Evaluating the social integration of immigrants: how to measure successes and failures?

Rob Bijl

www scp nl
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Why evaluation and monitoring of integration in Europe?

- **following /monitoring** the complex processes of integration

- assessment of different **effects** of different integration policies and programmes

- better insight into integration **processes**: by group, by generation, by social domain

- insight into **what extent ‘non-specific-integration policies’** (e.g. educational policy) contributes to integration and equal opportunities for migrants
Common Agenda for Integration
EC, sept 2005:

Common basic principles:
- Integration is a dynamic, two-way process of mutual accommodation by all immigrants and residents of Member States
- Integration implies respect for the basic values of the European Union
- Employment is a key part of the integration process
- Basic knowledge of the host society’s language, history, and institutions is indispensable to integration
- Efforts in education are critical to preparing immigrants, and particularly their descendants, to be more successful and more active participants in society
- Access for immigrants to institutions, as well as to public and private goods and services, on a basis equal to national citizens and in a non-discriminatory way is a critical foundation for better integration
- Other: Frequent interaction; intercultural dialogue; encourage civic, cultural and political participation; .............
3 approaches

* Migrant Integration Policy Index - MIPEX
  - description of laws and regulations per EU – country
  - focus on rules and conditions: access to labour market, nationality; family reunion; anti discrimination

* EC Project Immigrants Integration Indicators I-3
  - building of a common system of indicators to measure immigrant integration in Europe
  - focus on people and (changes in) social position

* Integration policy: synthesis of results from evaluation and monitoring research
  - actual situation and position of migrant citizens in society
  - focus on effectiveness of interventions/policies
Indicators on Immigrant Integration - I-3 project

- European Commission funding
- 6 member states:
The Netherlands, Germany, Spain, Portugal, Italy, Denmark

Aim: contribute to the building of a common system of indicators to measure immigrant integration in Europe
What is feasible under the present circumstances? Problems/challenges!

- **different definitions**: what is a migrant? What is integration? Who is deciding about being integrated?

- **theoretical foundation**: what are relevant social domains? What are relevant indicators?

- **availability of comparable data** in different countries: registers, survey data, qualitative information
Criteria for selecting indicators: be pragmatic!

- Limited number of indicators → establishing priorities
- focus on indicators of results (what has been achieved, performance/output/outcome), not on process (amount of resources put in)
- Permanent availability of data is needed for assessment of developments in time → preferably registrations
- comparability between countries → identical definitions, operationalisations

> NL en DK front runners with reliable and permanent data bases
> PT en D middle position in availability of data
> I en S very limited in available data
Results

- consensus about ‘key areas’ (cf. EU Agenda for Integration):
  1. labour market position: employment
  2. education
  3. basic knowledge about society (incl. language proficiency)

Two lists of indicators:

- 1. short-term immediate indicators: basic, necessary, realistic and national scope
- 2. medium/long term potential indicators: datasources need to be developed in the various countries
→ Indicators say little about effectiveness of integration policy!

Evaluation: what is it?

**Ex ante: ‘think before you act’**
Assessment of *expected* costs and benefits of policy alternatives.
E.g. scenario studies, multi-criteria analyses

**Ex post: ‘does my intervention work?’**
Evaluation of programmes that are in progress or that have been implemented: *effect* evaluation
Ex post evaluation:
How can we measure the effects of policies/interventions?

- **Example:** Law on citizenship education (‘inburgering’) in the country of origin
  - Assumptions: early knowledge of Dutch language and society → better opportunities for successful integration in Holland in the future.

Classical approach:
- (quasi) experiment: experimental and control group
Realistic Evaluation

“What works for whom in what circumstances”?

→ Open the black box

Articulation of Policy theory or Programme theory:

• Contexts

• Mechanisms: behaviour of people and organisations

• Outcomes
Steps in evaluation (1)

1. How **SMART** are the aims of the intervention/policy?
   - specific
   - measurable
   - acceptable
   - realistic
   - time-limited

2. articulating the **program theory**: underlying assumptions, is it ‘sound’ according scientific knowledge ($\text{C M O}$)

3. do a **baseline measurement**
Steps in evaluation (2)

How is the program / policy implemented? Throughput

- ‘program integrity’
  - Management, information sharing, cooperation between participants
  - Input of money and people
  - Variations in implementation

- implementation failures
  - Bottlenecks: not anticipated side effects; appreciation by the participants (migrants); .............
Steps in evaluation (3)

Was the policy effective?

**Description:**
- How: statistical information; experts’ knowledge; monitoring over time: **use of indicators**!

**Explanation: is there a causal relationship?**
- counterfactual?
- rule out alternative explanations
- is the program theory valid or plausible?

**Effect of program/policy may be assumed!**
Problems to be solved

- measurement issues:
  combination of methods is needed to assess effectiveness of policy: *indicators are outcome measures*, they do NOT give insight into how and why processes of (des)integration occur.