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An Ideational Perspective

Jensen, Kristian Kriegbaum

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Author:

Kristian Kriegbaum Jensen

Department of Political Science, Aalborg University

Fibigerstræde 1, 9220 Aalborg Ø, Denmark

Email: kkj@dps.aau.dk

ORCID iD: 0000-0003-2299-9516

Theorizing National Models of Integration: An Ideational Perspective

Abstract:

In recent years, the use of typologies of national models of integration to analyze and understand immigrant integration politics, policy or processes has become contentious. The approach has received a good share of criticism for offering stereotypical, inaccurate or too simplistic descriptions of how countries approach immigrant integration. According to critics, the approach lacks a clear definition and operationalization of the national model concept, it ignores internal variation, it is unable to account for change and, finally, it lacks a theory of action regarding how ideas affect policies. This paper responds to all these four criticisms but from the perspective of an ideational understanding of the national models approach. However, first, the paper distinguishes different kinds of national model approaches in order to offer a precise definition of the ideational approach it develops.

Introduction

Since the publication of Roger Brubaker's seminal book *Citizenship and Nationhood in France and Germany* in 1992, often credited with igniting research into citizenship policy, immigration scholars have often looked towards differences *among* West European nation-states rather than differences *within* these states to understand the politics, policies or processes of immigrant integration. This has inspired the development of several influential typologies of national models/regimes of integration/incorporation/citizenship (different terms have been used) that aim to describe overall differences in how nation-states approach immigrant integration (this paper adopts the term 'national models of integration'. Although introduced by those critiquing earlier comparative studies, it has become the most commonly used term). However, in

recent years, the use of such typologies has become contentious. This paper addresses the main critique forwarded with the aim of adjusting and further developing the national model approach.

Often, countries such as Denmark, Germany, Austria and Switzerland are said to have an ethno-cultural assimilationist model in which (de facto) access to membership of the national community requires ethno-cultural assimilation beyond political values (e.g., Koopmans et al. 2005; Mouritsen 2013; Perchinig 2010). In particularly Britain, Sweden, and the Netherlands, immigrant integration is often said to be structured by a multiculturalist variant of civic nationhood (e.g., Borevi 2014; Koopmans et al. 2005; Meer and Modood 2009). This latter model differs from the 'French' civic assimilationist model by promoting equality through the public recognition and accommodation of cultural differences instead of stressing the ethno-cultural and religious neutrality of the public sphere (e.g., Brubaker 1992; Bonjour and Lettinga 2012).

Several authors criticize such typologies for their stereotypical, inaccurate or too simplistic descriptions of how countries approach immigrant integration (see e.g., Bertossi 2011; Bertossi and Duyvendak 2012; Duyvendak and Scholten 2011; Freeman 2004; Joppke 2007; Reekum, Bertosssi and Duyvendak 2012). Criticism of typologies is often accompanied by criticism of national models as an analytical *approach*. By approach, I mean a particular way of analyzing and understanding phenomena of immigrant integration that focuses on (historical) differences between states rather than differences within states. That is, those elements (relevant to the question at hand) that characterize how the nation-state as a unit perceive and evaluate immigrant integration.

Generally, the criticism regards under-theorization. Four main points of criticism are: (1) the approach lacks a clear definition and operationalization of a national model of integration (Bertossi 2011); (2) it ignores internal variation and political contestation presenting a depoliticized view of immigrant integration (Bertossi 2011, 1562; Finotelli and Michalowski 2012; van Reekum, Bertossi and Duyvendak 2012, 420; Koenig 2007); (3) it cannot account for change (Finotelli and Michalowski 2012); (4) it lacks a theory of action regarding how ideas affect policies (Bertossi 2011, 1563).

The paper addresses each of these points of criticism in turn. Yet, it does so from a particular, yet common ideational perspective because, as I argue in the second section,

it is unproductive to think of a national model of integration as describing both a specific set of ideas and policies akin to Hall's (1993) definition of a policy paradigm. Instead, we must separate ideas and policies and work with different, possibly complementary typologies or models if we are to address the above criticism satisfactorily. This also assists the formulation of more precise definitions of national models of integration than 'different forms of national solidarity and citizenship' (Loch 2014, 624) or 'different ways of including or excluding ethnically and culturally diverse individuals or groups in society' (Finotelli and Michalowski 2012, 232).

Arguably, much of the frustration directed at national models of integration stems from lack of a clear definition and operationalization, making it difficult to know the evidence needed to argue that a nation-state should be assigned to some model of integration at a given point in time. This confusion is illustrated by the debate about whether the Netherlands have ever had a civic-multiculturalist model of integration, as many have argued (or assumed), and what kind of model they have today (if any). Since the 1990s, many mainstream political actors have grown highly skeptical of existing immigration policies resulting in rather restrictive integration policies, e.g. regarding family reunification and citizenship, which appear inconsistent with being formerly categorized as a model of multiculturalism (see e.g., Bonjour and Lettinga 2012; Joppke 2007).

In the third and fourth section, I discuss how to empirically show the existence of a national *ideational* model of integration and respond to the criticism that models ignore existing internal variation and cannot account for change. This discussion also touches upon how to evaluate whether nation-states are moving away from 'old' national models towards a shared model of civic integration, as claimed by Joppke (2010).

In the fifth section, I discuss the ideational mechanisms through which certain ideas retain a broad influence over a political system and structure policy choices. I discuss possible mechanisms through which ideas affect policies as a response to the criticism that the national models approach lacks a theory of action regarding how ideas affect policies.

There are good reasons to take a critical look at how scholars have made use of national models of integration and, indeed, the above points of criticism inject a healthy

dose of scepticism, but ultimately these are not reasons to leave behind the national model approach. Instead, they constitute a valuable point of departure for rethinking and further developing this approach. This paper picks up the torch, offers a response to these points of criticism, and shows one way of adjusting, specifying and further developing the national model of integration approach.

National models of integration: different approaches

Initially, the goal of differentiating between different national models of integration is descriptive and classificatory. We want to know which, if any, model of integration a given country is an example of at some point in time (Elman 2005: 297-98). Scholars use different types or models to classify and compare cases and to increase our understanding of why different cases display different outcomes or outputs. Hence, the usefulness of a typology is a function of how it contributes to our understanding of the cases under study through classification and comparison. Arguably, then, national models of integration are not ideal types, since ideal types do not aim to classify phenomena and have no apparent empirical referent (Hendricks and Peters 1973; Psathas 2005: 147).

The national models of integration approach inevitably involves reducing or simplifying the description of cases to a select set of significant variables or indicators. Still, it is important to note that although a typology can be a useful tool for comparing countries, no particular typology is indispensable to the national models approach. In descriptive typologies, the types are instances of a broader concept, not the concept itself (Collier, Laporte and Seawright 2008). Indeed, it might in some cases be analytically more fruitful to treat countries as having their own specific model instead of trying to group countries under a few different types. Especially if we aim for rich descriptions and a few dimensions or indicators cannot capture the relevant characteristics of the cases compared (Bader 2007).

While the 'national' in national models of integration uniformly refer to the type of cases classified (i.e., nation-states), the model characteristics (i.e., variables or indicators) may vary depending on the type of research question under study. The models distinguished are contingent on the kind of phenomena described and the explanatory purpose. Importantly, how the national models approach is theorized – i.e., how we

answer the criticism leveled at it – is equally contingent on the type of research question under study. For example, we might think of national models as ideational phenomena and seek to understand how such ideas affect policy output, or we might see them as policy phenomena with the purpose of understanding their effect on integration outcomes. These research questions conceptualize national models of integration differently and require different theories.

In the following, I propose differentiating national models of integration approaches based on the kind of research questions they aim to answer. First, I distinguish between understanding a national model of integration as either an ideational or policy concept. Second, I distinguish between three explanatory aims: ideational outcomes, policy output and integration outcomes. The aim is to single out and define the common, yet particular approach of using national *ideational* models to explain policy output. The remainder of the paper theorizes this particular approach.

Ideational models versus policy models

It is key to separate (normative) ideas and policy when we conceptualize national models of integration in order to address the before mentioned critique. Ideas, in this context, refer to 'fairly discrete diagnoses of problems, priorities and solutions' (Parsons 2016: 447) regarding immigrant integration, while policy refers to the actual immigrant integration policies incorporated into national law. Critics tend to equate national models with Kuhnian-like policy paradigms consisting of both specific ideas/philosophies and policies. Consequently, national models have been criticized for being 'dense, coherent, stable and homogenous structures' (Bertossi and Duyvendak 2012, 240), which makes the study of policy responses redundant because 'nation-states can be identified with philosophically coherent and historically stable models of integration' (Reekum et al. 2012, 419). Indeed, the influential approach presented in Koopmans et al. (2005) is particularly vulnerable to this criticism. The book defines a typology of national models based on two dimensions regarding nationhood and cultural pluralism. A country is assigned a type according to its configuration of certain integration policies. For example, an ethno-cultural assimilationist conception implies high barriers to naturalization and

few, if any, differential rights based on membership of a cultural group. Consequently, the approach entails that the dominant conception of nationhood can be inferred by examining the configuration of public policies.

This critique, however, loses much of its relevance when we no longer define national models in this way but only according to ideas or policy. Bader (2007) correctly argues that normative ideas only shape policies and that it 'should be evident that normative models do not determine institutions and policies' (p. 880). Similarly, many (historical) institutionalist scholars have emphasized how political actors often cherry-pick ideas that may legitimize policies they want to champion for other reasons. Daignenault (2013), in his discussion of the policy paradigm concept, concludes: 'The point is not that affinities between certain ideologies and certain policies do not exist, but rather that there is no law-like co-variation between the two' (p. 459). Goodman (2012), in her work on civic integration, also stress that different countries adopt similar civic integration policies for very different reasons.

In fact, many of our interesting research questions are about how (normative) ideas and policies are causally related. Often, scholars want to understand the impact of some broadly shared notion of nationhood or social cohesion on policy decisions (this is probably the most common type of research question in the literature on national models) and, thus, define national models ideationally (i.e., using ideational variables). However, national models would be defined in terms of policy if, for example, the research question regards the resilience of policies by shaping the normative ideas and policy solutions that win in the marketplace of ideas. Including both ideas and policies as part of the concept of a national model of integration simply begs the question because it makes these kinds of research questions largely irrelevant. If we treat national models as a relatively consistent phenomena made up of both specific ideas and policies, we can track policy changes and use them as evidence for the continued importance, or the opposite, of some particular way of thinking about immigrant integration – what Daigneault (2013, 459) terms 'the revealed ideas strategy.' Consequently, this creates circularity because we would be in the rather strange, if not absurd, situation that we do not need to study ideas in immigrant integration politics to know their effect (van Reekum, Duyvendak and Bertossi 2012, 419). For example, this is the strategy that Joppke (2017) uses (at one

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point) to argue that national models do not match up with empirical reality (what he terms model-inconsistent variation). For example, he argues that Danish policies deviate from the Danish model of integration because:

> … the Danish [language] exam is not done with a voice computer but through an officer orally examining the applicant. A negative decision can be legally challenged, which is yet a further element where Danish policy, though closely modeled on the Dutch, unexpectedly deviates from the latter (Joppke 2017, 1157).

If both ideational and policy dimensions are included in our definition of a national model of integration, we end up with a concept that is difficult to apply and too easy to criticize. I therefore suggest distinguishing between national *ideational* models of integration and national *policy* models of integration. A nation-state can be assigned a national ideational model if there is minimally bounded, coherent disagreement (or minimal internal coherence as Bader (2007) phrases it) among political actors about the end-goal (or criteria) of integration and the empirical processes through which integration occurs. A national policy model is defined by the co-existence of a relatively coherent set of integration policies (e.g., requirements restricting access to legal statuses) within a country typically defined along dimensions regarding restrictiveness (e.g., who is targeted, what they demand, and what resources or rights they limit).

One consequence of distinguishing between these two types of national models of integration is that assigning a given model to a case is not necessarily empirically undermined by non-parallel changes in policy and (the scope of) ideational consensus. For example, claiming that a policy change is model-inconsistent with a national ideational model of integration requires carefully tracing whether or not the ideas defining the national model influenced the decision process.

We find two examples of an ideational understanding of national models in the work of Roger Brubaker (1992) on France and Germany and Adrian Favell, especially his oft-cited 1998 study on France and the UK. They both argue that rather consensual ideas about nationhood have shaped (not determined) the naturalization policies in these countries. The basic assumption behind such an ideational conception is, as Adrian Favell puts it, that policy-making follows 'a set of consensual ideas and linguistic terms held across party political lines' (2001, 2). Both Favell and Brubaker stress that the politics of

immigrant integration is characterized by a resilient, historically shaped ideational consensus among mainstream political actors.

An example of a policy understanding of national models is found in the work of Goodman (2012). She argues that 'politics is mediated by policy structures' and that 'the particular inherited legacy of citizenship policy determines the starting point for policy continuity and change' (Goodman 2012, 672-73). She distinguishes restrictive from liberal citizenship regimes in terms of how difficult it is to naturalize, arguing that the existing naturalization rules mediate political pressures in either direction. Another example is Sainsbury (2006), who distinguishes between inclusive and exclusionary immigration policy regimes as part of her explanation of why United States, Germany and Sweden differ in the social rights afforded to immigrants.

Explanatory ambition

A second basic step in developing a national model approach is to distinguish and decide between different explanatory ambitions. What is it that we want to explain with our concept of a national model of integration? The model's explanatory range may be limited to certain areas of policy or life or the kind of phenomena they theoretically affect. Regarding the latter, I suggest differentiating between ideas, policy output and integration outcomes. Is it the aim to explain why political actors view the world through the lens of certain ideas – that is, the emergence, reproduction and stabilization of ideas (e.g., Bowen 2007, chap. 2; Østergaard 1992)?; is it to explain the actual policies implemented (e.g., Bonjour and Lettinga 2012; Favell 1998; Jensen, Fernández and Brochmann 2017), i.e., what the public policy literature terms policy output (Schmitt 2013: 30-31)?; or is it to test whether a national model of integration affects policy outcomes (Schmitt 2013: 30-31), i.e., the socio-economic, cultural and political integration of immigrants and the majority population (e.g., Kesler and Safi 2018; Reitz, Simon and Laxer 2017)?

The explanatory ambition will affect which dimensions are causally relevant to include in the construction of typologies or description of cases. For example, the ideas that shape how politicians approach national policies are not necessarily the same as the

ideas immigrants or national majorities tend to notice and reflect on – and they will be very different from the ideas that explain why certain ideas emerge as broadly shared in the first place.

Like Bader (2007), I also think we need disaggregated, theoretically guided models that contain all relevant dimensions or variables. Yet it seems unrealistically complex to create typologies with the ambition to explain differences among countries in terms of ideas, policy output as well as integration outcomes. Hence, I suggest working with different models for different explanatory purposes. The table below describes the six types of hypotheses that are differentiated by cross tabulating the two types of models (ideational and policy) with the three types of explanandum mentioned above (ideas, policy output and integration outcomes). Each cell or type of hypothesis constitutes different starting points for developing different national model approaches.

Table 1: Six types of hypotheses.

	Ideational model	Policy model
Ideas	Ideational path-dependency	Policy shapes ideas
Policy output	Ideas shape policy	Policy path-dependency
Integration outcomes	Ideas shape integration	Policy shapes integration

It is important to establish these two basic distinctions between type of model and explanatory ambition before addressing the critique of the national models approach, because the particular perspective affects how national models are conceptualized and theorized. In the remainder of this paper, I address the critique from the perspective of national *ideational* models with the ambition of explaining *policy output*. This kind of research question – the impact of ideas on policy – tends to be the prevalent focus within the field, and it is mainly these kinds of studies that critics reference. Indeed, Brubaker's 1992 book, which ignited much debate and inspired other scholars (see e.g., Bleich 2003;

Favell 1998; Koopmans, Michalowski and Waibel 2012; Mouritsen 2013; Schain 2008), represents precisely this kind of study.

With the previous discussion in mind, it is possible to deduce the following working definition of a national *ideational* model of integration aimed at explaining policy output: 'A select set of ideas about the end-goal of integration and the empirical processes through which integration occurs that significantly confine disagreement within a nation-state regarding immigrant integration policy.'

In the context of this particular kind of national model, the following addresses the critique of national models summarized in the introduction: how do we determine if a given case can be assigned some national ideational model of integration, how the impact of such ideas relate to change and internal variation and, finally, through what mechanisms ideas affect policy.

Which actors share which ideas?

This section discusses how to operationalize the national ideational model of integration carved out above. That is, the kind of ideas defining the model, and which and how many actors need to share those ideas.

It is common to define national models of integration according to conceptions of nationhood. Since Brubaker (1992), the ethnic-civic distinction has been used often to describe the most relevant differences between countries – either one-dimensionally or as part of a multi-dimensional typology. Brubaker talks about 'idioms of nationhood' and argues that Germany's restrictive naturalization policies relies on an ethno-cultural understanding of the nation, while France's more permissive policies express a civic assimilationist idea of nationhood. Although Favell (1998) does not rely on this particular distinction, he does assume that nationhood is a necessary element in the definition of national models of integration (or public philosophies of integration, as he terms it). However, his definition is more complex:

> Nation-states … universally conceive of their social unity and historical continuity in terms of a what might be called an "amateur" public theory or philosophy of integration, that combines a kind of functionalist social theory of what it is that holds nations together, with a normative political philosophy that

expresses nationhood in terms of abstract civic values (usually citizenship). (Favell 2006: 51).

This is a more refined, nuanced definition of the ideational content of a national model (see also Jensen and Mouritsen 2017). It distinguishes between a (normative) content aspect and a (functionalist, sociological) process aspect of national identity conceptions. The former refers to 'abstract civic values' that define the ideal end goal of integration. The latter concerns empirical assumptions about the functioning of individuals and society that condition how to reach the expressed societal ideal in the context of immigration (Favell 1998, 15).

Yet, it is important to note, that Brubaker and Favell distinguish national models according to conceptions of nationhood because they believe such ideas set nation-states apart and affect integration policy, not because nationhood is constitutive of national models. What is fundamental, however, is that most mainstream actors share some conception of what the end-goal of the integration process is (that is, what it means to be integrated) and the empirical processes through which such integration occurs (cf. the definition offered earlier of a national *ideational* model of integration aimed at explaining policy output). We could easily imagine mainstream political actors taking share in a non-nationalist notion about what integration means and how it comes about. The decisive factor is that they share ideas about immigrant integration.

Indeed, some argue that recent convergence in West European policies shows the increasing irrelevance of nationhood for policy-making (Goodman 2014; Joppke 2010). This is often presented as a critique of the argument that national models structure policy-making, when in fact it is a critique of the explanatory use of particular typologies of national models that define types according to conceptions of nationhood. Hence, Joppke (2007) overstate the implications of his argument when concluding that 'the notion of national models no longer makes sense, if it ever did' (p. 2). Besides the fact that significant policy variation remains (Goodman 2014), it is not problematic for the national models approach to admit that certain typologies have been wrongfully applied or are losing relevance (although it might be an embarrassment given the prevalent use of some typologies). It only serves as a critique of the national models approach if the approach assumes that national models of integration must also be nationally particular so

that nation-states never take share in the same model. Yet, this is at odds with how typologies of national models have been used to group different countries under the same model.

The ideas that make up a national model are on the ideational level of public philosophy. Public philosophies are ideas formulated at a high level of generality about the purpose of government and public policy based on assumptions about society (Mehta 2010). For example, the notion that government must secure mutual trust and shared identity among citizens because such trust and national belonging is the foundation for the universal welfare state. Yet, as policy-making or political debate move from abstract ideas to concrete solutions, a *translation process* takes place whereby phenomena or developments are problematized (or not) and solutions are considered. Consequently, it is common to distinguish at least two other ideational levels below the level of public philosophy; namely, problem definitions and policy solutions (Mehta 2010; Schmidt 2010).[1] A problem definition is a particular way of framing a political or social phenomenon as problematic that schematizes and reduces informational complexity, while policy solutions provide the means for solving what is regarded as problematic.

The specific definition of a problem affects the kinds of policy solutions that appear as suitable and, above that, public philosophies serve as a kind of meta-problem definition that provides a heuristic for the understanding of more specific problems. Still, each step in this translation process leaves substantial room for varying interpretations and other factors—material, institutional, or ideational— influencing which interpretation a political actor chooses. Hence, a national model of integration can be said to exist when a public philosophy is shared by so many political actors that the political debate only gives serious consideration to a limited range of policy solutions because said political actors tend to agree on which integration phenomena are problematic and why. This way of theorizing national ideational models of integration means that we cannot conclude

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[1] Within policy solutions, Peter Hall further distinguishes between 'instrument settings' and 'the instruments themselves' (Hall 1993: 279). The former denotes the level at which the policy solution is set; for example, whether a language requirement is set at a low or high proficiency level.

that no national model is present just because different policy solutions are discussed in political debates,. In order to show that a national model is not present and working, one must show that mainstream actors base their positions on different philosophical notions about integration.

Who and how many, then, must take share in the same set of philosophical ideas about integration before it is reasonable to state that a national model is present? I do not think there is a clear answer to this question, but it is something a study of the impact of national models must provide an answer to in order to have a transparent method of analysis. However, it is unreasonable to demand that all political actors share the same philosophical ideas. For such ideas to have a stable impact on policy, only a significant majority of the relevant group of actors needs to take share. What constitute the relevant group are those with power to decide on policy. For example, studies are often interested in the ideas political parties subscribe to because these actors have the constitutional power to decide on national policy. In this case, it does not necessarily undermine a national models approach that radical parties on the left and right have other ideas about integration than the mainstream political parties. It is arguably more important in most cases that the large mainstream (bloc) parties (in multiparty systems) or shifting governments share similar philosophical notions about integration (either explicitly or tacitly by not contesting them).

Yet, other studies might be interested in the degree to which there is a national model of integration present in how bureaucrats reason about integration when implementing policy or in how local politicians think about local integration policies and initiatives (Dekker et al. 2015; Poppelaars and Scholten 2008). It makes sense to say that the more widespread acceptance of some set of philosophical ideas about integration – synchronically and diachronically – the more embedded those ideas are in society. Therefore, if both national and local politicians, bureaucrats and frontline workers reason about integration using the same set of philosophical ideas over an extended period, we can speak of a strongly embedded national model of integration. Still, if we want to know why a majority of national politicians chose some specific set of integration policies, we investigate the ideas put forth in the decision-making process to see whether a national ideational model of integration seem to wield influence. If we demonstrate that a majority

of national politicians across the left-right divide used the same set of philosophical ideas as the basis for a policy decision and that it is not simply a deviation from previous decisions, we conclude that a national model of integration was present and informed the decision. This conclusion does not lose validity because other actors such as bureaucrats, local politicians or voters, for that matter, did not take share in those ideas.

Policy change and internal variation

A common criticism of the national models approach is that it cannot account for change and 'falls into the trap of ideational determinism' (Boswell and Hampshire 2017, 2). The basic criticism is that when these models are treated as relatively 'dense, coherent, stable and homogenous [ideational] structures' (Bertossi and Duyvendak 2012, 240), they cannot account for change, and they circumscribe (the possibility of) national political disagreements and conflicts over ideas and policies (Finotelli and Michalowski 2012, 234; Joppke 2010, 17-20). This critique assumes that scholars within the tradition conceptualize ideas as constraints on actors and as constitutive of their preferences. It is similar to the criticism directed at sociological institutionalists for positing a stable equilibrium based on cultural frames and norms (Hall and Taylor 1996, 954; Schmidt 2010). Consequently, we are presented with a rather static and depoliticized view of the world that makes change incomprehensible and cannot but fail when examined slightly more closely.

It is obvious that political actors within Western European countries disagree on immigrant integration policy. It is analytically useless to theorize national models in a way that assumes total agreement on ideas and policies. Variation exists within countries and such variation is closely related to (the possibility of) change. The question is when this variation and change fits a national models approach and when it has a degree and character that significantly decreases the likelihood that a national model of integration is analytically useful. In the following, I discuss policy change and variation in the policy solutions promoted in a national context. I have already argued that national ideational models of integration are not defined by a specific set of policies. Instead, a national ideational model is defined by certain philosophical ideas that different actors may adapt

to inform different policy solutions. Here I turn to discuss ways in which policy change may happen even when a national ideational model is present.

Policies may become politically contested and change from within a shared national model in several ways. These have to do with either puzzling, ideational ambiguity or ideational complexity. Ideational ambiguity describes the situation when philosophical ideas do not provide clear answers to which specific policies to pursue. Ideational complexity describes the situation when different generally accepted philosophical ideas seem to point in different policy directions.

First, broadly shared philosophical ideas about integration can create a certain tendency in (incremental) policy changes. Policy might continue to change even though the shared philosophical ideas remain the same, simply because problems are seldom solved by one policy change. Even after the implementation of a new policy with broad support, the problem it is addressing is likely to persist to some degree (if not the same). Decision-makers do not necessarily find what they themselves think are the optimal solution to begin with. Thus, political actors will keep on pondering the need for further policy changes. Indeed, if some political actors have a strategic interest in keeping the issue high on the political agenda, new policy changes might come sooner than later. Still, this puzzling and policy change might remain influenced by the same set of philosophical notions about integration. If this is the case, we should observe a certain tendency in the policy changes considered and enacted.

Second, philosophical ideas may be ambiguous in terms of how they translate into policy solutions. What a civic-assimilationist notion of integration actually entails in terms of say integration requirements is not clear. How does one translate the philosophical notion that becoming part of the national community requires cultural integration into, say, specific decisions about which type of integration requirements are important, how demanding they should be or where to place them in the process from arrival to citizenship? Such uncertainty is likely to result in political disagreement, particular if certain political actors have a strategic interest in placing such disagreement at the top of the political agenda. For example, some political actors might believe that cultural integration mainly happens in the work place and thus will argue for a rather strict employment requirement for citizenship. Others might disagree and argue that a

strict employment requirement would unfairly keep culturally integrated immigrants from becoming full members of society. Yet, they argue from the same basic premise of cultural integration being an important criterion and thus share the same philosophical idea about integration.

It is also important to note that policies may be similarly ambiguous in the sense that the same policy might be adopted in different countries for different reasons (see Goodman 2012 for a similar argument). The implication of this is that countries might converge in terms of policy but remain different in terms of their national model of integration. For example, language at some level of proficiency is a functional prerequisite for integration into most spheres of society such as the labor market, civil society and democratic participation, but it is also necessary for getting to know the national culture with its norms and traditions. Consequently, a language requirement for citizenship may find support from very different ideological positions.

Third, the national model may include ideas that appear contradictive in terms of policy solutions; what I termed ideational complexity above. If mainstream political actors want to pursue a policy that they argue is supported by one widely accepted idea about integration but contradicts another, then they have to weigh the relative importance of each idea. Different political actors might come to different conclusions in this weighing process and thus disagree on policy. Nonetheless, despite such disagreement it remains a fact that they accept the same set of philosophical ideas as the basis for the debate. Of course, such ideational complexity also means that actors can selectively appeal to those elements of the national model where a given policy might find support (Boswell and Hampshire 2017). If there are no limits to the policies that might be supported by some national model of integration, it is difficult to claim its relevance for policy-making.

In addition, how ideas are weighed against each other might be very dependent on context. Thus, if the context changes, we might see what looks like a big policy change without a change in the underlying ideas that drive integration policy. Take the recent Danish acceptance of dual citizenship in 2015. On the surface, it might appear puzzling that dual citizenship legislation passed in a country with highly restrictive naturalization rules and where most mainstream politicians accept a civic-assimilationist

notion of nationhood and understand integration to be a lengthy, demanding process (Jensen 2014; Mouritsen and Olsen 2013). Yet, it was exactly the strict naturalization requirements that allowed dual citizenship to pass. Because relatively few immigrants actually naturalize (and those who do are likely highly integrated), the issue was mostly debated from an emigrant perspective. Thus whereas previously, the cultural integration of immigrants was deemed more important than maintaining cultural ties with Danish expats, this weighing now shifted partly due to the context of restrictive naturalization rules.

To sum up, policy change and internal variation is not inconsistent with a national models approach. Instead, what is required is a considerable reduction in the policy solutions considered due to political actors being informed by a particular set of philosophical ideas. Hence, it is just as much the character of political disagreement as political agreement that identify a national ideational model of integration.

Cognitive and political mechanisms

Critics have argued that the national models approach lack a good theory of how philosophical ideas about integration end up structuring policy choices. How is it that a set of philosophical ideas about integration constrain policy-making to the extent that a historical, national policy path emerges? Obviously, national models of integration can only produce path dependency by limiting the range of policy solutions considered by decision-makers. But what are the ideational mechanisms or processes that potentially limit the policies considered? As argued above, ideas at the level of public philosophy may constrain whether and how empirical phenomena are problematized and what solutions are considered legitimate. Indeed, this basic mechanism limits the policy solutions considered. Yet, it still leaves plenty of room for puzzling and variation within the possibly large subset of legitimate solutions. So what kind of mechanisms might further delimit how public philosophies translate into policy solutions? In the following, I consider both cognitive and political mechanisms that may underlie national paths in immigrant integration policy-making.

First, political actors might be completely 'locked' into a particular worldview that includes both philosophical ideas, problem definitions and policy solutions. When

scholars treat national models as dense, coherent and stable, it is often on the basis of this image of the political actor as a *paradigm man*; that is, someone who cannot escape interpreting the world through the lens of a set of interconnected ideas going from the most abstract philosophical level to the concrete policy level (Hall 1993). It is indeed a possibility that some political actors are locked-in to such a comprehensive worldview, but there is no reason to assume that all are.

Second, the stabilization of public philosophies in national policy-making does not imply that political actors are necessarily so 'locked in' that these ideas totalise the perspective of the actor, so to speak. Sociology has moved well beyond the understanding that culture and ideas are necessarily internalised by actors (Carstensen 2011). Instead, ideas should be understood as resources that political actors can employ creatively and pragmatically in order to schematize informational complexity and comprehend the world - but also strategically to satisfy their political preferences. However, when searching for ideas to comprehend certain phenomena, the process may be constrained by time-pressure and/or lack of creative ability, which Schmidt (2010) terms background ideational abilities. This serves as a possibly strong bias towards the ideas that actors are already experienced in applying. That is, even though we can see that actors puzzle over how to understand a given empirical phenomena, they often fall back on old ways of interpretation.

In a similar vein, path dependency of policy might also originate in existing policies. These are an obvious resource to draw on in the process of translating philosophical ideas to policy solutions. Existing policy is a result of an earlier similar translation process that has grounded 'actors' subjective orientation and beliefs about what is appropriate or morally correct' (Mahoney 2000, 523).

Thirdly, we can also view path dependency as largely resulting from normal political calculations and puzzling and not as a question of an 'irrational reproduction of inherited conventions' (Favell 1998, 27)—as Favell accuses Brubaker and others of perceiving national identity and citizenship policies. Still, Favell speaks the language of historical institutionalism when arguing that critical junctures enable the introduction of new ideas into national policy-making, but that beyond these moments of political crisis, 'normal' politics re-establishes itself around a mainstream consensus on the public

philosophy that came out dominant (1998, 21). The stability of this consensus, he argues, follows from political parties investing themselves publicly and internally in the public philosophy. Once political actors have thoroughly invested themselves, they lock themselves in because of the electoral cost of rethinking their ideological commitments. These costs will be connected to the perceived credibility in the electorate and the uncertainty that arises from having to develop a new consensus both within the party and between parties in a coalition. Similarly, political actors can become politically tied to particular translations of philosophical notions about integration to policy solutions.

This implies that the amount of time political parties actually spend 'talking up' a certain idea or policy will be connected to how risky it is to leave it behind. In addition, we cannot assume that the stabilization of political disagreement (or agreement) around particular meanings of integration takes place because political parties and other actors actually internalize them; that is, firmly believe them to be true. This is certainly a possibility, but political parties might also act strategically and adopt a certain idea because it is politically opportunistic for them to do so. Favell emphasizes that such stabilization should not be understood as 'an example of some timeless political 'tradition' imposing itself' (1998, 21), but as the product of a political process. It might be perceived as popular among voters or serve to depoliticize issues that damage the party. Parties might also find it difficult to abandon ideas they have committed themselves to previously because of the risk of loss of credibility, public criticism, and internal fragmentation.

The mechanisms discussed above are not exhaustive. Yet, they show that it is indeed possible to begin constructing a more detailed, evolved theory of how philosophical notions about integration create national policy paths.

Conclusion

Critics of national models are correct to point out the deficiencies of the approach. Yet, rather than a reason to discard the national models approach, the critique serves as a good point of departure for further developing it. A first step is to acknowledge that certain prevalent typologies of national models of integration are not part and parcel of the national models approach. A second step is to be clear about the kind of national models

approach one wants to develop. The descriptive and explanatory use of national models of integration is simply too varied to talk about one all-encompassing definition and approach. It is equally fruitless to present a general critique of national models instead of directing it at specific kinds of national model approaches. In this paper, I have attempted to sketch the contours for how to develop a national ideational models approach focused on explaining policy outcomes or paths. Four core questions, which might serve as inspiration for future similar studies, have structured this undertaking: What is shared? Who must share it? What kind of change and internal variation is to be expected and what challenges the model? What mechanisms produce path-dependency?

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