

International Perspectives on Migration 4

Floya Anthias  
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# Paradoxes of Integration: Female Migrants in Europe

 Springer

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Female Migrants in Europe

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# Paradoxes of Integration: Female Migrants in Europe

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# Chapter 1

## Introduction: Paradoxes of Integration

Floya Anthias, Mirjana Morokvasic-Müller, and Maria Kontos

This book explores different facets of migrant women's participation in the EU. It analyses the lives of new female migrants<sup>1</sup> with a focus on the labour market and domestic, care work and prostitution in particular, both in terms of regular and irregular status and using a biographical perspective. It draws on research in the frame of the FeMiPol<sup>2</sup> project, conducted between 2006 and 2008 within the 6th Framework Programme of the European Commission. This book provides a comparative analysis embracing eleven European countries from Northern (the UK, Germany, Sweden, France), Southern (Portugal, Spain, Italy, Greece, Cyprus) and Eastern Europe (Poland, Slovenia), that is, old and new immigration countries as well as old and new market economies and considers the interplay of migration and policies and women's strategies in relation to these.

The ambiguity of the concept of integration lies in its differential acceptance and understanding by different users. Uncontested and taken for granted within political discourse, it was one of the key concepts in migration research in the twentieth

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<sup>1</sup> Under 'new migration', we mean the migratory movements in the last decade of the twentieth century and the beginning of the twenty-first.

<sup>2</sup> 'Integration of Female Immigrants in Labour Market and Society. Policy Assessment and Policy Recommendations'; see [www.femipol.uni-frankfurt.de](http://www.femipol.uni-frankfurt.de).

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century which was primarily concerned with the ways migrants adapt to their new contexts. Its heuristic value has been increasingly questioned today in academic research. Some critics point to its functionalist underpinnings and question purely policy-driven assumptions about integration (Guénif-Suilamas 2003; Peraldi et al. 2001). Our book instead highlights policy-relevant issues but at the same time treats integration as a highly normative concept, trying to uncover some of the contradictory assumptions behind it (see also Anthias 2012 forthcoming). Integration can be used both as an instrument of power and domination over migrants but also includes within it concerns with social inclusion. In its current apparition, it is linked to securitisation discourse and the management of populations, in particular those whose differences are considered to be disturbing and threatening on the basis of ethnicity, faith or national origin. The targeted population groups change over time; most recently, especially after September 2001, the focus has been on Muslims. In this introduction, we try to reframe the concept away from its contemporary policy connotations and in terms of a more intersectional, transnational and democratising discourse.

Migration patterns, migration discourse, migrant experiences, migrant positions and their expectations and strategies are all gendered (Anthias and Lazaridis 2000; Willis and Yeoh 2000; Morokvasic 2011). At the same time, gender crosscuts other social relations, and gender processes cannot be understood independently of class, race, migrant status, sexuality and generation with which they intersect. Therefore, a gender perspective in migration should not be reduced to focusing on the experiences of women. Indeed, this book contributes to the now abundant literature focusing on women but which ‘does not stop there’ as Donna Gabaccia says (1994). It implicitly uncovers the ways in which gender hierarchies are intertwined with other social relations of power. It provides a gendered and intersectional perspective on new migrations in EU by drawing precisely on the experiences of women. We argue that focusing on women as the primary object of studies or charting their experiences is central (Erel et al. 2003) as long as a male bias persists and as long as policies and practices are based on the assumption that the paradigmatic and desired international migrant is a young, economically motivated, possibly highly skilled male, and as long as the reality and the composition of migration streams worldwide is ignored.

Women today represent the majority of new migrants in and across Europe: they originate from transition economies of Central and Eastern Europe where the end of the bipolar world triggered a vast mobility of persons (Morokvasic and Rudolph 1994; Morokvasic 2003, 2004), but also from Latin America, Asia and North Africa. Their migration patterns are now highly diversified and reflect the varying but limited opportunities of cross-border movement because of restrictive migration policies, as well as limited options of access to the labour market despite the persisting demand in certain sectors, in particular, the service sector. In the new migrations of women, the majority use family reunification channels, tourist or student visas, while some have to rely on smugglers or traffickers in order to enter the EU.

We begin by focusing on the concept of integration, discussing some of its problems and ways of moving ahead. This discussion aims to provide a framing for the book. We then move to exploring gender and migration and briefly describe the focus of the different chapters in this book.

## 1.1 The Concept of Integration

The concept of integration has been part of a sociological vocabulary for a long time and arose out of a concern with the question of social order and organisation. The concept of social integration, found in classical sociological theory (e.g. in the work of Emile Durkheim (1893/1984)), was a child of modernity and industrial capitalism, being concerned with the preconditions for social order. Overall, in sociological analysis, integration refers to the process by which individuals become members of society and their multilevel and multiform participation within it; integration is a process relating to different forms of participation: in the neighbourhood, at work, school, family, etc. Such a concept of social integration, therefore, conceives integration as a social process relating to all members of society.

In studies of migration from the Chicago School (Thomas and Znaniecki 1918–1922 Park 1928/1950) onwards, integration became a key concept but used in terms of the specific problems for society posed by migrants. There is an assumption that integration processes are not relevant to all societal members and the focus is on ethnicity or migration status. At the same time, the social integration of the native population becomes the normative backdrop for the integration of migrants, without, however, making this explicit.

In contemporary societies, the integration of migrants has been conceived primarily in terms of the boundaries of the nation state. The expression ‘well integrated’ or ‘fails to integrate’ implicitly refers to being, primarily if not exclusively, part of a nation. The nation state-based perspective in relation to those targeted by integration discourses and practices extends its ambit to the governmentality of racialised minority population, some of whom are not migrant at all (being settled populations). In contrast, integration discourses and practices are not directed at migrants or ‘expats’ coming from developed countries: nobody asks Americans or Japanese in Paris or French or Italians in the UK to ‘integrate’, to demonstrate their knowledge of the language or to share supposedly French or British values.

## 1.2 Integration as Assimilation

It could be argued that this shifting of the primary meaning of the concept signposts therefore categories of the population that are seen as deficient in some way (treating them differently to other societal members). From such a point of view, the only alternative open to migrants is to assimilate and adopt the majority or dominant culture. This imperative neither acknowledges nor values the diversity of culture within the broader social landscape which is itself highly differentiated.

As it appears in current debates, integration assumes an end result where people become part of a given social fabric, despite the rhetoric of two-way integration and the idea of integration as a process rather than outcome embodied in EU frameworks (Commission of the European Communities 2005). Although it has been

claimed, on the EU level and, for example, in the UK, that integration is not ‘about assimilation into a single homogenous culture’ but a ‘two-way process with responsibilities on both new arrivals and established communities’ (Home Office 2008: 4), it treats ‘inclusivity and assimilation as the instrument of social cohesion’ (Zetter et al. 2006: 5).

In those European states that adopted a multiculturalist model, within the last few years, there has been a shift of emphasis in migration and integration policies and towards social cohesion. Consequently, there has been a growth of securitisation and migration management as well as neoliberal policies and related agendas around this (as opposed to more multiculturalist versions of integration). Within the programmatic of such an agenda, there are three tropes. Firstly, there is the trope about migrants’ unwillingness to integrate (to be corrected by requiring a demonstration of willingness through sitting and passing citizenship or integration tests); secondly, the undesirability of some differences and that these are supposedly a threat to Western values and society; and thirdly, the incapacity of some migrants to integrate and to become ‘one of us’, that is, to adapt and adopt values within the broader society.

As Joppke says (2007), integration as assimilation has become again a preferred model of ethnocultural accommodation in the current climate. One possible critique of the notion of cultural ‘assimilation’ is that it assumes a core centre of universal values in the ‘society’ and that the normal and desirable path is to ‘assimilate’. As well as not taking account of the diverse and differentiated nature of social relations, it does not valorise the existence of the multiple values which produce the social landscape. It also assumes the ability to integrate where there are exclusionary mechanisms at work on the basis of competencies that cannot be accessed by all and alongside the continuing inferiorisation and subordination of culturally identified groups (including racialisation, discrimination and xenophobia). It should also be noted that integration can be on subordinated terms, that is, there can be inferiorised or subordinated inclusion (Anthias 2001a; Mulinari and Neergaard 2005), as in the case of many migrant workers including women (Anthias et al 2008). Migrants are embedded in transnational networks and relations as well as having ties to the homeland. The normative assumption that assimilation is normal and desirable does not address the realities of transnational lives nor does it look at how migrants are embedded in their homelands or consider their transnational ties.

There have been considerable shifts in the conceptualisation of integration and rights within EU policy. One view, shaping the Council of Tampere Conclusions from 1999, is based on the idea of equal rights, entailing granting third-country migrants full residence status and equal treatment. However, in 2003, the long-term residence directive saw such rights as not pre-given but as rewards for those who have demonstrated integration, for instance, by acquiring the language or having found employment. Member states could require migrants from third countries applying for long-term residence status ‘to comply with integration conditions in accordance with national law’. This understanding has been adopted by most member states to which the directive applies.<sup>3</sup> Migrants who are seen as unable or unwilling

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<sup>3</sup>The UK, Ireland and Denmark have opted out of the directive.

to integrate can be thereby refused residence rights. This understanding is inscribed in the Family Reunification Directive (2003) which allows member states to require family members of migrants from third countries to comply with pre-departure integration measures, for instance, to take language courses, before acquiring residence rights (Acosta 2011; Groenendijk 2004).

Similarly to other countries in the global North, European countries' migration policies are converging in the direction of an 'aggressive civic integrationism' (Triadafilopoulos 2011), making integration a condition for admission, legal residency and citizenship (Morokvasic and Catarino 2006). In the shadow of Islamophobia, particularly, and the related securitisation discourses, integration is conceived as an accomplishment to be performed by the migrant prior to the right of residence rather than after it. Paradoxically, the proof of respect for liberal norms, such as the respect for women's rights, is employed for legitimising a restrictive policy on migration. Indeed integration as a goal forms the basis of selective migration policy (Kontos 2011). The selective character can be seen in the fact that, for instance, family members can be prevented from entering European countries while the policy allows the entry of skilled migrants, that is, those with higher qualifications and who are needed in the labour market. Poorer third-country migrants and women have been affected particularly by this (Anthias et al. 2008; Kofman et al. 2000). In addition, while integration is central in migration policies, it neither applies to all facets of migration realities nor does it target all migrants and cannot deal with undocumented migrants and in many instances does not address asylum seekers.

While the managed migration system (the points system, in some countries the quota system, in others regularisation), on the one hand, recognises the usefulness of migration for the economy, it regulates its character on the other. There are also fears of unskilled, dependent migrants, asylum seekers and refugees whose cultures and ways of life are seen to be incompatible or undesirable within Western societies and the fear of social breakdown and unrest attached to these (see Yuval-Davis et al. 2005; McGhee 2008). In addition, there is an increasing emphasis on enforcement and sanctions, for example, this is the case in the UK policy (Kostakopoulou 2010) as well as in Germany (Friedrich 2011).

### 1.3 Who Does the Integrating?

The need for migrants to explicitly demonstrate their commitment to the society of residence is illustrated by the concern to make citizenship conditional on such a commitment, to be demonstrated partly by knowledge of the national culture. The idea of the 'contract' between newcomers and the receiving society is used in public discourses in many European countries in combination with the idea of 'earned citizenship'. As an example, France explicitly defines its republican values such as secularism, women's rights and democracy through its Welcome and Reception Contract (Goodman 2010: 766; Morokvasic and Catarino 2006). These concerns act to legitimise the introduction of compulsory integration courses and other restrictive migration policies, for instance, the new point-based system in the UK (Guiraudon 2008).

Different versions of the ‘integration contract’ have been adopted and practiced in several northern European countries: in the Netherlands since 2002, in Austria since 2003, in France since 2006 (Guiraudon 2008; Morokvasic and Catarino 2007) and in Germany since April 2011 in selected regions and for the time being tentatively (Kontos 2013 forthcoming). The idea of the ‘contract’ and of earned citizenship is also entailed in the various tests that migrants have to pass in order to acquire long-term residence status or citizenship. The German citizenship test, for instance, is instigated by ‘moral inquisition and cultural nationalism’ (Joppke 2010: 127). The UK has embraced *conditional citizenship* based on the idea of earning citizenship through demonstrating knowledge of, and embeddedness within, a British way of life. It also sets out a *tiered citizenship* process with, for the first time, the setting up of a probationary period. Examples of requirements include learning British values, taking language classes, citizenship tests (the Life in the UK test) and citizenship oaths. While some of these are ways of enhancing entitlements, the experiences of people tell a different story (e.g. see Cooke 2009). The injunction to integrate, targeting precisely those who are defined as different (McGhee 2008; Kostakopoulou 2010) (and deficient) on the basis of ethnic identity, means also that the other facets that people have are then ruled as irrelevant or insignificant, for example, their class positions (if not identities), their gender and their broader political values and locations.

## 1.4 Culture, Belonging and Biography

‘Integration’ of the diverse (seen as minorities and migrants) underemphasises commonalities and structural contexts and assumes static, ahistorical and essentialist units of ‘culture’ with fixed boundaries (Anthias 2012 forthcoming) homogenising both minorities and the majority. Culture is treated as a kind of rucksack (Erel 2010) which people carry with them. This is unable to consider culture as a process and in terms of contextual practices as well as their material underpinnings.

With the construction of a supposedly homogeneous ‘cultural’ group, there are dangers of taking one version of the ‘culture’, usually that of male leaders, while silencing the voices of women and the young. There is therefore the problem of reinforcing the power of traditional elders and the issue of how any so-called culture’s needs are to be recognised and for whom (e.g. see discussions in Anthias and Yuval Davis 1992; Patel 2008).

Within integration discourse and practice, the notion of belonging has generally been discussed in terms of identification with the country of residence. However, becoming incorporated in a society is also a result of everyday practices and routines (Giddens 1984) These can generate processes of belonging which have experiential, affective and practical aspects (Anthias 2001b). Social policies may constrain or enable belonging by impediments or provisions for accessing citizenship and rights. Indeed, access to socio-economic, cultural and legal/political rights is a core dimension of citizenship (Penninx 2004).

Achieving inclusion (and on equal terms) is clearly a pragmatic interest for migrants/newcomers. It is therefore important to study the practices and strategies