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# Testing the integration model: The Hungarian Case

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**Abstract**

The aim of our study is to present how models of social integration and disintegration relate to the stratification models of a society and its inequalities. We argue that although the traditional approaches of research to social stratification have proved to be suitable for describing certain trends in post-transition transformations in Central and Eastern Europe, as a result of the social changes of the last quarter-century and the related new intellectual tasks, it is now necessary to establish new models focusing on social integration rather than just update stratification models based on occupation, consumption or the different types of capital. In our study, we present this new line of thinking through the example of Hungarian society. To prove the benefits of a model based on the logic of social integration, we examine the differences between social integration and social inequalities/stratification models. The results show that in terms of criterion validity, the integration model performs better in most respects than we have experienced with other models.

**Keywords**: social integration, social stratification, EGP, Hungary

## 1 Introduction

Our study presents a new approach to social integration and disintegration related to the stratification models of Hungarian society and its inequalities. Integration and stratification are core topics of classical and modern sociology. We argue that new integration research is necessary for exploring the groupings of contemporary societies. Traditional approaches to inequality (models expressing the labour market position of individuals based on occupations; see, for example, Goldthorpe, 2007) have proved to be suitable for describing specific trends in a transforming Central and Eastern Europe. However, due to the social changes of the last quarter-century, new research challenges and new needs have arisen.

The unique factors behind group formation best capture this new challenge. For understanding and analysing inequality trends in Central and Eastern European societies over the past decades, the use of traditional occupational classes, even if expanded with

differences in capital ownership, offers limited utility. New approaches in social research, such as the "cultural turn" (Nash, 2001), the perspectives of consumption, experience, and risk society (Beck, 1992), gender, and the problems of network and information society (Castells, 2004), have not been built organically into stratification models.[1] Several analyses deal with, for example, the components of consumption or differences in gender relations.[2] In these studies, inequalities based on occupational position are still used as independent variables, while topics considered building blocks of "post-modern" societies, such as identities, values, and networks, are treated as dependent variables.

Our paper presents an attempt to create a new social integration model for examining social integration that builds on factors viewed as defined by social stratification. We argue that these factors (e.g., political participation, interpersonal relations, relationship to norms, or subjective feelings of integration) constitute elements of social integration. We explain and examine this new approach through the example of Hungarian society.

Instead of occupational position or resources related to different types of capital, our model builds on the connectedness of individuals to different levels of the social system. As will be explained later, based on Merton (1949) and Habermas (1991), we differentiate between the systemic, the social, and the interpersonal levels of integration.

To show the advantages of this model, we implemented a nationally representative survey, which allows us to construct our model and compare it to previous models of social stratification and social class. The concept of integration includes all the achievements of occupation and capital-ownership-based stratum and class analysis in terms of content and methodology. However, new methods require understanding how society is organised and searching for answers to questions such as "What keeps society together?" and "What makes society tick?". This is illustrated well by the fact that the construct validity of our social integration model is, in most respects, better than what we experience with other models.

This study is structured as follows. First, we present the theoretical background to the social integration model, then we describe the methodological details of the new empirical model. Subsequently, we compare the construct and criteria validity of our social integration model to two other stratification and class models, namely the British latent class model and the classic occupation-based EGP model.

## 2 Theoretical background

Classical sociological references to social integration stem from Durkheim's concept of organic solidarity derived from the division of labour (2013). Studies on social integration also often cite Granovetter's thesis (1973), according to which tightly bonded small social groups are connected via bridges of weak ties, forming a more comprehensive social network in society.

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[1] This theory has been progressively elaborated in the great works of recent decades, although not in the context of stratification (e.g., Habermas 2005 [1968]; Beck 2003 [1968]; Crompton et al. (2000)].

[2] For example, the Great British Class survey, drawing on social, cultural and economic capital, includes questions on consumption as part of individuals' cultural capital (see Savage et al., 2013). Appleford (2016) then argues that bringing in fashion as part of cultural capital requires understanding how consumption and class differences are related to gender relations.

However, the theoretical implications of individuals' position in the social structure and social integration are most precisely defined by Robert Merton (1949). Merton reinterpreted the concept of anomie (by Émile Durkheim) and distinguished types of individual adaptation. His definition is based on the link between socially determined cultural goals and institutionally available means (i.e., norms, rules, and controls). For this article, Merton's most important statement is that the disintegration process emerges in a society when the orienting power of the cultural value system is significantly weakened because a rigid social structure and lack of mobility limit the use of the tools necessary to achieve previously accepted social goals (Merton, 1980).

In this sense, social integration is problematised by Gidron and Hall (2019), who argue that failures of social integration are responsible for the increasing support for radical right parties and populism instead of the much-cited demand-supply model or economic and cultural reasons. The latter define social integration as "the social relations linking individuals and promoting their sense of being valued members of society" (p. 1028); thus, they basically build on interpersonal networks and subjective feelings of inclusion/exclusion.

This definition also builds on the Durkheimian and Mertonian concepts of integration, attributing a seminal role to the shared norms of a society. However, it mostly argues that integration should be understood at the individual level. Our approach, seeing the transformation of the Hungarian and other European societies over the last decades, goes beyond understanding individual-level social integration and aims to look at the integration of society as a whole.

Therefore, in this study, we use the following definition of social integration: an "ideal-typical set of actions, attitudes, ideas, etc. (…) that improves the level of cooperation of particular integration agents and/or maintains the possibility of further cooperation, increases agents' sense of togetherness and reduces the chance of communication disorders or conflicts" (Dupcsik & Szabari, 2015, p. 62, own translation). Several arguments support the need for a new, integration-based model that represents social differences.

We should point out that in the 21st century, there have been fundamental changes in social reproduction. For example, in Hungary, the natural and social consequences of redistribution, the characteristics, volume and proportions of economic and other exchange transactions outside the market and financial systems, and their stratum- and group-forming effects are largely unknown (Csanádi et al., 2022). The main proportion of development funds (over 70–80 per cent even in 2005) reaches market actors through the redistribution system associated with projects. Social benefits are the primary source of livelihood for at least one-third of society, and their role may also be significant for other groups as well (Gerő & Kovách, 2022; Csizmadia & Szikra, 2019). Those who exercise political power are increasingly intervening directly in the operation of the economy through tampering with the distribution of development funds or, among other ways, through direct capital transfers and by offering local government/state resources to serve political interests (Erlingsson, 2005; Illner, 2010; Csillag & Szelényi, 2015; Bartha et al., 2020; Szikra, 2019). Economic operators are taking resource allocation and public sector procurements under their control. At the same time, the interests of economic operators are infiltrating political action and decisions concerning the regulation of the economy and the distribution of development funds (Neményi et al., 2018).

Over the past decades, the project-based redistribution of development funds has become standard in all areas of development/aid, including public administration and the world of business (Sjöblom, 2009). According to Boltanski and Chiapello (2005), one of the main features of network capitalism in the globalised era is that, in business, the hierarchical organisation of projects is being replaced by horizontal organisation proliferation of projects creates new conditions for social reproduction (Kovách, 2000; Ray, 2001). Social groups, areas, and settlements that are permanently excluded from project resources suffer significant disadvantages. A direct stratum- and group-forming effect is also attributed to projectification. Groups that possess the intellectual capital and managerial knowledge to play a crucial role in obtaining, organising, and implementing projects play a privileged role in determining projects, thereby creating a project class (Andersson, 2006; Kovách & Kucerova, 2006, 2009; Kovách, 2013).

Project based-redistribution is of particular importance in Hungary because the recapitalisation of the national capital class, or so-called "patronal capitalism" (Hale, 2015; Hajdu & Tóth, 2017), is significantly supported by the EU and national budget funds (Bartha, 2017; Hajdu & Tóth, 2017; Urbán, 2017; Burai, 2017; Martin, 2020; Civitas, 2021;).

However, little is known about how the new reproduction order affects livelihood strategies, social strata, and group formation. This confirms our assumption that both quantitative and qualitative changes have occurred in social reproduction, the causes and effects of which may be difficult to express through social groups formed on the basis of occupational classification. For example, the proportion of those with a precarious, uncertain stratification status has increased, which is a new factor in addition to recognising the complete transformation of the social reproduction system (Sik, 2020).

Integration is a multi-dimensional phenomenon. For example, in the context of the traditional occupation-based stratification approach, e.g., the EGP model, one may think of employment-based integration mechanisms. Labour market and employment-based processes play an essential part in social integration; however, they are only one type of such process.

The EGP model is criticised by Kitschelt and Rehm (2014) for capturing only a basic unrefined measure of the vertical element of the occupational structure. According to Kitschelt and Rehm (2014), the influence of occupational task structure on political attitudes—understood broadly, including attitudes towards redistributive policies, immigration, and support for authoritarian leadership—stems primarily from two dimensions: the autonomy one enjoys in one's work and the level of complexity of the work. Additionally, the specific challenges posed by certain occupations are influential. More autonomy and higher levels of complexity tend to lead to more liberal and less authoritarian political views, while lower complexity and more technical task structures may be associated with less inclusive and more authoritarian political stances. Thus, even if the role of occupation were at the core of our analysis, it would probably require a more nuanced analysis, building on experiences gathered from the workplace.

From the research mentioned above, it is clear that both integration based on social networks and connectedness to political institutions play an important role. Defining (and researching) groups that can be separated according to their degree of integration/disintegration is a task to be solved through quantitative analysis. This latter research objective means the application of both stratification and multidimensional processes. Accordingly, in the context of social integration, research on social stratification has a dual objective:

1. Describing the relevant social strata and groups according to the traditional stratification paradigm with the addition of new aspects (e.g., consumption and individualisation), avoiding the trap of unidentifiability.

2. Describing and analysing integration and disintegration mechanisms that explain the characteristics of the social strata and the differences between different stratification models.

By addressing this dual objective, we may arrive at a more accurate description of the layers of Hungarian society. Thus, the new grouping enables us to examine the systemic, social and interpersonal mechanisms of integration that create these groups.

Our aim is that the new integrational model should capture the role of integration processes in the generation of the division of society. We intend to create a model that includes the items of integration but also expresses the social differences that the occupational-based hierarchy is capable of grasping. We identify three levels of integration: systemic integration, social integration, and interpersonal integration. Following the theories of Habermas (2011) and Giddens (2013a, 2013b), systemic integration refers to the mechanisms that coordinate the repetitive actions of members of society as a result of the operation of external, subject-independent system(s) and define the framework for social reproduction. By analogy with Habermas' concept of lifeworld, the processes of cultural reproduction, socialisation and cooperation, trust and participation, and the impact of members of society on each other and their belonging to the community are included in the social integration mechanism. Interpersonal integration primarily means direct personal relationships (strong and weak ties), which are significant resources supporting participation in system integration processes (Laumann, 2006; Granovetter, 1983; Angelusz & Tardos, 2006; Lin, 2017). The resulting micro-milieux also create stabilising or disintegrating mechanisms of social-level integration (Albert & David, 2012, 2015).

## 3 Data and Methods

For the analysis, we used the data collected in the research project…[3] The CAPI survey was conducted in the spring of 2015. The sample (N=2,687) represents the Hungarian adult population in terms of regions, sex, age, settlement type, and education level.

The social integration model builds on three levels:

A. *Systemic integration* is measured by political participation (electoral and beyond),[4] trust in institutions (the National Assembly, the legal system, the police, and politicians), and the acceptance of and adherence to social norms. We applied a standard measurement based on the *World Values Survey* questionnaire to capture adherence to norms. We asked respondents to mark on an 11-point scale their tolerance of the violation of certain norms (four items). Since most respondents rejected norm-violating behaviour, this variable was transformed according to whether the respondent allowed or rejected the violation of a

[3] Integrative and Desintegrative Processes in the Hungarian Society – 108836 NKFI.

[4] Description of the variable. The value is '0' if the respondent does not participate. '1' means the respondent only participates in elections, and '2' if the respondent engages in other type(s) of cratic participation.

norm. We then created a principal component from the four responses: high values indicate tolerance of norm violation, while low values indicate rejection.

B. *Social integration* is measured by participation in the labour market and civil society. Individual work intensity captures participation in the labour market and takes a value from 0 to 1. The value is 1 if the respondent worked full-time throughout the 12 months preceding the interview and 0 if they did not work at all. Taking part-time months into account with a weight of 0.5, we calculated how much of the maximum possible time an individual worked. To create a dummy variable *civil participation* indicator, we asked respondents whether they had participated in the work and activities of four different types of voluntary organisations within one year prior to the survey. If they had participated in any of the listed types, the value is 1; if not, it is 0.

C. *Interpersonal integration* is captured by the number of strong ties, weak ties (nexus diversity), and the feeling of perceived social exclusion. In the case of strong ties, the *number* of *close relationships* is measured using the question of who the respondent discusses the most important aspects and problems of their life with. The number of people they list in response to this question (up to five people) is considered the respondents' *core discussion network*. In the case of weak ties, we inquired about 21 occupational categories, asking if the respondents knew any person with that occupation and, if so, whether they could ask that person for help. The variable of *nexus diversity* was calculated as the average of the answers to these two questions, i.e., of the weak ties and the weak helping ties. The respondents' degree of (subjective) social exclusion was measured in line with the *European Quality of Life Survey*.[5] The indicator of subjective social exclusion was obtained as the average of the four responses. A high value for this indicator reflects a sense of marginalisation and exclusion from society.[6]

To identify groups in relation to the above-listed eight variables, we applied the latent profile analysis method using the *mclust* package of the R software.[7] We adopted a seven-cluster group structure.[8] The seven groups and their proportions (%) within the sample were as follows:

1. *highly integrated and politically active* (15.5%)
2. *locally integrated* (9.2%)
3. *integrated into the labour market* (23.2%)
4. *integrated by the institutional system* (17.4%)
5. *moderately integrated* (16.1%)
6. *norm-following disintegrated* (12.9%)
7. *socially excluded, disintegrated* (5.6%).

The cluster means of the variables are shown for each cluster in Table 1.

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[5] The four items:
'I feel left out of society.'
'Life has become so complicated today that I almost can't find my way.'
'I feel that others do not recognise the value of what I do.'
'Some people look down on me because of my job situation or income.' Source: https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/en/surveys/european-quality-life-surveys-eqls

[6] For more details on editing each variable, see *anon.*

[7] https://cran.r-project.org/web/packages/mclust/index.html

[8] The criteria for the model fit are the BIC coefficient, size of the derived groups, and interpretability.

**Table 1** Cluster means for each variable

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Nexus diversity | 1.185 | 0.707 | −0.155 | −0.442 | 0.040 | −0.591 | −0.408 |
| Core discussion network | 0.615 | 0.324 | −0.187 | −0.115 | 0.195 | −0.495 | −0.540 |
| Subjective social exclusion | −0.391 | −0.147 | −0.251 | −0.399 | 0.167 | 0.229 | 1.963 |
| Civil participation | −0.284 | 3.004 | −0.276 | −0.255 | −0.265 | −0.224 | −0.196 |
| Labour intensity | 0.513 | −0.119 | 0.852 | −0.961 | 0.163 | −0.928 | −0.487 |
| Institutional trust | 0.197 | 0.191 | −0.067 | 0.623 | 0.048 | −0.790 | −0.567 |
| Political participation | 0.791 | 0.917 | −0.251 | 0.049 | −0.389 | −0.630 | 0.194 |
| Acceptance of violation of norms | −0.221 | −0.055 | −0.412 | −0.451 | 1.451 | −0.437 | 0.648 |

*Source:* Authors' calculation

*Description of integration groups*

The sociodemographic characteristics of the seven groups are reported in Table 2.

**Table 2** Socio-demographic characteristics of the integration groups

| Group | N | % | Graduate (%) | Budapest resident (%) | Roma (%) | Economically active* (%) | Age (average) | Graduate father (%) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Highly integrated, politically active | 314 | 15.5 | 38.7 | 19.5 | 1.0 | 81.2 | 44.8 | 16.9 |
| Locally integrated | 186 | 9.2 | 30.3 | 11.8 | 2.8 | 51.4 | 47.4 | 21.2 |
| Integrated into the labour market | 470 | 23.2 | 16.1 | 21.9 | 3.2 | 93.4 | 41.9 | 8.1 |
| Integrated by institutions | 351 | 17.4 | 11.8 | 28.7 | 3.0 | 2.2 | 56.0 | 12.3 |
| Moderately integrated | 326 | 16.1 | 13.4 | 13.2 | 6.1 | 63.0 | 44.1 | 7.7 |
| Norm-following disintegrated | 261 | 12.9 | 5.9 | 15.5 | 6.0 | 6.0 | 55.6 | 6.6 |
| Socially excluded disintegrated | 114 | 5.6 | 1.8 | 16.1 | 19.8 | 29.1 | 50.6 | 5.5 |
| Total | 2022 | 100 | 17.6 | 19.2 | 4.6 | 52.0 | 47.9 | 11.0 |

* Employed and entrepreneur

*Source:* Authors' calculation

In the *highly integrated and politically active* group (15.5%), nexus diversity and the number of people in the core discussion network are the highest, and the subjective feeling of social exclusion is the weakest. Labour intensity is significantly above average (second highest), institutional trust is above average, and civil participation and the acceptance of violation of norms are below average. The group is particularly active politically, primarily due to their high rate of activity beyond voting, mainly direct political participation. The proportion of graduates in the group is the largest (38.7%). The share of graduate fathers is above average; average per capita income is the highest in this group.

The civil and political activity of the *locally integrated* group (9.2%) stands out, and they are also exceptionally rich in social ties. Their level of perceived social exclusion is below average. Their institutional trust is somewhat above average; this group's acceptance of violating norms and labour intensity are moderate. In this group, the proportion of people living in villages is the highest (35.5%), while it is the lowest for those living in Budapest (11.8%); the proportion of graduates among them is the second highest (30.3%). The political activity of this group is exceptionally high: contacts with politicians and local government representatives and their support of civil organisations stand out.

Members of the *labour market integrated* (23.2%) group have the lowest average age (41.9 years), and the proportion of those living in towns is the second highest in this group (75.5%). More than ninety per cent (93.4%) of those within this group are active in the labour market; their perceived social exclusion is low, and their opinion of violating norms is not permissive. At the same time, their weak and strong personal ties are somewhat fewer than average; they do not participate in voluntary organisations' work; their political activity, apart from voting, lags well behind average, while their voting activity is around the mean. Their per capita monthly income is the second highest (320 €).

Nexus diversity and the number of confidential relationships are below average in the *integrated by the institutional system* (17.4%) group; at the same time, their sense of perceived social exclusion is also below average. Two-thirds of people within this group are retired, therefore, their average labour intensity is very low, and the average age in this group is the highest (56.0 years). Civil participation and acceptance of violations of norms are below average. Trust in institutions and the willingness to vote in this group are the highest. At the same time, political activity aside from voting is moderate, meaning that this group is primarily integrated through the political system. The proportion of Budapest residents is outstanding (28.7%).

In the *moderately integrated* (16.1%) group, the sense of perceived exclusion is somewhat above average, and their civil and political participation is below average. Trust in institutions and nexus diversity are average, and the number of people in their core discussion network is somewhat higher than average. This group's opinion of the acceptability of violating norms is exceptionally high. In this group, an above-average proportion agreed with the statement, *"To get ahead today, you are forced to do things that are not right."* They assume that others violate norms at an above-average rate. The group is mainly composed of low-income active persons: the average age is the second lowest (44.1 years), and the activity rate is the third highest (63%), while the per capita income is the third lowest in this group (287 €). The proportion of graduates and graduate fathers is somewhat below average.

The *norm-following disintegrated* (12.9%) group is significantly older than average (55.6 years); 63.9% are retired. Their nexus diversity and the number of their confidential relationships are below average. Their perceived exclusion is the second highest. Their political activity is deficient; only 23.0 per cent would vote compared to the average 51.0 per cent, and they engage in practically no other political activity. Trust in institutions is the lowest in this group. Their opinion does not permit any violation of social norms. Their education level is below average the proportion of graduates is only 5.9%. Their labour market activity is also deficient (6.0%), which is partly explained by the fact that nearly two-thirds of them are pensioners.

The nexus diversity of the *socially excluded, disintegrated* (5.6%) group is significantly below average, and the number of confidential relationships is the lowest. Their sense of perceived social exclusion is very high: on a scale of 1 to 5, nearly twice (3.9) the average value (2.1). This data is made even more significant by the fact that severe material deprivation in this group is three times the average (60.2%), the unemployment rate is four times the average (23.1%), and their per capita income is meagre (about 200 €). Their civil participation and labour market activity are below average, and their trust in institutions is significantly lower than average. Their political activity is somewhat above average because they have almost twice as frequent contact with politicians and local government representatives as average. On the one hand, this can be explained by the fact that the proportion of people living in villages is the largest in this group (37.7%), i.e., they are more likely to know the representatives in person. The proportion of people employed in the public works scheme is also the highest in this group, implying direct contact with the local mayor, especially in smaller settlements. Members of this group are more permissive of violating norms than average. Acceptance of the violation of norms is coupled with a kind of pessimistic worldview: the proportion of those agreeing with the statement *"To get ahead today, you are forced to do things that are not right"* is the highest in this group. Members of this group assume at the highest rate that others violate norms.

While our integrational groups do not constitute a one-dimensional social hierarchy, they nevertheless can be located along the social structure. The *highly integrated politically active* and the *locally integrated* groups are quite resourceful; many of them are of upper-middle status. The positions of the *labour market integrated* group and the *institutionally integrated* group are quite similar in the middle of the social structure, while they differ in age and activity (active/retired). The *moderately integrated* group has more of a lower-middle social status. The *norm-following disintegrated* and *socially excluded, disintegrated* groups represent the disadvantaged, lower third of society.

## 4 Validity of the social integration model

We can best demonstrate the applicability of our social integration model by examining its validity compared to other models in line with the requirements of criterion validity. We consider our integration model suitable for this comparison because it includes all the dimensions that stratification models do. Bailey (1988) points out that the concepts of 'validity' and 'reliability' have various meanings in social sciences. There are substantial differences between the related concepts and methods. Evans (1992), in examining the

validity of the Erikson–Goldthorpe–Portocarero (1979) class schema (EGP), distinguishes between *criterion validity* and *construct validity*. Criterion validity concerns the extent to which an established grouping corresponds to the findings of a theory. Construct validation tests the extent to which a generated grouping is correlated with variables (such as cultural consumption or party sympathy) to which it is closely related, according to the theoretical approaches. The validity of the EGP class scheme has been the subject of several studies (Birkelund et al., 1996; Evans & Mills, 1998) that primarily sought to discover the latent dimensions of the schema not directly observable through modelling directly observable class features. The latent class analysis (Evans & Mills, 2000) was able to modulate the categories of the EGP model but did not lead to a satisfactory result in terms of its validity.

The method of comparison we use is similar to the construct validation tests since we examine the correlation of the models with variables that are not included in the models but are assumed to be related to them. At the same time, it also differs from them in that these variables cover more areas than usual: issues related to work, occupational positions, dimensions of exclusion to political attitudes and satisfaction with the social environment and life.

### Latent class model (BBC model)

The first model we used for comparison, the latent class model (Savage et al., 2013; Albert et al., 2017), forms social groups based on the three Bourdieusian capital types. Economic capital is operationalised by income/wealth, cultural capital by the frequency of high culture and new culture consumption, and social capital by the diversity and average prestige of weak ties. The groups in the Hungarian version of the latent class model (Albert et al., 2017) were the upper class, the cultural middle class, the affluent middle class, young urban consumers, network-embedded rural workers, young drifters, middle-aged deprived, and the precariat.

### EGP class scheme

The second model we compare is the EGP scheme. Based on Erikson et al. (1979), Goldthorpe (2007) and Bukodi & Záhonyi (2004), we applied a categorisation containing 11 groups based on their employment relations (source and level of income, level of economic security, and growth prospects) and degree of work autonomy: 1. upper and middle-level managers, large and medium-sized entrepreneurs, 2. highly trained intellectuals, senior officials, and experts; 3. lower-level executives, lower-level intellectuals, subordinate officials, highly trained technicians, and managerial employees, 4. other technicians, office, skilled commercial, and service workers, 5. non-agricultural small employers and self-employed entrepreneurs, 6. agricultural small employers and self-employed entrepreneurs, 7. direct production managers and skilled industrial workers, 8. trained workers, 9. simple – unskilled – workers, 10. those droped out of the labour market, and 11. the inactive that have never worked. We assume this model is more strongly correlated with the dimensions of financial inequality.

## Method of comparison

We compared the capacity of the three models to explain various dependent variables (see Table 3). Our procedure was as follows: For each model, we ran stand-alone OLS estimates and investigated the adjusted $R^2$ value of the regression models. In each case, we first included the essential demographic variables; in the second step, we included the three models among the explanatory variables. Demographic variables were as follows: the respondents' age group, gender, marital status, highest qualification, household size, and place of residence. The categories of the three integration/stratification models were included in the regression models as dummy coded variables.

We tested the models with five sets of dependent variables. These are (1) labour market, (2) socioeconomic status, (3) political attitudes, (4) social capital, and (5) subjective well-being.[9] We compared the adjusted R-squared values of the models and concluded that one of the three integration/stratification models had the highest explanatory power if the difference between the adjusted R-squared values was higher than 0.01, i.e., one percentage point.

Based on the regression models, it may be concluded that there is no model where the basic demographic variables by themselves better explain the dependent variables than our integration model. The second step, therefore, involved continuously improving the adjusted R-squared value. It is also important to note that the standard deviation of explanatory power ranges from very low to moderate; that is to say, there is no difference in the magnitude of the explanatory power of the models involved in the comparison. Hence, only relative judgements may be given concerning which model is better (has more explanatory power). There is no doubt, however, that there are groups of variables for which the explained proportion of variance is higher and others for which it is significantly lower. The results are described in detail in the Appendix, while the most important ones are summarised below.

Overall, looking at the five groups of dependent variables (Table 3), it appears that our integration model has greater explanatory power than the other two models we compare with it. In the case of 12 out of 25 dependent variables, our model had slightly greater explanatory power than the other models. It worked well for the group of variables indicating social capital and subjective well-being and, to a lesser extent, for political attitudes. We found only one variable (whether the person has an employment contract) for which the EGP model had the highest adjusted R-squared value. The latent class model explains the variables associated with socioeconomic status and shows the most significant correlation with the factors closely related to the variables built into the model (e.g., the importance of a company of friends). The integration model is no exception to this latter comment. It performs well precisely in the areas of relationships, personal environment, and subjective satisfaction that are firmly related to strong and weak ties. At the same time, the different models perform well in other areas.

[9] Overall, we used 25 dependent variables in 5 groups. See the variables in Table 3.

The integration model explains most of the objective social status and social capital variables and has a stronger relationship with subjective factors, meaning it can contribute substantially to the examination of subjective factors. Based on this study, doubts can be raised about the validity of the EGP model.

**Table 3** Comparison of the explanatory powers of the three models

| **Dependent variable** | **Model that has the strongest explanatory power** |
|---|---|
| *(1) Labour market status* | |
| Unusual work patterns | – |
| Contract exists/existed | EGP model |
| Perception of chances of getting a job | Integration model |
| Work satisfaction | Integration model |
| *(2) Socioeconomic status* | |
| Severe material deprivation | Latent class model |
| Subjective financial situation | Latent class model |
| Intention to move | EGP model; Latent class model; Integration model |
| *(3) Political attitudes* | |
| Preference for democracy | – |
| Preference for individual or state responsibility | – |
| Satisfaction with political elite | Integration model |
| Satisfaction with economic elite | Integration model |
| Satisfaction with cultural elite | Integration model |
| Satisfaction with elite (Average) | Integration model |
| Left-right scale | – |
| Moderate-radical scale | – |
| *(43) Social capital, relationships* | |
| Generalised trust | – |
| Importance of family | Integration model |
| Importance of company of friends | Latent class model |
| Significance of workplace/school community | Integration model |
| Importance of neighbours | Integration model |
| The importance of a local community organisation | – |

**Table 3** *(continued)*

| Dependent variable | Model that has the strongest explanatory power |
|---|---|
| Satisfaction with family relationships | Integration model |
| *(5) Subjective well-being, subjective situation* | |
| Life satisfaction | Integration model |
| Subjective social importance | Integration model |
| Satisfaction with the localities | – |

–: For these variables, none of the models had an adjusted R-squared> 0.1.

Where the names of several models are associated with a variable, this suggests that the difference in explanatory power was not higher than 0.01, i.e., one percentage point.

## 5 Conclusions

This methodological study has presented an attempt to test the *Integration model* based on the various dimensions of integration and then compared it with the internationally most frequently used occupation-based stratification model referred to as EGP (Erikson et al., 1979) and the latent class model, generated based on Bourdieu's capital dimensions (Savage et al., 2013).

Social integration and stratification have always been core topics of classical and modern sociology. We have argued that the use of traditional occupational classes, or simply their expansion by including the various forms of capital, is only of limited utility and is less capable of identifying real social divisions.

We have argued that our social integration model is necessary for exploring the structure of contemporary society. Therefore, we used a unique concept of social integration, including the interpersonal, social, and systemic level, which improves the interpretation of social processes. As the description of the social integration groups shows, in line with Merton's approach, subjective social exclusion and acceptance of the violation of norms are a constitutive element of the grouping of society. Members of groups that feel more excluded usually tend to accept the violation of norms as well, showing signs of anomie. However, our model also indicates that other channels of social integration also matter: even the most excluded group can be mobilised to some extent in electoral participation. Furthermore, for the moderately integrated groups (those moderately integrated and integrated by the institutional system or the labour market), political institutions or the labour market are the primary tethers to society.

To show the advantages of this model, we implemented a nationally representative survey and studied and compared three models of social integration and social stratification. To verify our claims, we compared the construct and criteria validity of our social integration model to those of two other stratification and class models (the British latent class model and the classic occupation-based EGP model).

According to our research experience, the social integration model measures and explains something different than the stratification and class models developed earlier, although it also includes their content. Consequently, the recommended method is the *multimodelling of inequalities.* Our study indicates that the various stratification, class, and integration models perform well in different areas. The latent class model reveals stronger correlations with objective, social status-related factors, while the integration model better explains subjective elements, and the validity of the Erikson–Goldthorpe–Portocarero model is shown to be highly doubtful. [10]

Concerning the integration model as it relates to Hungarian society, taking it into account further supplements our knowledge of disadvantaged groups. Social integration/disintegration is not a feature that is automatically attached to the place occupied in the system of social inequalities but an independent dimension that expresses social status. According to this new dimension, the integration of highly integrated and disintegrated groups points to large-scale inequalities in Hungarian society. Based on our findings, the individualised and atomised poor possess no family or group-level strategies for managing and mitigating social disadvantages. The cumulation of disintegration in the case of groups that have multiple social disadvantages is a warning and provides evidence that the persistence of social weaknesses may affect up to 30-40% of Hungarian society.

Another significant contribution of our study is that the social integration and disintegration model makes the mechanisms of integrating groups between the upper and lower social segments much more comprehensible. As a result, we know far more about their group features. Integration through local attachment, the labour market, interpersonal networks, and institutional and political systems prove to be valid and relevant grouping factors. Therefore, we presume that integration/disintegration grouping also serves as a primary and essential structural model that successfully extends the dimensions of social inequalities and includes the mechanisms that create and maintain them. Our paper concludes that it is crucial and *inevitable* that social integration/disintegration mechanisms should be considered and applied in social inequality research.

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[10] As the integration model (and the latent class model) is based on more components than the EGP class scheme, it is not surprising that it is better at explaining more factors. This approach has a theoretical (and empirical) basis; therefore we believe that these models did not have an "unfair" advantage in the comparison.

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## Annex

**Table "A"** Explanatory power of each model (adjusted R-squared) N = 1853

| | Demography | Entire model | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Latent Class Model | EGP Model | Integration Model |
| *Labour market* | | | | |
| Unusual work patterns | 0.037 | 0.045 | 0.051 | 0.044 |
| A contract exists/existed | 0.005 | 0.014 | **0.113** | 0.019 |
| Chances of getting a job | 0.184 | 0.200 | 0.206 | **0.225** |
| Work satisfaction | 0.051 | 0.078 | 0.077 | **0.113** |
| *Socio-economic status* | | | | |
| Severe material deprivation | 0.161 | **0.244** | 0.176 | 0.205 |
| Subjective financial situation | 0.300 | **0.378** | 0.332 | 0.342 |
| Intention to move | 0.175 | **0.185** | **0.187** | **0.183** |
| *Political attitudes* | | | | |
| Democracy vs dictatorship | 0.059 | 0.090 | 0.064 | 0.090 |
| Preference for individual or state responsibility | 0.023 | 0.028 | 0.030 | 0.030 |
| Satisfaction with political elite | 0.032 | 0.040 | 0.037 | **0.148** |
| Satisfaction with the economic elite | 0.035 | 0.056 | 0.053 | **0.144** |
| Satisfaction with cultural elite | 0.029 | 0.050 | 0.053 | **0.104** |
| Satisfaction with elite (average) | 0.033 | 0.055 | 0.055 | **0.159** |
| Left-right scale | 0.039 | 0.043 | 0.046 | 0.043 |
| Moderate-radical scale | 0.045 | 0.048 | 0.051 | 0.055 |
| *Social capital, relationships* | | | | |
| Generalised confidence | 0.040 | 0.051 | 0.044 | 0.087 |
| Importance of family | 0.092 | 0.099 | 0.094 | **0.126** |
| Importance of the company of friends | 0.098 | **0.162** | 0.106 | 0.141 |
| Importance of the workplace/school community | 0.234 | 0.247 | 0.269 | **0.293** |
| Importance of neighbours | 0.084 | 0.092 | 0.085 | **0.101** |

**Table "A"** *(continued)*

| | **Demography** | **Entire model** | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | **Latent Class Model** | **EGP Model** | **Integration Model** |
| The importance of a local community organisation | 0.052 | 0.065 | 0.057 | 0.070 |
| Satisfaction with family relationships | 0.122 | 0.144 | 0.136 | **0.199** |
| *Subjective well-being, subjective situation* | | | | |
| Life satisfaction | 0.128 | 0.163 | 0.144 | **0.228** |
| Subjective social importance | 0.076 | 0.097 | 0.101 | **0.159** |
| Satisfaction with the localities | 0.040 | 0.058 | 0.049 | 0.084 |

*Legends:*
The R-squared values in bold indicate the highest proportion of variation of outcomes that is explained by the model (if R-squared > 0.1). The names of several models in bold indicate that the difference in explanatory power was not greater than 0.01, i.e. 1 percentage point. For each outcome, the coefficients on some or all categories of the three integration/stratification models are significant at the 5 percent level.