin affects the class of destination ( $O \rightarrow D$ ) clearly belong in the realm of general social stratification research. The specific pathways linking migration experience to the other nodes are then the add-ons to the study of migration-related integration processes. In the example, they concern how strongly migration experience in the family is correlated with class of origin ( $M \rightarrow O$ ), how strongly migration experience directly influences the educational attainment ( $M \rightarrow E$ ), and how strongly migration experience directly influences the destination class ( $M \rightarrow D$ ).

If one wanted to very briefly summarize the most important findings of this line of research, the result would be that ethnic inequalities are in most cases actually hidden class inequalities, i.e., largely due to general social inequality mechanisms. In other words, the main route from  $M$  to  $D$  is through  $O$  and  $E$ . For most minority groups in most Western countries, ethnic inequalities in the labor market are strongly a matter of education (e.g., Heath & Cheung 2007), and ethnic differences in educational attainment are strongly a matter of class of origin (e.g., Heath & Brinbaum 2014). However, while socioeconomic background may be the most important factor behind current patterns of structural ethnic inequality, it cannot tell the whole story, i.e., the other pathways are important as well. Even controlling for socioeconomic background, some ethnic groups do better in education than others, and even controlling for education, one finds notable differences between ethnic groups in labor market success. These residual effects of ethnic group membership ( $M \rightarrow E$ ,  $M \rightarrow D$ ) are often referred to as ‘ethnic penalties’ or ‘ethnic premia’ (Heath & Brinbaum 2014).

The analytic scheme can be easily extended and made more complex through finer-grained paths. For example, influenced by Boudon’s (1974) famous distinction, an entire branch of social inequality research has been concerned with disentangling ‘primary effects’ and ‘secondary effects’ of social origin (Jackson 2013). This idea is integrated by the dotted box and lines in Figure 8.1. Primary effects refer to the influence of social origin on achievement ( $O \rightarrow P$ ), while secondary effects are direct effects of social origin on educational achievement ( $O \rightarrow E$ ), often called ‘choice effects’. Accordingly, ethnic primary effects ( $M \rightarrow P$ ) and ethnic secondary effects ( $M \rightarrow E$ , controlled for  $P$  and  $O$ ) can further be added. An important empirical finding in available studies is that ethnic secondary

effects tend to appear positive for almost all migrant minority groups in all countries studied so far. This means that the members of these minority groups make more ambitious choices given their educational performance than do the members of the majority group (Brinbaum & Cebolla-Boado 2007; Van de Werfhorst & Van Tubergen 2007; Kristen & Dollmann 2010; Jackson et al. 2012; Dollmann 2017).

#### 4. ELEMENTS OF THE ANALYTICAL TOOLBOX

Because integration is a cross-cutting issue that touches on many subfields of sociology and other neighboring disciplines, the stringency of research is highly dependent on the theoretical and methodological state of affairs in other fields. As in the example of structural integration above, much of the existing integration research can be understood as basically adding a migration-related category – such as migration experience, generational status, or ethnicity – to customary analyses of social phenomena. The basic task is to establish and test bridge hypotheses about how these categories add to or influence the standard domain-specific mechanisms. In this section, I try to identify some important overarching theoretical building blocks of integration theory that – despite all the field-specific peculiarities – are common starting points in this endeavor. For this purpose, I generalize the scheme for the example of structural integration above (Figure 8.1) to apply it to any aspect of integration.

In the simplest version (Figure 8.2), there is an interest in a particular outcome that is used as an indicator of integration. There are now important domain-specific causes that have an impact on this outcome – via standard mechanisms that need to be specified by domain-specific theories. If the outcome is destination class, an important standard cause is educational attainment; if the outcome is educational attainment, an important standard cause is educational performance; if the outcome is educational performance, a major standard cause is origin class. So the MOED diagram above (Figure 8.1) and its extension to include performance and primary and secondary effects can be seen as iterations of this idea. However, the idea can also be applied to many other aspects of integration: if the outcome were health, a primary standard cause could be age; if the outcome were

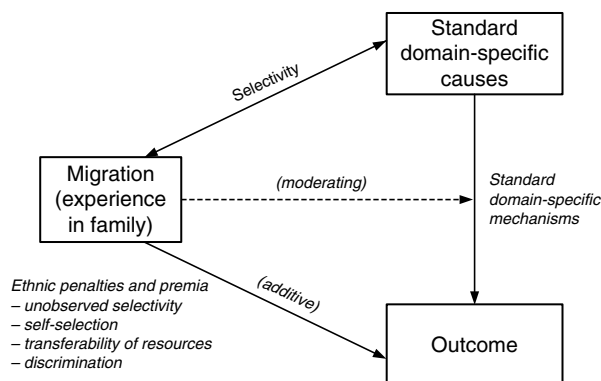


Figure 8.2 *A generalized basic triad*



friendship, a primary standard cause could be the opportunity to meet, to name only two of many possible examples.

In addition to the standard domain-specific mechanisms, there are then two fundamental questions that need to be answered by integration research: (1) is the migration-related category correlated with the standard causes or factors, and if so: why? This is the question of selectivity. (2) Does the migration-related category have an influence on these outcomes that is independent of these standard causes, and if so: why? This is the question of ethnic penalties or premia. They can either be thought of and appear as additive effects that complement the main domain-specific standard causes and mechanisms in producing the outcome, or they can take the form of interaction effects determining if or how strongly the standard domain-specific mechanisms take effect.

It should be emphasized that in a concrete case of application, it is certainly not satisfactory to merely juxtapose these different strands of mechanisms. In order to truly integrate the standard domain-specific mechanisms with the migration-specific mechanisms, something like a common theoretical framework is needed. As briefly indicated above, new institutionalism or, largely overlapping, a generalized resource-investment and social production function perspective provide such general frameworks. They have proved successful in many subfields of sociology, as can be seen in several chapters of this handbook. And they can integrate some of the key entry points to identify the more detailed mechanisms behind selectivity and ethnic penalties or premia, which I will discuss in the following section.

#### **4.1 Selectivity**

A key to understanding integration processes is the selectivity of immigration, i.e., the fact that the resource endowment of immigrants often differs from the typical resource endowment of the mainstream population in a receiving country. The most obvious factor contributing to the explanation is certainly a general difference between the average resource endowment in the origin country as compared with the receiving country. But selectivity goes beyond this. It has long been known that migrants are generally not just a random sample of the origin country's population (Lee 1966), i.e., there is also selectivity in out-migration. The explanation of this lies in the realm of migration theory. The neo-classical micro-economic theory of migration (Sjaastad 1962), for example, allows one to derive straightforward hypotheses about the age-selectivity of emigration. Important contributions to the selectivity of human capital have been made by Borjas (1987, 1994). He has shown that, in addition to specific demand and supply differences, the difference in the inequality structure between destination and origin countries is also important for selectivity with respect to human capital. If inequality is higher in the destination country, this may attract more highly skilled migration; if the inequality structure is lower in the destination country, this is likely to attract relatively more low-skilled migration.

Selectivity also relates to other resources. For example, the social-capital hypothesis of migration (Massey & Espinosa 1997) leads to derivations about the endowment with intra-ethnic relative to inter-ethnic social capital of different cohorts of immigrants in the destination country, which then might be crucial for their structural integration (Kalter & Kogan 2014). Selectivity is also important with respect to more psychological, often unobserved characteristics – this will be taken up in the next section.

Mechanisms of intergenerational transmission can transfer selectivity in various aspects from direct immigrants to their children and grandchildren to some extent (Nauck 2001; Casey & Dustman 2008; Luthra & Soehl 2015; Soehl 2016). The above example of structural integration (Figure 8.1) essentially deals with the intergenerational transmission of class and shows that the transmission process itself can be conceptualized according to the generalized scheme in Figure 8.2.

## 4.2 Ethnic Penalties and Premia

According to the general scheme in Figure 8.2, ethnic penalties and premia refer to mechanisms that explain outcomes that are not captured by the standard domain-specific mechanisms and the selectivity with respect to the standard cause (input resources) underlying them, but are specific for migrants and their descendants. In the following, I distinguish four more abstract starting points to identify such mechanisms: unobserved selectivity, self-selection, transferability of resources, and discrimination.<sup>2</sup>

### 4.2.1 Unobserved selectivity

When talking about standard domain-specific mechanisms, one typically means those that are known and common in the respective sub-domains. However, it could well be that there are other general causal factors that are also important for the outcome but are usually not observed. They may be unobserved either because they have not yet been considered that important or because they are difficult to measure. One source of ethnic penalties or premia that emerge in empirical analyses is that immigrants and their descendants are selected on such unobserved factors. A classic argument along these lines can be found in the work of Chiswick (1978), in which he argues that immigrants tend to be positively selected in terms of ability and motivation, which is related to the fact that they have chosen to migrate. This would explain the ethnic premia on income that emerge a few years after immigration. The positive selection of immigrants on psychological factors has become an important argument in integration research in general and is referred to as ‘immigrant optimism’ (Kao & Tienda 1995) or similar terms such as ‘immigrant drive’, etc. Another well-known example of the potential relevance of the selectivity mechanism in unobservable variables is the so-called ‘health paradox’ or the ‘healthy migrant effect’ (Razum et al. 2000; Ichou & Wallace 2019).

Immigrant optimism is also an important possible mechanism behind the positive selection effects of children of immigrants in education, mentioned in the context of Figure 8.1 above (Dollmann 2017). Recently, there have been some interesting more systematic attempts to capture and describe immigrants’ country-of-origin selectivity in more detail and to study its effect on integration outcomes such as children’s educational success or language acquisition (Feliciano 2005, 2018; Ichou 2014; Spörlein & Kristen 2019; Van de Werfhorst & Heath 2019).

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<sup>2</sup> Note that more general variants of these mechanisms can also be among the major domain-specific explanations. For example, self-selection or discrimination can also be based on class.

#### **4.2.2 Self-selection (specific goals or orientations)**

According to the framework of generalized resources and social production functions, the acquisition of resources (e.g., education) can basically be understood as an investment process, where other resources (e.g., time or money) are needed to produce an output. Investments are decisions under uncertainty, where the costs are immediate but the benefits are in the future. Specific beliefs and orientations can thus be a reason why some people are more likely to invest than others. This is the basic mechanism behind the choice effects in education mentioned above. It has been argued that immigrants may have specific orientations, such as an intention to migrate back, that make them less likely to invest in long-term benefits (Bonacich 1972; Dustmann 1993, 2000). They might also make different decisions to invest in their children because they lack relevant information (Kristen 2005).

#### **4.2.3 Transferability and specificity of resources**

As emphasized by the concept of social production functions, the value of resources depends on the social context. Thus, the act of migration can lead to a change in the value of resources that a migrant possesses. This argument is particularly important for migrants' human capital, where many aspects are specific to the country of origin, especially language, but also other skills and knowledge. This devaluation of human capital in the course of migration is a major cause of ethnic disadvantage in the labor market integration of immigrants, especially at the beginning (Chiswick 1978; Friedberg 2000). However, the question of transferability does not only refer to human capital, but in principle to all types of capital.

#### **4.2.4 Discrimination**

An obvious reason for ethnic penalties or premia could be discrimination. It is helpful to distinguish between a broader and a narrower sense of the term (National Research Council 2004). In the broader sense, discrimination is any differential outcome that results from the fact that a descriptive characteristic, in our case migrant-status or ethnicity, is correlated with something that is an unjustifiable cause of the outcome. While a justifiable factor in labor market outcomes is productivity, an unjustifiable factor could be access to relevant social networks, and when immigrant groups do not have the appropriate social ties, this can be seen as discrimination in a broader sense. Technically, this leads to an ethnic penalty in the empirical analyses as long as one does not control for the unjustified factor.

In a narrower sense, discrimination is a direct causal effect of belonging or being ascribed to a particular group. This is well captured, for example, in Heckman's (1998, p. 102) definition: 'Discrimination is a causal effect defined by a hypothetical *ceteris paribus* conceptual experiment – varying race but keeping all else constant'. In his seminal work on the 'economics of discrimination', Becker (1957) introduced the concept of 'taste discrimination' as one of the explanations for these direct effects: a personal preference, an inner comfort or discomfort, might directly cause people to treat some groups differently from others. Theories of 'statistical discrimination' (Arrow 1972; Phelps 1972; Aigner & Cain 1977; England 1992) see a different mechanism at work: if groups differ on average in their productivity, in the variance of their productivity, or in the reliability of tests that measure productivity, rational actors might use group membership as a

signal for their individual productivity. ‘Error discrimination’ then refers to the case where these statistical differences do not actually exist but are mistakenly thought to do so (England 1992, p. 60). Another interesting model is that of ‘monopsonistic discrimination’ (Madden 1973), which shows that discrimination is likely to occur when there is no competition on the demand side of the labor market. In general, transaction costs and barriers to market exchange may account for segments with different returns, leading to differences in outcomes when groups are trapped in these segments.

It makes sense to distinguish individual discrimination, i.e., discrimination through the behavior of actors, from institutional discrimination (Pager & Shepherd 2008; Reskin 2012), which is the effect of institutional rules. Institutional discrimination can also occur in the direct narrow sense (e.g., apartheid rules), but is often a form of discrimination in the broader sense, when institutions unintentionally favor or disadvantage some types of actors (Small & Pager 2020).

## 5. NEW ACCENTUATIONS AND PERSPECTIVES

### 5.1 The Value of Value

Explicitly relating the concept of integration to a more general resource theory perspective helps to identify some problems with the current research practice and provides some important clues to interesting new research questions. Broadly speaking, one weakness of current mainstream research is that it still focuses too much on processes that affect resource endowments, but not yet enough on the processes of how value is attached to particular resources. This critique is consistent with the broader research agenda of paying more attention to the processes of recognition when studying social inequalities (Lamont 2018), while emphasizing that it is not just about the recognition of minority members per se, but also about the social recognition of the resources they do or do not possess.

In empirical research, tacit assumptions about the value of resources are sometimes empirically questionable or tend to be subject to contextual and temporal change. A particularly telling example is the fact that the proportion of majority (non-immigrant) friends is frequently used as an indicator of social integration. If one takes the theoretical concept outlined above seriously, social integration would mean endowment with social relations that are of value, in other words, access to social capital. However, the value of social ties does not necessarily have anything to do with the immigrant background of the ties; this is just a bridge assumption that tends to be true under certain conditions but not under others (e.g., Kalter & Kogan 2014). Thus, using the ethnicity of the ties is a poor indicator for the theoretical concept. The recommendation would certainly be to measure social capital more directly (e.g., Van der Gaag & Snijders 2004) when talking about integration. Similar considerations apply to the cultural dimension. For example, is secularization a helpful indicator, a necessary thing to look at when talking about integration? The framework would suggest that ‘cultural integration’ would have to touch on fundamental values, i.e., values that are necessary to explain the integration of society, such as the acceptance of basic democratic principles. Thus, if religiosity is associated with integration, the implicit assumption is that it is correlated with such basic

values. But, again, this is an empirical question and the recommendation would rather be to identify these basic values theoretically and measure them as directly as possible in empirical surveys. While this means that it is interesting and legitimate to study secularization processes among immigrants and their descendants, there is simply no reason to call this ‘integration’ research.

The concept of social production functions teaches that even truisms of integration research can have an expiration date. In the cognitive dimension, almost everyone today would agree with the phrase ‘language is the key to integration’. But will that still be true if one day it is possible for everyone to communicate with everyone else instantly and in detail via a language app on their smartphones? Values can also shift in structural areas. The Covid-19 crisis, for example, has shown that the recognition of what is a system-relevant profession is time- and context-specific, subject to changing technical production conditions and social construction processes.

Another perspective that shows how important values are when talking about integration is the so-called ‘integration paradox’, which reflects the empirical finding that sometimes structural successes of immigrants and their children do not lead to a positive perception in a society and that thus ‘integration’ does not necessarily go hand in hand with increased recognition (Tolsma et al. 2012; Canan & Foroutan 2016). One assumption here is that upward mobility of migrants or their descendants leads to conflicts of competition, not only over economic goods, but also over cultural and identificational belonging. On the other hand, structural progress and success lead to rising expectations, making immigrants and their descendants more aware of recognition deficits and more sensitive to devaluations and lack of equality (De Vroome et al. 2014; Verkuyten 2016).

## **5.2 Beyond the Individual Level**

One of the central objections to the mainstream of empirical integration research is that in the vast majority of all analyses integration is treated as a property of individuals, whereas it should rather be a property of social systems (Schinkel 2018, p. 2ff; Favell 2019, p. 3). Such systems theory claims to reserve the term ‘integration’ only for the macro-level are certainly too extreme and would not do full justice to the concept either. Nevertheless, there is some truth in the criticism that empirical integration research focuses too much and almost exclusively on the individual or categorical group perspective of integration processes, neglecting far too often the important system level of integration. There has long been a growing unease in the camp of methodological individualism itself with the common folklore of much empirical social research. A macro-micro-macro scheme such as ‘Coleman’s boat’ (for micro-macro links, see the chapter by Raub, De Graaf & Gërkhani) emphasizes the idea that while the micro-level is methodologically necessary, in the end sociology is about macro-level phenomena. A recurring plea is not to focus on ever finer details of theories of action, but more on the problem of aggregation. The so-called micro-macro transition or ‘transformation’ problem is a central challenge in sociological theorizing; micro behaviors do not readily translate as simple statistical aggregates into macro-level phenomena but are ‘emergent’ and underlie complex dynamics of social interactions. This has been widely emphasized by rigorous sociologists (Raub 1984; Hedström & Swedberg 1998; Hedström 2005; Raub et al. 2011; Kalter & Kroneberg 2014).

These considerations cannot be adequately addressed empirically by standard survey designs and standard statistical analyses. In light of theoretical discussions, however, two methodological tools in particular have been proposed and elaborated to address the challenges of the micro-macro transition more explicitly and satisfactorily. Both appear to have the potential to contribute to central questions of empirical integration research as well. The first of these tools is agent-based modeling (ABM) (see the chapter by Flache, Mäs & Kejzer on computational approaches in rigorous sociology and the chapter by Steglich & Snijders on stochastic network modeling). Remarkably, the foremost role model, Schelling's famous checkerboard model of segregation (Schelling 1971), is a piece of integration research showing that ethnic segregation at the macro-level cannot be readily inferred from micro preferences. While the value of findings such as these had been somewhat neglected for some time, Bruch & Mare (2006) followed up on them 35 years later. Axelrod (1997) integrated agent-based modeling with evolutionary game theory and applied it to phenomena such as ethnocentrism (Hammond & Axelrod 2006). Agent-based modeling has also been used to address migration and migration decisions (Kniveton et al. 2011; Hassani-Mahmooei & Parris 2012; Klabunde & Willekens 2016). Nevertheless, the full potential of ABM for migration and integration research has yet to be realized.

The other promising toolbox for integration research is social network analysis (Kalter 2016; Leszczensky & Stark 2020). This field has recently seen an enormous growth in sophisticated models. Among the most important are the Exponential Random Graph Models (ERGM) or, synonymously,  $p^*$  models (Robins et al. 2007). They are already widely used in integration research, especially in the study of ethnic or racial homophily within friendship choices (Moody 2001; Mouw & Entwisle 2006; Wimmer & Lewis 2010; Kruse et al. 2016). These models are particularly useful as they control for opportunity structures, for characteristics such as social class that might be correlated with ethnicity or race, and for general mechanisms of network dynamics such as reciprocity or triadic closure.

In addition to ERGM, stochastic actor-oriented models (SAOM) of network dynamics (Snijders et al. 2010) have become increasingly popular (see also the chapter by Steglich & Snijders). One of their advantageous properties is that, applied to longitudinal network data, they allow the mechanisms of selection and influence to be disentangled, thus providing a relatively rigorous test of causality directions. This is often an important question, e.g., structural assimilation and social assimilation are highly correlated in many contexts. However, it is of central interest to know whether good positions lead to mainstream social ties (selection), or whether mainstream social ties lead to good positions (influence). Interestingly, SAOMs are basically agent-based simulation models that assume that actors make decisions about how to change their social ties and behavior. SAOM techniques are now increasingly being applied to questions in integration research. One example is the work of Leszczensky et al. (2016), who investigate the co-evolution of friendship networks and host country identification with the help of The Arnhem School Study (TASS). The study finds no support for influence mechanisms. But it does show that native Dutch significantly prefer children of immigrants who identify more strongly with the Netherlands, which accounts for the correlation between emotional and social assimilation in the latter group. The study is thus a good example of the importance of carefully considering relational aspects in order to understand integration-related findings.

Social network analysis (see the chapter by Buskens, Corten & Raub) can also help to address the multi-level nature of integration. Network analysis provides measures that describe the properties of the network as a whole, such as density, cliquishness, cohesiveness and extent of clustering (Jackson 2008). These can be read as operationalizations of social integration on a network level. Kalter & Kruse (2014) have used this to contribute to the general debate on the possible effects of ethnic diversity on social cohesion, which was stimulated by a now famous article by Putnam (2007). Using data from the CILS4EU study (Kalter et al. 2017), they show that there is no correlation between ethnic diversity and network density in the representative sample of almost 500 classroom networks in Germany, England, the Netherlands and Sweden. This reveals a new and, in some respects, more adequate empirical perspective on a key question in integration research. The SOAM technique allows us to take this one step further. It allows us to specify hypotheses (about the selection of social ties and other behavior) at the micro-level and to test them by fitting the model to the general network characteristics, thus reflecting the macro-micro-macro character very explicitly (Snijders & Steglich 2015). Snijders & Kalter (2020) show that this could again be particularly useful for integration research; they apply the idea to longitudinal network data from the German part of the CILS4EU study by analyzing the relationship between religious diversity and social cohesion.

## 6. CONCLUSIONS

Research on migration and integration has experienced an upsurge in sociology, reflecting the growing importance of the topic for the present and future of most societies. To be sure, it is also a field in which the multiplicity of approaches and the fragmentation of research strands are particularly striking, which also leads to a certain flourishing of research that is not quite as rigorous. But given the societal and political relevance, there is a high demand for stringent and well-founded argumentation and hard empirical facts. Accordingly, the past decade has seen enormous progress of rigorous theorizing and sophisticated empirical methods in journal publications and also in research funding.

This is partly due to the fact that growing ethnic diversity in modern societies has caused many neighboring fields with relatively high standards, such as labor market or social stratification research, also to become more and more involved in migration-related questions. The theoretical and methodological input and its elaboration has helped to make much progress on key questions of integration research. However, in addition to these more general domain-specific mechanisms, one can identify genuine migration-and-integration-related mechanisms in the toolbox that constitute an integration theory in its own right. These mechanisms can well be integrated into domain-specific approaches on the basis of new institutionalism and a generalized resource-investment framework.

In the past and present, developments in rigorous sociology in the field of migration and integration have always been accompanied by lively criticism and reservations against this so-called empirical-analytical mainstream. I have shown that, starting from a broader conceptualization of integration, parts of this criticism are justified and should be seriously reflected upon in order to lead to new accentuations and ways forward. However, the limitations do not call for less, but rather for more theoretical and methodological

sophistication. While the less rigorous research often has no more to offer than the critique itself, many promising developments are available that could be helpful in addressing these very issues. Recent developments in rigorous sociology have provided new general means to better capture interaction processes and non-trivial aggregations theoretically and empirically. These include, for example, agent-based modeling, longitudinal and multi-level analyses or longitudinal network analysis, which are increasingly finding their way into research practice. These are only a few of the promising ways in which important and justified claims, e.g., that integration is relevant as an emergent phenomenon at the macro-level or that integration processes are two-sided or multi-sided, can be addressed with fruitful, powerful and precise theoretical and methodological tools.

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