TRUST, INTEGRATION, AND COLONIAL LEGACIES

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Sammendrag

Denne artikkelen argumenterer for at kolonialismens langvarige ettervirkninger undergraver vellykket integrering av ikke-vestlige innvandrere i vestlige samfunn, og at den nåværende dominerende nasjonalidentitetsmodellen ikke gjør det mulig å håndtere disse ettervirkningene og deres effekter. Artikkelen diskuterer hvorfor tillit er en viktig komponent i vellykket integrering, og identifiserer og kritiserer fire kjerneelementer i nasjonalidentitetsmodeller. Artikkelen foreslår deretter en alternativ måte å analysere sosial tillit på, som tar hensyn til historisk og internasjonalt utviklede strukturer som påvirker de bakgrunnsforholdene som tillitsrelasjoner oppstår i. En slik analyse gir et bredere bilde av hva som påvirker tillit og vellykket integrering, og supplerer det nåværende fokuset på kulturelle forskjeller og felles normer med en analyse av fordommer, grensetrekning og ulikhet.

Nøkkelord

Liberal nasjonalisme, immigrasjon, integrasjon, tillit, rasisme.

Abstract

This article argues that enduring legacies of colonialism undermine successful integration of non-Western immigrants in Western societies and that the currently dominant national identity model does not allow to address these legacies and their effects. The article discusses why trust is an important component of successful integration and identifies and critiques four core features of national identity models. The article then proposes an alternative way to analyze social trust which pays attention to historically grown and international structures that influence the background conditions in which trust relations take place. Such an analysis brings to light a broader picture of what influences trust and successful integration, supplementing the current focus on cultural difference and shared norms with an analysis of prejudice and boundary-making as well as inequality.

Key words

Liberal nationalism, immigration, integration, trust, racism.

Introduction

This article argues that enduring legacies of colonialism undermine successful integration of non-Western[1] immigrants in Western societies and that the currently dominant national identity model does not allow to address these legacies and their effects. The article first discusses why

[1] I am aware that the very category of 'Non-Western' seems to further naturalize a distinction into different cultural and ethnic or racial groups that lies at the heart of processes of othering. At the same time, I think the term helps to capture which groups this article focuses on, namely those that are perceived as falling outside the Western cultural sphere by those who count themselves as belonging to that Western sphere, without having to specify which groups are meant. This accounts both for what is a historically changing concepts of who exactly is 'Non-Western' and underlines that it is not the actual countries of origin or ethnic or cultural group someone is part of but the external perceptions and constructions of it that are the focus of this article.

Nordlit 53, 2025 https://doi.org/10.7557/13.8424

trust is an important component of successful integration, ensuring social cohesion and fair equality of opportunity (section 1). Section 2 identifies four core features of national identity models and section 3 presents a critique of each of them. The article argues that national identity models of trust and integration ought to analyze questions of social trust within a model that recognizes how groups are embedded in historic and international structures which influence the background conditions in which they meet and decide whether to trust each other or not. It shows that such an analysis brings to light a broader picture of what influences trust and successful integration, supplementing the current focus on cultural difference and shared norms with an analysis of prejudice and boundary-making as well as inequality.

1 Trust and integration

Integration and trust are connected in several ways and to understand these links, it is helpful to first start with a definition of integration. I will here rely on Elizabeth Anderson's (2010) understanding of an integrated society in which different groups interact across different spheres of society on terms of equality. The opposite of integration thus is segregation, the carving up of a society in distinct groups which do not interact and cooperate with each other. These groups often occupy fixed positions both geographically, that is, where they live, and socially, that is what work they do and where on the social ladder they stand. Integration so understood is not assimilation. That is, it is not about creating a uniform society in which there are no different group identities. Rather, as Anderson argues, integration is an issue of social justice. In a segregated society, political equality is undermined as groups are less likely to form coalitions and more likely to appeal to group-based interests, which allows majority representatives to cater only to the interests of their electorate, leaving out the interests and concerns of disadvantaged minority groups (Anderson 2010). This political inequality is exacerbated if some of these minority groups, like immigrants before their naturalization, have no or only very restricted voting rights.

Apart from political inequality, segregation also leads to social and economic inequalities. Disadvantaged groups are excluded from (informal) networks of cooperation and information, which would help them to access jobs, business connections, and other resources such as housing, political influence, educational opportunities etc. These groups are thereby cut off from the social capital which would allow them upwards social mobility. A lack of integration thus entrenches social inequalities, partially by undermining effective equality of opportunity. Valerie Soon (2023) describes how social mobility depends on connections with a variety of different actors and how processes in which people sort themselves into groups in accordance with their social identities can impede such social mobility. She (Soon 2023, 2) concludes "The result is that freedom of association undermines fair equality of opportunity. […] It is a special case of exclusion, in which exercises of freedom of association perpetuate social inequalities."

A lack of integration thus leads to enduring group inequality and in the following I will argue that 1) it does so at least partially through mechanisms of distrust which have been scrutinized too little by political theorists interested in the ethics of integration and inequality and 2) that many of the groups most affected by such inequality caused by distrust and segregation are groups with a colonial history. Before examining more closely the specific mechanisms through which distrust and colonial legacies are connected, we should first establish how both trust and distrust relate to integration and segregation.

Trusting someone means to rely on the other person to act in a way that is not harmful (and ideally beneficial) to us even though they could act differently. Trust is thus an integral part of any cooperation and the more trust there is, the more cooperation there will be and the more opportunities will the people trusting each other have (Putnam 2001; Fukuyama 1996). Trust therefore constitutes a form of social capital. On the individual level, social capital describes the access of actors to advantages through membership in social networks and their position in them (Portes 1998; Bourdieu 2002). This aspect of trust as social capital connects directly with equality of opportunity and the preservation of group privilege in the context of immigration. Trust as a form of social capital affects the opportunities one has. Trust structures access to other forms of capital and resources by enabling us to have mutually advantageous cooperation. Relations of trust thus play an essential role in distributing resources and (dis)advantages.

If we trust the right people and are trusted by many, we have higher access to cooperative networks and the resources they distribute. If we are trusted by fewer people or trust the wrong people, our access to resources will diminish. For example, when applying for a job or for renting an apartment, belonging to a group that is generally trusted gives one a strong competitive advantage. In contrast, belonging to a group that is not trusted leads to informal discrimination and exclusion as data on immigrants' experiences when searching for jobs or housing show (Harrison et al. 2005; Teixeira 2008). Lasting group-based inequalities, exclusion, and discrimination can result from such a lack of social capital (Putnam 2001; Anderson 2010; Tilly 2009). Patterns of trust relating to group membership entrench and uphold privileges and exclude others from accessing the cooperative ties and relationships that produce these privileges. Therefore, a lack of trust towards a group will lead to their segregation and deprive them of social capital. Even in the presence of formal equality of opportunity they might experience disadvantages compared to groups that enjoy higher levels of trust by the relevant social networks. Conversely, strong trust between members of different groups ensures an integrated society, in which members of all groups have better opportunities for collaboration and in which access to resources and opportunities is also open to them.

Discussions about integration and trust are not just connected to social and democratic inequality, but also to other goods central to liberal democracies such as social cohesion, solidarity, and support for redistributive welfare states. Trust acts as a foundational component of social cohesion, which is related to integration, as it also describes a society in which members feel that they belong together and therefore engage in cooperation and show trust and solidarity (Holtug 2021). Similarly, trust is seen as supporting redistributive welfare measures as people trust each other to contribute to the common good and their institutions to distribute resources fairly.

In the last case, we can see two forms of trust at work: social and institutional trust. Institutional trust is not directly aimed at persons as individuals but rather at persons in their institutional roles, such as doctors, judges, or politicians. Here we may trust that a politician advocates for policies which they believe furthers the common good, or trust that a judge is impartial. Social trust, in contrast, is the generalized trust that we have in unknown others, such as strangers we meet on the street or people we never actually meet – which applies to the majority of our co-citizens. We encounter this type of trust when we, for example, think about whether it is safe to rent our apartment to an unknown tenant, whether other citizens can be trusted to pay their taxes instead of freeriding. It is therefore different from particularized trust, which is the trust we have in known others, such as our friends or family.

For the purposes of this article, social trust is central as it is the kind of trust which transforms into the social capital that allows actors which do not know each other well to cooperate. It

builds the bridges which link members of different groups together and thus leads to integration and social cohesion. Consequently, if we care about successful integration and the goods it secures, we need to care about social trust and its preconditions. In the following section, I will discuss how the question of trust and integration has been predominantly addressed by a national identity model of immigrant integration and has been framed through the 'liberal's dilemma,' – the notion that diversity and high social trust cannot be achieved together. I will draw out four core features of this approach and will subsequently criticize them for not taking into account the colonial background structures which influence the preconditions for trust and integration, and thereby social equality.

2 The national identity model of social trust and integration

The question of trust and integration has garnered the most attention in discussions about immigrant integration. These discussions often take as their starting point Robert Putnam's (2007) 'constrict hypothesis.' This hypothesis says that as societies get more diverse, general trust decreases. This connection between trust and diversity on the one hand and trust and liberal democratic values such as solidarity and redistribution on the other hand has let political theorists to speak of a liberal's or progressive's dilemma (Kymlicka 2015; Banting 2010; Kumlin and Rothstein 2010; Miller and Ali 2014). The dilemma is that liberals seemingly have to choose between two ideals that they value: that of a tolerant and multicultural society within which cultural rights are respected as an expression of respect for and equality of different groups (Kymlicka 1996), and that of a cohesive and social democratic welfare state. Underlying this view of the liberal's dilemma is what I call the national identity view of trust and integration.

The national identity view of trust assumes that a shared national identity or culture leads to trust and thus is necessary for an integrated society. David Miller (1995), for example, argues that a shared national culture generates a feeling of belonging together which in turn leads to trust and solidarity between those who see themselves as one people or nation. His hypothesis is supported by sociological and psychological research about the 'minimal group' paradigm. It shows that in-group members are generally trusted more than out-group members (Woitzel et al. 2024) and that group belonging can be structured around minimal categories of belonging (Tajfel et al. 1971; Bloemraad et al. 2023), in this case a shared national identity. Shared norms and values have come to occupy a central place in this discussion. First, shared norms and values are often a core component through which a group defines itself as a distinctive and cohesive nation. They therefore function as the lowest common denominator which minimal group paradigm theory has shown to be necessary for forging a shared identity between people that otherwise know little about each other and do not stand in close interaction, as is typical in modern states.

Second, as Patti Lenard (2016) discusses, shared norms and values also have an important role in creating a shared public culture. A shared public culture, in turn, makes social interactions smoother and more predictable. If we can rely on a shared set of norms and values to guide the behaviours of others, we can more reliably predict how they will act or what motivates them. In so far as the shared values and norms are positive ones, e.g. honesty, politeness, and consideration, they are conducive to social trust because they allow us to make justified general assumptions about whether it is reasonable to trust unknown others in certain regards (e.g. Kirby, n.d.), e.g. to be honest when paying their taxes, polite and helpful when asked for help on the street, and considerate of others even when pursuing their own interests.

Both theories of liberal nationalism and policy makers have, therefore, emphasized cultural integration as a requirement for mutual trust and solidarity and as a cure for deteriorating social cohesion. In debates about multiculturalism and integration, one of the core questions has been what kind of norms must be shared between immigrants and the native population to engender mutual trust (Breidahl et al. 2018; Mason 2018; Lenard 2007; Gustavsson and Stendahl 2020). The assumption of these theories and debates is that cultural integration leads to more shared norms and creates a (new) shared national identity, thereby increases trust, and contributes to social cohesion. This has led to a conceptualization of integration in which cultural integration presents itself as the source of shared norms and national identities, which then produce trust and enable immigrants to integrate fully by participating in networks of cooperation and solidarity (social cohesion) and by enjoying effective equality of opportunity in the mainstream society.

From the discussion so far, we can deduce four core features of the national identity model which is connected to its particular theorization of the connection between trust and diversity:

1. Primacy of national identity and shared values as the basis for trust: Trust is seen as arising from shared values (Holtug 2021; Lenard 2016) and identities (Miller and Ali 2014; Miller 1995). Accordingly, the core challenge of a diverse society is the existence of groups with different identities and values which lack a common shared identity and public culture. In the case of immigration to Western states, specifically, the problem is perceived to be an influx of people from countries and cultures that differ starkly from the receiving society, that is 'non-Western' immigrants.
2. Assumption of objective high cultural distance: Immigrants from certain regions are assumed to have cultures that objectively differ considerably from that of the host society so that the main task of immigrant integration becomes to bridge these differences. Thus, integration debates most often concern immigrants that come from countries that are seen as the opposites of Western liberal democracies, that is non-Western countries or countries in which conservative, non-liberal values are seen as dominant (Brunner and Kuhn 2018). At the same time, national cultures are portrayed as homogenous and integrated (Wimmer and Glick Schiller 2002, 310).
3. Isolationist approach: Only the relations between host societies and immigrants as they occur within the receiving state are taken as morally relevant. The analysis of what creates or hinders trust relations begins from the moment that immigrants arrive in a country. It leaves out how both the sending and receiving countries are embedded in international structures which already put them into relations with each other prior to the arrival of specific immigrants. The approach thus follows what Ulrich Beck (2000, 23) described as "the container theory of society," that is, non-domestic relations or structures are not considered important for questions of trust and integration within the state.
4. Ahistorical or presentist approach: The relationship between immigrants and host societies is considered to start with the immigrants' arrival in the receiving country. The approach treats immigrants and host societies as almost history-less. While political theorists acknowledge that immigrants come from different cultures and often also different socio-economic backgrounds than the majority of the receiving society, historical factors are seen as less relevant for questions of trust and integration. History and its potential normative consequence instead are relegated to questions of admission, for example when discussing state's duties to open their borders due to historic injustices such as colonialism (Achiume 2017; Amighetti and Nuti 2016; Ypi 2022; Fine 2017).

The following sections will criticize these foundational assumptions and methodologies of the national identity model as incomplete and will thereby chart the course for future work on the ethics of trust and integration which has a stronger non-ideal and decolonial focus. The next section poses one challenge to each of the four characteristics. It will show how addressing these challenges changes our picture of what influences trust and thereby the success of integration. It will argue that these blind spots of the current national identity model are of both practical concern because they give us an empirically incomplete picture for our normative theorizing and moral concern because they obscure certain questions of justice, thus making them harder to address.

3 A non-ideal-decolonial framework for the ethics of trust and integration

I have argued that the national identity model which is used to theorize and normatively analyze the connection between trust, diversity, and integration has four main features: It sees shared norms and identities as the main source of social trust, assumes that objective high cultural distance is the reason that immigration from non-Western states drives down trust, and it takes an isolationist and ahistorical approach. As a result, current theorizing about trust and diversity has focused on cultural integration as the antidote for decreasing social trust in diverse societies. In the following, I raise a challenge to each of the four characteristics identified.

Before doing so, however, I want to be clear that these challenges are meant to lead to an amended and more complete picture of the connection between trust, integration, and diversity as well as the normative questions and obligations that arise in that context. It is not meant to deny the importance of the theorizations and normative discussions that have already been undertaken. Cultural differences, and thus the need for cultural integration, is a hard to deny fact. The discussions about which form such integration should take and the duties that immigrants, states, and citizens of the receiving states have are necessary and important. However, as I will show in the following, if that is where the analysis stops, we do not only have an incomplete picture but are likely to overlook other duties and normative questions that arise in this context. With that said, I will present the four challenges to the national identity model's core assumptions.

To make following the line of argument clearer, I will discuss them in the reverse order to the four presented characteristics of national identity models, starting with methodological challenges and then showing how these directly lead to two further challenges regarding what is included in a model about trust and integration. The first 'decolonial' challenge regards the ahistorical approach of the dominant model and argues that groups are embedded in long-term historical structures which influence their trust relationships and create background structures against which such relationships take place. The second 'methodological nationalism' challenge characterizes the isolationist approach taken by the national identity model as a form of methodological nationalism. It does so by showing that groups are not only part of structures that extend in time, but also in space, that is beyond the nation state which is the usual object of analysis for ethics of integration. The third 'prejudice/ ideology' challenge then turns to prejudice which can lead to *perceived*, in contrast to objective, high cultural distance. It will discuss how taking a more international and historical approach will reveal that colonial and imperial histories have constructed specific narratives about 'non-Western' races and cultures which are still at work today and influence who is trusted and who is not. The last and fourth 'inequality'

challenge replies to the national identity model's assumption that shared norms and values are central for trust and integration success. It draws on empirical research which shows that inequality is an important driver of social mistrust and connects it to histories of colonial exploitation which continue in patterns of global and domestic inequality today.

3.1 The decolonial challenge – historicizing the immigrant – receiving society relation

This challenge concerns the fourth characteristic of national identity models outlined above, namely their ahistorical and presentist approach. Both structures of global injustice (the inequality and methodological nationalism challenge) and ideological constructions of group boundaries and identities (the prejudice/ ideology challenge) are the outcome of long-term historical processes. Furthermore, many of these processes are closely connected to colonial and imperial histories. Colonialism and imperialism have not just supported the economic development of many states that today are seen as 'Western', they have equally instituted economic, institutional, and economic structures which allowed for the easy exploitation of colonies and continues to keep these states in relations of subordination despite their formal independence (Getachew 2019; Rodney 2012; Sharma 2020). Likewise, many of the narratives which determine group boundaries today and give rise to prejudice stem from colonial times or have their sources in imperialist ventures (Pitts 2019; Mayblin 2017; Meer 2020; Goldberg 2006).

These colonial histories of central concepts and assumptions in the context of integration call for a critical genealogy. Amia Srinivasan (2019, 141 ff.) outlines two things a critical genealogy can achieve, and both are relevant for the discussion here. First, a critical genealogy can function as an epistemological critique of ideologies. It can reveal that certain assumptions and concepts stand on thin epistemic ground because they are unreliable, inconsistent, or plain false. Second, in a Foucauldian tradition, tracing the genealogy of certain concepts, arguments, and assumptions serves as a critical analysis of power. It reveals the social function of certain concepts and assumptions and how they have been, and presumably still are, or can be again, used as tools that enable oppression and inequality. Concepts here contribute to 'world-making', either by influencing how we evaluate and act on given realities, or even by bringing new realities into being (Srinivasan 2019, 145).

An example of the former can be the fiction of 'the Jew,' 'the Muslim,' or 'the Black' which have served as concepts through which Europeans categorized the non-White, non-Christian people they encountered first as distinct races, and then as inferior races (cf. Goldberg 2006). An example of the latter is that the categorization as Black, Jewish, or Muslim allowed actions to be taken that led to *de facto* situations in which these groups were put into inferior positions through actions such as slavery, colonial exploitation and control, religious pogroms, and the Holocaust. Far from being a thing of the past, these categories continue to function in similar ways as they sort migrants in racial and cultural categories which in turn influence how admission-worthy, dispensable, or in need of integration they are perceived to be (e.g. Mayblin et al. 2020; Modood 2022). In this context, we can highlight Raymond Geuss's (2002, 212) dictum that to "offer a genealogy is to provide a historical dissolution of self-evident identities" and that "it is a summons to develop an empirically informed kind of theoretical imagination under the conditions of perceived danger" (Geuss 2002, 213). The danger here is the danger of leaving concepts in place which 'explain' and naturalize distrust and segregation and thereby entrench inequality.

Works on the concepts of integration (Schinkel 2017), postcoloniality (El-Enany 2020), and self-determination (Sharma 2020) have shown that a historic account of the genealogy and function of these concepts reveals the ways in which they have been used to justify policies that uphold colonial structures of power inequality and racial segregation, especially in the context of immigration (cf. Menge 2022). Importantly, the role that the concept of trust plays has not been analyzed in the same way. Yet even just a preliminary look at the concept of trust shows that such an analysis is likely to reveal that it has important functions for justifying and instituting relations of power and inequality in current societies.

For example, narratives about who is trustworthy structure and justify the uneven distribution of social capital and thus enduring patterns of segregation and inequality. Within political theory, trust, and the fear of a decline in trust, has also been used to justify the selection of immigrants (Western over Non-Western) or the restriction of immigration as well as demands of cultural integration. Gina Gustavsson (2021), moreover, has argued that trust can also become a foundational component of national identity and thus that groups with low trust, whether the mistrust is justified or not, are automatically cast as unpatriotic and an unintegrated outgroup. Such a categorization of belongingness along lines of trust is especially detrimental because it not only pressures minorities with histories of injustice 'to get over it' and trust the majority and state against their better judgment, but also justifies excluding the mistrustful minorities from networks of cooperation and solidarity.

Specifically, taking a more historical, genealogical approach to analyzing relationships of distrust allows us to do at least three things. First, it can help to make us more critical about certain assumptions, e.g. the assumption of objective high cultural distance, as we see the history of these ideas and their function in justifying and sustaining colonial and imperial rule. Paying attention to history therefore allows us to identify patterns and to assess their validity and function in today's societies.

Second, a more historically-aware approach allows us to allocate responsibility for overcoming distrust more accurately. The national identity model allocated the responsibility to overcome distrust mainly on the individual level. Both immigrants and members of the receiving society had a duty to work towards a new and shared national identity and public culture. If we take a more historicized approach, we become more aware of the broader structures which create the background against which individuals act and which can affect their decision to trust. These include widespread prejudices, narratives about cultural distance, and domestic and global inequality. It thus becomes clear that ensuring an integrated society and a sufficient level of social trust is not a matter of personal adaptation to a new culture, but demands structural reforms both on the national and international level. Supporting and initiating such reforms might call for different actions – possibly by different actors – to those which have been at the center of discussions about the ethics of integration, for example when it comes to changing domestic redistributive justice measures to include immigrants or to anti-racist action.

Lastly, if we analyze the trust-diversity-integration connection through a more historicized lens, it can help to evaluate better whether distrust is justified or not and to do so on more than the traditional basis for such evaluations. Traditionally, trust is seen as reasonable if the trustee has good reasons to believe that the trustor will act in their favor or best interests, either because they have shown goodwill, are known to be guided by the right moral principles or incentivized through structures of social norms to honor the trust placed in them. In the absence of such a good reason to trust, or actual proof that someone cannot be trusted mistrust or distrust is seen

as more appropriate.[2] If we now remember that social trust is trust towards unknown others and that we therefore routinely generalize whether to trust someone or not based on their group membership, it becomes obvious that it cannot simply be individual relationships that determine social trust but rather group relationships.

However, in most cases of group relationships within states, these relationships extend throughout time. Thus, group members might not just take their own, individual, experiences into account when deciding whether to trust, but will also draw on the collective experiences of their group. In so far as these experiences have been characterized by past injustice such as colonialism, they might have good reason to exhibit heightened mistrust or even distrust towards members of the offender group.

3.2 The methodological nationalism challenge – integration as affected by non-domestic structures

Migration theorists have criticized methodological nationalism, which is the statist assumption that states have clear borders, possess a homogenous national culture and identity within these borders, and can serve as the primary entities for normative and empirical analysis of migration and related concepts such as national self-determination, national identities, and homelands that belong to an autochthonous or native population (Anderson 2019; Brubaker 2010; Sager 2021; Wimmer and Glick Schiller 2002). Instead, an empirically appropriate theorization of political, economic, and social basic structures must acknowledge that they reach beyond nation states. Thus, the traditional 'two-tier' split (Táíwò 2019) between theories of domestic justice and theories of global justice cannot be defended.

While migration studies have mostly focused on assumptions about borders and the state authority that regulates them, a similar point is to be made regarding the analysis of relations between citizens and immigrants once the latter have crossed the border. Even though integration takes place within the host society, this society is not a "container" in which immigrants and citizens are isolated. Instead, they are embedded in international structures which influence the conditions in which both sides meet. For example, in so far as material inequality impacts trust (see the inequality challenge), it is likely that trust towards immigrants from poor or rich countries differs. Furthermore, if global inequality is unjust (Armstrong 2012; Risse 2012), its detrimental effect on trust towards immigrants acquires further moral relevance.

By isolating questions of trust and integration from background structures that reach beyond the domestic context, the national identity model fails to consider factors that are potentially morally relevant to assessing duties and responsibilities in the integration context. The challenge is to assess how international and global structures of inequality and domination spill over into the domestic context and thereby change the normative landscape within which we think about (dis)trust and integration. Thus, the ethics of trust and integration become newly connected to questions of global justice, which so far only have been the domain of questions about the ethics of immigration, not of integration. However, overcoming methodological nationalism and recognizing the continued embeddedness of immigrants and receiving societies in the international order can lead to new normative questions and arguments. For example, in so far as

[2] Mistrust has been defined as "a cautious attitude toward others," still open to information that can sway the decision to trust or not, while distrust is described as "a suspicious or cynical attitude toward others" in which the decision not to trust has already been made and has hardened into a generalized assumption about (certain) others (Lenard 2008, 313).

immigration from poor countries drives down trust in wealthier, receiving states, these states might not only have duties to admit such immigrants in order to further global equality of opportunity (Carens 2013; Egan 2018; Kollar 2017; Moellendorf 2006). They might, for example, also have both justice-based and prudential reasons to address global and domestic inequality so that immigrants can more easily integrate if and when they migrate.

3.3 The prejudice/ ideology challenge – Perceived, not just objective cultural distance

Theories that employ the national identity model of trust and integration assume that what stands in the way of trust and what is the object of cultural integration is an objective difference in norms and values between different groups. While it is correct that different cultures can be guided by different norms and values (cf. the World Value Survey), this does not account for all cases of distrust. Besides inequality and objective cultural distance, prejudice-based boundary-making and the ideologies underpinning it must be taken into account. What is important to stress here is that generalized trust, that is trust towards people we do not know personally, does not rely on *actual* knowledge about shared norms or good will generated by specific relationships. Instead, *perceptions* of shared norms and mutual relations serve as a basis for how and whether we trust others. In this context, perceived group membership can serve as a proxy for deciding whether someone stands in a relationship that I assume is governed by good will towards me and whether we share norms. Group membership, and the boundary-making that determines it, thus plays an important role when explaining social trust.

Benedict Anderson (2016) highlighted how national identities and thus also boundaries are "imagined, because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet, in the minds of each lives the image of their communion." While the fact that a national identity is constructed does not make it less real, it highlights two things: First, such identity constructions usually rely on contrasting oneself with an other. Thus, the construction of one's own identity is simultaneously the construction of the identity of outgroup others (Said 1979; Todorova 1994). Second, this self-and-other construction is influenced by power structures and is malleable (Bloemraad et al. 2023; Said 1994). For example, in the US context, historical analysis has shown that group boundaries around the category of 'Whiteness' are strongly connected to preserving racial privilege. Whenever the privilege of the group currently defining itself as "White" was threatened due to them becoming a numerical minority in a democratic state, groups that were previously seen as non-White were coopted to consolidate a White majority status (Matsuda 1993). Interestingly, the clearest cases of such an 'expansion' of Whiteness are caused through large-scale immigration of non-White people into the USA. For example, Eastern European and Southern European immigrants used to be considered non-White but 'became White' as a reaction to an influx of non-European immigrants and the same might become the case with some LatinX immigrants in the future (Mendoza 2017).

While racial categories were a dominant force for boundary-making in the modern US, cultural, and especially religious categories fulfill a similar function in Europe and are connected to colonial and imperial histories (Said 1994). Colonial and imperial narratives contrasted the modern, European world with a backwards, non-European world and ascribed to the latter a different, and mostly negative, set of norms. Colonialism was largely justified by a narrative about its civilizing mission which was based on the assigned backwardness of the colonized (Keene 2002; Keal 2003). Such theories not only spread the idea that distinct races and cultures

exist and have certain, unchangeable features but they also unequivocally portrayed colonized peoples as having negative features, ranging from laziness and greed to irrationality and being child-like. Even after the official end of colonialism, such stereotypes and essentialism continue (Said 1979; Mayblin 2017).

As long as such prejudices and essentializing ideologies from colonial times still have a hold in the public imagination of Western countries, cultural integration will not or only marginally succeed in creating trust between non-Western immigrants and Western majority populations. Thus, the national identity model's assumption that distrust is the result of actual difference – and thus that to build trust means to culturally integrate immigrants – falls short. Overlooking the social construction of cultural distance and the role of prejudice and power in boundary-making means to ignore a central factor that bears on what causes distrust and which might render cultural integration measures ineffective, if prejudice persists, or superfluous, if the cultural distance is purely perceived but not actual. The challenge for integration ethics is to account for ideological background structures that produce prejudice and perceived, as opposed to objective, cultural distance and construct immigrants in specific, ideologically malleable ways.

I have argued before (Reibold 2025) that overlooking racial prejudice in the integration context has a number of consequences for the context of trust and integration. First, a model that assumes that distrust in diverse societies is mainly due to objective cultural distance, unwittingly reproduces, or at least does not challenge, the very notion on which cultural racism is founded. The uncritical assumption that it is an objective, not just perceived, difference in norms and values that leads to distrust supports the idea that non-Western immigrants are an outgroup and essentially different from members of Western states into which they immigrate. At the same time, this assumption averts attention from how power inequalities are bound up with the racist ideologies and boundary-making that lead to mistrust.

Moreover, the neglect of racial and cultural prejudice allows otherwise unjustified demands of cultural assimilation to pass as demands for integration, based on the prejudice that certain cultural or religious practices or markers are inherently illiberal, and thus need not be tolerated. Lastly, a too strong or exclusive focus on cultural integration might undermine fair equality of opportunity by blaming distrust and lack of positive cooperation on cultural differences instead of racist prejudice. Distrust thus seems acceptable, maybe even justified, while its real roots, racial and cultural prejudice, remain unaddressed.

3.4 The inequality challenge – Material, not just cultural bases of trust

The national identity model centers shared values as the source of trust. It can draw support from the theory of the minimal group paradigm which confirms that a sense of shared identity, arising from shared norms and values, leads to higher trust. It can also be supported by research about the cultural threat hypothesis which states that the perception of one's own culture being threatened by the influx of members of other cultures leads to heightened prejudice, mistrust and segregation (Manevska and Achterberg 2013; Zárate et al. 2004). At the same time, studies on cultural threat have shown that there is a second driver of prejudice and antipathy, namely economic threat. This is especially true of people in vulnerable economic positions, who can often perceive competition by unskilled or low-skilled immigrants and other minorities as a threat and react with antipathy and mistrust (Manevska and Achterberg 2013). While the reac-

tion to economic threat might be seen as a universal one, it is still worth taking a critical historical look at the situation. As Ines Valdez (2023; 2020) has argued, the USA have a history of breaking up labor organization and workers' solidarity along lines of race which turns on colonial narratives and inequalities. On the one hand, White workers were offered a superior social status which set them apart from non-White workers and drew on the colonial narrative about the superiority of the 'White race.' Thereby, non-White workers were effectively constituted as an outgroup with a different identity. At the same time, the fact that non-White workers were more easily exploitable turned them into a credible threat to White workers, who feared losing their employment to a cheaper workforce. Instead of showing solidarity along class lines, White workers instead allowed a division to arise along racial lines. This racial division, in turn, was based on concepts of racial hierarchy that supported unequal social status and thus promised social, if not economic, superiority to White workers.

Both the impetus of protecting a privileged social position (Metzl 2018) and the fear of an exploitable and foreign workforce pushing native workers out (Da Lomba and Zahn 2023) still loom large in immigration debates in North America and Europe. While both fears might be real, they are also a result of an unjust history which made some groups into an exploitable - and thus cheap - workforce and gave other groups privileges and a narrative that justified holding on to these privileges. The enduring focus on cultural difference, which characterizes the national identity model, continues and further entrenches the idea of immigrants being a cultural outgroup, thereby continuing the historic pattern of dividing the working class along lines of race and culture.

Moreover, inequality as such negatively affects levels of trust in a society (Abascal and Baldassarri 2015; Jordahl 2007). Abascal and Baldassari (2015), for example, have shown that a more nuanced analysis of Putnam's data does not actually support the constrict hypothesis' negative connection between diversity and trust. Instead, the factors consistently driving down trust are race/ethnicity, residential stability, and economic conditions which Abascal and Baldassari describe as indicators for inequality. In the USA, histories of slavery, racial segregation, and settler colonialism have entrenched inequality along racial lines, which is one reason why distrust is higher in diverse neighborhoods. A similar pattern can be found in Europe. While racial inequality was not legally institutionalized in the same way as in the USA, many immigrants that are seen as non-Western come from former colonies. Not coincidentally, immigrants from these countries often have lower education and wealth than the majority population of the receiving, Western state. The economic situation of immigrants' sending countries might thus contribute to mistrust towards them. The historical connection between colonial subordination and exploitation in Europe is similar to that in the USA. The colonial and imperial policies of the past stretch into the present by structuring inequality, and thus a source of mistrust, along lines of colonial and imperial power.

Nevertheless, the national identity model of diversity, trust, and integration scarcely touches upon these findings and their normative implications. This is problematic because the focus on cultural distance and cultural integration can hide social and economic inequality and blame immigrants for rising mistrust due to their 'lack of cultural integration' while the real problem might be that of economic deprivation. The more general challenge for integration ethics then is to broaden what is seen as a basis of trust from purely cultural factors to socio-economic background factors. Such a broadening of focus connects question of integration with questions of distributive justice, both domestic and global. For example, it might provide additional reasons to overcome global inequality and/ or to provide immigrants with the means for a good standard of living as a precondition for preserving or building social trust, and thereby equality

and solidarity, in a society. It therefore also impacts upon discussions around, for example, access for immigrants to welfare systems of the receiving states, the right of asylum seekers to work, or the importance of fast recognition of foreign degrees and professional certificates.

In addition, taking into account the historical roots of inequality can have further impacts on the framing of immigrants, and of other colonized groups such as Black Americans or Indigenous peoples in settler states. While economic inequalities can be traced back to the enduring effects of colonial exploitation, these roots of the current inequality are rarely discussed in the public debate. Non-Western immigrants thus appear to ask for resources, e.g. in the form of welfare benefits or access to workplaces, to which they have no right. In contrast, E. Tendayi Achiume (2017) holds that migration can be an effective way of decolonization, exactly because it leads to a redistribution of resources through the access that former colonial subjects gain to Western wealth and opportunities. In a similar vein, Nadine El-Enany (2020) argues that British immigration laws function to secure the colonial gains which made Britain rich and powerful. Proclaiming Britain as postcolonial, she says, had the effect of shutting the door to immigrants who could otherwise have benefitted from what Britain had taken from their home countries. Her conclusion is that illegal immigration is to be seen as an act of resistance and as righting an historic injustice.

These arguments put further pressure on the importance of economic and social equality in the context of integration. Far from being the recipients of Western states' goodwill or charity, access to resources here becomes an issue of justice and reparations. Withholding these resources then becomes doubly wrong, if we also understand that the resulting inequality leads to heightened mistrust and thus further entrenches a group's lack of social capital and status of inequality.

Conclusion

This article has argued that social trust is an important part of creating an integrated society, that is, a society in which different groups interact on equal footing and collaborate with each other. Integration in this sense is important because it allows social mobility, supports equality of opportunity, and furthers political equality for all members of a society. The article has furthermore proposed social trust as the central concept which underlies integration success and the goods that an integrated society produces. It then has shown that the current theorization of social trust in political philosophy is incomplete. Specifically, theories of social trust in the context of immigrant integration focus too much on cultural difference as a driver of mistrust, and thus on cultural integration as the key to social trust and integration. In contrast, the article has shown that there are several other, often more influential, factors that determine social trust and that need to be included in our normative theorizing about trust and integration. In particular, prejudice which distorts perceptions of cultural distance and social inequality can have a strong impact on social trust. Neither prejudices nor trust, however, will be changed through cultural integration policies. Successful integration will also have to include measures to reduce and correct both prejudice and social inequality. If that is so, then integration ethics must concern itself much more with questions of distributive justice and discrimination than it currently does. Moreover, the article has argued that inequalities and prejudices are often created by and embedded in international structures which have grown over decades and centuries. Consequently, an analysis of social trust in the context of immigrant integration must take into account

these international and historical structures which shape the relations between receiving societies and immigrants even before they actually enter a country. The article has argued that recognizing these broader background structures and their influence on social trust will generate new duties, e.g. related to global justice and structural reform, which so far have been overlooked in the debates on social trust and integration, yet are necessary to ensure a just and integrated society.

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Biography

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