INTEGRATION INDEXES: THE LINKS BETWEEN INTEGRATION POLICIES AND OUTCOMES

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This article examines the relationship between integration policies and outcomes, highlighting findings from the Migrant Integration Policy Index (MIPEX). By reviewing 128 studies analyzing 414 links across developed democracies, it identifies how inclusive policies foster positive attitudes, belonging, and well-being among immigrants and the public. The findings underscore the role of inclusive measures in creating "virtuous circles" of integration, enhancing immigrants' health, political participation, and socioeconomic stability, while restrictive policies perpetuate exclusion and distrust. Key policy areas such as access to nationality, education, health, and labor market mobility are explored, emphasizing their critical impact on integration dynamics and societal cohesion.

Integration outcome indicators and indexes are commonly used by integration policymakers as the context or starting point for public debates and policy planning. Notwithstanding these benefits, indicators on their own only have an indirect value for policy planning. The policy implications of indicator results are rarely clear. The results of outcome indicators are not the result of any one actor's actions. Outcome indicators alone do not provide enough information to justify statements or actions penalizing certain groups. The road from outcome indicators to policy can be very long.

To provide this overview of data linking integration policies to outcomes, the author[1] contributed to the 2020 Migrant Integration Policy Index with a full interdisciplinary literature review of all multivariate or multilevel analyses over the past decade that studied these links between MIPEX policy indicators – the most comprehensive, reliable, and cited index of national integration policies – with all measured integration outcome indicators. These studies have measured both 'objective' and 'subjective' outcomes in terms of participation across many areas of life as well as public attitudes. In the

1 See 1) Solano, G. and Huddleston, T., Migrant Integration Policy Index 2020, Barcelona and Brussels, CIDOB and MPG, ISBN: 978–84–92511–83–9. www.mipex.eu, 2020, 2) Huddleston, T., "Exploring the global links between indicators of integration policies and outcomes," (2020), 3) Huddleston, T. and Scholten, P. (2022), "The governance of migration-related diversity," in Scholten, P. Ed. *Introduction to Migration Studies: an Interactive Guide to the literatures on migration and migration-related diversity*, IMISCOE Network, Springer: 325–356.

end, this global literature review identified 128 robust studies that analyzed 414 links between a wide variety of integration policies and outcomes. These findings are generally applicable to developed democracies, as international multivariate studies are limited in geographical scope to Europe (mostly Western Europe) and, occasionally, OECD countries.

Overall, a country's approach to integration policy emerges as strongly related to public and immigrants' attitudes and identities, as well as immigrants' well-being, political participation and several other outcomes.

First, a country's approach to integration strongly influences the public's attitudes and behaviour towards immigrants. Integration policies are one of the strongest factors shaping the public's willingness to accept and interact with immigrants (see simple correlation Table 1, based on the MIPEX overall score with health and the Gallup's Migrant Acceptance Index).[2]

Second, integration policies are one of the strongest factors shaping immigrants' own attitudes, sense of belonging and even their health in their new home country. A country's approach to integration also shapes how well immigrants think and feel about their new home country (see simple correlation chart below, based on the MIPEX overall score with health and the Gallup's World Happiness Report).[3]

In other words, the way that governments treat immigrants strongly influences how well immigrants and the public interact with and think of each other. Restrictive policies create a 'vicious circle' of exclusion that reinforces fear and separation. Policies that treat immigrants as threats lead more people to see immigrants as general threats and treat them in ways that harm their integration.[4] Under restrictive policies, the public experiences higher levels of xenophobia and islamophobia and lower levels of social trust, which leads to fewer contacts and positive experiences with immigrants.[5]

Inclusive policies create a 'virtuous circle' of integration that promotes openness and interaction. Immigrants and the public are more likely to interact with and think of each other as equals in countries where inclusive policies treat immigrants as equals and invest in integration as an opportunity for society.

Inclusive policies not only increase positive attitudes and interactions between the public and immigrants, but also create an overall sense of belonging, well-being and trust.[6] Under inclusive policies, the public feels less fear of immigrants, while immigrants enjoy greater opportunities to learn and contribute. As a result, immigrants and non-immigrants have more regular, positive interactions. They also more frequently develop positive attitudes about their identity, their health, their satisfaction with life, their trust in society and their participation in politics.[7]

Beyond these general links between overall national integration policies and outcomes, this meta-analysis of studies linking outcomes to specific policy areas observes major

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2 John F. Helliwell, Richard Layard, and Jeffrey D. Sachs, "World Happiness Report 2018," *The World Happiness Report*, March 14, 2018, https://s3.amazonaws.com/happiness-report/2018/WHR_web.pdf

3 John F. Helliwell, Richard Layard, and Jeffrey D. Sachs, "World Happiness Report 2018," *The World Happiness Report*, March 14, 2018, https://s3.amazonaws.com/happiness-report/2018/WHR_web.pdf

4 Callens, Marie-Sophie. *Integration policies and public opinion: In conflict or in harmony?* October 2015. https://mipex.eu/sites/default/files/downloads/files/mipexpublicopinioninconflictorinharmony.pdf

5 Marc Hooghe and Thomas de Vroome, "How Does the Majority Public React to Multiculturalist Policies? A Comparative Analysis of European Countries," *American Behavioral Scientist* 59, no. 6 (January 12, 2015): 747–68, https://doi.org/10.1177/0002764214566499; Elmar Schlueter, Anu Masso, and Eldad Davidov, "What Factors Explain Anti-Muslim Prejudice? An Assessment of the Effects of Muslim Population Size, Institutional Characteristics and Immigration-Related Media Claims," *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 46, no. 3 (February 22, 2019): 649–64, https://doi.org/10.1080/1369183x.2018.1550160; Anna Zimdars and Gindo Tampubolon, "Ethnic Diversity and European's Generalised Trust: How Inclusive Immigration Policy Can Aid a Positive Association," *Sociological Research Online* 17, no. 3 (August 2012): 1–11, https://doi.org/10.5153/sro.2643; Eva G. Green et al., "When Integration Policies Shape the Impact of Intergroup Contact on Threat Perceptions: A Multilevel Study across 20 European Countries," *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 46, no. 3 (February 22, 2019): 631–48, https://doi.org/10.1080/1369183x.2018.1550159.

6 Andreas Hadjar and Susanne Backes, "Migration Background and Subjective Well-Being a Multilevel Analysis Based on the European Social Survey," *Comparative Sociology* 12, no. 5 (2013): 645–76, https://doi.org/10.1163/15691330-12341279

7 Akira Igarashi, "Till Multiculturalism Do Us Part: Multicultural Policies and the National Identification of Immigrants in European Countries," *Social Science Research* 77 (January 2019): 88–100, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssresearch.2018.10.005; Sol Pía Juárez et al., "Effects of Non-Health-Targeted Policies on Migrant Health: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis," *The Lancet Global Health* 7, no. 4 (April 2019), https://doi.org/10.1016/s2214-109x(18)30560-6; Boris Heizmann and Petra Böhnke, "Immigrant Life Satisfaction in Europe: The Role of Social and Symbolic Boundaries," *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 45, no. 7 (February 15, 2018): 1027–50, https://doi.org/10.1080/1369183x.2018.1438252; Florian Justwan, "Disenfranchised Minorities: Trust, Definitions of Citizenship, and Noncitizen Voting Rights in Developed Democracies," *International Political Science Review* 36, no. 4 (April 15, 2014): 373–92, https://doi.org/10.1177/0192512113513200; 1. Saul Thorkelson, "Political (Dis)Engagement among the Immigrant Second Generation," Academia.edu, December 17, 2017, https://www.academia.edu/35451971/Political_Dis_engagement_among_the_Immigrant_Second_Generation

divergences in the literature, across the eight areas of integration covered by MIPEX. The greater number of studies and links were identified on access to nationality, political participation and, increasingly health, with fewer, more complex studies on anti-discrimination, education and labour market mobility and limited data available on permanent residence and family reunification.

ACCESS TO NATIONALITY

Naturalisation policies emerge as one of the strongest determining factors behind naturalisation rates for first generation immigrants. Nationality policies are one of the best studied areas of integration policy, with over 30 independent studies linking MIPEX with key integration outcomes. Immigrants' chances to naturalise as citizens are strongly influenced by the policies in place, especially on dual nationality, birthright citizenship and the legal and procedural requirements.[8] Inclusive policies can also boost some immigrants' acceptance, socio-economic status, political participation, sense of belonging and trust.[9]

POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

Political participation policies seem to have consistently positive effects on the levels of immigrants' participation in the public life of their destination country in terms of voting in elections and other forms of conventional and unconventional participation. The importance of integration policies for democracy is well-demonstrated by over 30 independent scientific studies that use MIPEX to compare these policies to key integration policies. Under inclusive policies, immigrants are more likely to participate by voting in elections, contributing to political groups and parties and joining protests, boycotts and unconventional actions.[10] Over time, immigrants develop similar levels of political engagement, trust and satisfaction as the general public.[11] And a strong dynamic emerges between these policies and public attitudes. Inclusive policies are associated with higher levels of public trust, lower feelings of economic threat and a greater sense of a common civic rather than ethnic identity.[12]

HEALTH

The major gaps within countries' policies have major and direct implications for immigrants' health. While more research is needed on the different targeted migrant health policies, the potential impacts of integration policies have been analysed by around a dozen MIPEX studies, including several reviewed in *The Lancet*, one of the world's most prestigious medical journals.[13] How governments treat immigrants strongly influences how well immigrants feel both in terms of their mental and physical health. Under inclusive integration policies, immigrants and non-immigrants end up with similar

8 Maarten Peter Vink, Tijana Prokic-Breuer, and Jaap Dronkers, "Immigrant Naturalization in the Context of Institutional Diversity: Policy Matters, but to Whom?," *International Migration* 51, no. 5 (June 12, 2013): 1–20, https://doi.org/10.1111/imig.12106; Jeremias Stadlmair, "Which Policies Matter? Explaining Naturalisation Rates Using Disaggregated Policy Data," *Österreichische Zeitschrift Für Politikwissenschaft* 46, no. 1 (March 31, 2017), https://doi.org/10.15203/ozp.1585.vol46iss1; Thomas Huddleston and Swantje Falcke, "Nationality Policies in the Books and in Practice: Comparing Immigrant Naturalisation across Europe," *International Migration* 58, no. 2 (October 14, 2019): 255–71, https://doi.org/10.1111/imig.12656.

9 Serdar Kaya, "Social Consequences of Securitizing Citizenship: Two-Tiered Citizenry and Anti-Immigrant Attitudes," *Canadian Ethnic Studies* 49, no. 3 (2017): 27–49, https://doi.org/10.1353/ces.2017.0020; Rezart Hoxhaj, Maarten Vink, and Tijana Prokic-Breuer. "Immigrant Naturalisation, Employment and Occupational Status in Western Europe." IDEAS Working Paper Series from RePEc, 2019; 1. Sophia Hunger, "No Naturalization, No Participation?," *Zeitschrift Für Vergleichende Politikwissenschaft* 12, no. 1 (December 18, 2017): 279–96, https://doi.org/10.1007/s12286-017-0373-6; Oriane Sarrasin, Eva G. Green, and Jasper Van Assche, "Consensual versus Heterogeneous Conceptions of Nationhood: The Role of Citizenship Regimes and Integration Policies across 21 European Countries," *Social Indicators Research* 148, no. 3 (November 8, 2019): 987–1004, https://doi.org/10.1007/s11205-019-02222-9; Zimdars.

10 Mariya Aleksynska, "Civic Participation of Immigrants in Europe: Assimilation, Origin, and Destination Country Effects," *European Journal of Political Economy* 27, no. 3 (September 2011): 566–85. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ejpoleco.2010.12.004

11 Marc Helbling, Tim Reeskens, Cameron Stark, Dietlind Stolle, and Matthew Wright. "Enabling Immigrant Participation: Do Integration Regimes Make a Difference?" *In Just Ordinary Citizens?*, 130–146. University of Toronto Press, 2016. https://doi.org/10.3138/j.ctv1005br1.11; Rebecca Welge, "Union Citizenship asDemoi-Cratic Institution: Increasing the EU's Subjective Legitimacy through Supranational Citizenship?," *Journal of European Public Policy* 22, no. 1 (March 24, 2014): 56–74, https://doi.org/10.1080/13501763.2014.881300.

12 Zimdars, ;Marie-Sophie Callens and Bart Meuleman, "Do Integration Policies Relate to Economic and Cultural Threat Perceptions? A Comparative Study in Europe," *International Journal of Comparative Sociology* 58, no. 5 (August 29, 2016): 367–91, https://doi.org/10.1177/0020715216665437; Sarrasin.

13 Juárez, Sol Pía, Helena Honkaniemi, Andrea C Dunlavy, Robert W Aldridge, Mauricio L Barreto, Srinivasa Vittal Katikireddi, and Mikael Rostila. "Effects of Non-Health-Targeted Policies on Migrant Health: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis." *The Lancet Global Health* 7, no. 4 (April 2019). https://doi.org/10.1016/s2214-109x(18)30560-6

health outcomes in terms of their reported health, chronic illnesses, elderly diabetes and frailty and, even, mortality.[14] Under restrictive policies, immigrants are much more likely than non-immigrants to suffer from these poor health outcomes. For immigrants' health, a country's overall approach to integration seems more determinant than any specific area of integration policy.

ANTI-DISCRIMINATION

The slow expansion of anti-discrimination policies across most MIPEX countries appears to have a long-term impact on reshaping public attitudes, awareness, trust and reporting on discrimination. The links between anti-discrimination policies, discrimination and integration have been explored by over 30 independent scientific studies using MIPEX. While discrimination occurs in all societies, people in countries with strong anti-discrimination policies are more likely to know their rights and see discrimination as a problem.[15] Under strong policies, immigrants also tend to have greater trust in the police and legal system and a shared sense of trust in society and the country's democratic system.[16] Over time, people well-informed of their rights are more likely to report discrimination and less likely to identify as a discriminated minority.

LABOUR MARKET MOBILITY

Despite the limited and mixed results from the previously mentioned studies, a combination of various targeted policies may improve immigrants' investment in their skills, employment quality and long-term labour market mobility in the destination country. Labour market mobility policies also seem positively related to public perceptions of competition and economic threat. Whether immigrants or non-immigrants find a job depends mostly on their skills and the economic and social situation at the time. The emerging labour market mobility policies across MIPEX countries seem to respond to longer-term challenges. These policies can make the labour market fairer for working immigrants by helping them to secure the same types of stable quality jobs that non-immigrants enjoy. These findings on the links between labour market mobility policies and outcomes emerge from two dozen independent scientific studies using MIPEX. Labour market mobility policies can be effective to help working immigrant men and women to gain greater skills and education, careers and some forms of public acceptance. Under well-developed policies, immigrant men and women are more likely to improve their language and professional skills in the country and use them effectively to secure better jobs available on labour markets.[17] Labour market mobility policies also help shape public opinion.[18] Under inclusive policies, the public sees immigrants more as an economic opportunity than as a competition or threat.

EDUCATION

The specific role played by migrant education policies has been studied by relatively few international researchers. Around 20 independent scientific studies have tried to link MIPEX's education policies and outcomes. It seems that inclusive education and integration policies can facilitate

14 Elyas Bakhtiari, Sigrun Olafsdottir, and Jason Beckfield, "Institutions, Incorporation, and Inequality: The Case of Minority Health Inequalities in Europe," *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 59, no. 2 (February 20, 2018): 248–67, https://doi.org/10.1177/0022146518759069; Margherita Giannoni, Luisa Franzini, and Giuliano Masiero, "Migrant Integration Policies and Health Inequalities in Europe," *BMC Public Health* 16, no. 1 (June 1, 2016), https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-016-3095-9; 1. Matias Reus Pons, Hadewijch Vandenheede, and Helga de Valk, "Health Differences between Older Migrants and Non-Migrants in Europe: The Role of Integration Policies and Public Attitudes towards Migration and Migrants (2004–2013)," the University of Groningen research portal, November 25, 2015, https://research.rug.nl/en/publications/health-differences-between-older-migrants-and-non-migrants-in-eur; 1. G.J. Walkden et al., "Frailty in Older-Age European Migrants: Cross-Sectional and Longitudinal Analyses of the Survey of Health, Aging and Retirement in Europe (Share)," *Social Science & Medicine* 213 (September 2018): 1–11. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2018.07.033; Juárez

15 Conrad Ziller, "Societal Implications of Antidiscrimination Policy in Europe," *Research & Politics* 1, no. 3 (November 1, 2014): 2053168014559537, https://doi.org/10.1177/2053168014559537, p. 7.

16 Antje Röder and Peter Mühlau, "What Determines the Trust of Immigrants in Criminal Justice Institutions in Europe?," *European Journal of Criminology* 9, no. 4 (July 2012): 383; Conrad Ziller, "Equal Treatment Regulations and Ethnic Minority Social Trust," *European Sociological Review* 33, no. 4 (July 26, 2017): 572; Conrad Ziller and Marc Helbling, "Antidiscrimination Laws, Policy Knowledge and Political Support," *British Journal of Political Science* 49, no. 3 (2019): 1030.

17 Mariya Aleksynska and Ahmed Tritah, "Occupation-Education Mismatch of Immigrant Workers in Europe: Context and Policies," *Centre d'Etudes Prospectives et d'Informations Internationales*, no. 2011–16 (July 2011): 18; Martin Guzi, Martin Kahanec, and Lucia Mýtna Kureková. "How Immigration Grease Is Affected by Economic, Institutional and Policy Contexts: Evidence from EU Labor Markets" IZA DP No. 9108 (June 2015): 7.

18 Callens, Marie-Sophie, and Bart Meuleman. "Do Integration Policies Relate to Economic and Cultural Threat Perceptions? A Comparative Study in Europe." *International Journal of Comparative Sociology* 58, no. 5 (August 29, 2016): 367–91. https://doi.org/10.1177/0020715216665437.

a stronger sense of belonging and more equitable academic progress for youth of various ethnic backgrounds. Well-developed targeted policies not only help academically for specific vulnerable groups on different education tracks, but lead to higher education from one generation to the next.[19] These policies have various positive academic effects on the children in need who are eligible to benefit. But also targeted policies help out socially, for all students, with or without immigrant backgrounds, to feel safe and at home at school. Under more developed policies, immigrant pupils develop a similar sense of pride, safety and belonging at school as their non-immigrant peers.[20]

FAMILY REUNIFICATION

The many regular changes to countries' family reunification policies can matter a lot to the well-being of the limited number of families who have been separated by international borders. Yet the impact of these policies has been studied by a few international researchers in around 20 independent scientific studies linking MIPEX to these families' integration outcomes. Family reunification policies may be important to secure the family life, settlement and well-being of separated families. Under inclusive policies, immigrant families are more likely to reunite, settle down in the country, find jobs and a better place to live and age with dignity.[21]

PERMANENT RESIDENCE

Permanent residence policies may influence immigrants' settlement and mobility decisions as well as their security of residence and employment. The importance of permanent residence has been considered by a few researchers in around 20 independent scientific studies linking MIPEX to integration outcomes, but much more research is required. Permanent residence policies seem to matter most over the long-term for immigrants to put down roots in their new country and secure more stable employment. Restrictive policies on permanent residence can trap immigrants in precarious jobs and legal statuses, while inclusive policies increase immigrants' likelihood to stay long-term, settle down and secure better jobs.

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19 Seung-Hwan Ham, Hyojune Song, and Kyung-Eun Yang, "Towards a Balanced Multiculturalism? Immigrant Integration Policies and Immigrant Children's Educational Performance," *Social Policy & Administration* 54, no. 5 (January 17, 2020): 635; Elyakim Kislev, "The Effect of Education Policies on Higher-Education Attainment of Immigrants in Western Europe: A Cross-Classified Multilevel Analysis," *Journal of European Social Policy* 26, no. 2 (April 27, 2016): 195.

20 Soobin Choi and Yun-Kyung Cha, "Integration Policy in Education and Immigrant Students' Patriotic Pride in Host Countries: A Cross-National Analysis of 24 European Countries," *International Journal of Inclusive Education* 25, no. 7 (February 11, 2019): 822; Gert-Jan M. Veerman, "The Relationship between Ethnic Diversity and Classroom Disruption in the Context of Migration Policies," *Educational Studies* 41, no. 1–2 (September 11, 2014): 219; Ham, p. 48.

21 Migali Silvia and Fabrizio Natale. "The determinants of migration to the EU: evidence from residence permits data." EUR 28685 (2017), p. 18.; Martin Guzi, Martin Kahanec, and Lucia Mýtna Kureková. "How Immigration Grease Is Affected by Economic, Institutional and Policy Contexts: Evidence from EU Labor Markets" *IZA DP* No. 9108 (June 2015).

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