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Deterritorialized and unfinished “integration nations”?

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ABSTRACT

In my contribution to this symposium, I engage with Adrian Favell's “integration nation” in two ways: I maintain that, in addition to what Favell suggests, the integration nation recently became deterritorialized by reaching out beyond its national borders, designing some people as “immigrants” and subjecting them to “integration policies” before they even leave their country. Governmentality of integration is therefore constitutive of and for border regimes. Furthermore, I propose to distinguish different configurations of the constitution and power of the integration nation in the North Atlantic West. Bringing in Switzerland permits additional insights into the power mechanisms of the integration nation: the linear conception of the new political demography remains in this case quasi “unfinished” as it is almost impossible to become a fully recognized member through citizenship. Yet, this does not mean that the case does not speak to the integration nation issue.

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Introduction

It was a great intellectual pleasure to immerse myself in Adrian Favell's integration nation. I apprehend his book in two ways: first, it is a fine-grained, theoretically impressive, rich, convincing and in-depth analysis of the crucial role those who are designed as “immigrants” and subjected to Integration play for ongoing nation-building processes in what he calls the North Atlantic West. Integration is, as Favell demonstrates, basically about refashioning a sovereign, bounded national social order in the context of global diversity while being deeply anchored in a modernist (US) paradigm and reproducing historically anchored global inequalities between nations and racial capitalism.

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Second, Favell's book adds another facet to the extensive body of work that criticizes knowledge production in migration studies. These voices criticize the epistemological and theoretical underpinnings of migration studies that reproduce hegemonic structures, namely a nation-state logic and coloniality. Favell's main contribution is to demonstrate that mainstream researchers using the framework of Integration buy into (and invisibilize) nationalism and nation-building contexts and hence portray a deeply colonial view of "modern, civilized, fulfilled and successful individuals" (47).

Favell presents nothing less than a social theory of how and why Integration has been constituted, historically and conceptually, as a distinctive feature of liberal democracies and modern development. As Favell rolls out throughout the book, at the core of the integration nation lies a new political demography incorporating an unquestioned linear view on immigration, integration and citizenship that anchors the power of nation-states in the North Atlantic West: people cross the border; those who are categorized as "immigrants" (a tiny part of the entire population on the move) are subject to pressures and opportunities that will "integrate" them until they finally become full members of the national society through citizenship – reconfirming in this process the unit of a national society. His (pessimistic) conclusion is that the integration nation is, so to speak, the antithesis of a post-colonial order or any form of post-national society.

In the following, I will engage with Favell's book in two ways: I will argue that, in addition to what Favell proposes, the integration nation has recently been deterritorialized and that the governmentality of Integration is therefore constitutive of and for border regimes. Furthermore, I suggest to distinguish different configurations of the constitution and power of the integration nation in the North Atlantic West. In addition to what we find in Favell's book, I would like to present a case that, while it may concern a more "marginal state", Switzerland, can nevertheless bring further insights into the power mechanisms of the integration nation.

The deterritorialized integration nation?

Favell contends that integration policy can be specified as post-immigration interventions that:

are distinct from, and follow after, "immigration" policy as such – selection, border control, right of entry and abode, who is in an "immigration" category, and who is an unwanted "alien" or "illegal", or merely a "tourist" or "visitor", and so on. (13)

For him, integration presupposes a well-functioning border regime, thus, quoting Roger Waldinger, Favell argues that "the typical view of 'immigration integration' is one of the nation-state with its back turned to the border" (13).

I would like to suggest an additional perspective by transnationalizing the issue at stake. My claim is that integration policies are genuinely interwoven with border regimes and form a constitutive part of them – besides being a post-bordering issue. This becomes visible in cases where the integration nation is deterritorialized and where we can observe a fusion of “immigration” and Integration policies. This is the case, for example, in the realm of certain family-building migrations, especially cross-border marriages: namely when it comes to “immigrants” or citizens with a “migration background” (or ethnicized/racialized minorities) living in Europe, on the one hand, and a spouse from a non-EU country, i.e. from outside the North Atlantic West, on the other. In these configurations (and only in these!), national borders are gradually externalized to the country of origin, and incoming spouses are designed as “immigrants” and subjected to Integration *before* they even begin their journey or set foot on European territory. While the Human Rights Declaration stipulates a universal right to marry and found a family (art. 16),¹ such cross-border marriages nevertheless have become a key site for immigration control (Bonizzini 2018). Many Western European countries have restricted family reunification migration, primarily by imposing economic thresholds on sponsors and age requirements on the incoming spouses (Wray, Agoston, and Hutton 2014). What is more important for my argument is that the granting of family reunification rights is in these instances – i.e. in case of the UK, Germany, Denmark, the Netherlands or France – linked to the condition that incoming spouses should fulfil a so-called “pre-departure” or “pre-integrative” language and country knowledge requirement (Goodman 2011). National borders are not only increasingly *externalized*, but also simultaneously *reterritorialized*: they are “outsourced” to actors located in the territory of so-called third countries who are responsible for the language and country knowledge classes and tests, such as the British Council or the Goethe Institute (Dahinden, Moret, and Jashari 2020). These actors have become active players in enforcing the national border regime, *on-site* in the countries of origin (Gutkunst 2015). While a wide body of existing literature scrutinizes the externalization of the European border regimes, it does so typically by focusing on refugees and “illegalized” people, hence on people not (yet) formally labelled as “immigrants” and who have already left their country of origin (see among many De Genova 2017; Eule et al. 2018). When it comes to family immigration, in terms of cross-border marriages, externalization has a different consequence: namely, it is closely intertwined with the constitution of the integration nation. Integration – in terms of language and “civic” policies – has shifted from being a technology of governmentality relating to citizenship acquisition and, more recently, access to residence rights once people are already present in the new country towards an instrument regulating *entry* to nation-states in the North West Atlantic. It can therefore be conceptualized as a border

tool (Jashari 2021) and I suggest the notion of the “deterritorialized integration nation” in order to grasp how the power of the integration nation reaches beyond national borders.

How can we understand the emergence of this “deterritorialized integration nation” and what are its underlying logics? First, given the restrictive European border regimes, for all those people on the move who do not fit into the privileged categories of invisibilized mobiles (such as tourists, visitors, expats, etc.), family migration has become one of the few remaining channels through which third-country nationals can access nation-states in Europe. They can do so legally while becoming visualized “immigrants”. Equally important, secondly, is that nation-building requires the continuous reproduction of the nation – a crucial element of the new political demography that Favell discusses at length in his book. However, what is particularly important, and what I would add to Favell’s argument, is that the *family* is crucial and that nation rely on specific gendered (and heteronormative) family relations in order to reproduce themselves physically and culturally. The family is, so to speak, the cell of the nation, and women are ascribed a special role in this logic: they give birth to new members, and it is therefore important that they conform to the ethnified, racialized and classed representations of the nation, and that they are socialized as “proper citizens” (Yuval-Davis 1997). Similarly, as Warner (1991, 8) argues, “reprosexuality” – the interweaving of heterosexuality, biological and cultural reproduction and hence the imperative of heterosexual intergenerational transmission – is pivotal for the reproduction (and definition) of the family and the modern nation-state. Marriage migration, in this logic, threatens the established nation-state definitions of the “good and legitimate citizen” and the “good family” as much as the boundaries of the nation-state itself (Bonjour and de Hart 2013). The link to the integration nation also becomes apparent through the political framing of these marriages: in the North Atlantic West choosing a partner from the parents’ country of origin is presented as evidence of the failed Integration of migrants or citizens with “migration background” and is therefore a threat to the national host society (Charsley et al. 2020).

Likewise, Favell demonstrates that the modernist paradigm is one of the pervasive and characteristic features of the integration nation. Again, I would suggest to “gender” his argument: the construction of empires and nations also standardized modernist regimes of gender and sexuality. They first transformed Europe and then became entangled with colonialism (Lugones 2008; Jaunait, Le Renard, and Marteu 2013). During the colonial past, gender and sexuality regimes were employed to “civilize” the colonized populations, and in migration contexts today such efforts target migrantized/racialized people (Bilge and Scheibelhofer 2012; Palmary 2021). Ideas of gender equality, women’s rights and freedom of sexuality are presented as settled matters and genuine national values in the modern North Atlantic

West, while “immigrants” are portrayed as incompatible with these values, threatening and illiberal because of their backward “culture”, gender inequalities and homophobic attitudes (e.g. Farris 2017). In the case of cross-border marriages, these well-known discourses become *transnationalized* and simultaneously entangled with the colonialist legacies pointedly described by Gayatri Spivak as “white men saving brown women from brown men” (1993, 91; see also Mohanty 1984). Although, this time, it is the voiceless non-European (Muslim) “import bride” who is presented as victim, whether of the sexist and backward culture, Islam or gender inequality, and who needs to be saved by Western state institutions and, importantly, “pre-integration”. Indeed, as has been shown (Block 2019), policymakers in the North Atlantic West present these “pre-integrative” language and country knowledge courses as a tool that should facilitate the Integration, autonomy and empowerment of these women. The “deterritorialized” integration nation consequently reinforces culturalizing and orientalizing gender/sexuality representations, refashioning thereby the lines between “modern” and “traditional”. The process of deterritorialization is a part of neo-colonial governmentality that strengthens the integration nation, but, in addition to Favell’s argumentation, *without people needing to be on-site in the new society*. Integration can therefore, as Korteweg (2017) suggests, be considered as the part of the border regime, which – to push Favell’s argument further – is a constitutive part of the integration nation.

The constitution and power of the integration nation: different configurations?

Favell accurately elaborates how the integration nation has been constituted throughout the North Atlantic West as a model and based on the logic of the new political demography. In other words, integration nations such as the USA, the UK, France or the Netherlands share the same overarching logic, even if the technologies of integration governmentality may be very different – for example, more republican or multicultural in orientation – depending on the historically anchored different “contents” or local repertoires. Importantly, in Favell’s theoretical framework, “immigrants” who have succeeded in fully integrating as “citizens” reaffirm the sovereignty of the nation-state (22). I will look more closely at two interrelated elements, and thus shed light on some additional factors that can give us insight into the power of the integrating nation: I propose to scrutinize differences in integration governmentality in terms of *how* the integration nation was/is constituted in the North Atlantic West. Related to this, I suggest reflecting on the ways in which citizenship matters for reconfirming the integration nation. We can discern different configurations and I would add the cases of “marginal states”.

Grosso modo, I apprehend in Favell's writing two different models of how the integration nation emerged (and I hope not to reduce his elaborations too much with this typology). The first model concerns settler colonial states like the US (or Canada) and the way they eloped not only into classical "immigration countries" but also into the prototype and powerful global model for other integration nations. In this model, immigrants became "natives" over time and the native population became "national minorities" or "first nations" also in need of integration (15). Moreover, racism and the racial "colour line" became directly embedded in nation-building as a feature of the legacy of American slavery. A second model is embodied by European former colonial states like Great Britain, France or the Netherlands. Coming to terms with the end of the colonial empire and the absorption of the population they had inherited as a post-colonial legacy of global domination, the shrinking states turned to the idea of integration to redefine their continuing civilizational missions in the face of global diversity (2).

I would like to add a third model that, although concerning perhaps more "marginal states", can nevertheless bring additional insights into the power mechanisms of the integration nation. I am thinking of those nation-states in the North Atlantic West that strictly speaking never had colonies and in which nation-building took place primarily in the form of boundary work, both vis-à-vis neighbouring states and "immigrants". Switzerland embodies this model and illustrates an integration nation in which the linear conception of the new political demography takes a different turn. Although the ultimate goal of full national inclusion of "immigrants" is legally demanded and prescribed and acts as an instrument of power and discipline, in practice, and above all on the symbolic level of recognition, it is not fulfilled. Based on a fundamental *nativist* conception of the nation-state and through technologies both of migrantization and racialization, full membership through the acquisition of citizenship is possible *formally* while not *symbolically*. The question is therefore how such integration nations, in which selected foreigners are designed as "immigrants" but not as full citizens – quasi "unfinished" integration nations – assert their sovereign national power.

Even though Switzerland was never formally part of the colonial enterprise, historically there was a great deal of colonial complicity and Switzerland has been described as a form of "colonialism without colonies" (Purtschert and Fischer-Tiné 2015). The Swiss elite collaborated with colonial powers and reproduced dominant racist representations in a variety of ways – for example, by their involvement in the slave trade, or their crucial role in the development of "race science" and eugenics. Also, Switzerland shares with the countries analyzed by Favell (i.e. in chapter 4) that it struggles to this day with the notion of "race" and with acknowledging the everyday reality of racialization to the point where debates about structural racism were largely absent from public and political discourses, externalized to other

countries (mainly the US) or relegated temporally and historically (to the Shoah or colonialism) (Michel 2015; see for Europe Goldberg 2006). Lately, due to Swiss Critical Race Studies scholars and since the Black Lives Matter movement and protests, anti-racism activists in Switzerland partly succeeded in bringing racism to the surface of public and political debates (Dos Santos Pinto et al. 2022). In other words, racialization and coloniality are relevant in Switzerland, although this issue was dismissed in politics (and migration studies) for a long time and although they differ from those in “classical” colonial countries or the prototypical USA. Hence, the concept of “racialization” needs to be translated to this context. Furthermore, there is, besides racialization, a second technology of integration that is of relevance in Switzerland and beyond, namely migranticization. In other words, I consider racialization and migranticization as different technologies of integration governmentality (for a similar argument, see Tudor 2018). National contexts differ, and although one or the other can be dominant, they are always entangled and might play out differently. Racialization is understood here to be linked to this intellectual, economic and political history of colonialism and racism, as well as their continuing legacies and global force in terms of racial hierarchies and representations – what Aníbal Quijano (2000) coined as “the coloniality of power”. Racialization means ascribing people the status of not belonging and not being European (hence, structurally discriminating against them), often because of the colour of their skin or Islam, even if they hold citizenship of the integrating nation and regardless of whether they themselves have crossed the border or have lived in the country for generations – hence, whether or not they are migrants.² This technology is to be distinguished from *migranticization*, which in turn I see as deeply anchored in the nation-state apparatus and its logic (Dahinden 2016). It includes all performative practices that ascribe an (im)migratory status to people – labelling them (im)migrants, second generation, people with migration background, refugees, etc. – and thus re-establishing their a priori non-belonging, again regardless of whether the people designated as “migrants” are citizens of the nation-state or not (see also Anderson 2019).

In the Swiss context, migranticization is particularly crucial for the integration governmentality. The Swiss nation-state emerged from neighbouring empires and was created in demarcation and in opposition to emerging nation-states such as Germany or France and to “foreigners” (for Swiss nation-building see Wimmer 2011). A distinctive feature of the Swiss nation-state is its multi-layered nativist concept of the nation, in which any non-native element is seen as a threat to the “Swiss spirit and culture”. Nativism and migranticization are both reflected in the Swiss specificity of the terms *Überfremdung* (literally “over-foreignization”) and *Eidgenosse* (literally “confederate”). The danger of “over-foreignization” was (and still is) mobilized by populist parties in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries to limit

immigration, *both* from neighbouring European countries *and* from outside the EU (Kury 2003; Espahangizi 2019). Conversely, the term *Eidgenosse* has its origin in the “Oath of Rütli” between the three founding cantons of Switzerland in the thirteenth century. To this day, *Eidgenosse* is generally used for people of “native” Swiss origin with common ancestry, and the imaginary is one of Swiss people with no immigration in their family history ever.

This particular history of nation-building, on nativist grounds, results not only in one of the most restrictive naturalization regimes within Europe, but, importantly, it is almost impossible to become a full member of the nation through the acquisition of citizenship. Formally, one can of course become Swiss through naturalization, but symbolically one can never become an *Eidgenosse*. Racialization intervenes here insofar as whiteness is part of the imaginary of the Swiss native and *Eidgenosse* (Michel 2015). Yet, whiteness or being European alone does not guarantee that one will be considered as “native”. The widespread term “Swiss by paper” is used to label naturalized Swiss – be they Europeans (Italians, Germans and French) or non-Europeans – and creates a clear distinction from the nativist ideal, which is embodied in the often mobilized (Swiss) French term *citoyen de souche* – citizen by origin (Dahinden and Manser-Egli 2022). Hence, in this case, the new political demography, which is in Favell’s theory crucial for the constitution of the integration nation, remains quasi unfinished, given that the result of migrantization/racialization is that all immigrants – European or non-Europeans – can only become “real, native” Swiss with great difficulty.

However, I argue that the power of the integration nation is still present in this case: the ultimate goal of full national inclusion is not only prescribed, but also itself acts as an instrument of power and discipline such that in the end national sovereignty and superiority are reconfirmed. Research demonstrates that non-white Swiss citizens or migrantized Swiss confirm the nation-state by adopting the dominant discourses that deny the presence of racism or nativism. An “immigrant” strategy – developed from the position of eternally ascribed outsiders and non-belonging – is to self-align with (allegedly) Swiss “culture”/whiteness and misalign with other “immigrant” culture thereby reinforcing white, nativist national identity (Cretton 2018; Ossipow, Counilh, and Chimienti 2019; Dahinden and Korteweg [Forthcoming](#)). In other words, full citizenship is not necessary to confirm the power of the integration nation because migrantized/racialized Swiss reproduce the nation even as outsiders. In addition, in the Swiss case – *in contrario* to other cases Favell brings up – hyphenated identities are (at least when it comes to naturalization) not accepted. In fact, presenting oneself for instance as Swiss-Kosovar would likely result in the rejection of a naturalization request. The Swiss naturalization regime, based on old-fashioned ethno-national and nativist ideas, precludes people from becoming formal members if they do not uniquely align with the national container that needs them to be

confirmed. Ultimately, this twist guarantees that even when the membership of “immigrants” remains at first sight unfulfilled, they still confirm the unity and power of the sovereign container that is the nation-state.

Next steps?

Very briefly and in a nutshell: Favell’s argument inscribes itself in a body of work that shows, as I would put it, that immigration is *not* about immigration (research), but rather about the affirmation of coloniality and a national “we”. What sets this book apart, however, is the way Favell theorizes this issue through the lens of Integration. His approach is exceptionally original, perceptive and thought-provoking. What is missing – and this is the point that most (if not all) of us struggle with – are concrete suggestions on how to move a step forward towards a post-national or post-colonial society. Perhaps in one of his next books?

Notes

1. <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/universal-declaration-of-human-rights>
2. There is of course a long-lasting and much more in-depth debate about the concepts of “race” and “racialization” with at times contesting approaches and uses (e.g. see Murji and Solomos 2005), which I cannot reflect on here.

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