

## FAMILY MIGRATION AND INTEGRATION: *The Need for a New Research Agenda*

Helga Eggebø<sup>1,\*</sup>, Jan-Paul Brekke<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Nordland Research Institute, Bodø, Norway

<sup>2</sup> Institute for Social Research, Oslo, Norway

\* E-mail: heg@nforsk.no

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### Abstract



This article investigates the link between family migration and integration. It is based on a literature review of existing research across the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries, focusing on examples from Denmark and Norway. Much of the existing literature on family migration and integration analyses legal changes and policy arguments. Focusing on literature about integration and regulation outcomes, we identify the following two dominant topic areas in existing academic work: (1) empirical studies of labour market integration outcomes for family migrants – some limited to focusing on intra-marriages – and (2) research about the consequences of family immigration regulations. The article highlights the need for a new research agenda that moves beyond studies of intra-ethnic marriages and labour market participation to include all groups of family migrants and different dimensions of integration. Moreover, it should analyse long-term effects of family migration regulations, as well as post-entry regulations and social structures.

### Keywords

family migration • integration • immigration regulation • marriage migration • family reunification

## Introduction

Family migration and integration are two central topics in the international scholarship on migration. Migrants' integration in host countries has long been an important field of research, and the issue of integration is subject to considerable political and scholarly interest (see, e.g. Brubaker 2001; Castles 2017; Garcés-Mascareñas & Penninx 2016).<sup>1</sup> Family migration, however, attracted little attention among scholars and policy-makers until the turn of the century (Kofman 2004). Since then, this category of migrants has received more attention among both scholars and policy-makers (Bonjour & Kraler 2015). During the same

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period, the regulation of family migration has become increasingly restrictive, prompting studies on the effects of such regulations on sponsors and family migrants (Bonizzoni 2018; Kofman 2018). Over the past decade, the interlinkages between family migration and integration have received increased attention among policy-makers in Europe and scholars have turned their attention to the nexus among family migration, immigration policy and integration (Bech, Borevi & Mouritsen 2017; Bonjour & Kraler 2015; Hernes 2018). This article takes stock of the knowledge about these links. It is based on a comprehensive literature review that covers the OECD countries (Eggebo & Brekke 2018) but focuses on research from Denmark and Norway.

According to the Migrant Integration Policy Index (MIPEX), Norway and Denmark combine restrictive family immigration regulations with beneficial integration programs. In both countries, family migration has increasingly been portrayed as an obstacle to integration (Eggebo 2013; Liversage & Rytter 2014), reflecting the broader restrictive trend in migration policy and public debate across Europe. As Bonjour & Kraler (2015: 1409-1410) have pointed out, many European politicians now view family migration as an obstacle to integration.<sup>2</sup> In fact, the perceived problems of integration often serve as the main argument for restricting family migration (Bonjour & Kraler 2015; Charsley, Bolognani & Spencer 2016b; Grillo 2008). However, Charsley *et al.* (2016a) have noted that there is a lack of empirical research underpinning various assumptions about integration and family migration (see also Bonjour & Kraler 2015; OECD 2017: 135).

In this article, we present key findings from the literature about the linkage between family migration and integration. Given that most of the contributions to this special issue concern Denmark and Norway, we focus on research from these two national contexts and discuss findings in relation to insights from the broader international scholarship. The research question guiding this article is: What are the key topics, trends and knowledge gaps in current research concerning the link between family migration and integration? In the following, we provide a brief overview of the international scholarship on family migration and give a short description of Norwegian and Danish family immigration and integration policies. We then describe the methods we used to gather and select the material used in the literature review. Next, we drill into key topics that have attracted most academic attention: (1) empirical studies of family migrants' integration and (2) research that focuses on the consequences of family migration regulation. Finally, we present a new research agenda that will help cover the knowledge gaps we have identified in the existing literature on family migration and integration.

## Research on family migration

There is substantial international scholarship about family and migration, including research on transnational families, cross-border marriages and state regulations of family migration. The studies broadly fall into three categories: first there are studies of discourses, policies, laws (including case law) and regulations (e.g. Block & Bonjour 2013; Kofman 2018;

Neuwahl 2014; Pellander 2016; Schweitzer 2015; Sumption & Vargas-Silva 2018). Second, we find studies that investigate practices of cross-border marriage and transnational family life, also including how people are affected by and navigate immigration regulations (e.g. Baldassar & Merla 2014; Bryceson & Vuorela 2002; Charsley 2012, 2019; Constable 2005; Williams 2010). The third stream of literature consists of quantitative studies of marriage patterns and/or labour market participation among family migrants (e.g. Banerjee & Phan 2014; Bevelander 2011; Elrick & Lightman 2014; Mohn 2016).

Because many women migrate as family members, and most family migrants are women, the international scholarship on family and migration intersects with the scholarship on gender and migration (see, e.g. Anthias, Kontos & Morokvasic 2013b; Kofman, Saharso & Vacchelli 2015; van Walsum & Spijkerboer 2007). Moreover, most existing research on family migration seems to focus on heterosexual married couples (for a recent contribution on same-sex couples, see Chauvin *et al.* 2019). While spouses constitute the majority of family migrants, more than one-quarter of all family migrants moving to the OECD in 2015 were children (OECD 2017: 109). Still, studies of family immigration and integration focusing on children are relatively rare in the scholarship on family migration (exceptions are Becker 2011; Wray *et al.* 2015). The experiences of migration on children are largely overlooked in research on family migration (White *et al.* 2011: 1160) but present elsewhere in research on transnational migration (e.g. Baldassar & Merla 2014; Tyrrell *et al.* 2013).

Scholars use a broad variety of concepts to describe family migration practices, such as cross-border marriage, transnational families, mixed marriages, bi-national families, marriage migrants and family migrants. Immigration authorities tend to divide migration flows into labour migrants, students, refugees and family migrants. According to OECD, family migration constitutes the main channel of legal migration to the OECD area. In 2016, this admission category constituted between a quarter and half of all registered immigrants (OECD 2017: 108-113). Since the turn of the century – and amplified by the refugee crisis in 2015 – receiving countries in Europe and elsewhere have introduced increasingly restrictive migration regulations. The goal has often been to regulate and reduce immigration in general, but family migration has often been singled out as a key target for restrictions (Brekke, Røed & Schøne 2017). At the same time, concerns about the integration of refugees and family migrants have increased and several new regulations have been introduced aiming to promote integration as well as to reduce immigration (Hernes 2018).

In recent decades, controlling and reducing immigration has been high on the political agenda in both Denmark and Norway. Policy-makers have introduced restrictions of family migration not only to reduce the number of family migrants but also to indirectly reduce the number of asylum seekers, since generous family migration regulations are considered to be a pull factor for refugees (Staver 2014). Restrictions on family migration include rising income requirements, minimum age for marriage migration and attachment requirements. Among the three Scandinavian countries, Denmark is often considered to have the strictest immigration regulations in the region, Sweden to be more liberal, while Norwegian regulations are positioned somewhere in-between. According to MIPEX (2015), Denmark has one of the strictest family immigration policies in the OECD, ranking as number 36 out

of 38 (Norway is number 18). With regard to integration policies, Denmark and Norway have extensive introduction and integration programs covering both refugees and certain groups of family migrants. Both rank high on the integration policy index. This double face of strict immigration policies and extensive integration and welfare policies is a defining feature of the Nordic welfare state model (Barker 2017; Brochmann *et al.* 2010).

## Methods

This article is based on a systematic review of existing research on family migration and integration. We have applied two procedures to identify relevant literature: First, we have used snowball sampling, i.e. pursuing references of references starting out from key publications (Bonjour & Kraler 2015; Charsley, Bolognani & Spencer 2016b). This was supplemented by systematic literature searches in Norwegian, Danish, Swedish and international databases – ProQuest,<sup>3</sup> Web of Science,<sup>4</sup> DanBib,<sup>5</sup> Libris<sup>6</sup> and Oria.<sup>7</sup> The systematic searches turned out to include many irrelevant references, and many relevant publications, which are identified by the snowball method and the authors' previous knowledge about research on family migration, did not appear in the systematic searches. This may be because several publications on integration include information about family migration, and vice versa, without explicitly focusing on this link. Consequently, it is challenging to find consistent criteria for inclusion and exclusion. As a result, we continued to search for literature throughout the process of writing this article.

## The integration of family migrants

There are two main streams of literature about the integration of family migrants: first, studies of labour market integration of family migrants (see, e.g. Bratsberg, Raaum & Roed 2017; Chiswick, Lee & Miller 2006; Elrick & Lightman 2014; Oliver 2013) and, second, research that focuses the integration effects of intra-ethnic marriages (Jakobsen & Liversage 2017; Mohn 2016). The first stream of literature focuses on the migrants' integration into the labour market, sometimes also including data on educational level, language acquisition and the use of social insurance. It mostly relies on quantitative analyses of register or survey data, often comparing employment rates and salaries across admission categories (labour migrants, family migrants and refugees) and between subgroups (e.g. gender, country of origin and the sponsor's legal status). The second stream of literature focuses on transnational intra-ethnic marriage involving people from Pakistan, India, Turkey and Morocco. Such intra-ethnic marriages between a second-generation migrant and somebody from their parents' country of origin have received considerable political and scholarly attention.

A common theme in both these streams of literature is the importance of gender with regard to labour market participation, reconciliation of work and family life and cultural norms. Moreover, both streams are characterised by having a restricted understanding

of integration, focusing primarily on labour market participation. A notable exception is a recent study of integration among British Pakistanis, Indians and Bangladeshi where Charsley *et al.* have combined qualitative and quantitative data investigating the following six dimensions of integration: (1) structural integration, (2) social integration, (3) cultural integration and (4) civic/political integration as well as (5) identity and (6) transnationalism (Charsley *et al.* 2016a).

## Labour market participation among family migrants

Studies of labour market participation across admission categories find that family migrants' rates of labour market participation and educational achievement tend to be lower than for labour migrants. However, there is considerable variation between different groups of family migrants. Gender, educational level, country of origin and length of stay are crucial factors explaining differences. For example, male marriage migrants have significantly higher rates of labour market participation than female marriage migrants. This finding is consistent across OECD countries and also in studies from Norway and Denmark.

In a 2017 article, Bratsberg, Raaum & Røed (2017) rank the labour market participation of different categories of migrants in Norway. The lowest labour market participation is found among refugees. On top of the list are migrants from the 'old EU countries', followed by migrants from new EU countries; family migrants married to a Norwegian sponsor and, finally, family migrants married to migrant sponsors. However, rates of labour market participation vary according to the family migrants' gender, country of origin, educational attainment, age at entry as well as the sponsors' citizenship (Bratsberg, Raaum & Røed 2017). Other studies also show that marriage migrants have lower employment rates than labour migrants but higher than refugees; again, employment rates vary considerably between subgroups of marriage migrants (Aalandslid & Tronstad 2010). For example, female marriage migrations reuniting with a refugee have an employment rate of only 38%. Female marriage migrants married to a native male sponsor, on the other hand, have relatively high employment rates (67%) (Aalandslid & Tronstad 2010). In Denmark, Bonke & Schultz-Nielsen (2013) have used register data to establish patterns of employment and income for couples in which one or both partners have an ethnic minority background and compared to native Danish couples. Their analysis shows substantial differences in female employment rates depending on the type of spouse: the odds of a marriage migrant woman being in employment is 27% higher when they are married to majority Danish men, as compared with men who are themselves immigrants. For marriage migrant men, however, the differences in employment relative to the type of spouse are much smaller (Bonke & Schultz-Nielsen 2013: 98).

While women's lower labour market participation seems to be a common finding across countries, other differences in outcomes diverge. For example, some studies from Southern Europe (Sorana 2016; Vickstrom & González-Ferrer 2016) show that migrants arriving through family formation with a native-born sponsor have lower rates of labour market

participation than those reunifying with another migrant. A Norwegian study, however, finds the opposite pattern (Bratsberg, Raaum & Roed 2017), but since different categories and methodologies have been used in various countries (Oliver 2013: 51), it is difficult to establish whether these findings reflect actual national differences, or merely stem from differences in data and methods.

The main finding from Bratsberg, Raaum & Roed's (2017) study of labour market participation across admission categories is that migrants from low-income countries first experience increasing employment rates, but after 5-10 years in Norway face declining employment rates (Bratsberg, Raaum & Roed 2017: 31). This pattern of increasing and then decreasing labour market participation over time among some immigrant groups is also found in a Danish study of Turkish marriage migrants (Jakobsen & Liversage 2017). These Scandinavian studies seem to contradict findings elsewhere in the OECD countries, where immigrants' employment rate continues to increase over time. This somewhat surprising finding seems to be a result of precarious, low-skilled work and insecure labour market status, on the one hand, combined with access to welfare benefits that reduce labour incentives on the other hand (Bratsberg, Raaum & Roed 2017; Jakobsen & Liversage 2017).

### **Intra-ethnic marriages: marriage patterns and labour market integration**

There has been considerable scholarly interest in studying marriage between second-generation immigrants in Europe and spouses from their parents' country of origin – e.g. the marriage patterns of Turks in Denmark (Çelikaksoy 2007), Turks and Moroccans in the Netherlands and Belgium (Casier *et al.* 2013; Sterckx 2015: 1552; Van Kerckem *et al.* 2013) and Pakistanis and Indians in the United Kingdom (see Dale & Ahmed 2011: 903-904 for an overview). On the one hand, this research is a part of a more than 50-year-long scholarly interest in inter-marriage and integration wherein marriage patterns have been viewed as a test case for revealing societal structures and social boundaries. On the other hand, the scholarly interest in intra-ethnic transnational marriages also mirrors a tendency among policy-makers in Europe to understand such marriages as a barrier to integration and intermarriage as the litmus test of minorities' (lack of) assimilation (Casier *et al.* 2013; Rodríguez-García 2015). Thus, some studies frame marriage patterns as a measure for integration *per se*. Others study the correlation of (1) marriage patterns and (2) labour market participation to investigate whether certain marriage practices impede or promote integration. Gender and family norms are also prominent topics in studies of these marriages, where such marriages are often expected to be more traditional concerning gender norms than intermarriages and marriages between natives. Some studies confirm such assumptions (Brekke & Rogstad 2011; Jakobsen & Liversage 2017), while others show that there may be conflict and diverging opinions among different family members and that transnational marriages may not fully fit the assumptions of traditional gender norms (e.g. Charsley 2005; Charsley & Liversage 2015; Nadim 2014).

In Norway, as in other European countries, intra-ethnic marriages have received considerable attention among policy-makers and scholars (Myrdahl 2010). Besides statistical accounts of marriage patterns (Daugstad 2009; Dzamarija & Sandnes 2016), there are some studies investigating the relationship between marriage patterns and employment. According to a publication from Statistics Norway, male marriage migrants married to a second-generation sponsor have the highest rate of employment (81%), while female family migrants married to a second-generation sponsor have an average employment rate similar to those reunifying with refugees (38%) (Aalandslid & Tronstad 2010). Brekke & Rogstad (2011) found that the spouse's country of origin had no significant effect on labour market participation among female descendants of migrants from Turkey, India, Pakistan and Vietnam. In another Norwegian study, Ferdinand Mohn (2016) compared labour market participation among people who marry someone from their own or their parents' country of origin with those who marry someone of the same ethnic background already residing in Norway. In contrast to Brekke & Rogstad (2011), he found that marrying someone from their parents' country of origin did have negative effects on employment and earnings, particularly so for women. Mohn argues that such marriages impede economic integration (Mohn 2016: 22, appendix). Nadim, on the other hand, found that transnational marriage can also create incentives for second-generation women's work. Based on a qualitative study, she has argued that differences in the spouses' migration status can enable women's labour market participation: Migrants' husbands tended to be positioned in unstable and marginal parts of the labour market and this situation created a greater pressure and opportunity for their wives to work (Nadim 2014).

In the Danish context, Çelikaksoy investigated the labour market participation and educational achievement among second-generation immigrants, in a study that also covered Sweden (Çelikaksoy 2007). Similarly to Mohn's study, she found that spouse import had a negative effect on labour market participation as compared with those who married someone already residing in Denmark (Çelikaksoy 2007). Another study of Turkish marriage migrants in Denmark (Jakobsen & Liversage 2017) revealed that female sponsors have higher employment rates than marriage migrant women but significantly lower than male migrant spouses. According to the authors, these gendered patterns are explained by cultural differences with regard to work–family reconciliation combined with barriers to accessing the labour market (Jakobsen & Liversage 2017: 26).

## The effects of family immigration regulations

Existing studies of family immigration policy show that decision-makers increasingly see family migration as an obstacle to integration. Consequently, concerns about integration serve as justification for introducing new restrictions on migration in general and family migration in particular (Bonjour & Duyvendak 2018; Bonjour & Kraler 2015). As several scholars have pointed out (Charsley, Bolognani & Spencer 2016b; Scholten *et al.* 2012; Strik, de Hart & Nissen 2013), the actual effects of regulations – whether they promote integration

or primarily have other effects – are the important topics for empirical investigation. The international scholarship on family migration includes a number of studies that analyse the effects of family immigration regulations, such as income requirements, age limits and language and integration tests (e.g. Gutekunst 2015; Kofman 2018; Kofman, Saharso & Vacchelli 2015; Liversage & Rytter 2014; Sumption & Vargas-Silva 2018). There are also some comparative studies that focus specifically on the integration effects of regulations (Oliver 2013; Strik, de Hart & Nissen 2013). Existing studies point in somewhat different directions with regard to the effect of regulations on integration. Some research suggests that having requirements with regard to language and civic integration may have a positive effect on language acquisition and labour market outcomes (Büttner and Stichs quoted in OECD 2017: 157). Other studies find that the integration effects of such measures are modest at best (Groenendijk 2011; Scholten *et al.* 2012).

However, an indisputable effect of increasingly restrictive measures on family migration, according to the existing research, is a fall in the number of applications submitted and a (short-term) reduction in the number of residence permits granted for family migrants. Moreover, regulations have selective effects on admissions within the family category (Kofman 2018; Kofman, Saharso & Vacchelli 2015; Strik, de Hart & Nissen 2013). For example, the family members of female and ethnic minority sponsors are affected more negatively by strict income requirements due to the fact that these groups, on average, have a weaker position in the labour market than native-born men (Sirriyeh 2015; Sumption & Vargas-Silva 2018). Restrictive and selective policies unavoidably lead to family separation for those who cannot meet the requirements. Family separation has negative effects on individuals and families, including mental health problems, heavy financial and practical burdens on spouses, general distress and anxiety and negative behaviour for children (Damir-Geilsdorf & Sabra 2018; Griffiths & Morgan 2017; Gubernskaya & Dreby 2017; Miller *et al.* 2018; Wray *et al.* 2015), and such difficulties affect the ability to successfully integrate (Beaton, Musgrave & Liebl 2018).

In Norway, there has been limited research on the effects of family immigration regulations. The most important restrictive measure has been a high-income requirement. It was introduced in 2010, has been increased several times and is currently the highest in Europe.<sup>8</sup> The income requirement caused a marked increase in the number of rejected applications. The rejection rate was significantly higher for applications that included female sponsors and for applicants from Somalia and Afghanistan and lower for male sponsors and applicants from Thailand, Russia and the Philippines (Eggebø 2013: 20-22). Such selective effects are similar to those of the UK income requirement (Kofman 2018; Sumption & Vargas-Silva 2018). The Norwegian Directorate of Immigration has commissioned an evaluation of the income requirement, but results are not yet available.<sup>9</sup> However, a previously introduced income requirement – affecting only persons who had applied for asylum and been granted a residence permit on humanitarian grounds – was evaluated in 2010. The results showed that the income requirement had led to a marked decrease in the number of applications for family reunification for this group, as well as a decrease in the number of approved permits (Bratsberg & Raaum 2010).



Since the beginning of the 2000s, Denmark has introduced a series of restrictive regulations on family migration and, compared to Norway, more academic work has been published on its effects. According to Bech, Borevi & Mouritsen (2017: 6), Denmark constitutes the 'toughest family-migration rule package in force among Western democracies today'. Regulations have included a 24-year minimum age requirement for marriage migration, the so-called attachment requirement, language qualifications, employment records and a financial guarantee (but no fixed income requirement as in Norway). Existing research has shown that strict regulations caused a marked reduction in the number of successful applications among young spouses. As a consequence, families who did not qualify for family migration were forced to continue living in different countries and family separation is particularly hard for children (Schmidt *et al.* 2009). Many of the couples whose applications were rejected by immigration authorities moved to Sweden. Thus, the restrictive immigration policies in Denmark pushed spouses to integrate in Sweden instead of in Denmark (Wagner 2015).

One important aim of the restrictive family immigration introduced in Denmark was to promote the integration of ethnic minorities (Liversage & Rytter 2014). Research shows that restrictive regulations did not have an effect on this group's tendency to complete higher education (Danckert & Jakobsen 2014). Moreover, regulations on family migration did not seem to have had any effect on the arriving family migrants' integration into the labour market (Larsen & Lauritzen 2014). However, regulations did have an effect on marriage patterns among ethnic minorities. After the changes, this group married later and fewer married a person from their parents' country of origin (Schmidt *et al.* 2009). This effect of restrictive policies is also found in other European countries (Carol, Ersanilli & Wagner 2014).

Danish family migration regulations have been criticised for targeting ethnic minorities. Some young people of immigrant background view regulations as exclusionary and unjust measures reproducing stigma and consequently leading to resentment and anger among ethnic minorities (Schmidt 2014). However, regulations also have consequences for Danish nationals who marry a third-country national. Fernandez & Jensen (2014) argue that the effect on Danish nationals is an unintended consequence and show that rules have indeed been modified several times to favour the family life of Danish nationals.<sup>10</sup> Recently, the Danish government has replaced the attachment requirement with a new set of regulations including language requirements, labour market participation and a ban on family migration for people living in poor neighbourhoods with a low level of labour market participation.<sup>11</sup>

## Towards a new research agenda

In a special issue on family and migration in *JEMS* from 2004, Bailey and Boyle called for more empirical research on how family migration is experienced and highlighted the need for theoretical innovation on the intersection of 'migration' and 'family' (Bailey & Boyle

2004: 230). In the 15 years that have passed, the international scholarship on family and migration has flourished and certainly provided rich empirical detail into how family migration is experienced and shaped by legal regulations.<sup>12</sup> A more recent development, as this article has shown, is that the family migration scholarship has connected to the literature about the immigration–integration nexus (Entzinger, Saharso & Scholten 2011) and investigated the intersections of family migration and integration (Bonjour & Kraller 2015; Charsley, Bolognani & Spencer 2016b; Oliver 2013; Strik, de Hart & Nissen 2013). In the following, we outline a proposal for further research on family migration and integration.

Existing empirical studies of migration and integration outcomes primarily focus on labour market participation and educational achievement, and this general trend is also evident in research from Norway and Denmark. While labour market participation is an important aspect of integration for individual migrants as well as for policy-makers, limiting the focus to this single dimension of integration is insufficient. Charsley, Bolognani & Spencer (2016b) have convincingly argued that studies of integration need to include the structural domain (education and labour market participation), social integration, identity and civic, political as well as cultural integration. Their mixed-method empirical investigation of integration in the United Kingdom (Charsley *et al.* 2016a) would be worth following up in Norway and Denmark in addition to other European countries to further our knowledge and theoretical understanding of the immigration–integration nexus.

Across Europe, there has been considerable political and scholarly attention drawn to transnational inter-ethnic marriages (Van Kerckem *et al.* 2013: 1007) and, as we have shown, this tendency is also reflected in research from Norway and Denmark. For example, marriages between descendants of migrants from Turkey, Morocco, Pakistan and India and somebody from their parents' country of origin have been studied and debated extensively across Europe. Given the attention drawn to the marriage patterns of second-generation migrants, it is worth noting that in Norway, they constitute only a small share of family migrant inflows (Dzamarija & Sandnes 2016: 2-14).<sup>13</sup> We argue that it is pertinent that research on family migration and integration includes all family migrants.

Future research on family migration and integration should focus more on children. The international scholarship on family migration has so far focused primarily on marriage migration, and this also seems to be the case for Norway and Denmark. This limitation could be accounted for by engaging more systematically with other parts of the migration scholarship – for instance, that of the existing scholarship on migration and care (Baldassar & Merla 2014), or the literature about refugee children and families (e.g. Vitus & Lidén 2010 in the case of Norway and Denmark).

Some studies indicate that requirements for family migration, such as income requirements and language and civic integration, may further the integration of marriage migrants and sponsors. For example, income requirements can be an incentive for the sponsors' labour market participation (Bratsberg & Raaum 2010), but if pre-entry income requirements push sponsors to prioritise short-term income from low-skilled jobs at the expense of human capital investments, such income requirements may, in fact, contrary to their aims, contribute to reducing earnings and labour market participation in the long

run (Charsley *et al.* 2016a; Kulu-Glasgow & Leerkes 2013). Thus, future research should investigate the long-term effects and unintended consequences that different regulations have on integration for sponsors as well as migrants.

Income requirements for family migration have been introduced to avoid family migrants becoming dependent on the welfare state (Eggebø 2010; Staver 2015). Scholars, however, have been preoccupied with a different form of dependency, namely the family migrants' social, economic and legal dependency on the sponsor. For example, the dependent residence status of marriage migrants – who are predominantly women – leaves them in a subordinated position vis-a-vis the sponsor and this makes them vulnerable to domestic violence (Patel 2002; Staver 2015; Williams 2010: 94-98). Other scholars have also shown that marriage migrant men suffer from economic and social dependency on their partners (Charsley 2005). Furthermore, research from the Canadian context (Banerjee & Phan 2014; Elrick & Lightman 2014) documents that the dependent residence status of marriage migrants serves as a strong incentive for gender-traditional division of labour among couples. These mechanisms are shown to have long-term negative effects on labour market participation and earnings (Elrick & Lightman 2014). Dependency seems to be key to understanding the dynamics of both family migration and integration, and future research should engage more systematically, both empirically and theoretically, with this issue.

Existing research has shown that access to post-entry training and benefits, including integration programs, language training, welfare benefits and services, education and the labour market, are key to promoting integration (Strik, de Hart & Nissen 2013). Among highly qualified family migrants, there is also evidence of widespread under-employment (Liversage 2009). Thus, access to the labour market and mechanisms to improve qualifications are essential (Bratsberg, Raaum & Roed. 2017). Therefore, studying the effects of policy on integration should not be limited to pre-entry regulation. Existing research indicates that post-entry requirements and entitlements may indeed be more significant for integration than pre-entry regulations. Norway and Denmark, with their restrictive family immigration policy on the one hand and beneficial post-entry integration measures on the other hand, would be interesting cases for studying the dynamics and possible contradictory effects of different regulations.

Many women migrate as family members, and most family migrants are women (Kofman 2004). While acknowledging these patterns, it is important not to overlook the fact that women also migrate as providers and workers and that men migrate as spouses and family members. As many scholars have argued, it is important to investigate the gendered aspects of migration flows, immigration regulations and family practices. We propose that future studies focus more on how the gender regimes of host countries, which set the structural and social premises for integration, influence migrants as well as natives (Anthias *et al.* 2013a; Elrick & Lightman 2014).

There is a need for both quantitative and qualitative data to study how the integration process unfolds over time and how the processes are structured and shaped by immigration regulations and post-entry access to rights. While quantitative studies of labour market

participation are important, such data alone are limited in its ability to capture the complexity of the factors shaping the social, cultural, political, structural and identity processes (Charsley, Bolognani & Spencer 2016b: 483). In addition to studying the effects that immigration regulations have on labour market participation and education, it is important to study the effect that family separation has on integration. Thus, quantitative studies focusing on macroeconomic patterns should be systematically combined with qualitative studies of the experiences of family migrants.

## Conclusion

In this article, we have reviewed existing academic work on family migration and integration and identified the following two dominant topic areas: (1) empirical studies of labour market integration outcomes for family migrants – some limited to focusing on intra-marriages – and (2) research about the consequences of family immigration regulations. The analysis shows that there is a need for a new research agenda, one that moves beyond the long-term dominance of studies of intra-ethnic marriages and labour market participation, to include all groups of family migrants and different dimensions of integration. Such an agenda should further include analyses of long-term effects of family migration regulations, as well as post-entry regulations and social structures.

## Notes

1. The concept of integration is contested, often ill-defined and carries normative connotations (Charsley, Bolognani & Spencer et al. 2016b: 474). A critical discussion of the concept is outside the scope of this article (see for example, Rytter 2018 for a discussion).
2. The European Commission considers family migration to be an important right in order to promote immigrant integration, but very few European countries today encourage migrants to bring their families (Bonjour and Kraler 2015: 1409-1410).
3. Search: ALL(integrat\* AND (“family migration” OR “family reunification” OR “family formation” OR “marriage migration”)).
4. Search: TS=(integrat\* AND (“family migration” OR “family reunification” OR “family formation” OR “marriage migration”)).
5. Search DANBIB: familieinnvandring ELLER familiesammenføring ELLER familiegenforening ELLER familiemigration og (ma=bå eller kat=ana eller ma=dp) og år>2006.
6. Search LIBRIS: Søkstreng: anhörginvandrare OR Familjemigration OR familjeåterforening OR tredjelandsmedborgare.
7. Search ORIA: (familiesammenføring ELLER familiegenforening ELLER familieinnvandring ELLER familieetablering).

8. In 2017, the Norwegian requirement was an annual income of 26,500 Euros, while in the United Kingdom, it is 21,000 Euros. However, the UK requirement is probably the highest relative to income levels.
9. In 2018, Bratsberg is conducting a new study of the effects of the income requirement: <https://www.frisch.uio.no/prosjekter/?view=project&pid=1493>.
10. One such modification was the introduction of a rule stating that one may be exempted from the attachment requirement if one had been a Danish citizen for at least 26 years. This rule was judged to be unlawfully discriminatory by the European Court of Human Rights in 2016 (Biao vs. Denmark, application no. 38590/10).
11. For information about the new requirements for family migration, see official information at [newtodenmark.dk](http://newtodenmark.dk): <https://nyidanmark.dk/en-GB/You-want-to-apply/Family/Family-reunification/Spouse-or-cohabiting-partner>, accessed 25 October 2018.
12. A recent contribution is a special issue in JEMS about cross-border marriages from the perspectives of the state, spouses and researchers, edited by Moret, Andrikopoulos & Dahinden (2019).
13. We have not been able to find comparable data for Denmark; see <http://www.statistikbanken.dk/VIE4>.

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