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**Unsettling integration**

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# Unsettling integration

By **Giovanna Astolfo,**  
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## Abstract

As part of the three-year project “EPIC”, funded by the Asylum, Migration and Integration fund, this research explores the diversity of responses to migration across eleven European urban spaces and the different strategies put in place by migrants to navigate and learn the city. To achieve its objective, the project has been designed to establish an international environment for building knowledge and exchanging good practices across multiple partners and sectors. The first chapter examines current migration and integration literature in order to dissect and move beyond the notion of integration. Incorporating policy discourse and academic analyses of integration frameworks and practice, the chapter provides a discursive context for and background to the need for concept revision and to how processes and practices of adaptation are perceived of and understood. The second chapter discusses the findings of the surveys and interviews conducted across the eleven cities based on an alternative framework of care, repair and maintenance, drawing out the dominant dimensions and themes within subjective definitions and experiences of ‘integration’. The analysis underlines the importance of recognising the diversity in trajectories of integration, and that policy design should focus on removing obstacles to integration rather than imposing linear integration trajectories. The paper attempts to adopt a reflexive gaze throughout the research to acknowledge the position of power, privilege and in most cases whiteness of the researchers involved. It also recognises the limitations of this type of research and the fact that it is not meant to provide solutions. It wishes, however, to foster further reflections and address the challenges faced by local NGOs and governments.

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**This research attempts to expose the coloniality of the current policy and discursive notion of integration, while moving beyond ‘methodological nationalism’ and engaging reflexively with urban inhabitants, positioning their subjective truths.**

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# 01. Introduction

## **Decolonising integration**

*We have a problem when the migration discipline becomes implicated in this disciplining of migration (Stierl, 2020).*

European and Euro-centred scholarship on migration has increased much after the so called refugee crisis in 2015. Special emphasis has been put on the policy relevance of such research, while less attention seems to be paid on its risks, including that of reproducing instead of challenging institutional categories such as the distinction between voluntary/involuntary migration, asylum seekers, refugees, and so on. These categories, despite having been created to protect individuals, then can do the opposite.

There is also increased expectation that research on migration leads to salvific outcomes, providing policy ‘solutions’ to the ‘problem’ of migration and integration. This is not however realistic, nor auspicious. The purpose of knowledge coproduction is to formulate good questions, or to change the nature of the questions, reframing perspectives. Research should ultimately be able to expose the violence of migration management and integration policy and discourses, putting forward ‘counter-empirics’. (Stierl, 2020)

In this light, the present research – conducted over eight months in nine different territories – attempts to expose the coloniality of the current policy and discursive notion of integration, while moving beyond ‘methodological nationalism’ and engaging reflexively with urban inhabitants, positioning their subjective truths.

The first chapter examines current migration and integration literature in order to dissect and move beyond the notion of integration. Incorporating policy discourse and academic analyses of integration frameworks and practice, the chapter provides a discursive context for and background to the need for concept revision and to how processes and practices of adaptation are perceived of and understood. The literature review highlights the rigidity of policy frameworks based on narrow definitions of integration and how these lead to policy failures and it presents alternative paradigms of integration and practice that allow for the fluidity of experiences and diverse everyday

practices missing from colonial conceptualisations of integration and migration and the inequalities and exclusions that stem from this.

According to Schinkel (2018) research on migration and integration today, in Europe especially, occurs within a discourse that is “riddled with racism hard to avoid” (p.2). Integration has failed, both “as a political way to describe the process in which migrants settle, and as a concept in social science to analyze such processes” (ibi).

It has failed for multiple reasons. Firstly, because it entails a negative instance – the inability of a person to conform to society or place (a problem) – hence the need to develop integration services. Secondly, because it is generally considered a one way process. We never look at integration as the ability of one society to integrate into foreign groups and individuals. Thirdly, because it is a divisive notion, despite its apparent meaning. It starts from the idea that a society is naturally different and constituted by difference, however it implies the presence of a dominant group and a minority group, and a clear distinction between the two. Fourthly, because it implies the idea of immobility, as if people could be fixated in place.

But most of all, the authors claim that the notion of integration is colonial, patriarchal and racist. It is colonial in its origin and in the way in which it perpetuates power asymmetry and inequality (on how coloniality of power saturates contemporary immigration policy and practice see: Carver, 2019; De Sousa Santos, 2007; El-Enany, in press; Sharma, in press; Gutiérrez Rodríguez, 2018; Mamdani, 2018; Mayblin, 2017; Mongia, 2018; Picozza, 2020).

Based on this, we urge to move away from the current paradigm of integration to embrace alternative frameworks. We propose that of ‘inhabitation’, intended as a relational feminist practice constituted by multiple incremental and transformative formal and informal encounters between people, places, institutions and services that are developed to endure and maintain life (Boano & Astolfo, 2020). Inhabitation is ultimately the result of complex daily strategies of learning, navigating and governing a city (p.555). Such an understanding enables us to shift our focus from pre-set categories and needs onto the historical and present experiences of those who ‘have to integrate’, recognizing the centrality of inhabitants, including migrants’ and refugees’ own assessments.

In order to examine integration as inhabitation and as a relational practice, we propose two alternative concepts that do not belong to migrantised

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**Methodologically, the report offers a glimpse into the struggle to move away from quantitative, un-positioned and un-reflexive research in the field of migration, especially during a pandemic.**

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language and have been developed outside migration research: spatial practice, and ethics of care, repair and maintenance. If integration policy and practice are narrowly bounded to service provision and rights enhancement, we encourage instead to listen to people's accounts of practices – amidst improvisation, precarity, alternative scripts of citizenship and how state rules are negotiated. In this report, the focus on integration practices is both related to institutions as providers, but also to other less visible ones, developed by the inhabitants in an often provisional way, and related to an ethics of care, repair and maintenance. Then, rather than simply collecting and comparing such practices, successful or not, across different geographies, the conclusive reflection and result of the research constitute the foundation of a capacity building effort that will target the challenges faced by local NGOs and governments in addressing the challenges of inhabitation.

The second chapter discusses the findings of the surveys and interviews conducted in nine cities with around 700 people and based on an alternative framework of care, repair and maintenance, drawing out the dominant dimensions and themes within subjective definitions and experiences of 'integration' across the nine territories. The analysis underlines the importance of recognising the diversity in trajectories of integration, that each individual will be situated on a different point or stage of integration, and that policy design should reflect this by shifting focus from imposing linear integration trajectories and onto removing obstacles to integration.

Methodologically, the report offers a glimpse into the struggle to move away from quantitative, un-positioned and un-reflexive research in the field of migration, especially during a pandemic.

Such effort has taken different directions. First, the issue of categorisation and construction of social identities and stigma are not new to the debate on research methods, and are related to the risks of creating racialised bodies and less-than-human subjects. Similar dilemmas are also produced when confronting with the simultaneous presence of vulnerability and agency. In this context, the concept of 'contextual vulnerability' (Monno and Serreli, 2020) was useful to the construction of alternative relations within the urban space. It also helped us to separate vulnerability, as a concept, from the idea of a permanent and unchangeable condition.

Similarly, focusing on inhabitation - as a set of transformative encounters that take place in the street, - and to the idea of 'sociabilities of emplacement', - that describe how migrants and inhabitants at large forge relations to enhance connections with place, - helped us to redirect attention from categories that might not reflect actual or perceived conditions to ideas of collective urban life.

In practical terms, instead of treating the migrant population as a different unit of analysis and investigation by employing separate questionnaires and interview guides, we have directed the focus on parts of the whole population, as urban inhabitants, which obviously includes diverse groups with different migrant and refugee backgrounds, needs, ambitions, and trajectories.

We have (reluctantly) kept the word "integration" within certain parts of the research and the present report, but we have rejected thinking of it as an achievement and as a state. In the questionnaires and interview guides we have broken the word down into alternative terms that allow for a more granular analysis of the subjective experience of urban inhabitants: knowledge, participation, imagination, belonging and networks.

Finally, we have attempted to adopt a reflexive gaze throughout the research to acknowledge the position of power, privilege and in most cases whiteness of the researchers involved. We also recognise the limitations of this type of research and the fact that it is not meant to provide solutions. It wishes, however, to foster further reflections and address the challenges faced by local NGOs and governments.

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**The focus of integration discourse and the application of national policy on ‘hosting’, ‘hospitality’ and even ‘welcoming’ migrants is seen to prioritise the host society and maintain outsider/receiving status of migrants, which is contradictory to integration purpose.**

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## **02. Literature review**

### **Integration beyond the current paradigm. Discourse, policy and practice**

#### **Integration:**

There is broad agreement in the academic literature that ‘integration’ and what it is lacks conceptual clarity. Indeed, there is no accepted definition of integration. Integration has been described as a concept that is ‘vague and contested’ (Oliver and Gidley, 2015); chaotic (Robinson, 1998) and ambivalent (Astolfo et al, 2018), and it has been problematised widely. It is used both as an ‘aspirational concept’ and a policy objective adopted by international organisations, governments and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) alike, but which lack ‘clarity about what integration “looks like” and how it is evaluated.’ (ibi)

The discussion and discourse around integration has developed over time and in response to inadequacies of the asylum reception and integration processes that have been observed and experienced, in particular since the so-called migration crisis of 2015. Attempts to understand, analyse and fix the ‘broken system of reception’ (Betts and Collier, 2017) have led to particular reconceptualizations and redefinitions of ‘integration’ against multiple backgrounds and frames of analysis. Below is an overview of this discursive development.



## A two-way process?

Meanings of integration have, in most cases/areas, moved away from assimilation, where migrants are expected to adopt the language, culture and practices of the host country and abandon heritage and away from the idea that provision of short-term emergency policy implementation can affect long-term development. Within the literature and policy on integration, a common positioning developed around integration being a two-way process, acknowledging the agency of migrants within that process which otherwise treated migrants as subjects of policy. In this paradigm refugees must adapt, and host societies must facilitate and support this process.

Within the policy field, humanitarian and international organisations such the EU and UNHCR provide a discursive and structural framework for integration practice at all levels of application. The EU definition states that ‘integration is a dynamic, two-way process of mutual accommodation by all immigrants and residents’ (EESC, 2004). Similarly the UNHCR defines integration as “a dynamic two-way process that places demands on both the refugee and the receiving community.” The document continues: “Integration requires that receiving States and civil society create a welcoming environment which supports refugees to achieve long-term economic stability and adjust to the new society, including fostering a sense of belonging, and encouraging participation in their new communities.” (UNHCR, 2013: 8).

Such organisations recognise that integration is multi-dimensional – that it “relates both to the conditions for and actual participation in all aspects of the economic, social, cultural, civil and political life of the country of resettlement as well as to refugees’ own perceptions of, acceptance by and membership in the host society” (ICRIRR, 2002: 12). Integration policy can be thought of as aiming to reduce the segregation, inequality, discrimination, and poverty experienced by ethno-racial immigrant groups, as well as make city institutions like schools, hospitals, and social service agencies more demographically representative and accommodative of newcomers’ needs and interests (de Grauw and Vermeulen, 2016: 989). However, this simple rendering of integration has encountered significant criticism. In most policy cases, however, the onus of ‘integration’ is placed on migrants to integrate, at will, leading to migrant blame for integration failures (Camilo, 2010). Implicit assumptions about ‘host’ or ‘resident’ societies characterise them with well-defined boundaries, integrated social and coherent cultural systems that the migrant should adapt to (Grzymala-Kazłowska and Phillimore, 2018) and suggest that social integration should occur across these boundaries (between migrant and such-defined host community) rather than amongst ethnic or migrant groups (Wessendorf and Phillimore, 2018). Grzymala-Kazłowska & Phillimore (2018) point out that despite the emphasis on two-way processes,

‘Integration policy has on the whole developed in such a way as to encourage the adaptation and inclusion of immigrants to life in a new society while maintaining the existing socio-cultural order, where there was assumed or imagined to be a dominant, prevailing and somewhat singular culture and identity as well as belief and value system.’ (186-187)

The terminology and policy around integration has continued to frame integration as something that is a top-down process, and a ‘colonial’ concept (Mignolo, 2011): A concept which this review returns to in more detail below and which is inherent within binary notions of otherness common to migration and integration discourse.

The language of ‘welcome’, ‘host’ and reception, common to integration policy, has become the subject of considerable academic scrutiny, and has been shown to impose a host-guest binary that is mediated through legal procedures (Baban and Rygiel, 2017), and which create a disjuncture between conceptual and policy categories and the lived experiences of those on the move (Crawley and Skleparis, 2018). The focus of integration discourse and the application of national policy on ‘hosting’, ‘hospitality’ and

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## **Inclusion is a one-way street and not a reciprocal right.**

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even 'welcoming' migrants is seen to prioritise the host society and maintain outsider/receiving status of migrants, which is contradictory to integration purpose. Berg & Fiddan-Qasmiyeh (2018: 1) argue for 'the need to trace alternative modes of thought and action that transcend and resist the fatalistic invocations of hospitality.'

Other scholars also highlight the need to move away from its 'colonial' top down meaning (for example Mignolo, 2011) and to acknowledge the subjective nature of the integration process and sensitise to the views and opinions of refugees (Phillimore, 2012). As Mignolo suggests,

"Inclusion is a one-way street and not a reciprocal right. In a world governed by the colonial matrix of power, he who includes and she who is welcomed to be included stand in codified power relations" (Mignolo, 2011: xv).

There is still a sense that "they" are being incorporated into "our" codes, into "our" spaces, rather than there being a more radical epistemic challenge unfolding here (Jefferess 2013).

Humanitarian categorisation is also linked explicitly to the inclusion/exclusion dichotomy and to alienation, not only in the distinction between host and migrant, but within migrant populations: Zetter (1991: 1) states that due to 'bureaucratic labelling process'... '[a]lienating distinctions emerge by the creation of different categories of refugee deemed necessary to prioritize need'. In relation to Lebanon, literature produced by K. Dorai, the Lajeh Project and Refugee Hosts also challenge assumptions and images of the refugee as passive victim and recipient of aid/relief, and instead stress the refugee /migrant /displaced person as an active participant in the environment, urban, political, economic life, and as a host. Marchetti & Franceschelli (2018) also look at categorisation in terms of distinction between asylum seekers, refugees and migrants within the Italian legal system and its implications. The artificiality of this distinction is similarly addressed by Karatani (2005) and Scalettari (2007) (cited by Marchetti & Franceschelli 2018: 5). Categorisation affects several aspects of the life of individual refugees and migrants, including integration processes and access to housing and services. Categorisations define and restrict or open the integration policy framework that is available to migrants, particularly from national organisations, but also determine funding for local level projects that may disregard national level categorisations of migrants to offer broader integration practices.

### **A multidirectional and multi-faceted process:**

Many scholars (for example Castles et al. 2002; Musterd, 2003; Phillips, 2006; Fiddan-Qasmiyeh, 2015, 2016a; Grzymala-Kazlowska & Phillimore, 2018) have pointed out that the concept of integration is multidimensional, in the sense that it extends to different spheres of social life. Sigona (2005: 118) argues that

[integration is] 'not only a "two way process", a definition that seems to imply two homogeneous subjects: the host society and the refugee community. It rather involves many actors, agencies, logics and rationalities.'

Similarly, the UNHCR (2013: 8) also identifies integration as a multi-actor effort:

"Integration is multi-dimensional in that it relates both to the conditions for and actual participation in all aspects of the economic, social, cultural, civil and political life of the country of resettlement as well as to refugees' own perceptions of, acceptance by and membership in the host society."

Yet, within humanitarian policy refugees are not recognised as agents in the process, while state and society remain widely unproblematised.

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**Integration is understood as a process of change which is dynamic and two-ways, in that it places demands on both third-country nationals and on host countries; long-term, since it implies the process of becoming a full, active member of society; and multidimensional, since it pertains to participation in economic, social, cultural, civil and political life, as well as the perception by persons of migrant origin that they belong to that society.**

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Ajduković et al (2019) recognise that ‘the notion of integration does not refer to the unidirectional adaptation of third-country nationals, but also includes efforts focused on strengthening the capacity for their reception. Specifically, integration is understood as a process of change which is dynamic and two-ways, in that it places demands on both third-country nationals and on host countries; long-term, since it implies the process of becoming a full, active member of society; and multidimensional, since it pertains to participation in economic, social, cultural, civil and political life, as well as the perception by persons of migrant origin that they belong to that society’ (5).

Oliver and Gidley (2015: 1) describe integration as

‘an active process involving actors and institutions in the receiving society as well as migrants themselves, or more appropriately, a set of processes that occur at multiple scales over differing time periods.’

Oliver and Gidley show that integration has been conceptualised as a ‘set of processes of receiving newcomers’ and of ‘maintaining stability of society’ through their integration, which is primarily focused on a state’s self-interest (ibid: 2). The authors, however, highlight the multidirectional and non-linear nature of integration processes and its occurrence in different domains, which link to various indicators of integration such as employment, education and skills, social inclusion, civic engagement and social cohesion.

Similarly Peter Dwyer (2013) points out different forms of integration: ‘structural integration’ – ‘the increased participation of migrants in the institutions of their new society (e.g. the paid labour and housing markets, social welfare systems) and ‘acculturation’, (the processes by which migrants may develop their identities/practices over time within a host society) (Castles et al, 2002; Korac, 2003). Others have highlighted spatial segregation, ‘cultural clustering’ and the impact that social inequalities may have in impeding integration (Musterd, 2003; Dwyer, 2008). This connection of integration to a diversity of domains is returned to through the research methodology used in this project and in the analyses of survey and interview data in chapter two, where the importance and understanding of domains of integration is discussed and analysed. While understanding of integration as process is conceptually helpful, by definition, sets of actions towards an envisaged end, the non-linear, fluidity and continuity of process and its relational element is similarly underlined by the data collected for this project.

## **Time and space:**

### ***Temporary and short-term solutions***

Whilst the focus of recent (post-2015) policy response around integration has been reception and release, establishing a legal status framework and the institutional environment for migrants, literature on integration has criticised this process as incomplete and creating situations of exclusion and limbo for those experiencing it (for example Zetter (2007; 1991: 1) Marchetti & Franceschelli (2018); Karatani 2005 and Scalettaris 2007). In this context, status and categorisation of refugees and migrants in terms of status and vulnerability has been critically analysed within literature on integration as a mechanism that creates dichotomies of inclusion/exclusion, alienation/integration from integration programmes, access to services, housing and labour markets (Astolfo & Boano, 2018). The linear and temporary process of reception and categorisation leaves these exclusions unresolved. An argument for a more developmental approach to policy has been adopted by international organisations such as the UNDP and UN-Habitat to address situations in which national and local governments lack the capacities to address the humanitarian challenges of displaced persons, migrant and refugee support. However, the temporary nature of humanitarian intervention and development policy and funding sits uncomfortably with the increasing recognition that integration is a long-term process that involves a process of 'becoming a full, active member of society' (Ajduković et al 2019).

Berg and Fiddian-Qasmiyeh (2018) also address changes in perceptions and understandings of migration over time and space. They highlight the changing nature of migration, the diverse nature of encounters, the 'how and why different actors have responded to the actual, prospective, and imagined arrival of migrants across time and space'. This contextual perspective on migration allows integration to be problematised within and across time and space located in a conceptual understanding of its meaning. Situating current practices within historical and geographical context and a critical perspective resists the 'largely myopic, ahistorical, and isolationist responses that governments and media have developed to migrant arrivals in the global North' (2018:2). Within critical analyses of integration, place and its relation to integration has attracted considerable attention, in terms of both policy and conceptualisations of integration.

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### ***Integration and place***

Integration policy is made at the international and/or national level. It happens, however, at the local level. Policy generated at an international and/or national level cannot effectively reflect local circumstances of society and migrant experience. Consequently, policy is often lacking migrant agency, is top-down and presupposes immobility, a condition not possible for many, often generating exclusions (Grzymala-Kazlowska & Phillimore, 2018; Darling 2016) and, consequently, resistance to marginalisation. The focus on, or incorporation of place in analysis and understanding of integration allows for

understanding of micro level relations and how they contribute to a sense of belonging and ability to participate within local communities and institutional structures. Although the complexity and multi-directionality of 'integration' is clearly recognised within the available literature, it also demonstrates that refugee agency in integration remains under examined. This is partly because available administrative data is not deemed sensitive to migrant situations, and diversity within the migrant population is not recognised or addressed (Platts-Fowler & Robinson 2015: 477). Research has also been criticised for failing to acknowledge the subjective nature of the integration process and for being insensitive to the views and opinions of refugees (Phillimore, 2012). From this perspective, Spicer (2008) notes that few 'explore "place" and, in particular, the locality of neighbourhood places, as mediators of social exclusion and inclusion.' Indeed, the centrality of place and practiced space to integration processes is underlined by Ajduković et al (2019):

'integration takes place not at the national level, but indeed in each street, neighbourhood, municipality, town and county. It takes place in neighbourly conversations, in schools, in contacts with civil servants in charge of helping people exercise their rights, at work and through social activities. Therefore, it is exceptionally important to assess integration needs and challenges at the local level.'

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**Cities and their networks have been seen as increasingly important players in the EU and its member states' response to the arrival of asylum seekers and refugees that are uniquely positioned to respond to local needs and represent local pragmatism, efficiency and legitimacy whilst also able to network horizontally with other cities (Doomernik and Ardon, 2018).**

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Policy frameworks increasingly recognise the role of local actors. Cities and their networks have been seen as increasingly important players in the EU and its member states' response to the arrival of asylum seekers and refugees that are uniquely positioned to respond to local needs and represent local pragmatism, efficiency and legitimacy whilst also able to network horizontally with other cities (Doomernik and Ardon, 2018). Policy largely focuses on 'giving migrants the tools to be able to succeed and fit in the new society' and on removing barriers that stop them from doing so (Camilo, 2010). This leaves unexplored, however, the questions of how we conceive these barriers: are they conceptual, practical, discursive, and how do they relate to practice whether national or, in particular, at the local level. This policy gap has negative implications for economic and social integration as it leads to informal labour, segregated and marginalised living, and decreased access to education and health.

Alexander (2003: 48–50) offers four policy domains that relate to migration and migration issues: the legal-political domain; the socio-economic domain; the cultural-religious domain and the spatial domain. However, the importance of city type is underlined by Els de Graauw & Floris Vermeulen (2016) who cite the 'importance for cities to have (1) left-leaning governments, (2) immigrants who constitute a large part of the city electorate and are part of local decision-making structures, and (3) an infrastructure of community-based organisations that actively represent immigrants' collective interests in local politics and

policy-making (de Graauw and Vermeulen, 2016: 989). This leaves open questions about cities that do not possess these features, but might have been recipient of dispersal policies or have become migrant destinations by virtue of EU restrictions on the movement of refugees and migrants, and how they fit into migration and integration patterns and policy.

The broader framework of 'place' allows integration to be seen as a localised phenomenon that sees cities experiencing migration in different ways, depending on causes of migration, the socio-political situation, and the history of migration and therefore cannot be standardised. A focus on cities as places, however, has produced issues of scale. The literature that uses urban space as a framework and perspective for examining integration has concentrated on large cities that have become examples of good practice. There is a need for looking also beyond cities as an entity or space, and to recognise the diversity and heterogeneity of communities, voices, actors and forms of governance at the urban level in different contexts within the city and beyond it (Blocher, 2017: 14). The sub-city level, for example is seen to have 'deeply heterogeneous rules and regulations with implications for inclusion and integration'. This leads to policy recommendations that integration be targeted at different scales and sub-city levels, as proposed by many municipal governments and by UN-Habitat (ibid: 15).

Connecting place to its relational dimension, Fiddian-Qasmiyeh (2015; 2016a) defines integration as related to diverse forms and practices of urban encounter: with and between different people, places and services, temporalities and materialities, beliefs and desires, and sociocultural and political systems. Fiddian-Qasmiyeh has argued (2016: 4) that:

'in light of the limitations and dangers of fatalistic readings of hospitality,' the lens of "being together" and "being with" (Jean-Luc Nancy 2000) may prove more productive as a theoretical lens: that the "everyday geographies" and "quiet politics of belonging" of ordinary encounters and modes of being (Askins 2015) can allow for recognition of the conceptual and practical challenges that emerge in encounters between hosts and strangers and potential for, refugees, migrants, and hosts (whether citizens or refugees/migrants themselves) both "being with" and "being together.'

The focus on place and relational encounters is thought to redirect policy away from focus on migrants and refugees themselves, who may, for example, not self-identify with these labels or may not wish to settle, onto building stronger communities, solidarities and convivial spaces among all inhabitants.

Monno and Serreli (2020) also use vulnerability as a lens for developing alternative paradigms of integration within urban spaces. They argue that various authors and research approaches emphasize the character of the 'migrant' as a vulnerable and fragile subject, and that vulnerability is seen as an innate condition which institutional governance and reception policy

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**'Contextual vulnerability' – 'allows us to expand our gaze from deprivation and marginality, to the construction of alternative relations within urban space' and separates vulnerability, as a concept, from the idea of a permanent and unchangeable condition.**

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generate and make permanent (Monno and Serreli, 2020). Monno and Serreli (2020: 7) suggest looking at vulnerability as contextual and describe its analytical benefit as follows:

‘contextual vulnerability’ – ‘allows us to expand our gaze from deprivation and marginality, to the construction of alternative relations within urban space’ and separates vulnerability, as a concept, from the idea of a permanent and unchangeable condition.

They conclude that ‘focusing on vulnerabilities and enacting generative urban policies may help to foster the emergence of new ways of conceiving integration, which aim at consolidating new correspondences between the geography of everyday life and ways of sharing the city as a place of supportive coexistence’ (ibid: 17).

### **Beyond traditional migration: super-diversity**

Integration as a concept is clearly problematic and the discursive framework that encompasses policy-making and practice has produced policy gaps, exclusions and segregations. Evident within the discussion of the literature above, there are several challenges to the concept of integration and understandings of migration itself, some of which are reviewed here before further addressing coloniality as an underlying logic:

‘Super-diversity’, in this sense, constitutes the continuation of immigrant integration by other means. And one must hasten to add: the means may differ, but the institutions, the flows of money and the academic CV’s hardly do so. (Shinkel, 2018)

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## **Grzymala-Kazłowska & Phillimore (2018: 186) highlight the change in processes of migration and increasing fluidity and diversity of receiving societies and a need to reconceptualise integration in terms of super-diversity.**

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Grzymala-Kazłowska & Phillimore (2018: 186) highlight the change in processes of migration and increasing fluidity and diversity of receiving societies and a need to reconceptualise integration in terms of super-diversity. As a concept integration has developed around ‘traditional’ migration’, or when migrants settled permanently in new countries where there was a ‘dominant’ host population (ibid). They contend that this concept has not been sufficiently reworked in the context of ‘new migration’, ‘wherein not all migrants settle permanently, or maintain close connections to more than one country. Similarly, the ‘diversified nature of contemporary migrants and new forms of mobility’ is discussed by Giuliana B. Prato (2020: 35). This altered condition ‘demands a new approach to the study of contemporary migration that acknowledges the importance of a cross-disciplinary dialogue’ that also take into account ‘the role played by the interaction among social, economic, legal, political and cultural factors in the quality of migratory policies and in the status of foreigners in the host society.’ Prato’s article shows how ‘local context and cultural factors interact with the newcomers’ specific circumstances in determining their position in the local society’ (ibid). The focus on agency and diversity of relational experience within local contexts here attempts to undo dominant conceptualisations of ‘migrant’ within the context of challenging notions of integration.

In this context of super-diversity, Grzymala-Kazłowska & Phillimore (2018) suggest three ways integration could be reimagined. 1, there are new ways of conceptualising integration such as holistic integration (Strang, Baillot, and Mignard, 2017) or reciprocal integration (Phillimore, Humphris, and Khan 2017). 2, Alternative perspectives on adaptation and settlement such as interaction between legal status, skills and competencies (Wessendorf, 2017); attachment theory (Grzymala-Moszczyńska and Trabka, 2014; van Ecke 2005); embedding (Phillimore, 2015; Ryan, 2017; Ryan and Mulholland, 2015) or social anchoring (Grzymala-Kazłowska, 2017). And 3, new research agendas around notions lying behind the concept of integration need to be established, for example integration of transit populations, or within super-diverse fluid communities (Grzymala-Kazłowska and Phillimore, 2018).

Pardo et al. (2020) argue in the context of Urbanity that 'Combined with specific research objectives, the application of ethnographic methodology leads to a great variety of approaches and to new paradigmatic challenge.' For migration, ethnographic method allows for the exploration of the migrant group loyalties and affinities, and how 'identities play out in terms of concrete actions and behaviours' (8). This form of examination demonstrates how 'practices and rituals associated with memory and remembrance order, renew and embellish people's identifications with urban spaces (Cervinkova 2016).'

Ataç et al (2020) highlight the need for 'policy responsive to local governance structures and civil society and migrant organisation. An examination of the missing nexus between policy and local responses to migration and integration issues proposes expanding a horizontal approach using the following points of reference: (a) activities of city governments, e.g. when municipal governments oppose exclusionary national immigration policies, hinder the implementation of these policies and act inclusive towards these groups; (b) non-governmental local actors, e.g. when civil society actors outline inclusionary policies and discourses and reframe a meaning of belonging at the urban scale (Bauder and Gonzalez 2018; Lippert and Rehaag 2013).'

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## **Ryan & Mulholland (2015) suggest a 'multilayered and multi-spatial notion of embedding' which is proposed as useful for understanding 'migrants' complex relationship to diverse social networks' by seeing it as a process rather than a static state.**

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Embedding is described as a vague and 'fuzzy' concept, lacking in precision and clarity (Hess, 2004; Ryan & Mulholland 2015: 136). Ryan & Mulholland (2015) suggest a 'multilayered and multi-spatial notion of embedding' which is proposed as useful for understanding 'migrants' complex relationship to diverse social networks' by seeing it as a process rather than a static state. It is said to offer a way of thinking about the details of 'migrants' experiences of engagement with the people and places that make up their social world,' that in the context of 'integration' can transcend the fixed and narrow concepts often associated with it. This is useful for showing that integration is multidimensional and includes a sense of rootedness; to emphasise place and time and to acknowledge the materiality of place, and to take into account the fact that opportunities and resources which migrants can draw on are conditioned by the 'socio-economic, cultural and physical particularities of the local areas in which they live and work' (Ryan and Mulholland 2015: 139).

Sociability of emplacement is examined by Yuval Davis (2006), Wessendorf (2018). The concept is related to belonging, emotional attachment to place



and feeling at home (Yuval Davis 2006; Wessendorf 2018). Beyond functional relations (relations that are in place because there is a need, it is about a mutual sense of being human). It implies reciprocity, mutuality – and this mutuality helps to go beyond the idea of social integration which is one way. This mutuality represents a shift away from the focus of ‘social integration’, which, particularly in policy thinking, places the onus on migrants to become part of a society through building bridging capital. In the context of super-diversity (above) the authors raise the question of ‘what ‘unit’ migrants were supposed to integrate into, an ethnic group, local community, social group or more generally British society (Castles et al., 2002:114) and identify a ‘missing link in public debates between integration and superdiversity’ which places the onus of integration on ethnic minorities and/or migrant communities (Wessendorf and Phillimore: 2).

Like social integration, embedding and sociabilities of emplacement are described by Wessendorf and Phillimore (2018: 2) as

‘how migrants forge social relations which enhance their connectedness with the place in which they settle and the wider society around them.’

Notions of belonging, defined as emotional attachment to a social group or location and feeling at home (Yuval-Davis, 2006), whilst the contested notion of ‘social integration’ refers to the relations migrants establish after they arrive in a new country. Wessendorf and Phillimore suggest that ‘the notion of ‘integration’ needs to reflect the social ‘unit’ into which migrants are supposed to integrate.’ The article points to a ‘negative policy discourse about social relations with co-ethnics and the assumption that only bridging social capital with members of the majority society furthers integration’. The authors attempt to move beyond this paradigm by demonstrating that different types of social relations influence settlement and that relations embedded in migrant social networks that can also open pathways to housing and work, for example, and can therefore be construed of as ‘migrant social capital’. In this manner, the argument extends the concept of integration beyond assumptions about a distinct host society (ibid).

Integration as emplacement (Wessendorf 2018; Glick Schiller & Çağlar, 2016; Phillimore et al. 2017) is about how people forge relationships to enhance connectedness with place. It is a process related to sense of belonging, emotional attachment and feeling at home. Beyond functional relations (relations that are in place because there is a need), it is about a mutual sense of being human). It implies reciprocity, mutuality – and this mutuality helps to move beyond the idea of social integration which is a one way relation and which, particularly in policy thinking, places the onus on migrants to become part of a society through building bridging capital.

### **Decolonising integration**

In an earlier section, we mentioned Mignolo’s (2011) reference to inclusion being a colonial concept, as there is a power relation between he who includes and she who is welcomed.

“The locus of enunciation from which inclusion is established is always a locus holding the control of knowledge and the power of decision across gender and racial lines, across political orientation and economic regulations” (p.xv)

This is also in line with much recent literature on hospitality revisiting Heidegger, Derrida and Nancy (Boano & Astolfo 2020; Berg & Fiddian-Qasmieh 2018).

In a blog post titled “From dehumanising to decolonising”, Vanyoro, Hadj-Abdou and Dempster (2019) build two connected and rather persuasive arguments. The first being on the root causes of migration and the second on the positionality of institutions, NGOs and researchers. Migration cannot be understood nor addressed without understanding coloniality (Quijano, 2007;

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**Social and humanitarian workers, volunteers, researchers and academics all come from a position of power. This requires a deep reflexive attitude when dealing with migration and integration.**

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Mignolo 2000), meaning the fact that colonialism is still present and manifests itself in power asymmetry and inequality between south/north and east/west. As a consequence, the notion and policy of integration which are born within migration studies are to be considered colonial – given they imply the existence of a dominant host society into which marginalised individuals are supposed to integrate into. From a coloniality lens, integration is the “solution” for a “problem” that is created by the same colonial powers. Colonial powers produce the problem that they claim to address.

In “Coloniality and modernity/rationality”, Quijano (2007) argues that “Coloniality, then, is still the most general form of domination in the world today, once colonialism as an explicit political order was destroyed. It doesn’t exhaust, obviously, the conditions nor the modes of exploitation and domination between peoples. But it hasn’t ceased to be, for 500 years, their main framework. The colonial relations of previous periods probably did not produce the same consequences, and, above all, they were not the corner stone of any global power. .... So, coloniality of power is based upon ‘racial’ social classification of the world population under Eurocentered world power. But coloniality of power is not exhausted in the problem of ‘racist’ social relations. It pervaded and modulated the basic instances of the Eurocentered capitalist colonial/modern world power to become the cornerstone of this coloniality of power.” (p.169)

Building on this, in “Coloniality. The darker side of western modernity”, Mignolo (2011) defines coloniality as “the underlying logic of the foundation and unfolding of western civilisation from the renaissance to today of which historical colonialisms have been a constitutive, although downplay, dimension” (p.2)

Maldonado Torres (2007) defines coloniality as the residual structural and cultural presence of colonisation, such as the mental, emotional, and agential dispositions and states of being, long after colonisers have left.

“Coloniality, instead, refers to long-standing patterns of power that emerged as a result of colonialism, but that define culture, labor, intersubjective relations, and knowledge production well beyond the strict limits of colonial administrations. Thus, coloniality survives colonialism. It is maintained alive in books, in the criteria for academic performance, in cultural patterns, in common sense, in the self-image of peoples, in aspirations of self, and so many other aspects of our modern experience. In a way, as modern subjects we breath coloniality all the time and everyday.” (p. 241)

He also distinguishes between coloniality of being, knowledge and power: “colonial relations of power left profound marked not only in the areas of authority, sexuality, knowledge and the economy, but on the general understanding of being as well. And, while the coloniality of power referred to the interrelation among modern forms of exploitation and domination (power), and the coloniality of knowledge had to do with impact of colonization on the different areas of knowledge production, coloniality of being would make primary reference to the lived experience of colonization and its impact on language.”(p.241)

There is increasing literature on how coloniality of power saturates contemporary immigration policy and practice (see Carver, 2019; De Sousa Santos, 2007; El-Enany, in press; Sharma, in press; Gutiérrez Rodríguez, 2018; Mamdani, 2018; Mayblin, 2017; Mongia, 2018). Gutierrez (2018) connects the coloniality of migration with racial capitalism and the asylum-migration nexus. It examines how migration research and policies produce hierarchical, orientalist, racialised categories of migrants and refugees, which were typical of colonialism. It also focuses on the relation between migration and the racialization of the workforce.

According again to Vayoro et al (2019) coloniality is perpetuated through institutions (EU, national and regional governments, NGOs, academia, etc), categories (labels such as refugee, asylum seeker, economic migrant etc)

and individuals. Institutions and individuals have knowledge, power and agendas to pursue. They are embedded in power relations and reproduce those relations. Social and humanitarian workers, volunteers, researchers and academics all come from a position of power. This requires a deep reflexive attitude when dealing with migration and integration (see scholarship on the reflexive turn in migration research). This is one way to attempt a decolonial project, meaning a way to disrupt coloniality (how knowledge and relations are produced to silence some groups).

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## **The notion and policy of integration which is still based on power asymmetry, racial difference and patriarchy must be decolonised, freed from hierarchies of power and race. This is not an easy endeavour.**

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Decolonising means to get rid of hierarchies and power structures, racialized structures, embrace many perspectives especially those whom are excluded. For Mignolo (2007) decolonising means 'delinking', meaning unlearning the 'associated dispositions and values' instilled by the dominant colonial regime.

The notion and policy of integration which is still based on power asymmetry, racial difference and patriarchy must be decolonised, freed from hierarchies of power and race. This is not an easy endeavour. Institutions, NGOs and researchers work in rigged spaces, spaces that are very limited, yet even in those limited spaces it is important to embrace exercises of decolonisation "for the coloniality of power lies in always assuming that we are right without interrogating our own actions as individuals." (Vanyoro et al 2019)

Mignolo (2007) also argues that coloniality is already a decolonial concept, and decolonial projects have been present throughout history. In this sense, acts of resistance to integration could also be seen as decolonial projects, and should be taken in much consideration.

Schinkel (2018) brings this proposal forward. Arguing that integration research and monitoring are a "neo-colonial form of knowledge", he advocates for the abandonment of the notion of integration altogether both in discourse and policy.

He insists that 'immigrant integration' sustains a classed and raced form of dominance that is less precisely called 'native' or even 'nativist' than 'white'. In order to understand this, one must consider what I have discussed in the book as dispensation of integration. This is what is 'granted', so to speak, to white citizens. And this is the 'positive' way of describing the fact that these do not appear on the integration monitor. It is the active way to describe an omission that is consequential, and which already does all the work of separating those who are considered to make up 'society' and those who do not and who thus need to further 'integrate'. Dispensation of integration means that white citizens are not researched or described in terms of their 'integration'. Dispensation of integration is not granted to 'native' citizens, because those of the so-called 'second generation' are born in Western Europe, but they generally do not 'get' a dispensation of integration. "..... "The really decisive difference, after all, is not the difference between the 'well integrated' and the "less integrated"; it is the difference between those for whom integration is not an issue at all, and those for whom it is. To the former, a dispensation of integration applies, and this in effect codes them as 'society', and it in turn codes that 'society' as 'white', precisely by never having to characterize it as such, since 'whiteness' is a racial category that is experienced, certainly in the Netherlands, as 'uneasy' (Essed & Trienekens, 2008), i.e., as a concept that threatens to undo precisely a whiteness that claims neutrality, non-racial universality." (p.4)

According to Schinkel, monitoring integration has colonial roots. During colonialism society and individuals were scrutinised based on whether their behaviour was deviant or normative. Individuals in the colonies were evaluated based on their suitability to EU society before being given citizenship.

“Just to be clear, then: yes, measuring immigrant integration is a thoroughly neocolonial practice. It comes out of a history in which the encounter with the other first emerged, and emerged by way of a raced work of cultural classification and in the context of dominance. It is a form of what Ann Stoler has recently called ‘colonial duress’: the tenacious survival of colonial effects and divisions (Stoler, 2016). And it exists today in contexts of power asymmetries that in turn help shape the raced classifications and ethnic taxonomies of researchers Van Houdt (2014) has changed the conversation about ‘immigrant integration’ by subjecting it, for the first time, to an analysis in the Foucaultian framework of technologies of government.” (p.14)

Dahinden (2016) points out that the “dilemma arises from the fact that migration and integration research itself originated within a nation-state migration and normalization apparatus”. She proposes “to ‘de-migrantize’ migration and integration research through a threefold strategy. I argue that it is possible to disembed this field of research from the migration apparatus by clearly distinguishing between common-sense and analytical categories in research, articulating migration theory more closely with other social science theories and re-orienting the focus of investigation away from ‘migrant populations’ towards ‘overall populations’.” (p.2208).

## Conclusions

This review of the literature around integration appears to confirm arguments put forward through critical literature that ‘the dominant ‘integration’ paradigm often generates exclusion, as it presupposes immobility, a condition not possible for many (Grzymala-Kazlowska & Phillimore, 2018; Darling 2016). Additionally, the current policy framework and the governance system of migration and integration are excessively compartmentalised missing a nexus. Such a policy gap is common to many countries and has negative implications for economic and social integration as it leads to informal labour, segregated and marginalised living, and decreased access to education and health.

The literature around integration conceptualisations, discourses, practices and policies demonstrate overwhelmingly that integration is understood as a process, long-term, localised and that policy cannot be proscriptive, but should be reflective and develop from and by local communities and local government. Literature on sanctuary cities, local responses and municipalities and civil society and community action offers examples of a focus on place/space and micro-level integration strategies and experiences. There remains a gap, however, between focus on policy made at the international/national level and local responses to migration issues and integration. Likewise, case studies and examples focus on policy navigation, design and implementation at the meso-level demonstrating the gap between macro and meso policy/funding or to highlight innovation in migrant integration. Although the micro-level relational aspects of integration are highlighted by some of the literature, it also highlights that there remains significant gap in understanding how this relational ethnographic focus and processes can affect policy. Revealed as a colonial concept, ‘integration’ emerges as particularly problematic, and we are reminded to reflect on the research the process itself, and on analytic categorisation. What emerges from this literature is that ‘integration’ as a concept, discourse or policy, particularly in the context changing migration patterns and processes, is not naturally conducive to practice that generates inclusions. Indeed, the calls for interdisciplinary and ethnographic method, and refocus on relational processes within general populations, embedding, emplacement, encounters and a feminist ethics of care challenge dominant paradigms of migrant integration practice and theory.

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**‘Practice’ in context of integration is the actual application or use of an idea, belief, or method, as opposed to theories relating to it; or simply that practice is a process.**

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## **Practice**

### **What is ‘practice’ in context of integration?**

Common definitions of practice refer to it as habit or custom or to repeat an exercise to develop skill; the actual application or use of an idea, belief, or method, as opposed to theories relating to it; or simply that practice is a process - an applied way of doing. In the context of integration, practice commonly refers to the processes and ways of doing developed and applied by practitioners working with migrants that support and facilitate a process of moving migrants through particular areas that have become indicators of integration in international migration policy. Practice that is deemed successful at meeting these markers may be defined as ‘good’ or ‘best’ practice and becomes an example of policy that has worked in a specific place. Within policy documents and guidance on integration, ‘practice’ is rarely problematised but implicitly takes on meaning associated with policy design and implementation. Best/good practice, therefore, equates with how policy measures up with successes in meeting accepted indicators of integration. Such indicators have been defined by international organisations, such as the OECD and European Commission (2015) as: participation in the labour market, quality of jobs, education and training, social inclusion and household income, housing and health, civil engagement and host society opinions of immigration. In this manner practice refers to a plurality of unique practices giving the concept little cohesion beyond its integration framework.

In terms of integration, ‘there is a tendency within policy and academic studies to focus upon practical outcomes, and the focus upon empirical research, particularly narrow determinants and outcomes’ (Grzymala-Kazłowska 2015; Spencer and Cooper 2006). ‘Indicators of good practice’ relate to different areas. Eg: Social cohesion policies in relation to equal opportunities for access to rights, recognition and respect of diversity, social participation, protection and promotion of health and local welfare. Therefore, practice itself, and good/best/bad practice categories become almost synonymous with meeting expected outcomes developed primarily by policymakers and are connected to accepted integration indicators. As such, integration practice appears narrowly bound to service provision and with rights enhancement. The very notion of what is ‘good/best’ practice appears bound explicitly to visible policy outcomes and disconnected from the (often invisible) rudiments of ‘everyday life’ and relational encounters.

Such a reading of practice reinforces the top-down bias of integration models and discourses, addressed in the review of integration literature. Theorists such as Heidegger (1947) and Wittgenstein (1953) inform a more critical re-examination of ‘practice’ and its meaning. For them, practice constitutes the unspoken and scarcely notable background of everyday life. Practices therefore always need to be drawn to the fore, made visible and turned into an epistemic object in order to enter discourse.

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Building on this, Bhan (2019: 2) states that ‘a narrow reading of “practice” shapes in turn the kind of theories that we generate and value’, which ‘creates a “common sense” that particular modes of practice can be neatly mapped onto particular kinds of practitioners’. This itself is given as an example of what Bhan calls the theory-practice ‘disconnect,’ which occurs in three areas: 1. when theory remains arguably “unrooted” in context and thus seems impossible to translate, apply or use to influence practice in particular places. 2. A narrow reading of ‘practice’ that restricts it to professional, formal or institutional modes rather than a more expansive sense of different ways of moving by differently situated and motivated actors and institutions. 3. Where things that are known (‘open secrets’) are not present in authoritative disciplinary canons or dominant forms of practice. Addressing ‘vocabularies’ of practice, Bhan (2019), in this analysis of southern Indian urban practice, defines a vocabulary as ‘a specific kind of knowledge assemblage and intervention’ and states that

‘I do not believe that vocabularies of practice can be created other than incrementally from multiple locations, so that they may then begin to speak to each other to see if shared theoretical frames can emerge across these locations. Such work then holds the possibilities to generate and imagine both localized forms of practice and more generalized forms of theory.’

This suggested bottom-up generation of practice theory, based on local urban practices, offers a broader paradigm of practice that can influence policy formation at all levels of governance, in a manner in which practices of everyday life and ways of moving can gain visibility and discursive resonance.

### **Practice theory**

Developed by Bourdieu, Giddens and others, Karren O’Reilly (2012) makes the case for ‘practice theory’ to be employed as a meta-theoretical framework for all migration studies. ‘Rather than perpetuate this distinction between structure and agency, practice theory perceives social life as the outcome of the interaction of structures (of constraints and opportunity) and actions (of individuals and groups who embody, shape and form these structures) in the practice of daily life’ (23). According to O’Reilly, this meta-theoretical framework ‘underpins, but does not replace, other theories and approaches.’ Its use in migration research is suggested as a way that the interaction between macro, meso and micro level can be understood, not simply recognised and separated. In her book, practice is understood as:

‘synonymous with the constitution of social life, i.e. the manner in which all aspects, elements and dimensions of social life, from instances of conduct in themselves to the most complicated and extensive types of collectivities, are generated in and through the performance of social conduct, the consequences which ensue, and the social relations which are thereby established and maintained. (Cohen 1989: 12)’

Or more simply: practice is daily, lived experiences and actions. In her application of practice theory to international migration, O’Reilly (2012: 23) states that

‘Practices take place within the horizon of action and involve active agency, communities of practice and conjuncturally-specific external structures. Active agency, or the daily actions of agents (Stones 2005), includes both routine and reflexive (thoughtful, purposive, strategic) action.’

The theory of practice allows integration to be analysed and addressed within its interrelation to other aspect of migration and the social patterns, institutional and discursive structures that relate to it. O’Reilly advocates the use of ‘practice stories’ as a means of making sense of things ‘as ongoing processes, shaped by and shaping general patterns, arrangements, rules, norms, and other structures.’ Practice stories ‘explain something

(how working class children end up in working class jobs, for example) by describing how it develops over time as norms, rules, and organizational arrangements are acted on and adapted by people as part of their daily lives, and in the context of their social lives (their communities, groups, networks, and families).

### **Practiced Space**

Within academia, the rise in what has been termed ‘practice-led/based research’, as well as the influence of the writings of Henri Lefebvre and Michel de Certeau on spatial practice, has produced an understanding of practice as a process which occurs, not only through design but also through the activities of using, occupying and experiencing, and through the various modes of writing and imaging used to describe, analyse and interrogate space. Although published literature is limited, examining integration of migrants through focus on practiced urban space has offered means of highlighting and understanding migrant practices.

Yet, the lack of conceptual clarity about what integration ‘looks like’ and ‘the failure to fully understand the importance of local context to the integration experience’ contribute to the continuing weakness in understanding of the integration processes (Platts-Fowler and Robinson, 2015: 3) and a segmentation of inquiry. Local context such as housing, the local labour market, service provision, same or other ethnic group presence, prejudice and tolerance, and cooperative activity and group interchange (Atfield et al., 2007; Castles et al., 2002; Fyvie et al., 2003;) are recognised as affecting integration experience, but are often examined as separate. Platts-Fowler and Robinson (2015) argue that it is ‘important to recognise the interplay between integration and urban transformation. Places will be remade through the social practices of refugee settlement and integration. Understanding this process of transformation should be integral to our appreciation of integration as a two-way process involving change for refugees and host societies’ (Platts-Fowler and Robinson 2015).

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Disparities in the form and nature of integration mean that practice, as a method or process aiming to integrate migrants, varies considerably from place to place, as does migrant experience of integration. This intrinsic relationship of integration with place and space connect practice directly to the urban. Buhr and Glick Schiller and Schmidt (2016) warn against scale restrictions and ‘the assumptions that migrants’ social lives are confined within ethnically defined neighbourhoods’ (Schiller and Schmidt, 2016: 5). Ingold (1993; 2011) also argues that ‘with the enmeshing of people’s tasks and activities in space, inhabitants become an integral part of their surroundings’ (Buhr, 2018). He sustains that movement within an environment (2011: 143) is an act of dwelling because this is how practical knowledge and skills is

created. Daily engagements with space are place-binding (but not place-bound), and ‘it becomes possible to think about individuals being integrated to space or, in other words, about their spatial integration’ (Buhr 2018).

Critical spatial practice was developed by feminist theorist and architectural historian Jane Rendell and has expanded across disciplines. The concept has not yet received significant attention in relation to integration practices and research.

‘At its core, critical spatial practice encourages active participation in shaping the spaces of everyday life that have been unevenly affected by capitalist development. Part method, part framework, it mobilizes a transdisciplinary following in search of methods for instrumentalizing theory in consequential ways’ (Sturlaugson, 2019).

Rendell (2006) sees the “place between” disciplines as offering alternative models to binary thinking. “Critical spatial practice” is used to explore the space between disciplines, between theory and practice, and between public and private, both in terms of actions and in terms of methods, and allows for reflection upon spatial conditions and experience through which it is produced (Hafeda, 2016: 400).

In terms of urbane scale and of migrant special integration Franz Buhr (2018) argues for understanding of urban space as ‘practised territory’ (Crouch 2001; Benson 2011; Knowles 2011; Hall 2012). Buhr (2018) suggests a scrutinization of practice that would mean ‘liberating the scale of investigation from overly bounded spatial units and, for migrant integration research, this would also entail more careful attention to the diversity of spaces used by migrants and to the qualities of their engagements with those spaces.’ In this context, ‘practice’ is connected to ‘the space of doing things’ (Crouch 2001) and the ways migrants practise space. This directs attention to ‘how the use of space conditions the very activities that can take place, or the ‘things that can be done’—and that is when migrants’ fruition of city space becomes a tangible question’ (Buhr 2018: 310-311).

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**When Practice is focused on institutions and policy this leaves underexamined the diverse refugee and migrant practices that foster solutions to the problem of displacement in the absence – or in spite of the presence – of formal humanitarian providers and state intervention.**

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Buhr also points to an assumption in policy and theory that migrants will learn to use the city and that this leaves a ‘marginal role left for the mechanics of migrants’ use of urban space’ (2018: 311). He suggests that the intersection between urban/spatial practice and migrant integration has often been overlooked by academic scholarship, but notes that Myers (2008); Knowles and Harper (2009); Benson (2011); Knowles (2012a) are exceptions (Buhr, 2018: 309). When Practice is focused on institutions and policy this leaves underexamined the diverse refugee and migrant practices that foster solutions to the problem of displacement in the absence – or in spite of the presence – of formal humanitarian providers and state intervention. The question arises from this as to whether examination of that nexus between spatial practice and integration, offers potential for generating more inclusion, access and sense of belonging through professional integration practices.



## Care, repair and maintenance

Within the limited body of literature that focuses on practice theory, 'care and repair and maintenance' is presented as a framework for critical thinking around all aspects of practice and disciplinary investigation. The definition of care most cited within critical theory is that of Tronto (1993): 'species activity that includes everything that we do to maintain, continue, and repair our 'world' so that we can live in it as well as possible' (cited in Williams 2020). Many authors, however, point also to the need to address dominant paradigms of care and structures that produce inequalities and silences. Shannon Mattern (2018) points to the need to reckon with care's troubling histories and administrative structures - to consider recuperative strategies that don't normalize care as inherently virtuous and good-feeling. She cites other authors (Aryn Martin, Natasha Myers, and Ana Viseu) who propose that a critical practice of care would 'pay attention to the privileged position of the caring subject, wary of who has the power to care, and who or what tends to get designated the proper or improper objects of care' (Aryn, Myers and Viseu, 2018: 12).

In relation to immigration Francesca Meloni, reviewing Miriam Ticktin on *Casualties of Care*, states that 'along with security measures against immigration, 'regimes of care' have come to play a key role in governing immigration through the exceptional principle of compassion (Meloni 2013: 114). By examining particular care regimes of the humanitarian (particularly the illness clause) and gender violence in France through which migrants may be granted exceptional legal residency status, Ticktin examines the unintended consequences of compassion in the world of immigration politics and how immigrants are made passive victims permitted to remain in the country for moral imperatives rather than political right. Immigration and asylum come to be viewed by the state through a medical lens creating advantage for the exceptional few who can claim illness or select experiences of sexual violence, at the expense of care for the majority of undocumented migrants who are criminalized by the system. Faranak Miraftab (et al. 2019) also sees dominant paradigms of care as connected to its humanitarian function and shaped by neo-liberal city and inhumane urbanism that makes care work for social reproduction invisible. She describes care in this context as having been used as alibi for super-exclusion and a demonstration of the need for different function of care.

Kristian Ruming, and Maria de Lourdes Melo Zurita (2020: 98) also remind us in their study of forced public housing relocations that care practices, can be contradictory and 'emerge as tools of a neoliberal government' that, in this case study, result in dispossession. This underlines the centrality of maintain, continue, and repair to 'good' care practices. Similarly, the subjectivity of encounter is underlined by Conradson (2003) in this study of a drop-in centre which demonstrated although such agencies can be spaces of care, some individuals experienced the spaces as exclusionary environments.

The 'ethics of care' (articulated by the feminist scholar Carol Gilligan, 1982) and radical care (Dowler et al. 2019) describe an alternative moral approach to traditional ethics that centres on relationships, responsibility and interdependence (Robinson, 2010; Schmid, 2019). Maria Puig de la Bellacasa (2011: 100) argues that caring involves an "ethico-political commitment" to the neglected and oppressed and a concern with the affective dimensions of our material world: 'We care for things not because they produce value, but because they already have value.' De la Bellacasa shows that care is a vital part of sustaining worlds, but that it is 'continually appropriated by and entangled in powerful configurations, including those with ultimately destructive effects, from marketing discourses that call for commodity-driven self-care, to justifications for armed international interventions, to the language of corporate greenwashing which substitutes 'care' for accountability' (ibid). Yet, as de la Bellacasa contends, thinking with care offers a way of thinking beyond these entanglements and unlocking them. As a framework for disciplinary theory and practice, 'care' is seen to offer a radical re-thinking of

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## Care is fundamentally a relational practice where both parties have an interest in each other's well-being and that care creates social ties between people upon which durable institutions can be built.

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disciplines that 'that takes the multidimensionality of the intimate seriously.' In the context of the need to 'pay attention to/with care and the politics of how care is being provisioned by governments and business' Williams (2020: 6) describes the ethics of care and care-full practice as a 'way to resist and challenge the dominance of neoliberalisms' and to 'collectively think throughways to challenge these inequalities and find ways to collectively shape diverse cultures where caring is valued, competently practiced and fairly distributed.' Here 'care', as an ethics, helps understandings of the roles of maintenance and repair in creating more caring and just cities, emphasise inter-dependence and collective responsibility and expose silences, injustices and neglect to provoke action.

In the moral theory of care or normative approach offered by Virginia Held (2006), Kreiss (2010) notes that care is fundamentally a relational practice where both parties have an interest in each other's well-being and that care creates social ties between people upon which durable institutions can be built. Here 'care' is connected explicitly to "good caring relations," as opposed to relations that are "dominating, exploitative, mistrustful, or hostile." (Held 2006. 27).

Framed by the geography discipline but set within feminist appeals for institutional change within and beyond the discipline, Dowler et al (2019) suggest a manifesto of radical care that 'centres on non-dominant and intersectional forms of care – a method of decoloniality (Lugones 2010) – and challenges geographers to recognise different bodily experiences while being mindful of a commonality of vulnerability that stems from national or institutional policies and politics (Dowler et al, 2019: 35). They suggest geographers 'move beyond recognition into action, actively working to infuse radical care into our everyday interpersonal interactions and into our departmental, institutional and disciplinary policies and practices.' In this vein, Faranak Miraftab (et al, 2019) also sees care; as 'transformative solidarity' – not a short term humanitarian care which does not go above the individual and does not address historical and structural problems. Instead, radical care will have elements that critique this and move beyond categories of deserving, is inter-scalar, not temporal and emergency driven.

Williams, M.J., (2020) defines care as a relational ethics, a practice and a performative act, connected intrinsically to maintenance and repair (see below), through which cities become more caring and just, and method of emphasising inter-dependence and responsibility, and of revealing silences, injustices and neglect in a manner that provokes action. Williams goes as far as to say that, 'As an ethics care has the potential to maintain, continue, repair and transform our worlds. As a practice, care is often hidden from view despite the integral role care plays in ensuring survival in our worlds of both human and non-human others' (ibid: 1).

Applying an ethics of care to integration Sophia Schmid (2019: 121) sees care ethics and values as particularly well equipped to deal with diversity and difference and to situate care ethics in relation to diverse world views, which she identifies as a gap in the care literature. She positions 'care' as a better framework for integration than concepts such as traditional multiculturalism or 'caring multiculturalism' (Scuzzarello 2015, p. 73) which advocated for

context sensitive, fully inclusive multicultural policies, informed by care values and based on the real needs of those affected. Schmid argues that 'Tronto's (2013) conviction that care needs to become the centre of democratic politics also extends to contested social issues, such as integration' and that 'basing social relations, citizenship practices and policies on care-ethical values has the potential to make political structures and the public sphere more inclusive both for immigrants and for other disenfranchised groups.'

## Repair

Repair stems from a 'broken world thinking' (Jackson, 2014): when we take erosion, breakdown and decay as a starting point and recognises the fragility and limits of world orders and environment but also the appreciation of subtle arts of repair that maintain or create resilience within established orders. It is defined by Steven Jackson (2014: 222) as 'the subtle acts of care by which order and meaning in complex sociotechnical systems are maintained and transformed, human value is preserved and extended, and the complicated work of fitting to the varied circumstances of organisations, systems, and lives is accomplished.' Nate Millington (2019) described repair as

'a concept that is designed to highlight the diverse forms of maintenance work that mark the contemporary landscape, [that] offers us forms of engagement that are relational and located in everyday practices. Repair takes uncertainty and breakdown as starting points, and develops forms of action that are predicated on that which exists. In doing so, it gestures at forms of critical presence, critical forms of occupying space, and orientations towards a politics of what we might call restoration. Practices of repair are ongoing, even if invisible; they suggest the critical ways in which planetary breakdown is being responded to and possible pathways for an ethics and a politics going forward.'

For Bhan (2019: 8) repair suggests a particular assemblage of practices. First, it 'emphasizes the need to restore immediate function over the need for substantive material improvement.' Second, 'it is located in an immediate material life-world where what can be quickly accessed and easily used is more likely to be chosen as the "right" material for the job.' Third, 'it does not presuppose any actors.' Fourth, it can be seen as 'a mode of practice that draws upon forms of public and proximate knowledge.' And fifth, the concept suggests not only actions 'but a sensibility, one that sees materials in a constant cycle of use and reuse by the same actors and in the same setting over a long time period' (Millington, 2019).

Repair is described as a corrective and as a care practice (Jackson 2019). Binary distinctions between 'repaired' and 'new' are overcome, 'allowing repair to hold a sense of endurance but also one of aspiration and renewal' (Millington 2019). The limits and dangers of concentration on repair are also noted by Millington. 'Repair can serve regressive ends or suggest that tinkering with the existing can forestall the need for deep structural changes in the foundations of contemporary life' and can reproduce 'existing inequalities and inequities' even when framed otherwise and particularly within the structural dynamics of contemporary capitalism. As a care practice, repair relies on understanding surrounding infrastructures (physical and social) to be interlinked 'in complex, intimate ways with broader dynamics of social reproduction.' Millington suggests that a 'critical spatial politics of repair' can offer insight into migrant practices of self-reliance, for example that occur within the policy and category gaps that create exclusions. Squatting, encroachment, and 'everyday politics of repair and maintenance that can render landscapes livable'

Shannon Mattern (2018) links care, repair and maintenance in her article 'Maintenance and Care'. Maintenance is described as having gained a 'new resonance as a theoretical framework, an ethos, a methodology, and a political cause.' An area where the lines between scholarship and practice

are blurred. Mattern states that “To study maintenance is itself an act of maintenance. To fill in the gaps in this literature, to draw connections among different disciplines, is an act of repair or, simply, of taking care — connecting threads, mending holes, amplifying quiet voices.” Maintenance is set against ‘innovation’ as a paradigm and a as a corrective framework that also traverses scales. She connects maintenance, repair and care explicitly to infrastructures. Literature on integration concept and practices identify infrastructural gaps and missing links between policy areas, and practices within which innovative and self-reliance practices emerge, but which are often made less visible within neoliberal urban contexts. Mattern states that ‘where infrastructures are absent or unreliable, the gaps are filled by illegal water taps, grafted cables, pirate radio stations, backyard boreholes, shadow networks, and so forth.’ Literature on integration policy and practice similarly expose areas where migrants fall into cracks in the infrastructures of integration created by legal parameters, resort to informality. Case studies of housing pathways suggests informality is often the only means of securing housing and that local and refugee agency has contributed to its development and, in some cases, formalisation.

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**Literature on integration concept and practices identify infrastructural gaps and missing links between policy areas, and practices within which innovative and self-reliance practices emerge, but which are often made less visible within neoliberal urban contexts.**

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**Local innovation in practice:** NGO/LA /community individual practice

Examining the literature on integration and practice raises the question of how organisations, NGOs and local authorities in particular, fit into or correct the disconnect between theory and practice within integration processes, or how can integration be better understood so as to facilitate the outcomes policy is predicated upon. Suggestions from the literature, such as ‘actively working to infuse radical care into our everyday interpersonal interactions and into our departmental, institutional and disciplinary policies and practices’ (Dowler et al 2019), or developing ‘transformative solidarities’ and employing critical practice frameworks and methods may be one way. Innovative practices at local level are well documented (Bradley, Milner, Peruniak, 2019, Fawaz et al. 2018; Scholten et a, 2017; Baggerman et a, 2017; Dicker, 2017; Easton-Calabria, 2017). What remains underexamined, however, is the wider framework that could link these practice innovations more theoretically and conceptually in a manner that can affect and inform broader policy on integration.

The literature also points to the idea that the ‘good’ practice is more theoretical – is critical practice – is about a reflective attitude towards policy, design and implementation of strategy and a process of assessment and adaptation as a well as a means of decompartmentalising structure and agent. Taking a more conceptual view of practice, of employing practice as a meta-theory to guide academic and practitioner enquiry and processes.

## Conclusions

This review of practice underlines the need to think beyond existing definitions and paradigms of practice, and apply a critical 'theory of practice' and a corrective ethics (of care, repair and maintenance) that challenge and resist neoliberalisms and inequalities associated with them. Practice defined simply as daily, lived experiences and actions and a care ethics as a relational practice provide a meta-theory and transformative concept through which integration practice and theory may be decolonised and through which restrictive boundaries of analytical categories can be reflectively considered and transcended.

Both the literature on integration and on practice point to a fundamental conceptual challenge at the heart of addressing the inequalities and exclusions that existing policy frameworks and practices can produce for migrants through 'integration processes or within research processes and analytical constructs themselves.

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**This review of practice underlines the need to think beyond existing definitions and paradigms of practice, and apply a critical 'theory of practice' and a corrective ethics (of care, repair and maintenance) that challenge and resist neoliberalisms and inequalities associated with them.**

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**It was found that in most questions, differences between responses were marginal. This supported the initial research hypothesis that integration was a phenomenon not distinct to normative categories of the migrant, but instead was a more general phenomenon of human interaction and experience.**

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## **03. Unsettling integration**

### **Findings from surveys and interviews**

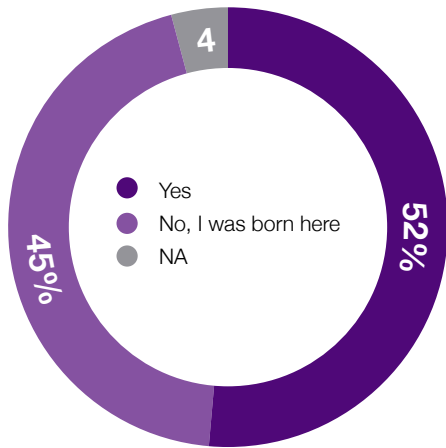
#### **Introduction**

As outlined in the methodology, a key aim of the survey design was to attempt to avoid imposing normative dichotomies of migration on participants, and to move away from pre-set categorisations which we believed would distort answers to the question of integration. We therefore avoided asking whether the person was a migrant or a local; a 'guest' or 'host'; 'outsider' or 'insider'. Instead, a question asked if the participant had either migrated to the territory they were currently living in, or had been born there. This sought to circumnavigate participants to not designate themselves and hence reproduce categories of law, nationality, ethnicity, or popular narratives and discourse, whilst still allowing us to understand patterns of mobility and identify respondents who had moved from one place to another at some point in time without them assuming a 'migrant' identity in the process. Rather, the question and answers resulted in a more universal conception of the phenomenon of migration which could include 'locals' as well as 'migrants' and 'migrant locals'.

Out of 685 survey respondents, 52% identified as having moved to the city they were in, and 45% as having been born there. An analysis on the difference between these two groups was made across the survey results, however it was found that in most questions, differences between responses were marginal. This supported the initial research hypothesis that integration was a phenomenon not distinct to normative categories of the migrant, but instead was a more general phenomenon of human interaction and experience. In the cases where differences were found, there were usually other explanations as to why, such as length of time spent in the city or exposure to specific integration practices or discourses. A few of these cases are therefore highlighted throughout the analysis.

**FIGURE 3.1**

Q: Did you migrate to this city?  
(N=685)

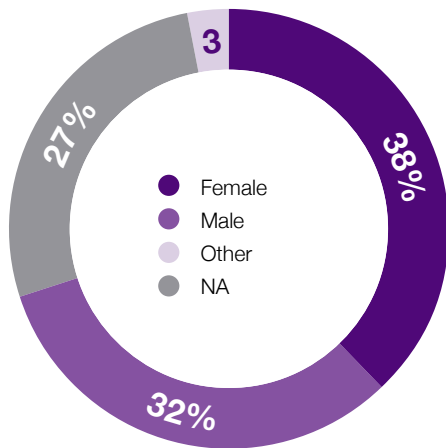


This open self-identification approach to question design was also applied to the question of identity, in which the term ‘heritage’ was asked rather than a specific delimited category. The answers to this question resulted in many participants choosing their own category, ranging from more popular designations such as religion, ethnicity, nationality or continentality, but also a number of more diverse responses such as parental background, historical and cultural attachments, memory, and humanistic values and principles:

[Q: *What is your heritage?*] “The Greek language, Olympic Games, Greek monuments, tourism, arts (silversmithing, dry stone, etc.), mastic farming, the Mediterranean diet, etc.”; “Ambition and diligence”; “Black German with migration background of one parent”; “I live in a Western European culture, but I bring in the culture of Eastern Europe and I lived my first 15 years in the Communist period.”; “Memory of the homeland.”

**FIGURE 3.2**

Q: Gender (N=685)

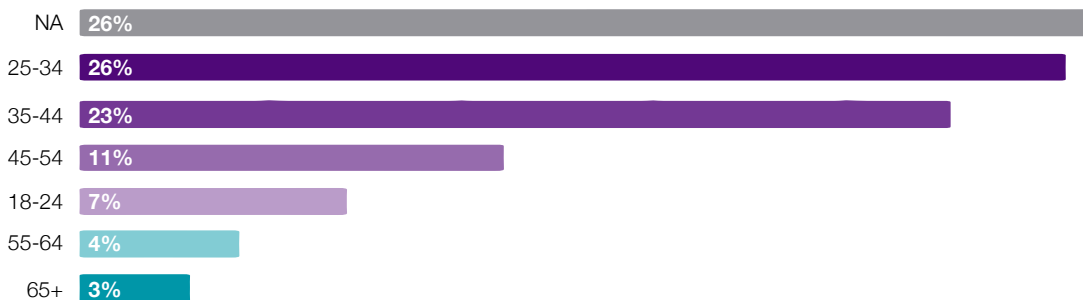


Despite this approach however, there were still a number of more standard demographic questions asked such as age and gender, as well as whether or not the participant worked for a migrant integration related practice. Questions on age and gender came at the end of the survey and allowed some measure of respondent characteristics within the sample to be collected. In terms of gender, the balance was slightly tipped towards female, with 38% responding as such, and 32% as male, with 3% preferring not to say. However, 27% did not answer the question, which could be attributed to the survey length imposing time and engagement constraints, as well as the demographic questions falling at the end. In terms of age, non-responses also made up 26% of total responses, and there was a concentration of responses (49%) falling between the 25-44 age range, which must also be kept in mind when interpreting the survey results. 25% of respondents reported having worked for a migrant integration related practice, which fell close to the sampling target of 1/3 of responses being practitioners in the sector.

As highlighted in the methodology section, the survey was divided in three parts, the first one aimed at understanding people’s relation to place, the second at examining the meaning and attributes of the word integration, and the third one to confront institutional responses to migration and integration with more spontaneous people-led practices and spaces of inhabitation.

**FIGURE 3.3**

Q: Age (N=685)



**FIGURE 3.4**

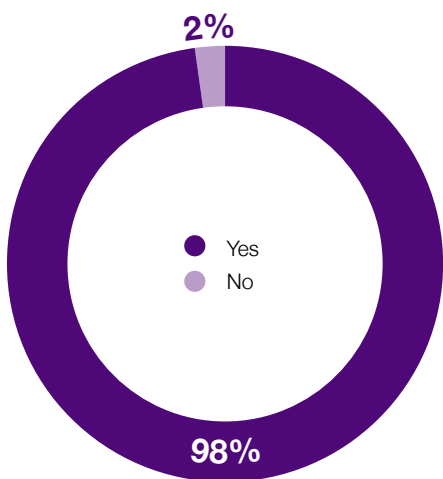
Do you work for a migrant integration related practice?  
(N=685)



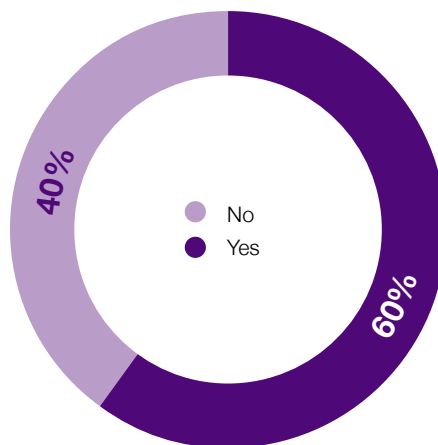
### The meaning of integration

Within the surveys, the vast majority of respondents (98%) answered ‘yes’ to understanding the word integration, but 40% believed it was an abstract term. Following this question, 469 respondents then provided a definition of what integration meant to them. The answers ranged quite significantly, with some providing a definition that was more theoretical and conceptual; others stating what they believed were the specific ingredients of integration, whether it be the right to housing or inclusion in a community; and others providing a more emotionally orientated response, viewing integration as an act of humanity or a value system. Despite these perhaps differing interpretations of the question at hand, 10 themes emerged across the responses which will be explored below: Belonging; adaptation; difference; two-way; welcome; equality; participation; respect; agency; and process.

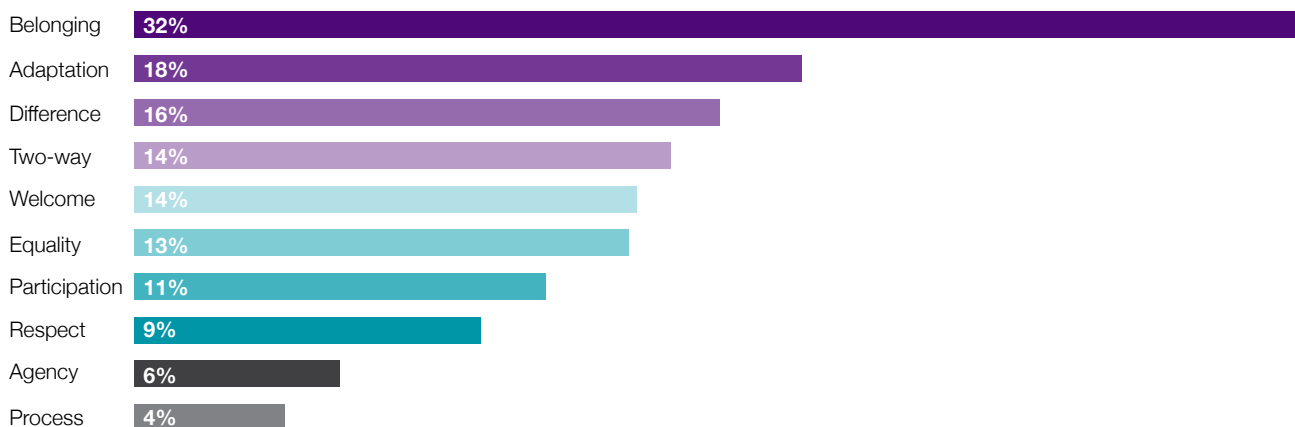
**FIGURE 3.5**  
Q: Do you use and understand the word integration? (N=466)



**FIGURE 3.6**  
Q: Do you think integration is an abstract term? (N=565)



**FIGURE 3.7**  
Q: How do you define integration? (N=468, open-ended question. Multiple responses possible)





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## Another cross-cutting pattern which emerged within the language related to whether verbs used to describe integration were passive or active, and could occasionally create contradiction within responses.

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Across these 10 themes, there was a diverse array of similar, differing and contradicting language used to describe integration. For example, to name a few, there was; assimilation, inclusion, permeation, connection, cooperation, interpenetration, rehabilitation, merging, contributing, incorporating, associating, involving, joining, unifying, uniting, gathering, inserting, interacting, assembling and accepting, amongst many others. Within this list, two terms - common within discourse on migrant integration - attracted the most consensus and definition; inclusion and assimilation.

In line with normative definitions, assimilation was usually defined as a form of integration where a minority group adapts its characteristics and identity to a larger group. Inclusion on the other hand, was usually referred to as a form of integration that was instead mutual, in that both groups, regardless of difference or size, mutually adapted to become a new whole:

“Integration is real only when the majority as well adapts and broadens its cultural and experiential horizon by including characteristics of the minority, albeit to a lesser extent than the other direction. Otherwise, when it is only the minority that makes the habits and customs of the majority their own, without an exchange, I would speak only of assimilation.”

Across the responses, these two terms of inclusion and assimilation related to another pattern in language which defined integration as being a process of ‘unity’, ‘becoming one’ or a ‘whole’, which appeared in almost a quarter of all responses (24%). Although these answers used the language of unity, which might suggest the equal merging of multiple parts, they still tended to be divided in a similar pattern to the terms of assimilation and inclusion. On the one hand, like assimilation, some responses viewed integration as consisting of a smaller part joining a larger, pre-existing part, which therefore presupposed a hierarchy in relation:

“[Integration is] incorporating new elements into a whole”; “merging something new with something old”; “to conform someone or insert something from the outside into the bigger picture”.

However, on the other hand, in line with the definition of inclusion, another set of answers viewed integration as the joining of two equal (or at least uncategorised) parts with no reference made to hierarchy:

“Integration, in the most general sense, may be any bringing together and uniting of things: the integration of two or more economies, cultures, religions.”; “The gathering of certain elements into one whole”; “to join different units of people”; “to bring together and unite things”.

Another cross-cutting pattern which emerged within the language related to whether verbs used to describe integration were passive or active, and could occasionally create contradiction within responses. For example, if we take the quote below, the statement is a progressive assertion of equality, but lacks any personalised action:

“For me, integration is about having the same opportunities and rights as local people.”

Whereas for the next quote below, action and change is personalised:

“Integration means that I have to change, I have to change things.”

This was more easily found in the interviews which conveyed more of the tone of the respondents, where the use of more active verbs such as joining, including, merging or fitting, tended to presuppose a more active outlook to the subject of integration.

This might assume the transformative role of the migrant within a host society. However, it might also imply the onus and responsibility of integration is still perceived as the responsibility of those ‘who have to integrate’ rather than to the society at large

### **Two-ways**

This distinction between active or passive language tended to emerge most frequently within the discourse of integration as being a ‘two-way process’, which was a theme explicitly mentioned 68 times within the responses (14% of total). These responses usually referred to integration as being an exchange that is not one-directional, but two-directional between the host and the migrant group, and as a mutual practice which was composed of benefits as well as compromises:

“Integration is, or should be, a process in which, through getting to know each other and exchanging knowledge, customs, traditions, a new society is created together.”

This directionality of integration emerged in nearly all the other themes, usually indirectly, and not always explicitly. Many responses are mixed in their definition of integration, defining it as an action or process that is one-directional in some ways, mutual in others, and sometimes in contradiction.

### **Adaptation as learning**

Adaptation was a theme of integration that was found in 18% of responses, and defined integration as a process of learning new skills, languages and abilities. Within this theme, the binary of integration being a two-way process also emerges quite clearly, with some respondents placing the onus of adaptation on the arrival group:

“[Integration] is adapting to the customs of a given country, understanding and using their language.”

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**Adaptation was a theme of integration that was found in 18% of responses, and defined integration as a process of learning new skills, languages and abilities.**

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Others on the host group:

“For me, it means to integrate people who are coming from somewhere else in the community into social networks so that they can attend in social interactions as everyone who was born here. If that requires support in terms of language or financially etc., then they should be empowered to.”

And others in balance:

“[Integration is] a two-way process of mutual adaptation of the local community and people from another place. It requires a great deal of effort from both sides.”

### **Welcome and respect**

Other themes were primarily one-directional, and placed the burden of integration on those who arrive, such as the theme of ‘respect’, which comprised 44 of the total responses (9%). This theme related to integration as being the respect and understanding of a host societies rules and legislation, or the understanding of the more intangible cultural codes of a society:

‘[Integration is] the assimilation, and respect for the applicable legislation and culture of the country of residence.’; “[it is] the identification with pre-vailing social norms, and the understanding of cultural codes.”

Or on the contrary, the theme of ‘welcome’, which comprised 64 of the responses (14%), was also usually one-directional, but placed the emphasis of integration on the host communities ability to receive and welcome new arrivals into their community:

“[Integration is] to welcome a person into a community and consider such a person as part of that community.”; “being welcoming in the host society, through equal opportunities and without discrimination of difference (acceptance of difference by the host society)”.

Here, the idea of welcoming presupposes an othering process and the reproduction of the distinction host/guest.

### **Difference**

Responses falling under the themes of respect and welcome in the survey would occasionally merge into a larger, more nuanced, and usually more affirmative theme oriented around the role and significance of difference in integration. Difference was mentioned in 75 responses (16%), and usually contained language such as diversity, identity, heritage, experience and origins. The overarching emphasis of these responses was placed on the fact that integration did not have to presuppose the dominance or loss of one group’s identity over another’s, even when adaptation took place:

“In my opinion, the concept of ‘integration’ is not totally positive, because it is based on the existence of two cultures: a dominant one, and a subordinate one which needs to be ‘integrated’, namely assimilated. Sometimes, this process does not take into account the characteristics of different cultures.”

But rather, these responses often felt that integration should mean an adaptation which was mutual, and which could retain both former identities alongside the creation of a new, shared identity:

“For me, integration means becoming part of a society without forgetting yourself and your personal background. You build yourself into a foreign society and also bear its responsibilities.”; “Being able to be part of a society from all points of view and to keep your individuality in a positive way at the same time.”

It was also sometimes connected to a confidence in the identity of a society, in regard to a host societies ability to open up to the new without fear of losing their current local identities and traditions:

“A condition of peaceful coexistence among all those who are not afraid of losing their cultural identity.”

The theme of difference strongly incorporated the definition of inclusion - the joining of groups rather than the subjugation of one over the other – as well as the more non-hierarchical language of unity which did not presuppose a hierarchy. These responses also tended to use active language, such as ‘combining’, ‘harmonising’ and ‘joining’.

In these two photographs from the photo elicitation, both from migrants in Zagreb, the theme of adaptation can be viewed in the first, in that the person expresses a willingness and open-mindedness towards adapting to their new home. The second photograph however could be seen to represent the theme of difference, since they retain and cherish a cupboard of spices from their former home as a form of identity. Interestingly, both images present symbols which can be closed behind doors, within a literal cupboard, to be revealed or obscured within their own home as they please.

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## The theme of difference strongly incorporated the definition of inclusion – the joining of groups rather than the subjugation of one over the other – as well as the more non-hierarchical language of unity which did not presuppose a hierarchy.

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### FIGURE 3.8

Photo elicitation.

Image on the left: “I chose my desk because it is a symbol of hope...for me to achieve some of my future, I see that I can be a health worker, I can be a doctor, I can also be a nurse. I have no idea yet. I’ve planned a lot for my life, and everything is changeable. I can’t plan, I might become a professor, but I am a student for now.” Iranian in Zagreb, Croatia

Image on the right: “That scene and those spices take me back twenty years ago or more. I didn’t grow up with my mom and dad but with my dad’s grandparents. ... My grandmother taught me to cook. [...] my spices were very important to me. I have a lot of spices, I can cook Indian, Afghan, Iranian. It reminds me of my culture.” Syrian in Zagreb, Croatia



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**The theme of difference would often connect to the theme of ‘process’, which defined integration as being temporal, continuous or gradual, rather than a fixed phenomenon which could ever be completed.**

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### **Integration as a process**

The theme of difference would often connect to the theme of ‘process’, which defined integration as being temporal, continuous or gradual, rather than a fixed phenomenon which could ever be completed. This theme was mentioned the least with 19 responses (4%), however when it did occur, was usually strongly expressed:

“I understand integration as a lifelong task for all people who want to live in a community. For me, integration always means to give and take, a good measure of tolerance and solidarity intentions. The moment I turn away from my fellow human beings, my integration ends. So integration should be worked on for a lifetime.”

It would however sometimes be raised in opposition to the affirmation of difference, and refer to integration as being the gradual dissolution of one’s past identity to make way for the new:

“Integration is a long-time process where someone that comes from a different country with a totally different cultural background starts adopting the habits and culture of the new place and also gradually abandons the habits that he had in his country of origin.”

### **Integration as belonging**

Lastly, the most commonly referenced theme was ‘belonging’, which was found in 149 of responses (32%), and primarily referred to integration as being the creation of a shared community and society:

“[Integration is] being an active part of a community that recognizes me as an individual bearer of positive culture, traditions and values”; “...the process through which a person has the opportunity to feel part of a collective in its various aspects.”

This theme usually formed the scaffold for many others, and usually included the themes of difference, equality, participation, and a two-way process:

“Integration is to be able to live in a community, to live with your fellow human beings as they lived before your entry. At the same time giving this community and your own elements and shaping together a new collective reality.”

It also often related to the theme of agency, which was mentioned 26 times (6%), and equality, mentioned 63 times (13%):

“For me integration means that every human being is able to integrate well into the community in which he/she lives, that is being able to express his/herself in the best possible way without suffering any kind of discrimination or physical or psychological violence and without fear of expressing his/herself for any reason.”

And lastly, it would also sometimes incorporate a critique of migration as being the antithesis to a shared community:

“Integration is becoming a part of the wider community that you live in, not isolating yourself or staying within a bubble of fellow migrants.”

### **Integration as inhabitation**

All these themes of integration explored can be found to emerge again and again throughout the proceeding analysis, and serve to show the inherent complexity in migration, since it fundamentally concerns the most personal, and universal human values of identity and community.

When we look at the more nuanced narratives found within the interviews

these same themes also emerged, with some considering integration as a two-way reciprocal process that requires patience, willingness, time and open mindedness, and others perceiving integration as one-directional either by the migrants or by the hosting communities.

“[Integration is] integrating yourself and your culture with them, but not forgetting your culture”; “Integration means acceptance to the fact that you are just the way you want to be. It should be far from assimilating the ‘Other’”; “I believe we should instead favor a new meaning in which it is understood as a dynamic and reciprocal process”; “Constantly trying to get the people you come to, to accept you”; “Adjustment is everything, and if the immigrant wants to belong to the community, the obstacles are overpowered.”

However within the interviews, almost all the responses intersect on the meaning of integration as the ability to adapt and navigate changing circumstances. Although this differs from the most common theme of ‘belonging’ as found in the survey results, both represent the risks and rewards necessary to be taken when embarking on the new, and in becoming part of a community separate from yourself. Whether it is the life of a migrant, refugee, asylum seeker, citizen, or local, it is clear that each has a life and circumstances that is different from the other regardless of their categorisations, and such differences correspond to their ability to adapt, or not, in the face of change. The proceeding sections of this analysis embarks with this assumption, attempts to avoid migranticised language, and instead, assumes that integration is a spatial practice that can be only either hindered or enhanced by policy.

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## Within the interviews, almost all the responses intersect on the meaning of integration as the ability to adapt and navigate changing circumstances.

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### The multiple dimensions of inhabitation

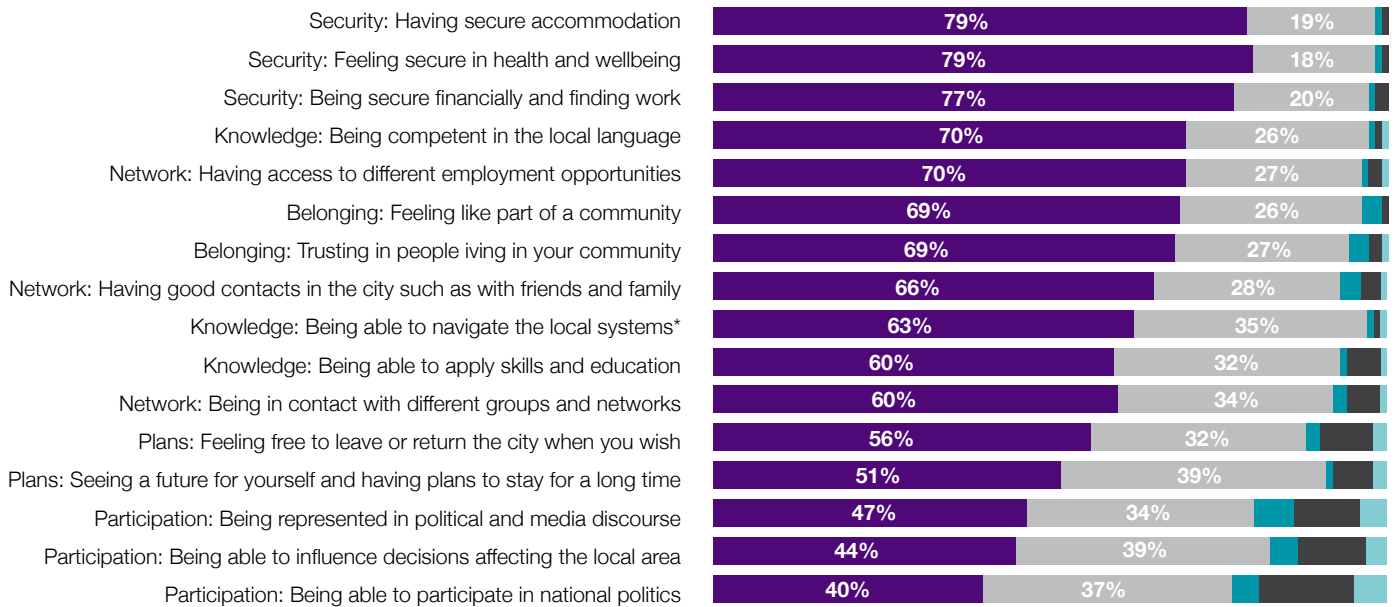
As explained in the previous chapters, and building on the assumption that integration is a multidimensional concept, too complex to be captured by a single metric, participants were asked to outline whether a range of different factors of integration were either important, or not, in supporting inhabitation. These dimensions were; Participation, Plans, Knowledge, Networks, Belonging and Security. The percentage of respondents who strongly agreed with the importance of each can be seen in the figure. Each dimension also contained sub-dimensions in order to provide a more nuanced exploration.

**FIGURE 3.9**  
Q: Which factors are most important for supporting integration? (average of ‘strongly agree’ response) (N=570)



**FIGURE 3.10**

Q: Which factors are most important for supporting integration? (N=570)



### Security

The highest ranked dimension in terms of its importance in supporting inhabitation was Security, with 78% of respondents strongly agreeing. Within this dimension, having secure accommodation was ranked the highest, with 79% of respondents strongly agreeing, followed by health and wellbeing (79%) and financial security and work (77%).

The interviews responses aligned with this finding, with some respondents developing the concept of security further into the notion of ownership and recognition as a fundamental element for integration; home ownership and recognition through work. For example, one respondent described a positive outlook on their future and personal development with the buying of a flat:

“We are thinking of buying a flat if we get a bank loan. A man has to develop. I believe we have a good future ahead of us here.”

Other respondents expressed frustration and anguish by the fact that they were not able to own a house or a car. For them, ownership is connected with a better way for life and is a precondition for integration:

“I wanted to buy a house. That’s why I have earned and bought it. If I plan to buy a car, I earn and buy. But in Moldavia, there is no possibility to do so [...] The money left is enough to buy food only. There is no possibility of making plans and solving problems. There is no opportunity [...] I have to take what’s new and integrate better. If I want to change my life, it’s because I don’t feel well. I must stop suffering.”

For some interview respondents, ownership was connected to access to well paid jobs and opportunities. Some respondents also differentiated between a “job” and a “real job”, with the latter being the access to formal work permits and therefore a more secure way of life:

“Then, a sponsor law came out in Italy with which an Italian could invite, at his own risk and expense, a person from abroad to work as a housekeeper or caregiver. Here, this was my first work residence permit, which allowed

**For the interwees, ownership is connected with a better way of life and is a precondition for integration.**

\*Such as housing, employment, health or education.

me to look for a real job, not as a housekeeper. So, I could switch to a normal permit”.

Other interview respondents felt that work was a way not only to form relationships with locals, but to create a positive perception from locals as a working member of the society. In this way, work becomes an image builder, and alludes to a notion of belonging that one wants to create:

“The work of the local community, but then also for them to see my work. Because then it helps to get to know us more”; “[...] that’s why integration is important to me because I will get to know them and they will get to know me and then when I would work and have a job they would create some image of me”.

This again reveals the implicit idea that migrants have to prove themselves worthy of the host society through achieving security status and abiding by the host’s rules and expectations.

## **Belonging**

The second highest ranked dimension in terms of importance from the survey responses was Belonging, with an average of 69% of respondents scoring it as very important. The importance of belonging here can be related to the same theme as explored in the definition of integration earlier. However, here, we are able to view it’s relation with other dimensions of integration with more focus: Interestingly, ‘trust in the community’ ranked slightly higher than ‘feeling like part of a community’, and both ranked below the Networks sub-dimension of ‘having access to employment opportunities’, and the Knowledge sub-dimension of ‘being competent in the local language’.

This result of belonging – although still highly ranked as important to integration – being prioritised below specific notions of security, networks and knowledge, could be understood more clearly within the interview narratives. One respondent, for example, although expressing strong feelings towards lacking a sense of belonging, viewed such a cost as at least being justified by the new sense of safety he had in the new territory:

“I feel I don’t belong here. I feel alien when I buy a ticket. You hear them talk about you. You feel pressure all the time. How is it possible to feel good then? But no matter the difficulties, I feel safer here. The problem is I miss my family.”

Within the interviews, belonging was also sometimes seen as a being achieved through understanding the new community you found yourself in, and being prudent about its values:

“[It is important] to be familiar with the environment that you live in: not being adventurer, criminal, but being honest, industrious, moral, so that you can be assimilated by the local society. Respecting the customs of the country that he lives, the religion, the legislation”.

## **Networks**

Networks ranked third in importance with an average of 65% of respondents ranking the sub-dimensions as being very important. The first sub-dimension, access to different employment opportunities, ranked as 4th most important, however the second, ‘having good contacts in the city such as friends and family’, fell 8th. This aligns with Security being the top dimension, since networks can be seen as essential in facilitating the finding of employment. It also falls in line with the concept of ‘embedding’ as developed by Phillimore (2015), Ryan and Mulholland (2015), as the process of forging social relations which enhance connectedness with a place, and therefore supports livelihood creation and the access to opportunities.



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**Within the interviews, religious connections and networks such as through the mosque or church proved to be very important across many of the cases.**

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The majority of respondents in the interviews agreed that networking was a key factor to the success of their integration process, however one participant felt that without wider motivations from both sides connections would remain shallow:

“We don’t have a great relationship with other people, the only thing is to say hello to people on the street. They greet us and we greet them, but there is no communication or relationship. They have no motivation to communicate with us, and then we have no motivation to get back to them.”

Within the interviews, religious connections and networks such as through the mosque or church proved to be very important across many of the cases. This usually related to positive interactions and accessibility to a wider community. For example, in Croatia, participants noted the high level of religious tolerance in the country, and how that strongly supported their daily encounters in the cities of Zagreb and Sisak.

“The Islamic community in Sisak also helps a lot in our integration and we are connected with them.”

### **Knowledge**

The dimension of Knowledge had 64% of respondents ranking the factor as very important, and comes 4th in the hierarchy. Although it’s sub-dimension of ‘being competent in the local language’ scores much higher than other sub-dimensions with 70% of respondents strongly agreeing on its importance, and is a factor significant to most integration related questions in this study.

Within the interviews, language acquisition as a tool of communication was widely deemed as crucial in facilitating any kind of integration, and underlined all other efforts in being part of a society:

“I have learnt that communication has a primary function. If you know how to communicate, you can go on, you can go anywhere.”

It was also often viewed as one of the most difficult stages of integration to achieve for a new arrival, since it did not only concern vocabulary, but also dialect, cultural norms, and entire ways of viewing the world which could not be easily learnt:

“That is not a problem for me to say it. The fact that they speak their language in communities, and too often only their dialect, has created enormous problems.”; “Think that a considerable difficulty people experience, at this moment, is at a mental level. It is the language because it is the way we think. So, my main obstacle is language.”

‘Being able to navigate local institutions such as housing, employment, health and education’ as a Knowledge factor was also ranked as highly important by 64% of respondents, and often related to the specific barriers of bureaucracy and modes of working within a territory which must be learned:

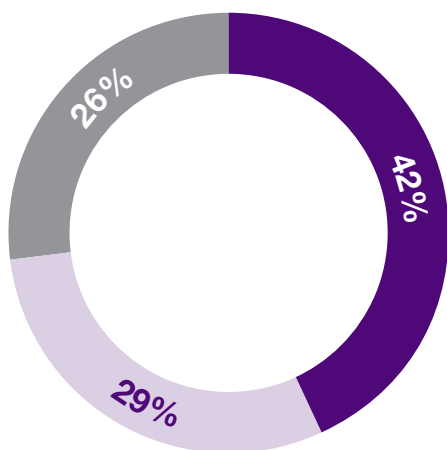
“I know more now. I know the situation, I know how things go at work.”

The last sub-dimension of Knowledge concerned the ability to ‘apply skills and education’, and was ranked as very important by 60% of respondents. This represents a common issue within migration policy across the EU, explicitly raised within the focus groups of the project consortium, and relates to the non-recognition of qualifications and skills from migrants preventing them from finding higher-level employment. This was also found within the interview responses, and relates to this previous notion of “real” jobs (those that utilised pre-existing skills) and those which weren’t (jobs which were more menial, domestic, or labour intensive). One respondent attached this inability to convert qualifications as being linked to a wider perception that migrants were generally incapable and not to be trusted:

**FIGURE 3.11**

Q: Which is most important for you?

- Being (financially) autonomous
- Being (socially) well-connected
- Being able to choose what is better for yourself



“People [should] know that there are some very capable immigrants, who can get things done on their own, have plans and want to do something. They want to grow up, find a job and get integrated. We are not just criminals or pushers as they read in newspapers. There are also good people, very capable...”

### Plans

Interestingly, only 54% of respondents ranked the dimension of Plans as ‘very important’, which contained the sub-dimensions of ‘feeling free to leave or return to the city when you wish’ and ‘seeing a future for yourself and having plans to stay for a long time’. Although these sub-dimensions relate to notions of agency and independence - often deemed important in integration literature - within the survey responses they are perhaps seen as non-essential in the short term, and instead feature more as long term aspirations after security, a sense of belonging, and the facilitating of networks and knowledge are achieved. In the interviews however the importance of this dimension was revealed with far more nuance, and could be understood much more clearly within wider narratives. For example, for many interviewees, their ability to choose which destination they wished to migrate or move to was a very important one, and was connected to their imaginaries of a place, their agency, and also sense of certainty towards the future. Those who ended up having to settle in a different destination than they had initially planned often found it more difficult to integrate at the beginning, and described having to psychologically readjust their expectations and accept their situation before they could settle.

### Participation

The dimension of Participation ranked the lowest in terms of importance in supporting inhabitation, with only 44% of participants scoring the factor as ‘very important’. This consisted of the sub-dimensions of ‘representation in political and media discourse’ (47% listed as ‘very important’), ‘being able to participate in local politics’ (44%), and ‘being able to participate in national politics’ (40%). Like the dimension of Plans, this suggests that participation is likely a more long-term aspiration, and usually superseded in the short-term by more direct and immediate needs.

### What is most important?

As opposed to ranking each dimension individually, figure 3.11 shows the results to a similar question on the importance of different dimensions of inhabitation but in which participants were able to select only one of three possible responses. The results from this show ‘being (financially) autonomous’ as having the highest frequency of importance with 42% of respondents selecting it. This is followed by ‘being (socially) well connected’ with 29% of responses, and lastly ‘being able to choose what is better for yourself’ with 26% of responses. This reflects and reaffirms the results from figure 3.10, and makes intuitive sense, since financial autonomy would often equate to security in terms of shelter, food and livelihood creation.

As we have seen from the interviews however, each of these dimensions are intrinsically intertwined: Employment and security leads to identity, facilitates social connections and community and, therefore, a sense of belonging; security does not only mean obtaining a property, but also the creation of a home and a sense of place and ownership within a territory; and employment does not only relate to income, but also to visibility within a community, a corresponding pride and purpose, and the agency to approach integration from a position of equality. Between all these dimensions is the knowledge and networks that form the links between the acts, and which ultimately facilitate the process of belonging within a larger community, and the process of inhabitation, meaning adapting, navigating and learning the city.

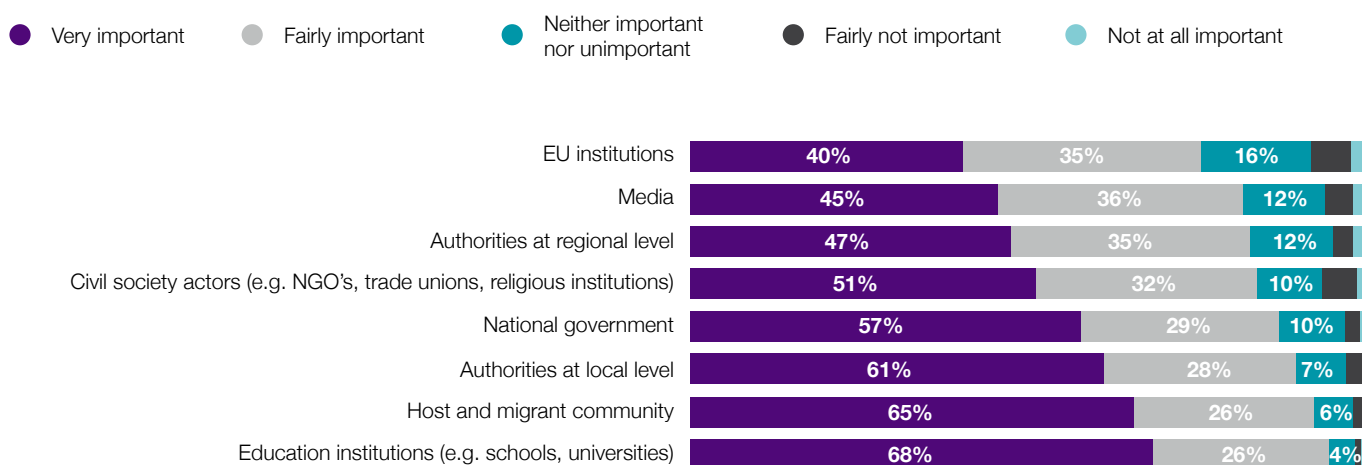
### ‘Crucial acquaintances’. The actors that support inhabitation

Participants were asked to rank the importance of the role of different actors within their inhabitation experience. From the results, a pattern in scale can be seen to emerge quite clearly, with the top three actors of educational institutions (68% designated ‘very important’), host and migrant community (65%) and authorities at local level (61%), all being actors on the immediate local and community scale. Besides ‘National government’ (ranked 4th with 57% of respondents viewing it as ‘very important’), this pattern in scale continues downwards, with authorities at a regional level (47%), media (45%), and the largest scale institution of the EU (40%) all ranking as the least important actors. This emphasis on local relations also corresponds to the dimension of Plans from figure 3.10, where we saw that ‘having influence over local decisions’ ranked above the importance of ‘participation in national elections’, and appeared to be a clear trend throughout the results.

Interestingly, although Knowledge as a dimension of integration was ranked 4th in terms of importance as seen in figure 3.10, here, in contradiction, we can see the most important actor being ranked as educational institutions. This difference emphasises how the relative importance of the various dimensions of integration can shift when contextualised differently, in this case when considering actors, relationships and networks more explicitly.

**FIGURE 3.12**

Q: In your opinion, how important or unimportant is the role of each of the following actors according to your experience?



**FIGURE 3.13**

Q: Where do you turn for practical support to navigate and access services at the urban level? (N=466)

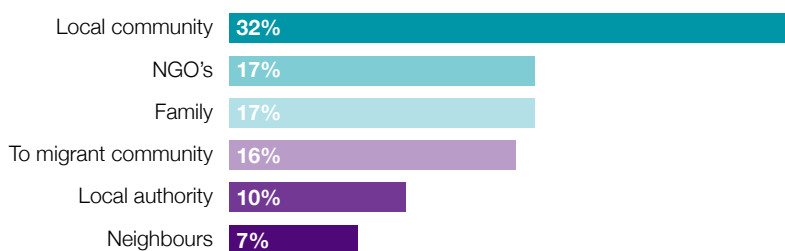


Figure 3.13 asks the question of the importance of actors again. It focuses, however, more broadly on a local scale, and only allows participants to select a single response. The results show a clear result confirming the importance of the local community to a sense of integration, with 32% of respondents selecting it. This was roughly twice that of the next three responses of NGO's (17%), family (17%) and migrant community (16%). This large difference may be due to participants interpreting the 'local community' as representing a more general and interpersonal group than that of specifically 'NGO's' or the 'Local authority', or perhaps as a more diverse set of networks than the 'Family', 'Migrant community' or 'Neighbours'.

However, when the responses of those who stated they had migrated to the city are compared to those who had said they were born there, a strong contrast emerges. Whereas only 22% of those who migrated to the city reported that they would turn to the 'Local community' for integration support, twice the number of those who were born there said they would (44%). And where 24% of migrants reported turning to the 'Migrant community' for integration support, only 8% of those born in the city said they would. On the one hand this could be seen as quite an expected result, supported by Wessendorf's (2018) notion of the 'crucial acquaintances' of migrant integration often being forged between other migrants as 'bridges' of social capital. However on the other hand, this difference also represents a point in the survey where the distinction between which group is doing the integrating suddenly becomes blurred. This is since an additional question that emerges from this result is whether those who identified as being born in the city were answering from a perceived perspective of a migrant, or instead from their own position as a 'local'. If it was the former, then the difference between responses is significant and represents a clear disjuncture in perspective on integration between these two groups. But if the reason were the latter, then it means those born in the city have been answering the questions about integration from a personal perspective: that is, as a process not limited to those who cross borders, and as a universal experience faced by anyone in their daily lives.

### **Multiple lives**

From the exploration of the different dimensions of integration that emerged from the survey and interview responses, a number of trends and patterns are evident across groups about which dimensions are prioritised for navigating and learning the city.

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**Priorities certainly can change depending on circumstance and individual trajectories; the needs of a young person newly arrived in a city will likely differ to that of a longer established parent with dependants, or a more elderly person born within the territory and experiencing uncertainty over more newly arrived groups.**

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Despite this, priorities certainly can change depending on circumstance and individual trajectories; the needs of a young person newly arrived in a city will likely differ to that of a longer established parent with dependants, or a more elderly person born within the territory and experiencing uncertainty over more newly arrived groups. This is even more the case when we focus on the actors of integration rather than more conceptual dimensions, since it is through this lens that the social relations that ultimately construct any process of collective life formation are revealed, and therefore also the more nuanced experiences that are involved.

It first seems essential to recognise this diversity, and to understand that each individual will likely be on a different trajectory or stage of integration. Despite this, as seen, there are also many commonalities in experience, where needs, as well as spaces and the relations which satisfy such needs, overlap and converge. It is these spaces and relations will be explored later as the potential untapped opportunities. But first, an analysis of the pre-existing and more visible, formalised practices of integration will be made.

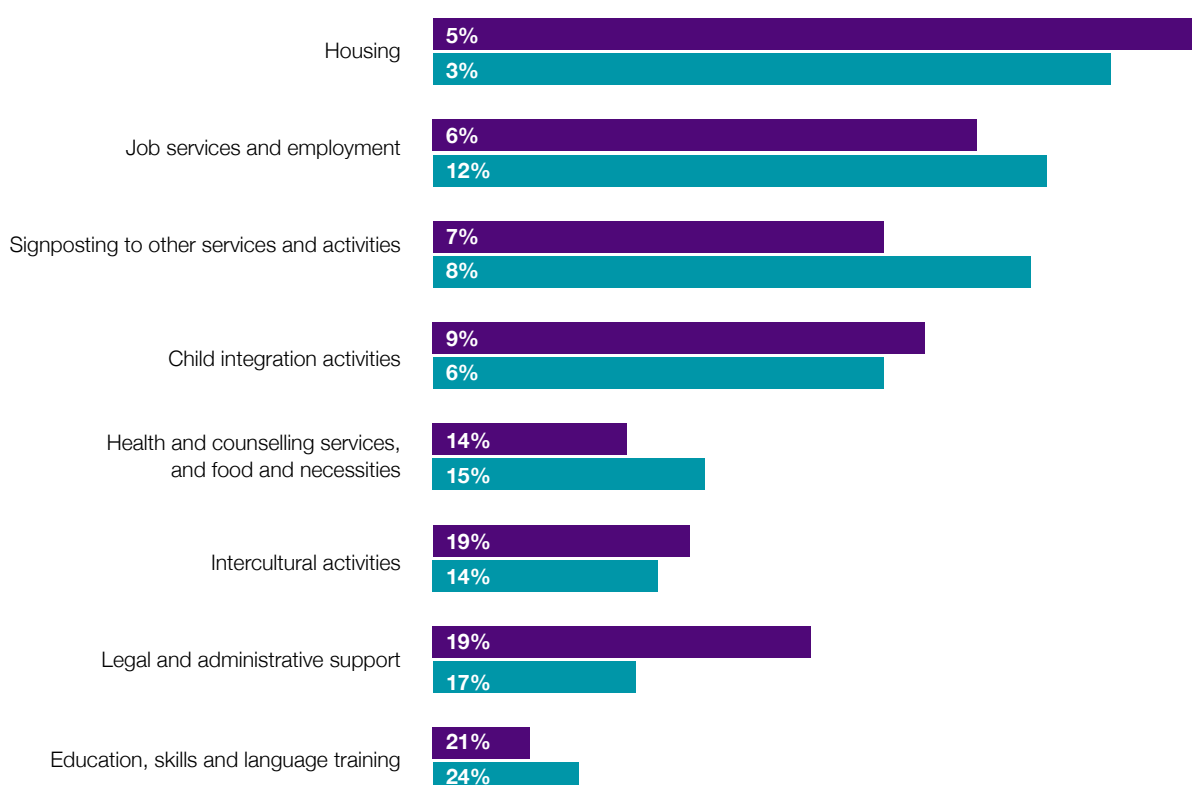
### Humanitarian and institutional responses to migration and systems of provision

Part of the survey aimed to explore more explicitly the level of access to urban provision systems, related to housing, education, health care and job market. Each partner provided a list of the most established practices within their territory, and participants were asked to select the one they were most familiar with to answer questions on. Whilst individual feedback was provided to each partner, within this report the practices are analysed holistically, with each one being placed within overarching categories of services in order to allow for a wider cross-analysis of provision across the territories. Figure 3.14 shows the types of services from each practice, the form of service participants said they were most familiar with, as well as showing a breakdown between those who reported migrating to their city and those who were born there since some interesting variation could be found.

**FIGURE 3.14**

Q: Which practices are you most familiar with? (N=432)

● Was born in city ● Migrated to city



Comparing between the groups the results varied only slightly. There was a clear difference, however, when it came to employment services, with those who migrated to the city having twice the rate of familiarity than those who didn't (12% against 6%). There was also a slight variation within the familiarity with intercultural activities, with those who migrated being less familiar than those born in the city (14% against 19%). For both groups however, 'Education, skills and language training' is the form of service provision most were familiar with. This aligned with the findings from interviews, where language support as an essential support service was one of the most frequent mentions across all respondents. This is attributed to the importance of local language knowledge for accessing all other forms of services, resources and networks. Legal and administrative support was the second service that participants were most familiar with, which was also a common theme found within the interviews, since having valid paperwork and documents was an essential prerequisite for the formal acquisition of other factors such as housing and work.

The rate of familiarity with these two services could be related to the finding that security was the top priority; in the ability to communicate and navigate networks and institutions, and to have legal certification to do so. However, the fact that housing emerges as the service respondents were least familiar with breaks this logic, since as we saw in figure 3.10, 'having secure accommodation' was ranked as the most important factor in supporting inhabitation by respondents. While this result could mean participants have not been seeking out housing support as much as other services, when contrasted against other findings in this analysis, it appears more likely that housing support services are either absent or inaccessible across most territories.

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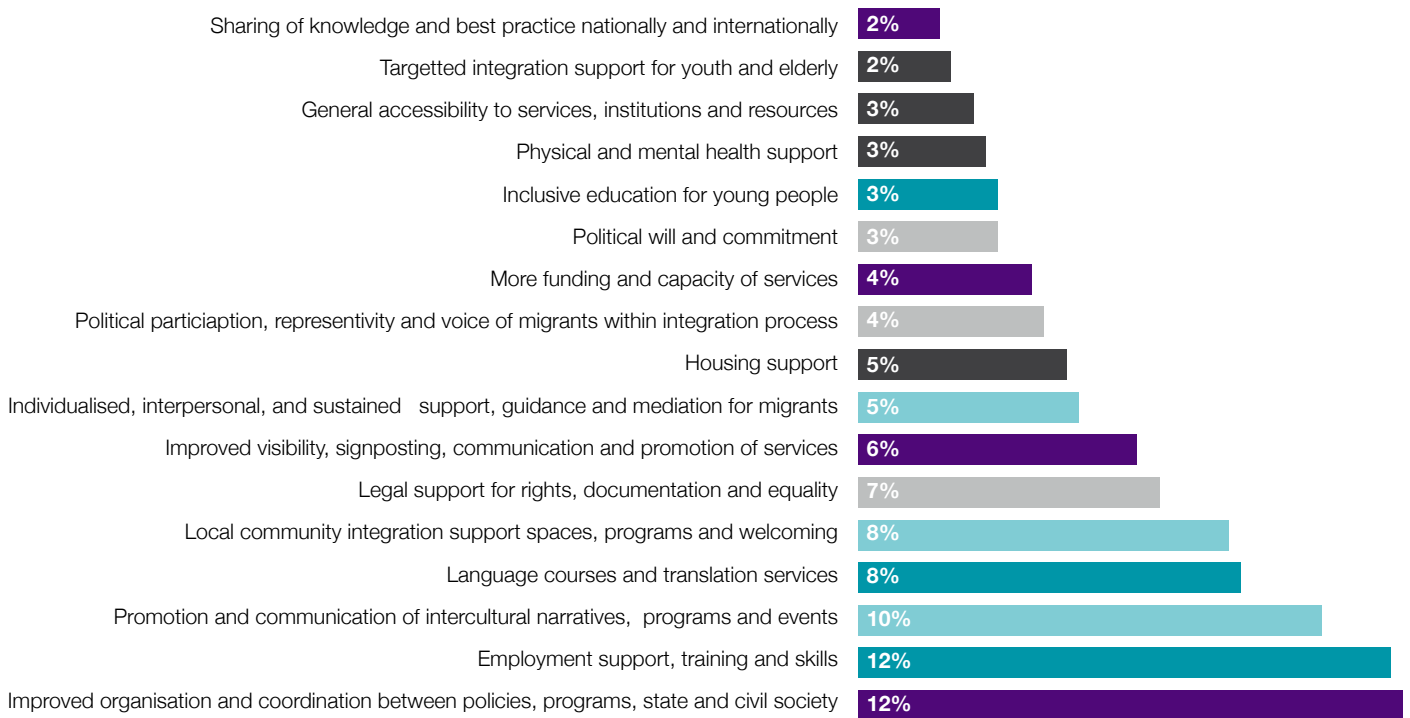
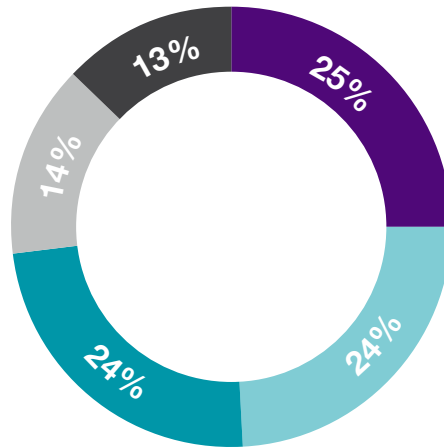
**For both groups however, 'Education, skills and language training' is the form of service provision most were familiar with. This aligned with the findings from interviews, where language support as an essential support service was one of the most frequent mentions across all respondents.**

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**FIGURE 3.15**

Q: What do you think is missing in terms of support services? (N=246)

- Coordination, organisation and communication of integration practices
- Intercultural programmes, welcoming and mediation
- Language, education, skills and employment
- Legal support, representation, participation and equality
- Accessibility and provision of health, housing and support services



## Conclusions

### Expanding the ‘vocabulary of practice’

Institutional responses to migration and systems of provision, as provided by the partners of the consortium, have been useful in providing insight into the present-day formal practices to support inhabitation. However, as highlighted in chapter one, practice is not only focused on institutions and policy but also on the diverse refugee and migrant practices that address the challenges of migration in the absence – or in spite of the presence – of formal humanitarian providers and state intervention. As this research shows, there are additional practices that develop intuitively through every-day life, and which are not always directly related to integration as a concept in and of itself.

Beyond service provision, the interviews revealed the presence of a set of practices that constitute the unspoken and scarcely notable background of everyday life. In reviewing the literature, a focus on such spatial practices of everyday life as a target for urban equality policies can be seen to attempt to redirect policy away from a focus on migrants and refugees themselves, who may, for example, not self-identify with these labels. Instead, a focus on spatial practices has come to be seen as more effective since it directs attention towards ideas of place and spaces, building stronger communities more generally for all inhabitants of a locality. People engage with different spaces, where social lives are not only confined within ethnically defined neighbourhoods’. Through these engagements people actively participate in shaping the urban – even though this is hardly noticed. Such practices need to be drawn to the fore, made visible and turned into an epistemic object in order to enter discourse.

From the analysis of the interview narratives, four relational spaces emerged: public and social spaces; humanitarian and institutional spaces; commercial spaces; and religious spaces, where a variety of spatial practices of care, maintenance and repair take place. These spaces were derived from the interviews rather than the surveys since they emerged more clearly within wider narratives. However, this framework of spaces was applied to responses to a survey question which asked participants to outline individual, and personal practices of inhabitation that they may have discovered through their everyday lives, not fitting within more institutional or formal responses. The frequency of mentions of these spaces from the survey responses can be seen in figure 3.16.

**FIGURE 3.16**

Q: Have you initiated or adopted any particular practices or habits (not through an organisation) that you think has supported either your or others integration? (N=143).





## Humanitarian and institutional spaces of care

As we have seen in the first chapter, these can be spaces where humanitarian work becomes simultaneously inclusive and exclusive, ethically committed to the oppressed and also discriminatory. But these spaces are also where the interdependence of care practices becomes evident. Beyond categories of deserving, and emergency situations, here care is practised as a form of ‘transformative solidarity’.

Within the interviews, participants listed a wide range of ‘institutional spaces’ for integration programmes and activities, such as language training centres, scholarship programs for artists coming from endangered countries (ICORN), immigrant support centres, European Solidarity Centers, and schools. Whilst these makeup the more visible, normative practices of integration as explored in the previous section, when viewed as spaces of relation, more nuanced characteristics emerged.

For example, respondents would often not only comment on the specific service delivered by the institution, but also and especially on the relationship they established with those who operated them. In this way, the effectiveness of the service can be tied to the interactions that occurred within those spaces, which could entail the friendliness of staff, the familiarity of faces, or even the atmosphere of waiting rooms. One participant, when describing a personal practice of integration, stated how if they were having difficulty with a governmental department, would call up at different times of the day since this could sometimes catch those who operated the phones in a different, perhaps more open mood, leading to a more successful outcome.

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**Respondents would often not only comment on the specific service delivered by the institution, but also and especially on the relationship they established with those who operated them.**

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The institutional space which was shown to be the most significant in terms of social encounters however was that of the school, with many interview respondents describing how effective they were not only for children, but also for parents, families and the wider community. This was also seen in the survey responses (figure 3.12), where it was ranked as the most important actor in facilitating integration, with 68% of respondents agreeing. Schools in this way do not only provide a space for learning, but also a space of encounter; a place where diverse groups within a community could meet with a clear purpose in doing so, which could therefore facilitate micro-interactions either at the school gate or in specific after-school community-wide events. The loss of such spaces was also mentioned in relation to the impact of the pandemic, as also entailing the loss of social opportunities:

“[...] with the children and the school, they were left alone at home and did not have the opportunity to socialize with other children and had homework over the internet and it was also difficult for them because of the language they learning through physical contact. It wasn’t easier because of the corona.”

## Care in public and social spaces

Care is fundamentally a relational practice where all parties have an interest in each other's well-being; also care creates social ties between people upon which durable institutions can be built. Public and social spaces make-up the most diverse set of spaces where people meet and build relationships according to the interviews, referring to encounters found within public spaces, within the street, within the home, through shared meals, sports games or artistic pursuits. What differentiates such encounters from those that happen in a religious, institutional, or commercial space is that they take on a looser nature, are less attached to specific roles or tasks, but are derived more explicitly from the pleasure and purpose to be found within a wider community. As such, it is also perhaps the most spontaneous form of caring.

Most interview respondents referred to everyday public and social encounters as being the main driver for navigating and learning the city, as it often led to the opening of up channels of communication, understanding, and more practically the knowledge of a language and the unwritten codes of a culture:

"[For integration] friendship helped me a lot. I have some local friends with whom I can talk and have dinner together. I have learnt a lot of things in Italian, and that was the most important thing to overcome problems."

One common denominator for these types of encounters was a desire to build a network of relations, to find friends and belong to a wider community which recognised them and allowed them to participate in all other dimensions of life:

"[Most important for integration] is to have friends in that community, local friends, because you need to get involved in the dynamics of the community."

Specific activities would often emerge which could support such relations, for example through sports:

"One thing that facilitates integration is communication with people. The other thing I can say is socializing, cycling, sports. I meet people through it".

As well as through cultural events and particularly cooking:

"I also take part in events organized by cultural institutions in Gdańsk. I like it when you can come, cook food with others and talk to people. The Urban Culture Institute also has an interesting offer."

And for some, such social encounters had first began within institutional spaces, but after termination of the specific programme would continue as a personal practice within the wider community:

"The Municipality also gave us things to do, we put up some wash houses but, after a 4-year project, we no longer knew what to clean. So, we moved into the construction field and created a social garden and a social orchard".

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**Most interview respondents referred to everyday public and social encounters as being the main driver for navigating and learning the city.**

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**FIGURE 3.17**

Photo elicitation.

"... It is my friend's birthday party. There are a lot of people here, the atmosphere is cool. I associate that with comfort and being together. It is all about cosiness, not partying. You can go to the toilet, take a nap. Anything goes." Pole from Gdynia in Gdansk, Poland.

Commercial spaces, like humanitarian, institutional and public ones, represent another space of negotiation and daily life which often cannot be avoided. However, as such, they also represent spaces where interactions between diverse groups necessarily take place, and therefore present potential and opportunity in advancing relationships, responsibility and interdependence, as the core elements of care practices.

One interview respondent suggested that multi-ethnic shops and supermarkets were a space where unlikely relationships could form for them. For them, a starting point of ignorance and distance between different groups could easily become self-reinforcing and be hard to overcome, however having the 'need' to connect through commerce was one way this could be tackled. Despite this, they said it could sometimes work the opposite way, where shops which became over-specialised for migrant groups, such as those that may focus on a certain cultural product, may seem inaccessible to other groups, and as such reduce the diversity of encounters:

"There must be an exchange between immigrants coming from other countries, between immigrants and locals...I don't go to Chinese shops, not because they sell poor quality products, no, I don't think so. It is because of ignorance, I don't know their products. So, I'd rather go to Esselunga (supermarket), where I know what to get."

### Care and repair in faith spaces

Religion, as a medium and space of relation, was mentioned by a wider number of interview respondents, who often referred to religious events, spaces and practices as an infrastructure of care and as opportunities to know others from within and outside their community. This was particularly so for those just arriving in a new territory, who could quickly find welcome and community within mosques, churches, synagogues and other faith spaces.

"The Islamic community in Sisak also helps a lot in our integration and we are connected with them."

As we have seen in chapter one, practices of repair can offer insights into migrant self-reliance, and the ability to fill in the gaps of institutional practices and fixing and maintaining a 'broken' system of reception. Similarly, from the interviews it emerged that faith spaces also often played host to a number of other services and institutions, whether it be the facilitation of programmes for asylum seekers or refugees themselves, or the renting out of such spaces to other organisations that did so. For example some respondents praised the church and its supporting youth programs as a great tool for integration for both their children and themselves:

"The Church deals with and works on the integration of asylum seekers and I am involved in the youth program."

One respondent referred to Ramadan dinners as being special, lively and pleasing moments that created a sense of solidarity within the community, as well as allowing for moments of celebration alongside the sharing of tragedy and suffering;

“We met people who brought us stories of suffering but also created strong solidarity. I don’t know, I think back to the quarrels that ended for Ramadan.... It became a moment we all expected. I think about this liveliness. I think it was special. I wanted to tell you about it because it was pleasing.”

Lastly, it is important to note that within the interviews, a large factor which dictated the form of encounter available to the interviewees was gender. This usually related to men more commonly taking up employment roles outside the house within public and commercial spaces, whereas women would have more primary care roles in looking after children. Interestingly, from the interviews, it emerged from this distinction that women could often experience more diverse daily urban encounters than men due to the additional activities they did with their children:

“Usually, there were mostly families here and, in all of them, it was only the men who worked. At least, in the ones I have met. Some women work, for example, the greengrocer’s wife. But, even in this case, only because the activity belongs to her husband. Thanks to her, all the women came to the parish with their children, where it is easier to mix because integration is not only with Italians, it is also with other foreigners.”

However in other cases the reverse was true, when the reduced mobility of women to the home could reduce the number of commercial and public encounters women would have:

“Greek lessons are provided by some NGO, but they are held in the center of the city, and due to the cost of the ticket to the urban many women are unable to go.”

Two responses to the photo elicitation exercise seen below proved to be one of the most sensitive insights into the integration as a caring practice centred on interconnectedness, shining light on the duality of identity someone experiences, and must adapt to, when they leave a home to create a new one.

### FIGURE 3.18

Photo elicitation.

Image on the left: “This place [...] means that my life has two parts. One part is that place that reminds me of my past, ...in Syria because I was always sitting by the window there too. And now the other part of my life is here in Sisak”. Syrian with a family of five children, in Croatia, Sisak.

Image on the right: “I chose this place because it reminds me of everything I went through in life. Everywhere I went I loved having one such place where I could think and remember everything I had been through”. Afghani in Zagreb, Croatia.



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**We live in cities. We learn how to access them – their services, jobs and housing provisions, depending on different levels of privilege, capitals, status and networks. This is rather more relevant. The discourse and policy on integration should be completely reframed as a discourse and policy around urban equality.**

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## 04. Conclusion

The report “Unsettling integration” is not about how successful integration of migrants into host societies looks like, or how to achieve better levels of integration. It is rather about why we get everything wrong with integration and why there is no such thing like successful integration.

First, as discussions of coloniality in chapter one suggest, integration is a concept widely employed to implement social control, a governmental technology in Foucauldian terms, developed by white European host societies. It is not something that ordinary people – whether migrant or not – necessarily feel, live, perceive or conceive. It doesn’t really speak to the reality on the ground, as it does not translate in affective relations, nor coping mechanisms, and bottom-up strategies that make up people’s urban survival and thrive, as our research confirms. Also, we do not necessarily need to integrate. Host community members are not asked to integrate – why would migrants need to do that?

We live in cities. We learn how to access them – their services, jobs and housing provisions, depending on different levels of privilege, capitals, status and networks. This is rather more relevant. The discourse and policy on integration should be completely reframed as a discourse and policy around urban equality.

Second, integration is an abstract state-centred concept grounded in the distinction between host/guest and citizen/migrant, and rooted on the trinity state/territory/sovereignty. Integration is in its essence an othering process. This can make it colonial and racist. There is a sense that people are being incorporated into host society codes, into host society spaces, rather than there being a more radical epistemic challenge unfolding. Integration is still unfortunately seen as the ability of the other to adapt to the host context and

the society. Host societies even develop services to facilitate such process – meaning to facilitate and reproduce othering and control. Yet the question on integration should also be around how the host context and the society moulds around foreigners.

Integration – if we accept its need – is shaped by individual agency, however the responsibility for it doesn't fall on individuals alone –integration is shaped very much by outside forces such as policy and media. The latter calls for reconceptualise and reposition integration in migration research and policy. As long as we keep framing migration though integration, as long as we keep pursuing integration policies – we will not really support the flourishing of migrant communities in cities nor the peaceful coexistence between diverse groups.

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However, reframing integration as a form and practice of urban encounter (Fiddian- Qasmiyeh, 2015, 2016a), as a relational practice (Latimer and Munro, 2009) extremely subjective and non normative (Boccagni & Baldassar 2015; Grzymala & Phillimore, 2018) emplaced (Wessendorf 2018; Glick Schiller & Çağlar, 2016; Phillimore et al. 2017) and embedding (Ryan & Mulholland 2015), in one word, reframing integration as inhabitation help us to better understand the manifold transformative formal and informal encounters between displaced people/migrants, places, institutions and services that are developed to endure and maintain life (Boano & Astolfo 2019).

Through this research we attempted to go back to the notion of integration, reject its foundations, to rethink hospitality and citizenship. The way we did it was primarily through the design of the research methods and a deep reflection on positionality and the relationship between researcher and researched subject. First, we tried to move away from pre-set migranticised categories to let participants define themselves without bias. By rejecting categories we hoped to expose the coloniality of migration as a field of knowledge.

Secondly, the research was very much shaped by the idea that integration is a form of transformative relation, between people, places and institutions. It is driven by individual choices and collective constraints. It is the way we all build an urban basis for ourselves. So the attempt was to decolonise the notion of integration by unlinking it from structures of power and privilege, policy and disciplinary language and categories.

Yet a decolonial project related to migration policy is still to start. The review of the literature on integration and practice underscored the 'otherness' and binary distinctions embedded within policy discourse and design. Much of the academic literature formed around challenging dominant discourses of integration and advocated shifting focus onto migrant agency, relational practices,

encounters and place. Integration policy and practice, however, remain entangled within this policy discourse and practical attempts to negotiate them within local contexts of the nine territories examined in this project add obstacles to 'integration' processes. The majority of migration policy dehumanise, racialise and infantilise migrants. It is pointless to quote here the burgeoning literature (and advocacy) on the wrongs of the management of migration in Europe – policy that is leading to massacres in the Aegean and Mediterranean seas, and murderous spectacles of violence at the Eastern borders, inhumane detentions in the camps whether in the Greek island or in Ventimiglia or Calais.

The decolonial project has remained so far within academia and doesn't speak to policy. What we wish this report will be helpful for, is rather than providing solutions, to instead foster a reflection amongst those who work closely to migrants, refugees, and anyone who struggles on a daily basis against hostile environments, lack of funding, rising racism and discrimination, and who work in a ridden space around coloniality. This is ultimately to understand how the latter gets reproduced, but can be equally challenged by subverting discourses and categories.

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