

IUSSP Seminar on Indicators of Integration in Social Statistics

Montreal, Canada, 10-11 December 2007

IUSSP Scientific Panel on the Integration of Migrants

Seminar Report

The seminar was organized by the IUSSP Scientific Panel on the Integration of Migrants, the Quebec Inter-University Centre for Social Statistics (QICSS), and the Institut National d'Etudes Demographiques (INED), with financial support from INED and the Department of Population and Migration (DPM) of the French Ministry of Social Affairs. The amenities for the workshop were offered by CIQSS.

Seminar Objectives:

The aim of this workshop was to launch a critical overview of the different approaches of integration processes in quantitative studies. Most scientific research on the "integration of migrants" makes extensive use of quantitative data, but only a few studies offer a critical assessment of the significance and the limitations of the indicators that are used. Unemployment rates, segregation indexes, intermarriage rates, homogamy within social networks, linguistic maintenance or shift, discrepancies in health status, crime rates and cultural preferences are used as benchmarks for assessing integration or assimilation processes. These indicators are often used without explicit reference to broader analytic framework and concepts. The implicit or explicit normative values behind these indicators call for analysis. Although statistics are vital for devising and implementing public policies, they are not as value-neutral as they are often portrayed. The way they are conceived and developed are frequently policy driven. As a result, the notion of "indicators of integration" needs to be viewed from a normative perspective, since these indicators are often designed to produce "integration" more than to provide information on a complex and ongoing process. Why and how far these indicators are relevant for the study of integration and to which extent they can be used for policy making were the main questions dealt with by the papers.

Participants:

A call for papers was disseminated by the IUSSP to its membership and largely circulated among research networks dedicated to the study of migration and integration (IMISCOE, immigration research list in the United States, Metropolis, among others). Twenty-six submissions were received, of which 16 were selected by the seminar's scientific committee. The IUSSP Scientific Panel on the Integration of Migrants served as scientific committee with Patrick Simon acting as Chair. A total of 21 participants attended the workshop: 15 of the selected authors, several co-authors, one solicited presenter (Enzo Bisogno, of the UN Statistical Division) and two Canadian PhD students from the University of Montreal.

Results provided by the papers and the discussion:

Papers presented at the seminar highlighted the discrepancy between the policy perspective, which is necessarily normative, the social sciences perspective, which tends to be critical and relatively complex, and the actual indicators, which are often unsophisticated and disconnected from the theoretical and conceptual frameworks used to produce them. According to Rogelio Saenz and Karen Manges Douglas, the role played by the receiving society's structures is usually ignored in most of the research on integration. Yet the dynamics

of integration cannot be understood and analyzed without taking into account the receiving conditions and obstacles that migrants face. Mark Ellis and Richard Wright highlighted the role played by urban space, explaining the consequences of the choice of spatial indicators on the understanding of integration mechanisms. The longitudinal approach, which was discussed by Mirna Safi and applied to the case of labor markets by Anne Hartung proved particularly heuristic.

One of the limitations associated with quantitative analyses of integration is the lack of data or inappropriate collection formats. During session 2, which was dedicated to data, various types of sources were presented, with their respective pros and cons: longitudinal surveys (UKHLS in the United Kingdom, presented by Jonathan Burton), integration monitoring center (Netherlands, by Rob Bijl), population records (Spain, by Clara Cortina), financial remittances by bank statements (Burkina Faso, by Christophe Sawadogo). Each source provides different types of information, which in turn lead to different angles to interpret the integration trajectories. The system set up in the Netherlands by which the various files are interconnected is surely the most comprehensive source but the specific conditions that make it possible there make it difficult to replicate elsewhere. The categories used in statistical sources also have a major impact because they focus the analysis on foreigners (Spain), ethnic minorities (UK) or immigrants and their descendants (Netherlands).

Measurement methods also vary considerably depending on the data sources and target population. For instance, quantitative studies of Muslims tend to focus on the degree of religious practice or of legal and social acceptance of Islam (Pamela Jackson), in particular when analyses of segregation are based on very sophisticated statistical methodologies. In these cases, as John Iceland pointed out, the choice of one indicator or another can lead to very different results and conclusions regarding segregation. An ethnographic approach such as the one implemented by Patricia Vanderkooy for her research on the Haitian community in Miami highlighted people's complex relation to their identity and the image constructed by the surrounding milieu. No synthetic indicator could elucidate these positions in all their subtlety. The analysis, which was based on segmented assimilation theory as formulated by Portes and Zhou, proved heuristic in this case, as also in the case presented by Alejandro Roman in his study of young people of Mexican origin in the US.

National case-studies proved to be quite heterogeneous. One was based on Morocco (by Aomar Ibourk, who had to cancel at the last minute); another on India (by Sudesh Nangia); the last two presentations, on Australia and the United States, could have been merged with the previous sessions. Siew-Ean Khoo presented a commissioned evaluation of integration policies in Australia. The choice of indicators proved to be strategic and was discussed at length after the presentation. Finally, Frank Bean and Susan Brown presented the first results of a large survey conducted in Los Angeles among 1.5 and 2nd generation migrants. Their study attempts to link indicators taken from different domains to build a cross-dimensional analysis of integration.

Victoir Piché synthesized parts of the seminar's discussion into his own concluding presentation and Enzo Bisogno presented the work currently conducted by the UN Statistical Division on the topic of migrant integration.

Conclusion

The papers stressed that integration remains a hazy concept that could be interpreted in many different ways. When applied to quantitative data, either on residential segregation, access to labor markets, religion practices, education, family formation, or to a more complex grid of

indicators, the concept itself has proved to be of limited use if understood as a one way process. The need to pay attention to the “host society” or the mainstream population has been emphasized by all participants. Nevertheless, a more critical use of the data and of analytical concepts can make it possible to produce scientific knowledge on integration. This knowledge is not designed for policies, but can be translated into policy options.

Theories of integration should be revised according to new findings from quantitative analyses. The different theories (straight line theory, segmented assimilation theory, pluralist integration theory) are challenged by the new insights derived from post-colonial studies and more interactive approaches. The notion of “mainstream society” itself has to be deconstructed.

Programme

Monday, December 10

9.00–9.30 Welcoming buffet

9.30–9.45 Presentation of the scientific panel and of the workshop: Patrick SIMON (INED)

9:45–12:45 **Session 1 – Discussing the meaning of integration**

Rogelio SAENZ, Texas A&M University (USA)

Karen Manges DOUGLAS, Sam Houston State University (USA)

“Immigrant Integration: A Focus on the Host Society”

Mark ELLIS, University of Washington, Seattle, (USA)

Richard WRIGHT, Dartmouth College, Hanover, (USA)

“Patterns on the Land Space in Theories and Measurement of Immigrant Integration in the United States”

11:05–11:25 Coffee break

Anne HARTUNG, Catholic University of Leuven (Belgium)

“Integrated or not? The impact of Conceptual Choices on the Analysis of Labour Market Integration”

Mirna SAFI, Observatoire Sociologique du Changement (OSC)-Sciences Po (France)

« Décrire le processus d'intégration des immigrants : apports de l'analyse longitudinale »

12:45–13:45 Lunch

13:45–16:45 **Session 2 – Data and their use for analysing integration**

Rob BIJL, The Netherlands Institute for Social Research / SCP (The Netherlands)

“Evaluating the Social Integration of Immigrants: How to Measure Successes and Failures”

Jonathan BURTON, University of Essex (UK)

“Integration of Migrants to the UK: Data sources and the UKHLS”

15:05–15:25 Coffee break

Clara CORTINA, Centre estudis demogràfics, Autònoma Barcelona (Spain)

“International Migration and Union Formation in Spain: What Can We Learn from Official Statistics?”

Christophe SAWADOGO Ram, Université de Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso)

« Les chiffres de revenus et de transferts monétaires des migrants de retour et les migrants et leur potentiel d'indicateurs de niveau d'intégration »

16:45–17:00 End of the first day

Tuesday, December 11

9:30–12:30 Session 3 – Measurement and theories

John ICELAND, University of Maryland (USA)
“Measuring Immigrant Residential Incorporation”

Pamela Irving JACKSON and Roderick PARKES, Rhode Island College (USA)
“Measuring Muslim Integration in Postindustrial Democracies”

10:50–11:10 Coffee break

Alejandro ROMAN, El Colegio de México (Mexico)
“Education of Mexican Youth and their Assimilation by Socioeconomic Segment in the United States”

Patricia VANDERKOOY, Florida International University (USA) (tbc)
“Looking in & Looking out: Measuring (Segmented) Assimilation of Haitians in Miami”

12:30–13:30 lunch

13:30–16:30 Session 4 – Indicators applied to different case studies

Sudesh NANGIA Sudesh and Nivedita HANSRIA, Jawaharlal Nehru University (India)
“Integrating Migrants in an Urban Industrial Environment”

14:50–15:10 Coffee break

Franck BEAN and Susan BROWN, University of California-Irvine (USA)
“The Nature and structure of immigrant group integration and incorporation: evidence from Los Angeles”

Siew-Ean KHOO and Peter McDONALD, Australian Demographic and Social Research Institute (Australia)
“Indicators of Immigrant Settlement for Australia”

16:30–17:15 Final roundtable, Victor PICHE (Université de Montréal), with the participation of Enrico BISOGNO, Statistical Division of the UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE)



IUSSP / UIESP



CENTRE INTER-UNIVERSITAIRE QUÉBÉCOIS DE STATISTIQUES SOCIALES
QUEBEC INTER-UNIVERSITY CENTRE FOR SOCIAL STATISTICS



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Organized by the IUSSP Scientific Panel on the Integration of Migrants and the Institut National d'Etudes Démographiques (INED), with the support of the Quebec Inter-University Centre for Social Statistics (QICSS).

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