

Measuring social integration in Latvia

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What are we measuring?

Latvian government's definition **2001**:

“The integration of society means *mutual understanding and cooperation* among individuals... based on *loyalty* to the state of Latvia ... and the readiness to accept the *Latvian language* as the state language [...] The goal of integration is to create a democratic, cohesive civil society based on *common basic values*.”

Key words: cooperation, loyalty, language, values

Should we use the government's definition?

Arguments for:

- ▶ Convenience
- ▶ They sometimes give us money (not lately)
- ▶ Unfair to measure integration by any other definition

Arguments against:

- ▶ How does one measure loyalty?
- ▶ Values change very slowly
- ▶ Can't divorce values from social situation
- ▶ Ignores recent work

Conceptions of social integration over time

Early approaches *do* stress values:

- ▶ **Emile Durkheim (1858-1917):**
coherence through common values/beliefs (“mechanical solidarity”) or interdependence (“organic solidarity”)
- ▶ **Talcott Parsons (1902-1979):** integration = institutionalizing common values in the social system

Usages of “social integration” in the 1960s

1. Imposing central control
2. Linking government and governed
3. Promoting self-organization capacity
4. Developing a values consensus
5. Uniting groups in a single territory and establishing a national identity

[Weiner 1965]

Social integration in the nationalism literature

- ▶ Karl Deutsch: “communicative integration”
= “complementary habits and facilities of communication”
- ▶ Presumption of desirability and possibility of cultural/linguistic homogeneity
- ▶ Integration = assimilation

Rationales for assimilation

- ▶ Paternalistic ethnocentrism (“assimilation is good for them...”)
- ▶ Presumed economic necessity (“need mobile, interchangeable workers”)
- ▶ Presumed political benefit (“democracy can’t work” – homogeneous public sphere for communication, solidarity)

Barriers to assimilation

- ▶ Minority identities durable!
- ▶ European minority rights regime strengthening
- ▶ Increasing diversity through migration
- ▶ Europeanization limits room for immigrant assimilation

Integration and multiculturalism

- ▶ integration ≠ assimilation
- ▶ Integration = cultural maintenance + intergroup contact
 - intergroup contact -> Value change (Allport, Berry)
 - “Intercultural competence” needed (competence areas: democratic citizenship, language, history)

Integration and human rights [see Merja Pentikainen...]

In CERD, ECRI, FCNM, others:

- ▶ Integration = participation
- ▶ Integration = equitable access and non-discrimination
- ▶ Integration = minorities learning majority languages without losing their own languages

Immigrant integration (according to the EU)

- ▶ Tampere (1999):
integration = non-discrimination
- ▶ Common Basic Principles (2004):
participation, non-discrimination, cultural
maintenance, interaction, common
European values, intercultural competence

Towards a synthesis

- ▶ Integration \neq assimilation
- ▶ Integration means interaction, not separation
- ▶ Integration closely linked to
 - participation (basis of democracy, core minority right, leads to sense of ownership)
 - non-discrimination (discrim. prevents interaction, skews participation, undermines cohesion)

Our understanding

- ▶ Integration = process of unifying society through:
 - Participation *and* representation
 - Intercultural contact *and* competence
 - Non-discrimination *and* promotion of equality

Realms of life

1. Political (citizenship, representation, defense of interests)
2. Social (housing, health, welfare, etc.)
3. Economic (labour market, income)
4. Education
5. Information and media
6. Culture, language, identity

Indicators

- ▶ Examine participation/representation, non-discrimination/equality and intercultural contact/competence in each realm
- ▶ Identify indicators that comparable (CoE, EU, etc.), available, relevant
- ▶ Look at phenomenon in general, quality of participation/differences/contacts and most problematic groups/biggest risks
- ▶ Use both objective and subjective measures

Policy dialogue about integration indicators

- ▶ With the Integration Secretariat (2007-8)
 - ▶ With the Ministry for Children and Families (2008)
 - ▶ With the Ministry of Justice (2009)
 - ▶ With ? (2010)
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- ▶ New draft integration guidelines for 2010-2016 have 27 indicators
 - ▶ Almost 1/2 look very familiar!

Results?

- ▶ List of 108 suggestive indicators
- ▶ Some authors used as guideline more...
- ▶ Many data gaps: e.g., residential segregation, position of Roma
- ▶ Crisis means situation rapidly changing
- ▶ Very contradictory trends

How contradictory?

See forthcoming ASPRI Book

- ▶ *How integrated is Latvian society? An Audit*
- ▶ ~ 350 pages
- ▶ Authors: Muižnieks, Rozenvalds, Kunda, Brands Kehris, Hazans, Rajevska, Zepa, Šulmane, Tabuns
- ▶ Available soon (December?) in English/Latvian

**Thanks for your
attention!**

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