



EUROPEAN
PLATFORM OF
INTEGRATING
CITIES

Unsettling integration. Research Report

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The present report is the outcome of a collective effort lasted a little over eight months. It has been conceived and written by a team of researchers (Giovanna Astolfo, Harriett Allsopp, Jonah Rudlin, Hanadi Samhan) based at the Bartlett Development Planning Unit (DPU), University College London (UCL), as part of the Work Package 2 "Baseline Analysis" of the project "European Platform of Integrating Cities (EPIC)" funded by the European Union's Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF). Research has been conducted in collaboration with 15 EPIC partners: ADL Zavidovici, Municipality of Brescia, ALDA, JRS Portugal, Municipality of Lisbon, JRS Croatia, Municipality of Sisak, Kitev, Oberhausen municipality, AEIDL, Symbiosis, Municipality of Ioannina, Solidaridad Sin Fronteras (SSF), Regione Sardegna, Studio e Progetto 2.

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All figures in the report have been developed by the Authors. The Datasheet has been designed by Patricia Martinez (AIEDL) based on data provided by the Authors. The surveys and interviews have been conducted, transcribed and translated by in-country researchers affiliated to the partners in the EPIC consortia. Data from surveys and interviews have been coded and analysed by the Authors.

Harriett Allsopp conducted the desk research and literature review write up (chapter 1 and 2). Jonah Rudlin and Hanadi Samhan conducted the data collection, coding, aggregation, analysis and write up (chapter 4). All Authors contributed to the methodological chapter (3) write up. Contribution from in-country researchers (Krzysztof Stachura and Igor Kovač) are included in the methodological reflections.



Disclaimer

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Table of Contents

Introduction

1. Urban biographies

2. Findings from surveys and interviews

Conclusion



Introduction

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 was 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 been created to protect individuals, ultimately 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 current migration and integration policy and research, putting forward counter-narratives.

In this light, the present research which was conducted over eight months in nine different European cities attempts to (1) question the notion of integration, especially to examine whether it corresponds or not with lived experiences of urban inhabitants; (2) move beyond the state as privileged unit of analysis to avoid what migration scholarship has called 'methodological nationalism'; (3) engage reflexively with urban inhabitants and position their subjective truths.

The following pages contain a short version of the report. If you are interested in reading a more comprehensive literature review, a reflection on the methodology and the Urban biographies of the other cities involved in the project, please consider reading the original English version of this Report.

The original version is structured accordingly¹. The first chapter examines current literature in order to dissect and move beyond the notion of integration. According to Shinkel (2018), research on migration and integration today in Europe especially occurs within a discourse that is "riddled with racism hard to avoid". Integration has failed, both "as a political way to describe the process in which migrants settle, and as a concept in social science to analyse such processes" (ibi). We propose alternative concepts and categories that do not belong to migranticised language and have been developed outside migration research (such as spatial practice, ethics of care and repair). While in migration research, integration practice is narrowly bounded to service provision and rights enhancement, we propose to listen to people's accounts of practices – amidst improvisation, precarity, alternative scripts of citizenship and how state rules are negotiated. So the focus on practices is both related to institutions as providers, but also to other less visible ones and those related to an ethics of care, repair and maintain.

The section on nine urban territories wishes to briefly profile the cities the research engages with.

The methodological chapter offers a glimpse into the struggle to move away from quantitative, un-positioned and un-reflexive research, while trying to do fieldwork during a pandemic. Such effort has taken different directions. First, the issue of categorisation and construction of social identities and stigma is not new to the debate on research methods, including the dilemma produced by the simultaneous presence of vulnerability and agency, its dehumanising risk, and the risk to create racialised bodies. 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 migrants, refugees, social workers, practitioners, etc, addressing the same questions. We have (reluctantly) kept the word "integration" within most of 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 other categories closer which we deemed to the empirical world and subjective experience of urban inhabitants– knowledge, participation, etc. Secondly, we have adopted a reflexive gaze throughout the research to acknowledge the position of power, privilege and most often whiteness of researchers. We also recognised the limits of this type of research and the fact that is not meant to provide solutions. It wishes however to foster further reflections and address the challenges faced by local governments.

The final chapter discusses the findings of the surveys and interviews based on an alternative framework.

¹ This is the short version of a longer report including only the findings of each section.



The research has the following objectives:

- (1) To move away from a rigid, obsolete notion of integration, to embrace the idea of inhabitation as a relational practice constituted by transformative formal and informal encounters between displaced people, places, institutions and services that are developed to endure and maintain life. Inhabitation is ultimately the result of complex daily strategies of learning, navigating and governing the city. Such an understanding enables us to shift our focus onto the historical and present experiences of those who 'have to integrate', recognizing the centrality of inhabitants, including migrants' and refugees' own assessments.

In line with the main objective, our research approach:

- (2) Employs concepts, notions and 'categories' that have been developed outside migration research (in urban sociology, planning and development). In order to avoid treating the migrant population as a different unit of analysis and investigation, we have instead directed the focus on parts of the whole population, as urban inhabitants, which obviously includes migrants, refugees, social workers, practitioners, etc
- (3) Maintains the word "integration" within most of research and the present report, but rejects thinking of it as an achievement and as a state. The notion of integration is broken down into other categories closer to the empirical world and subjective experience of the urban inhabitants– knowledge, participation, etc.
- (4) Adopts a reflexive gaze to acknowledge the position of power, privilege and whiteness of researchers. We are also recognising the huge limits of this type of research and the fact that is not meant to provide solutions nor it is particularly anxious to be policy relevant. It wishes however to foster further reflection and address the challenges faced by local governments.
- (5) Questions the notion of practice beyond the idea of best practice, success and more in general beyond the idea of integration practice narrowly bounded to service provision and rights enhancement. Conversely, we have tried to emphasise people's accounts of practices – amidst improvisation, precarity, alternative scripts of citizenship and how state rules are negotiated, focusing on practices related to institutions as providers, but also other less visible ones and those related to an **ethics of care, repair and maintain**.



1. Urban biographies

Ioannina, Greece

The 1990s saw restrictive immigration policy introduced in Greece. Border restrictions and removal procedures criminalised migrants. Migrants' status was regulated after 1997 and two presidential decrees and in 2001 Greece introduced its first immigration law, in which migrants were accepted if employed. Laws of 2005-2007 provided greater recognition of the permanence of immigration and possible benefits of it and led to an action plan for social integration. Yet resources were not directed towards its implementation hindering migrant integration initiatives. The socialist government 2009 harmonised Greek policy to EU directives on reception and return and in April 2014 new immigration laws, a 'Migration Code' made improvement to migrant rights and integration but restricted public services to those who could prove legal entry into Greece. Greece became a point of entry for thousands of migrants during the refugee 'crisis' of 2015 and was unable to adequately process the sheer numbers of arrivals which exceeded 860,000 in 2015 alone. Migrants came primarily from Syria, Iraq, and Afghanistan. Greece began as short-term transit country, but after closure of 'Balkan Route' and the European Union (EU) – Turkey Statement in March 2016, Greece became 'a country hosting a growing population of refugees and asylum seekers who would be remaining in Greece for the foreseeable future.' In 2019 Greece was reported to be processing more than 11 percent of EU asylum applications. The nature of the response began to change to cater to the needs of a largely stationary population. Integration of migrants became an overarching concern; however, Greece still officially considers itself a transit country, and national policy is directed at providing refugees and asylum seekers with temporary relief while awaiting permanent resettlement.

The situation was characterised by overflowing camps, derogatory policy rhetoric by some politicians and an inefficient public sector, that prevented effective solutions to Greece's problems. Existing accommodation available for refugees has been pushed to its limits, migrant shanty towns developed in worst affected areas and migrants are separated from local populations. Employment is scarce even for those with Greek language skills due to the poor economic situation in Greece and nationwide unemployment stands at 18.5 percent. In January 2019, the government of Greece presented for public consultation a proposal for a new strategy, resulting in the July 2019 National Integration Strategy. The new strategy contains provisions regarding education, labour market integration, racism, and xenophobia, among others. In addition to these overarching strategies, the government also drafted a policy paper providing for educational actions for refugee children in 2016. Greece does not have a standard integration programme for newcomer third-country nationals. (<https://ec.europa.eu/migrant-integration/governance/greece>). The "Nea Dimokratia" (New Democracy Party) government elected in the summer of 2019 introduced new laws and regulations, however, on asylum and detention and removal plans that have been termed punitive and hard-right.

Ioannina is situated in northwest mainland Greece and is the main city of the Epirus administrative region. Inward and outward migration appear to be 'a strong feature of the city's history and identity' and migrants have been attracted to the area due to economic opportunities. The economy of Epirus region is one of least developed in Greece, but Ioannina city boasts a diverse economy focused on food production, education and tourism. Between 2008 and 2011 the Ioannina area also experienced significant proportional fall in population. The city population is approximately 10% non-Greek origin, primarily Albanian, also Pakistanis, Cypriots, Chinese and Africans also resident.

Political and local policy backing for a positive approach to immigration and integration in Ioannina city council and Epirus regional governance has been strong. The experience of large numbers of migrants from Albania appears to have prepared local governance for coping and adapt to new conditions without help from central government. Local governance sought to prepare for the eventuality of accommodating large numbers of migrants in the context also of Albanian border closures and to make Ioannina a community which is welcoming to newcomers (whether they arrive through choice or under duress) and which has the legislative and institutional infrastructure and expertise to transform their hospitality into practical support and sustainable communal integration. Strong political motivation to be a welcoming inclusive city, is recognised by the Intercultural Cities, but less has been attained in practice yet.

Migrant accommodation varies between Katsikas Camp outside the town, accommodation inside city, Agia Eleni (a former youth hostel in Ioannina, Western Greece, that has been renovated by UNHCR in the framework of ESTIA programme). A series of NGOs (Arbeiter Samariter Bund, Terres des Hommes, Arsisi,



Solidarity Now², to name but few) implement innovative accommodation programs for refugees and asylum seekers. The aim of the programs is to ameliorate the everyday life of those people, to help them become more autonomous and to be appropriately prepared to claim their rights and take charge as well as responsibility for their new lives. Mikri Poli, is a community centre for refugees and migrants opened in 2017. Located in the area of Platanos, it offers a range of free educational, cultural and recreational activities for adults and children from all backgrounds, as well as support to access social services. The facilities include two classrooms, a computer lab, a family support room, a childcare area, a kitchen and a lounge area, space for interaction. It is run by Oxfam and Terre des hommes and supported by the European Union emergency support funding.

A **challenge** identified by the literature and by local organisations is that that funding is inadequate and/or mistimed. Funding was reported to have dropped in 2017 when it was needed for integration. A further challenge is the absorption of migrants into the labour market. The Greek economy is characterised by extremely high levels of self-employment and there is very little government support for immigrant integration into the labour market. In Ioannina unemployment is 21.3 percent – above national averages and the highest in the country. Unemployment is also significantly worse among TCNs. Whilst integration efforts are successful in other areas of life and gaining legal status grants migrants the same rights as Greek citizens, unemployment is a barrier to integration in more ways than one. Overcrowded camps and continuation of dispersals and new arrivals means that some hostility to new arrivals is experienced amongst local population and amongst existing migrant populations. At a camp in Katsikas, near Ioannina, refugees refused to allow newly arrived migrants in. The camp capacity is 1,000 migrants, and 1,200 are housed now. Opportunity to access to language classes and conversing with native Greeks may be a problem.

Thessaloniki, Greece

Thessaloniki is a medium-sized city with a metropolitan population of 1.5 million people. Thessaloniki has centuries' long history of provision of refuge to those fleeing persecution and conflict, including Sephardic Jews in the 1400s and Greek expellees in the 1900s. Thessaloniki and the surrounding area at time of writing hosts approximately 16,000 asylum seekers and refugees from Syria, Afghanistan, Iraq, Turkey, Iran, Pakistan, plus south Asian and African countries. It has been described as both a transit city and a destination city. In 2016 the municipality of Thessaloniki had 324,766 inhabitants and 45,695 migrants with legal residence permits in the local community. Initially, Thessaloniki's location close to Greece's northern borders, its large international humanitarian presence, and association with the presence of smugglers, who assisted irregular migrants, made it an attractive destination. The area experienced many 'spontaneous arrivals' in which smugglers transported people outside official transfers and directly to Thessaloniki city rather than to the reception facility at Evros. Migrants were, therefore not registered with Greek authorities. This left many without access to shelter, cash, benefits, services, and increased informality of living or onward migration. Thessaloniki has developed an Integrated Action Plan for Integration of Refugees: 'Integration and inclusion is a two-way process. While individual agency free of paternalism is key for successful inclusion, this does not insinuate that inclusion happens on its own. The current Action Plan takes the view that a proactive stance in order to facilitate to creation of pathways for inclusion; in particular, the focus should be on removing barriers, filling gaps, reforming Municipal structures to effectively respond to new realities on the ground and providing key assistance where needed. An important aspect of this pathway and process is supporting vulnerable groups in achieving self-reliance. While there are limitations to the mandate of the Municipality to intervene in key sectoral areas such as employment, health, education policies; there are key areas where supportive measures can bolster overall national and regional efforts. In this respect, the promotion of affordable housing in the City, creation of robust employability programmes for citizens and non-citizens alike, linking the private and public sector and supporting individuals through non-formal education activities are some of the central measures foreseen by the Action Plan.' Report demonstrates the differing integration paths of migrants based on accommodation they live in. Those with own accommodation sought employment for integration. Those in housing schemes employment was low compared to these with own accommodation (self-reliance). However, 'The free services, such as food, clothing or the day centre for homeless offered by the Municipality and NGOs, were used more by the self-accommodated households compared to the refugees and asylum-seekers in the accommodation scheme.

² The Accommodation program is implemented all over Greece in Attika, Thessaloniki, in Ioannina and in the island of Tilos (recently the intervention was completed). The Tilos – Pilot Program for Social Coexistence, has been an example of a locally-funded international project, through which local communities have welcomed refugees by supporting them and making sure they have a smooth integration in the society (program completed).



Thirteen municipalities in Greece are taking part in the Cities for Integration Network to cooperate in knowledge exchange, capacity-building, policy development and actions for refugee integration. The participating municipalities - Athens, Agios Dimitrios (Attica), Heraklion (Crete), Thessaloniki, Ioannina, Karditsa, Larissa, Levadon, Nea Philadelphia - Nea Chalkidona (Attica), Piraeus, Trikeon, Piraeus - are host to 12,434 asylum seekers and beneficiaries of international protection.

Migrant accommodation: There is only one site connected with Thessaloniki's public bus routes, all other sites are located far away from the city. While information is available on asylum seekers and refugees residing in urban accommodation schemes and open accommodation sites, much less is known about those who are self-accommodated, the ones who reside unofficially in open accommodation sites and others who arrived spontaneously. In 2016 the greater Thessaloniki area had seven camps (Open Reception Facilities (ORFs)) in: Diavata, Oraioikastro, Kalochori, Sinatex, Softex, Derveni, and Vasilika. All but Diavata and Langadikia were closed in 2017 with the start of an urban housing program that resettled refugees in Thessaloniki city. Asylum seekers and refugees typically will initially take residence in the Diavata camp, which is a former military settlement with an official capacity for 936 persons, located on the outskirts of the city some 6.2 miles (10 km) from the centre. It is one of the most overcrowded camps on mainland Greece and is reported to be an insecure place particularly for children and women. Self-accommodation in apartments within the city has become a common move, independently or through an Urban Housing Program. At the time of writing, the UNHCR, in cooperation with the Greek Government, NGOs and local authorities including the Municipality of Thessaloniki, provides urban accommodation and cash assistance to refugees and asylum seekers through ESTIA (the Emergency Support to Integration and Accommodation programme). In Thessaloniki, at the end of 2018 approximately 870 places, coordinated by the Thessaloniki Municipality REACT project, had been created. Although some refugees and asylum seekers have chosen to remain in the camp due to regular, although often inadequate, provision of medical care, first aid, transportation, interpretation, and food assistance by humanitarian organisations. There is some distrust of humanitarian aid worker among refugees and asylum seekers, who may accuse such organizations of withholding aid and of discriminating against certain nationalities. A report published in 2017 suggested, in the context of employment and Diavata residents relying on local informal work, that without leaving Diavata, integration is almost impossible. The **Urban Housing Program** began in 2013 when Praksis and Arsis (Greek NGOs) established low-income housing in pre-existing apartment complexes in Thessaloniki. In November 2016, low-income housing projects across the greater Thessaloniki area were also established, although on a small scale. The Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) was the largest provider of this accommodation, but in March of 2018 their operations in Thessaloniki were suspended. This forced refugees, including those categorised as vulnerable, to fend for themselves. Solidarity Now, Caritas, React, Praksis, Arsis, and Intersos have managed low-income housing in the area for a period, although programmes are now ending. Few migrants also choose to self-accommodate if they have the resources to do so.

Challenges: As in Ioannina, unemployment and underemployment are challenges to integration. Whilst legal status had a significant impact on ability to find employment, the national economy was also a significant barrier to gaining work. A report profiling migrant in Thessaloniki (2019) reported 70% of the asylum seekers and refugees who had been working were actively looking for more work and were underutilising existing qualifications. Migrants identified the lack of availability of employment opportunities in Greece coupled with inability to communicate in Greek to an adequate level as significant barriers to employment. Lack of documentation and legal status was also seen as a barrier and learning the Greek language was mentioned by many interviewees as particularly important. The importance placed on gainful employment and experience of barriers to it was reported as a primary cause for forced some persons into illegal income-generating activities. Finding employment was the condition prioritized for integration by most households across all types of accommodation as well as recognized legal status that formalized their position in Greece. For those accommodated in camps (Diavata), social interaction was reported to be limited. Distance from the town and designated within-camp services, as well as language barriers, contributed to this dislocation. The continuation of new transfers to the camp also triggered protests. In 2019 small-scale local protests against transfers occurred demonstrating some local disaffection with the continued increase in numbers/ or renewal of migrant population. One report identified a number of challenges within education: teachers not always willing to invest time in children who they believe will not stay in Greece or the area. Language barriers and irregular attendance contribute to this. In other contexts, refugee children have been excluded and are often socially isolated from their peers due to the central education system. It would appear from this that there may be a gap in mediation between schools and families of migrants. Funding for further education is non-existent or inadequate.

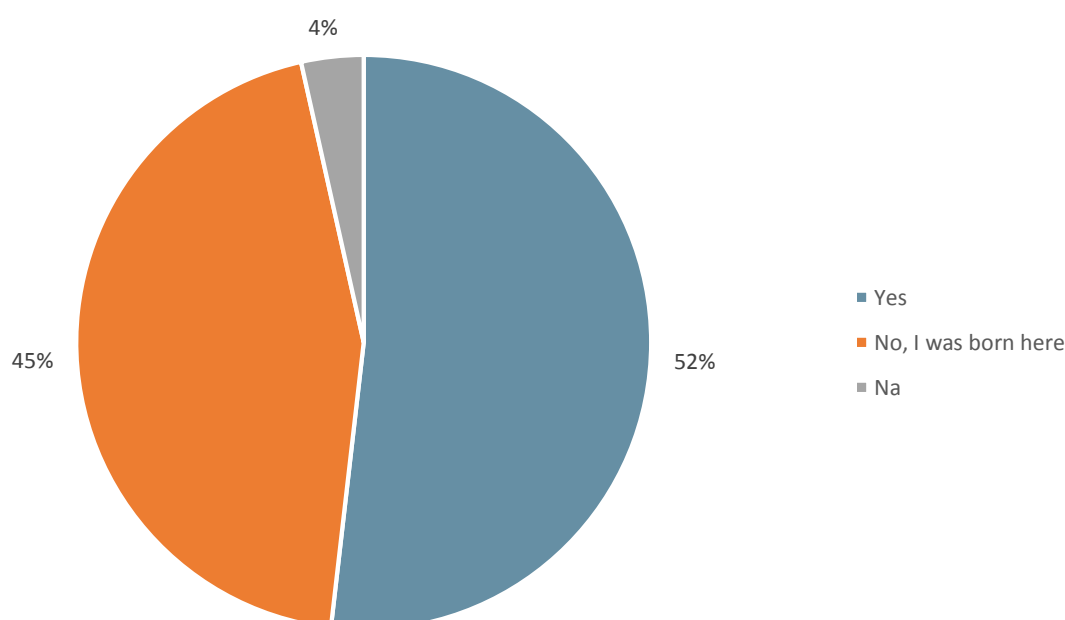


2. Survey analysis and findings

The survey respondents

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 directly the pivotal question of the study: the question of whether the person was a migrant or a local; a 'guest' or 'host'; or an 'outsider' or 'insider'. Instead, a question asked if the participant had either migrated to the territory they were currently living or had been born there. This attempted to not ask participants to designate themselves within categories of law, nationality, ethnicity, or popular narratives and discourse. Instead, the intended assumption made from an answer to such a question is that the person had or had not moved from one place to another at some point in time. The hope was that in answering such a question, an identity of a migrant would not be assumed, but rather the perspective of someone who moves from one place to another would, resulting in a more universal conception of the phenomenon of migration which could include 'locals' as well as 'migrants'. 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 hypothesis of the analysis 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.

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



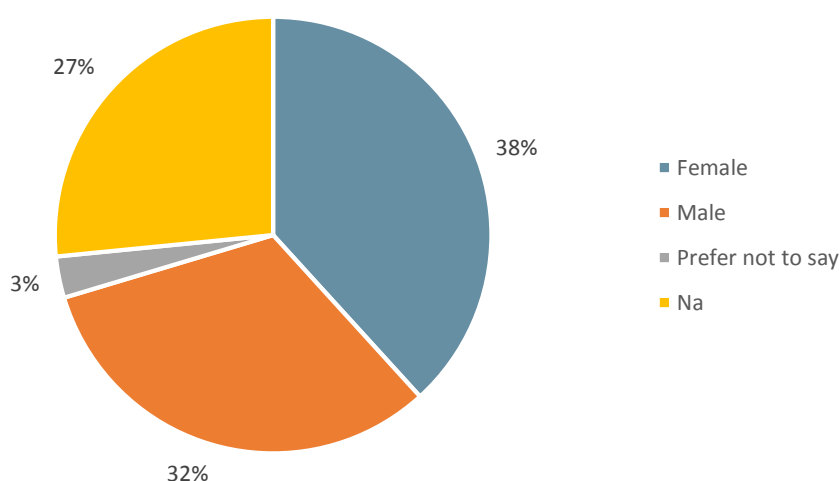
This open self-identification approach to question design was also applied to the question of identity, in which the term 'heritage' was asked rather than a specific delimited category. The answers to this question resulted in many participants choosing their own category, ranging from more popular designations 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:



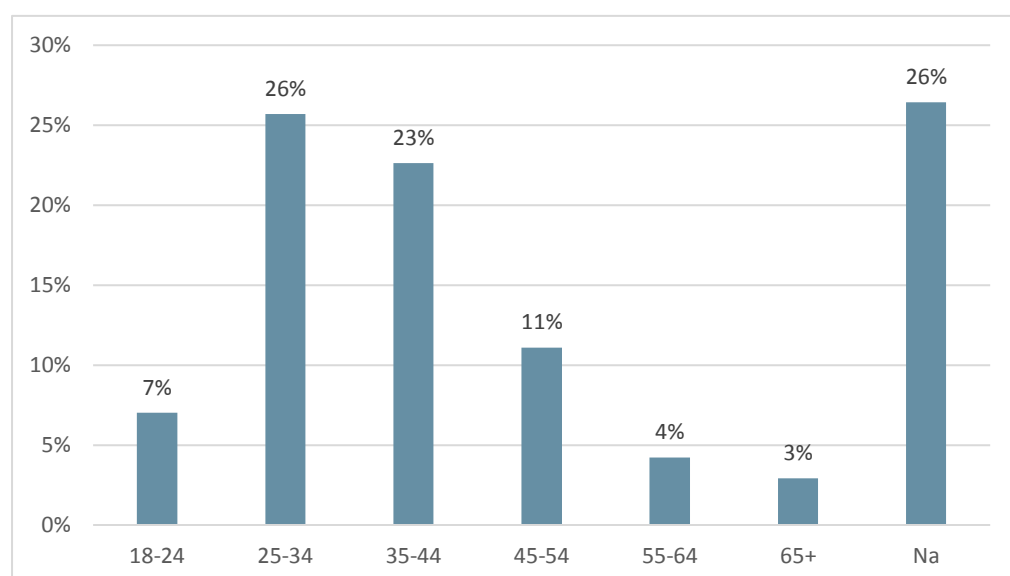
[Q: What is your heritage?] "The Greek language, Olympic Games, Greek monuments, tourism, arts (silversmithing, dry stone, etc.), mastic farming, the Mediterranean diet, etc."; "Ambition and diligence"; "Black German with migration background of one parent"; "I live in a Western European culture, but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

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 so as not to impact too greatly on integration related questions 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. This is certainly a limitation in the methodology design having to adapt quickly to an online format due to social distancing measures. 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 1/5 of responses being practitioners in the sector, with non-responses making up 26%.

Gender (N=685)

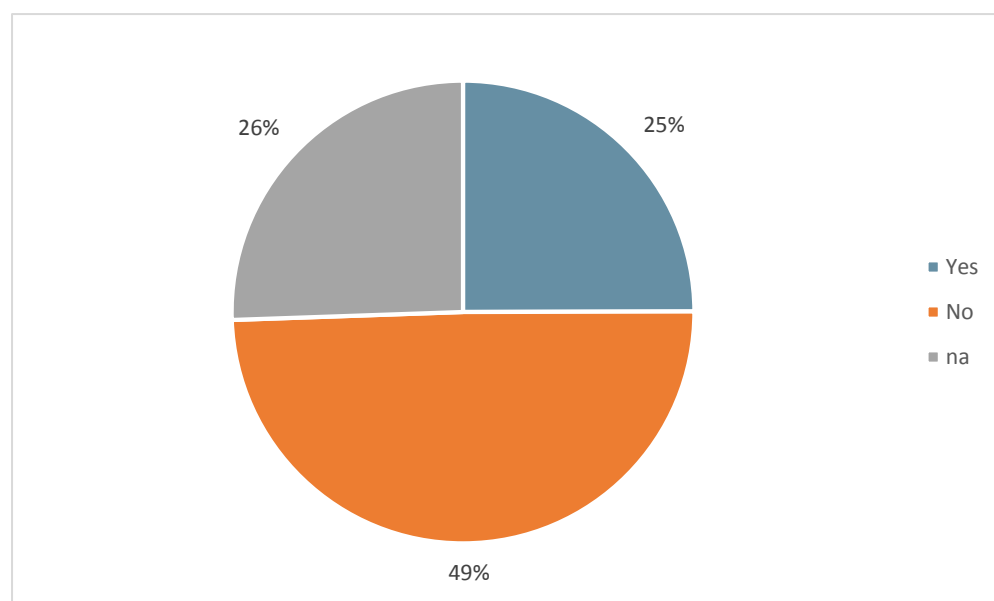


Age (N=685)



Q: Do you

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



The meaning of place

The method of photo elicitation was adopted into the study in order to account for the lack of face-to-face contact brought about by local lockdown measures in the different territories, and attempted to add a more humanistic and visual element to the results. Participants from the interviews were asked to share images which represented a space which brought them comfort or belonging either within or close to their home, and 13 interview respondents did so.

The expectation from the question was to receive photographs of participants' local areas, be it a living room, a balcony, a park, or a public plaza, which might have revealed differing notions of the home, and the associated safety, belonging and comfort it may bring. Photographs of local spaces did end up making up some of the responses, however unexpectedly a number of others interpreted the question of "home" quite differently. Some respondents detached the concept from time and space, and incorporated feeling and memory within their interpretation. This included images such as an old photograph depicting a period in their life, they cherished the most, friends or relatives enjoying a moment together, or simply a daily ritual which connected them to past experiences, sensation or a feeling.



One of the most interesting photos shared by the interviewees was a photo by a Polish man from Gdynia, still living in Poland, who chose to share an old picture of a period in time when he was working as a chef on a ship and sailing with his wife and children. This image showed that home is not necessarily bound to the place where they were born, currently live, or even any geography whatsoever, but can sometimes simply include relationships, rituals and practices which come together to form a sense of identity detached from space.

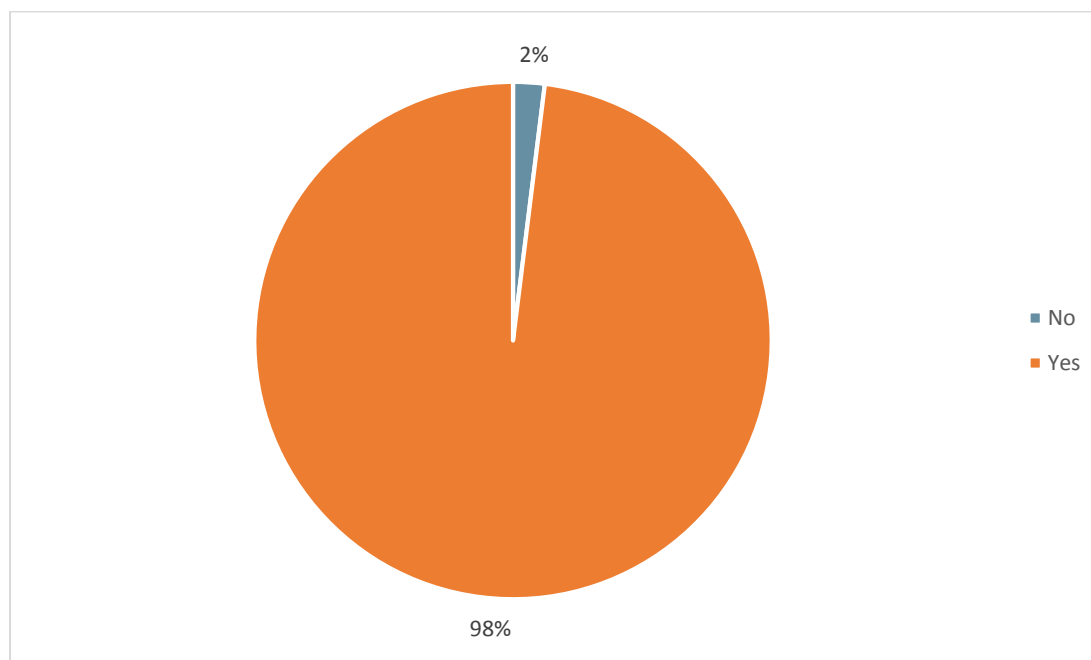
This idea of home meaning different things to different people reflects Grzymala-Kazlowska & Phillimore's (2018) concept of multi-dimensionality, which seeks to counter a view of migration as consisting of unilateral and categorically homogenous groups taking similar paths to similar places. Multi-dimensionality contends that experience cannot be easily defined by fixed geographical boundaries or limits; it can always be found elsewhere in different forms when it is being looked for. When people move to a new place, they are in constant search for traces of their homes, trying to reproduce their lived experiences in their new places; be it a morning coffee by the window, spices and flavours, natural scenery, city views, or cosy atmospheres with friends. Such images from the photo elicitation will be spread throughout the proceeding analysis, and support the notion that integration, away from more technocratic or legal definitions, is an intuitive act of living in which individuals continually seek to recreate the notion of home in whichever geography they may find themselves.



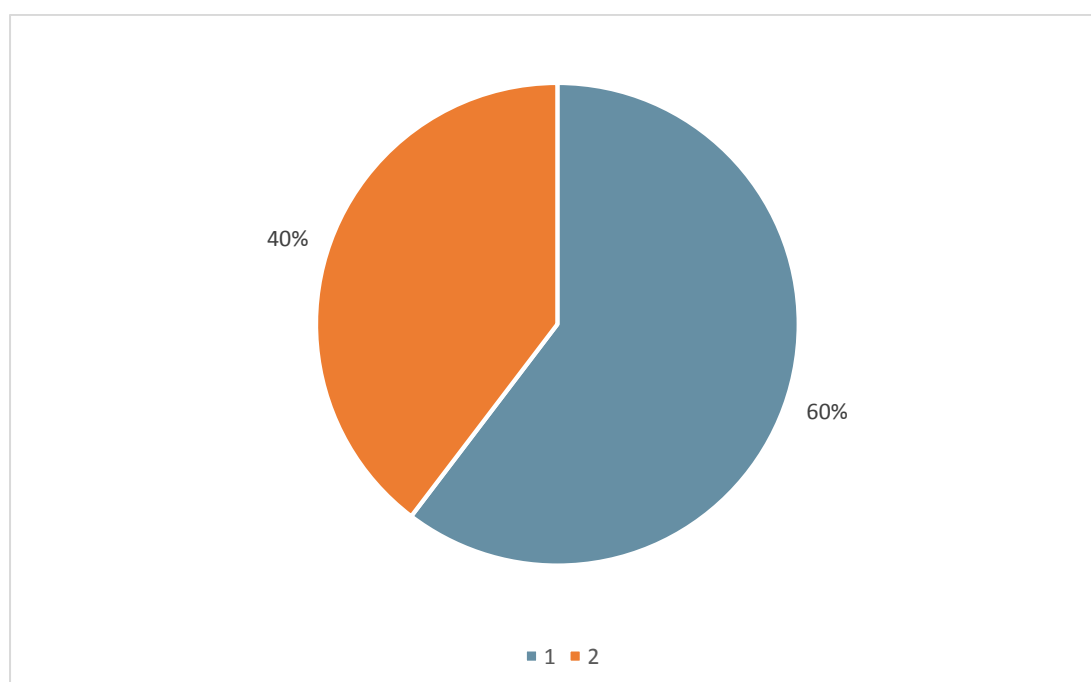
"This is a photo taken on a ship I worked on. You can see Westerplatte in the background. These were the times, when it was fairly easy to often meet your relatives. My wife and the kids could visit me every day or every second day and we could also organize parties for the ship crew alongside families".

The meaning of integration

Do you use and understand the word integration? (N=466)



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

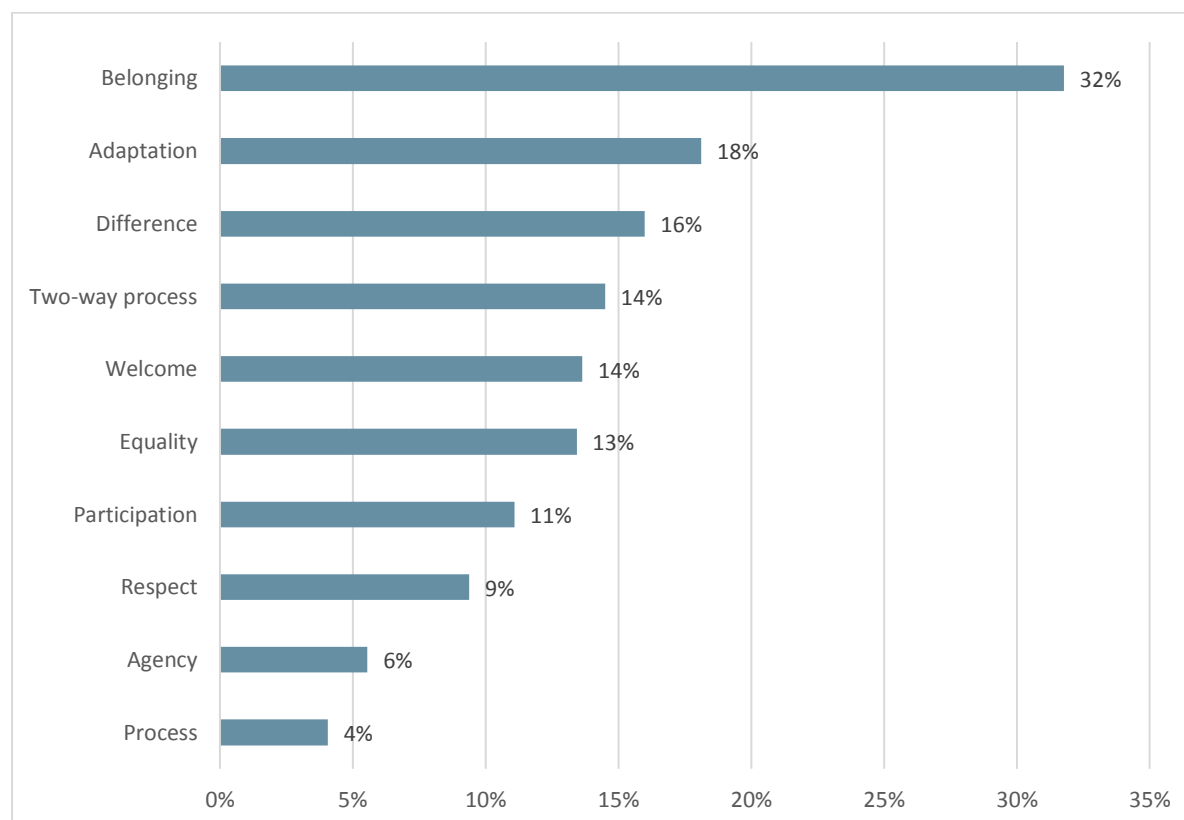


Within the surveys, the vast majority of respondents, 98%, answered yes to understanding the word integration, but 40% believed it was an abstract term. 469 respondents following this question then provided a definition of what integration meant to them. The answers ranged quite significantly, with some providing



a definition that was more theoretical and conceptual; others stated what they believed were the specific ingredients of integration, whether it be the right to housing or inclusion in a community; and others provided a more emotional orientated response, viewing integration as an act of humanity or a value system. Despite these perhaps different interpretations of the question at hand, 10 themes emerged across the responses, which were belonging; adaptation; difference; a two-way process; welcome; equality; participation; respect; agency; and process.

Q: How do you define integration? (N=468, multiple responses possible)



Across these 10 themes, there was a diverse array of similar, differing and contradicting language used to describe integration. For example, there was; assimilation, inclusion, permeation, connection, cooperation, interpenetration, rehabilitation, merging, contributing, incorporating, associating, involving, joining, unifying, uniting, gathering, inserting, interacting, assembling and accepting, and many others. Amongst 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, similar to the IOM's own definition of the term, 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 follow a similar pattern to the terms of assimilation and inclusion. On the one hand, like assimilation, some of these 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, similar to inclusion, another set of answers instead viewed integration as the joining of two equal - or at least uncategorised - parts with no reference 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".

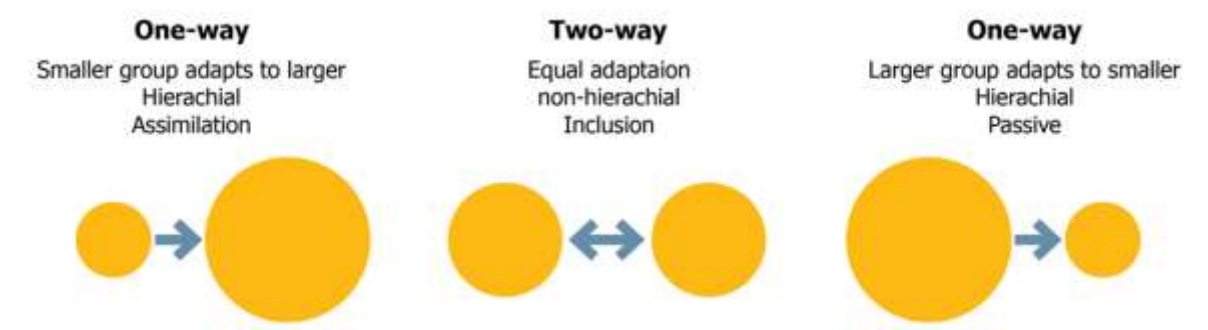


Figure above: the differing conceptions of integration

However, moving beyond more migranticised discourses, another more cross-cutting pattern emerged within the language which could often bring contradiction to more affirmative responses. This related to whether more active or more passive verbs were used to describe the integration process.

For example, if we take the quote below, although the assumption made is a progressive statement that integration is a mutual process of equality, the language lacks personalised action from both sides:

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

Whereas for the next quote below, action is directly centered as the fundamental process of integration:

"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 responses which used more active verbs such as joining, including, merging or fitting, tended to presuppose a more active outlook to the subject of integration. This is further explored in the themes below.

Two-way

This either active or passive language emerges in the more normative discourse of integration as being a two-way process, as outlined in the literature review of this paper, and is a theme that was explicitly mentioned 68 times in the responses (14% of total responses). These responses usually referred to integration as being an exchange, and 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 binary emerges in nearly all the other themes, usually indirectly, and not always explicitly. Many responses are mixed in their definition, defining integration as an action or process that is one-directional in some ways, mutual in others, and sometimes in contradiction.

Adaptation as agency

The third most commonly mentioned theme of 'adaptation' represented 18% of responses and defined integration as a process of learning new skills, languages and abilities. Within this theme however, the

fluctuating binary of a 'two-way process' also emerges quite clearly, with some respondents place the onus of adaptation on the arrival group:

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

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."

As well as adaptation, this also

Welcome and respect

Other themes however were primarily one-directional and placed the burden of integration on those who arrive, such as 'respect', which comprised 44 of the total responses (9%). This theme related to integration 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 prevailing 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)".

Difference

Responses falling under these 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, 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 the confidence in self and identity of a society, in regard to its ability to open up to the new without fear of dissolution of the old:

"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, 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 represent symbols which can be closed behind doors, to be revealed or obscured within their own home as they please.



Figure 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



*Figure 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 male in Zagreb, Croatia*

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 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.**"

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."

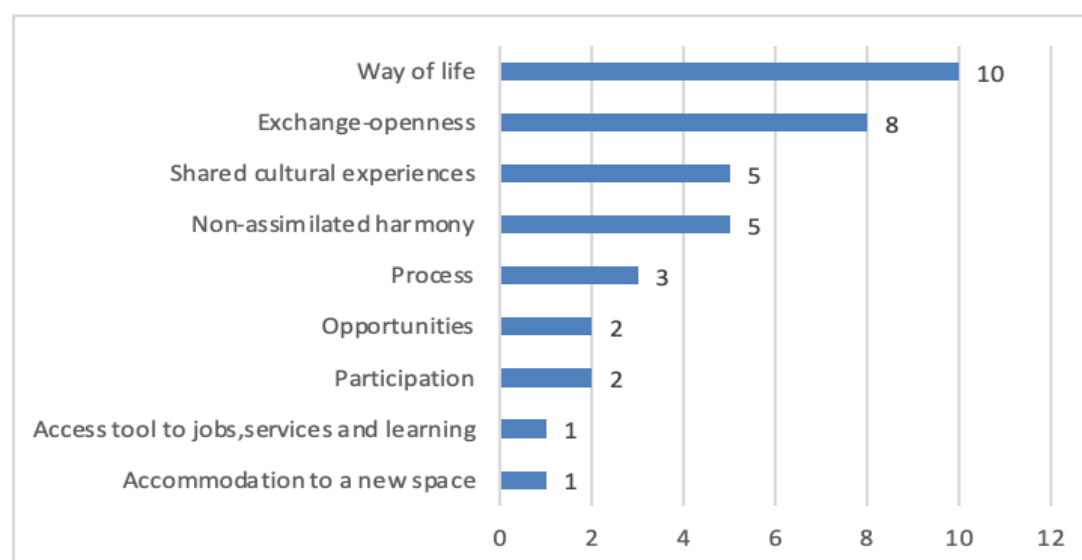
It also often related to the theme of agency, which was mentioned 26 times (6%), and equality, mentioned 63 times (13%):

"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."

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."

A new way of life. The meaning of integration



When we analyse the more nuanced narratives found within the interviews, almost all the responses intersect on the meaning of integration as being a way of life. Or rather, the adaptation or the openness to a new



way of life with all its aspects of social interaction, communication, cultural values and economic productivity. While some considered integration as a two-way reciprocal process that requires patience, willingness, time and open mindedness using notions of “exchange-openness, shared cultural experiences and process”, others perceived integration as one-directional either by the migrants or by the hosting communities. For those, the meaning of integration meant either the willingness of migrants to integrate by “participation, accommodation and finding non-assimilated harmony” or by providing citizens equal rights, and opportunities by the hosting communities.

*"That you can integrate yourself and your culture with them, but not forget 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**" Sardinia, Italy. **"Constantly trying to get the people you come to, to accept you"**. Sisak, Croatia.*

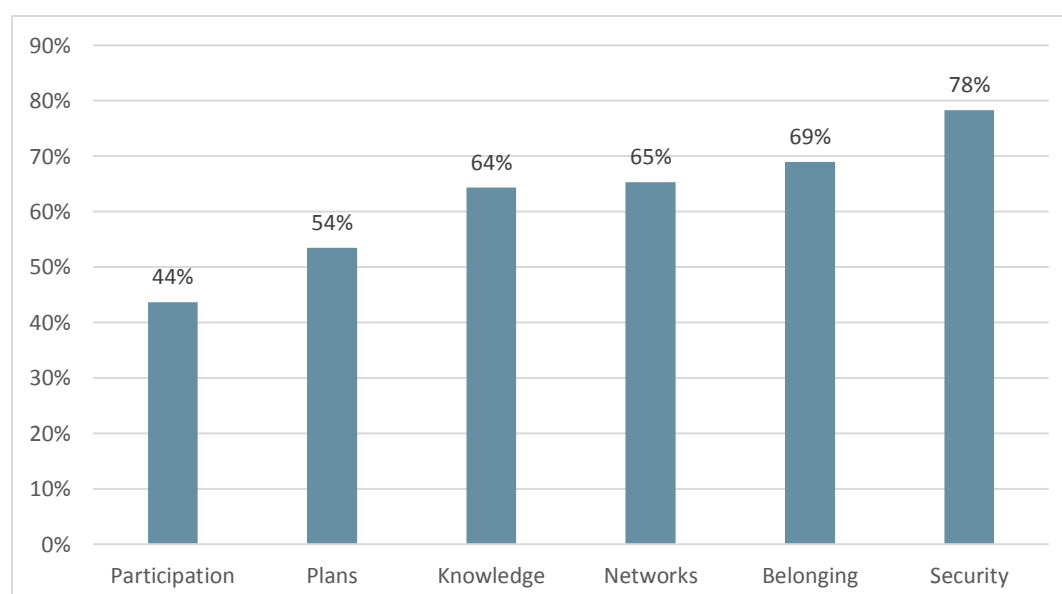
Despite these variations in responses, integration as “the new way of life” came out as the most frequent meaning of integration across the interviews. Although this differs from the most common theme of belonging from the survey results, both represent the risks and rewards necessary to be taken when 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 next section of this analysis embarks with this assumption that attempts to avoid migrantised language, and instead, assumes that that integration is a natural human phenomenon that is only hindered or enhanced, and seeks to understand what such factors may be.

*"Adjustment is everything, and if the immigrant **wants to belong to the community**, the obstacles are overpowered."*

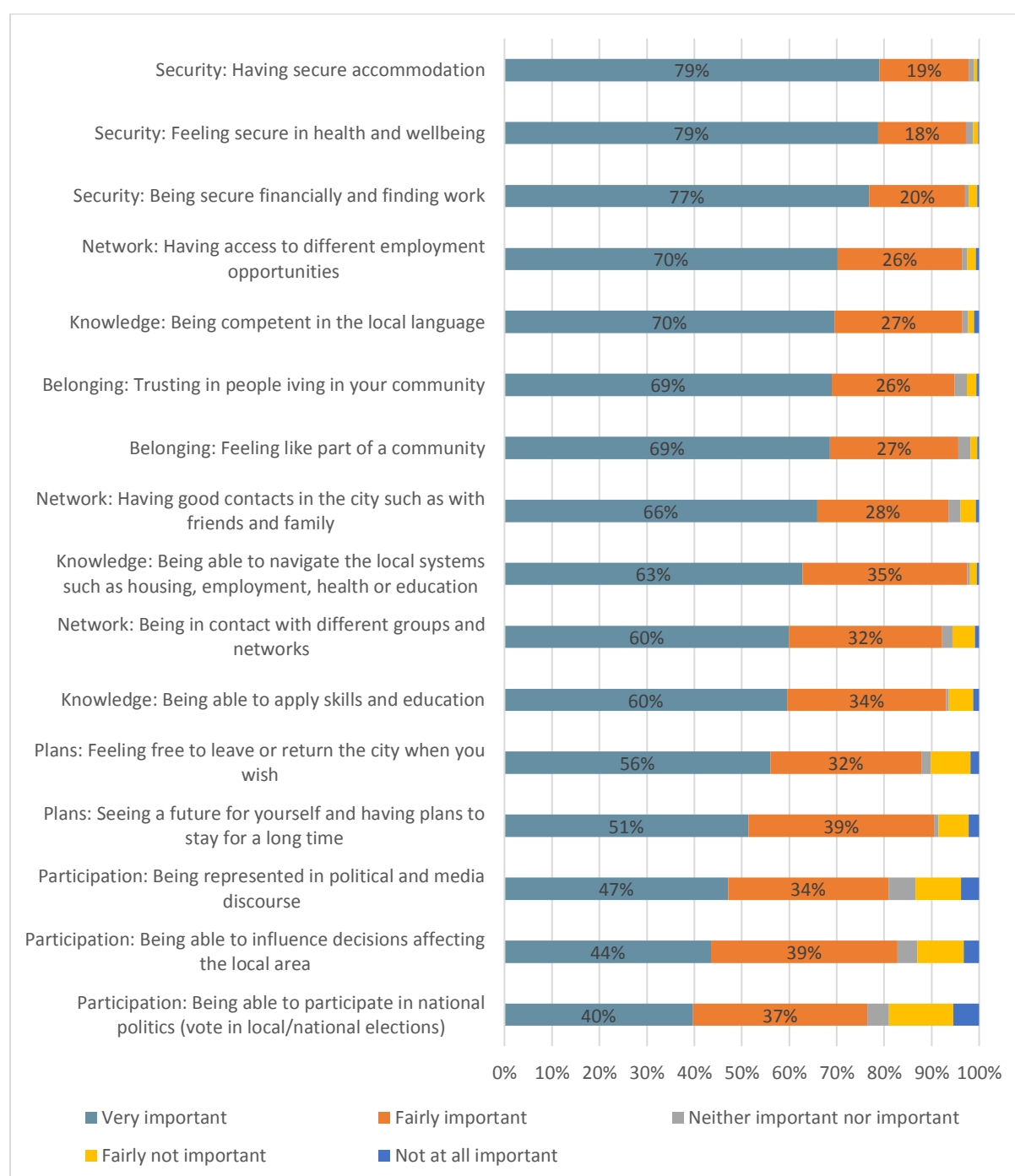
The multiple dimensions of integration

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 integration. These dimensions were Participation, Plans, Knowledge, Networks, Belonging and Security, and the percentage of respondents who strongly agreed with the importance of each can be seen in the figure. Each dimension however contained sub-dimensions in order to provide a more nuanced exploration, which can be seen in the figure.

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



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



Security

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

The findings from the interviews further supports the dimension of security and the practicality of its outcome, however 2 respondents referred explicitly to the notion of ownership and recognition as an imperative element for integration; home ownership and work recognition. One respondent linked the good future to come and development of a man with buying a flat. *"I plan to learn Polish, so I am more fluent."*



We are also 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"

Some other respondents expressed frustration and anguish by the fact that they are not able to own a house or a car. For him, ownership is connected with a better way for life this 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. Better. If I want to change my life, it's because I don't feel well. I must stop suffering.

For respondents, ownership concern is linked to access to well paid jobs and opportunities. It was interesting how some respondents were looking for recognition through their jobs and they even differentiate between a "Job" and a "real job" as the latter being the access to normal permit and thus a normal way of life. A whatever job only grants a life and it is transitional to have a "real 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 me to look for a real job, not as a housekeeper. So, I could switch to a normal permit".

Perceptions about jobs and works were different, as another respondent thought that work is a way for others to get to know him better. *"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".* Another respondent said *"...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".* In this, work becomes an image builder and in this he alluded to the notion of belonging that he wants to create which will be explored in the next section.

Belonging

The next highest ranked dimension in terms of importance was Belonging, with an average of 69% of respondents scoring it as very important. Within the individual sub-dimensions, 'trust in the community' interestingly 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'.

As one respondent interestingly elicited the feeling of belonging encountered in his daily life and nonetheless, he feels safe *"I feel I don't belong here. I feel alien when I buy a ticket. You hear they talk about you. You feel pressure all the time. How is it possible to feel good then? No matter the difficulties, I feel safer here. The problem is I miss my family."*

Nonetheless, concerns were expressed about understanding the new context and being prudent about its values, as two respondents expressed it_ *"Much depends on one's sensitivity. Identity issues are linked to certain values people have. I have been engaged in NGO activity and felt it was important to feel good"*

"...being able to be familiar with the environment that he lives in -not being adventurer, criminal, but being honest, industrious, moral, so that he can be assimilated by the local society. Respecting the customs of the country that he lives, the religion, the legislation".

Networks (Care & repair)

Networks ranked third with an average of 65% of respondents ranking the sub-dimensions as being very important. The first sub-dimension, access to different employment opportunities ranks highly as 4th most important, however the second, 'having good contacts in the city such as friends and family', falls 8th. This aligns with Security being the top dimension, since networks are 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.

The majority of respondents in the interviews agreed that networking is a key factor to their integration process success. However, in the interviews, a participant argues *"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"

Religious connections through mosque/church – prove to be important in Croatia, but negative in Greece, and neutral in Italy.

Knowledge & capacity

The dimension of Knowledge, with 64% of respondents ranking it's factors as very important, comes 4th in the hierarchy. It's sub-dimension of 'being competent in the local language' however scores highly (70% strongly agree) in 5th place and is a factor that arises strongly across most integration related questions in this study. 'Being able to navigate local institutions such as housing, employment, health and education' is ranked at 64%, followed by the ability to 'apply skills and education' further down at 60%.

"And I mean, for me, yes, I know more now. I know the situation; I know how things go at work".

Language acquisition - as a communication tool – is deemed important: "I have learnt that communication has a primary function. If you know how to communicate, you can go on, you can go anywhere." However it is extremely difficult. "For an immigrant, it is even more difficult because there is an obstacle given by the local language." And further, "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." And more so: "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".

Imagination, future & choice

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 - factors often deemed important in integration literature - within these 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 networks of and knowledge and support are achieved.

In the interviews, it emerges that the choice of a destination is the most important one, alongside the imaginaries of place.

Participation & agency

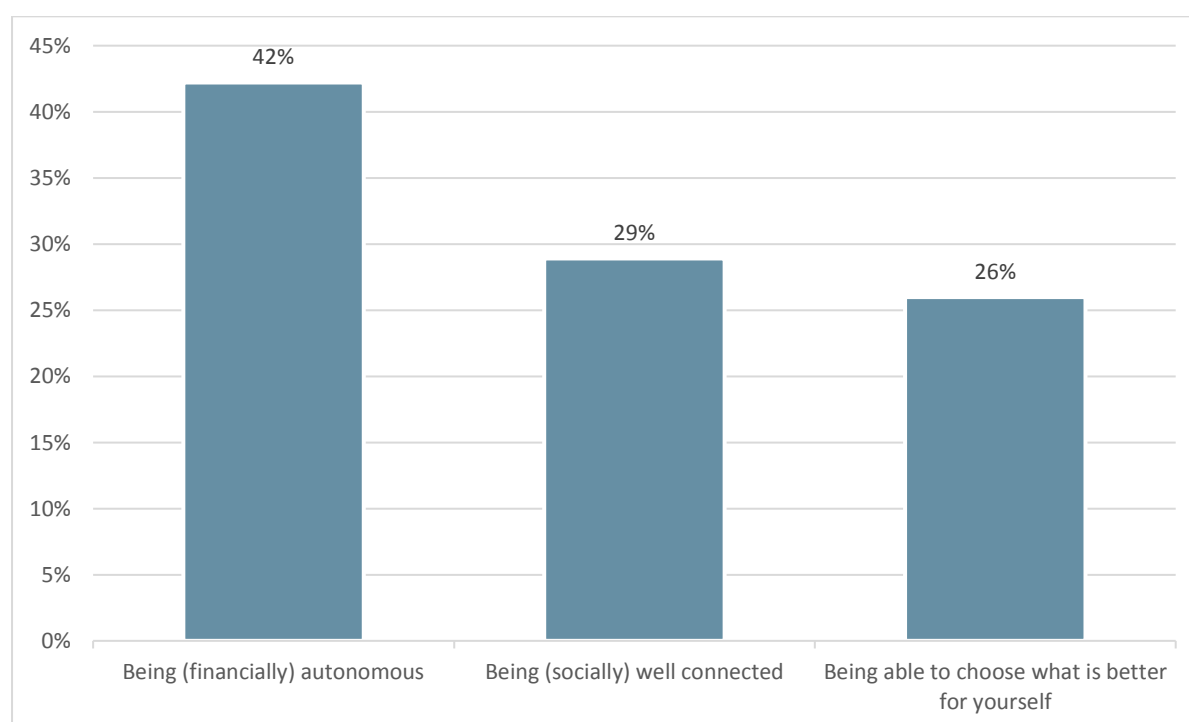
The dimension of Participation ranked the lowest in terms of importance in supporting integration, with only 44% of participants scoring the factor as 'very important'. These consisted of the sub-dimensions of 'representation in political and media discourse' (47% listed as 'very important'), 'being able to participate in local politics' (44%), and 'being able to participate in national politics' (40%). Similar to the dimension of Plans, this suggests that Participation sits as a more long-term aspiration, superseded by more direct and immediate needs.

What is most important?

As opposed to ranking each dimension individually, the **figure** below shows the results to a similar question on the dimensions of integration, however this time summarised into three, with participants being only able to select one. The results from this show 'being (financially) autonomous' as having the highest frequency of responses 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 the **figure** and makes intuitive sense since financial autonomy would often equate to security in terms of shelter, food and livelihood creation.



Q: Which is most important for you?



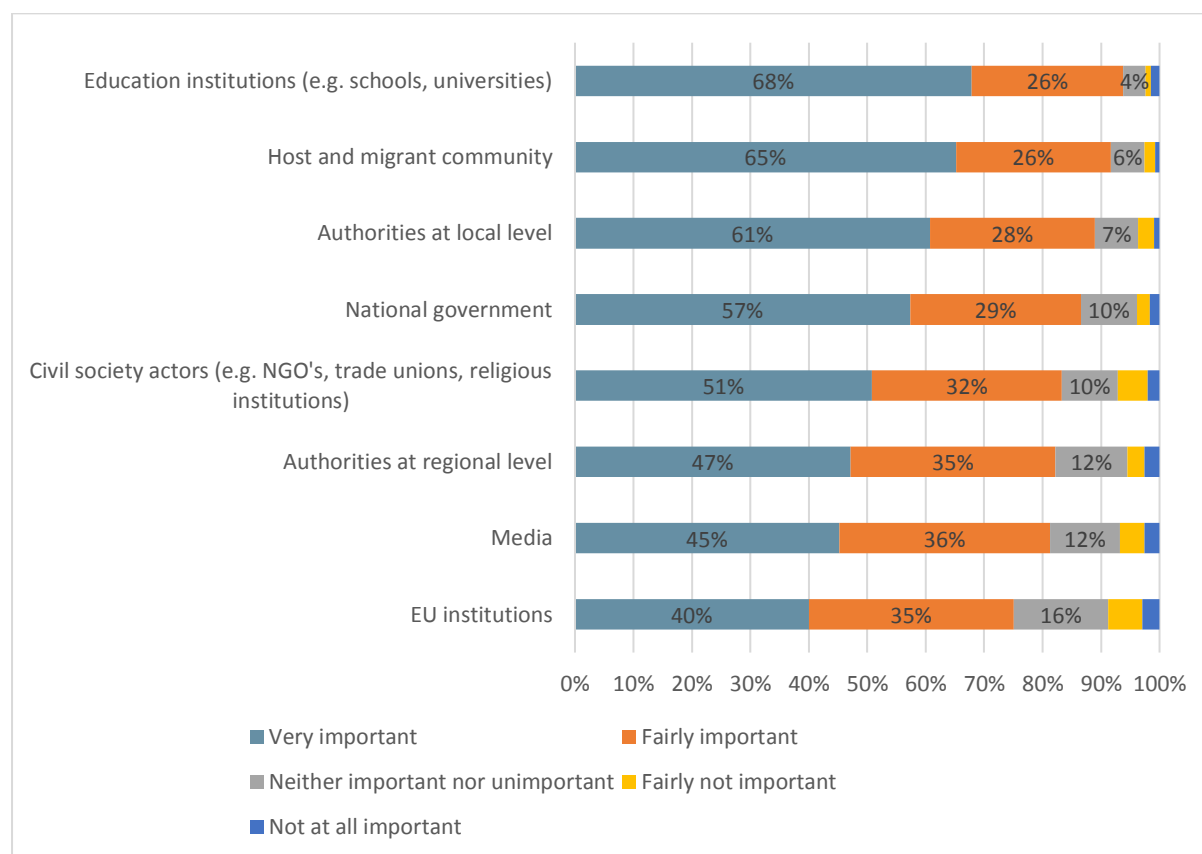
However, as we can see from the interviews, each of these dimensions are intrinsically intertwined: employment and security leads to identity, facilitates social connections and community, and therefore a sense of belonging; security does not only mean obtaining a property, but also the creation of a home and a sense of place and ownership in a place; and employment does not only relate to income, but also leads 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 create the links between the acts, and which ultimately facilitate the process of belonging within a larger community, and the process of adaptation to change: the most common definition of integration as found in the previous chapter.

The actors of integration

In order to explore more closely the relations of integration, participants were asked to rank the importance of the role of different actors within the integration process. From these results, a pattern in scale emerged quite clearly, with the top three actors of education 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, where we saw that 'having influence over local decisions' ranked above the importance of 'participation in national elections' and appears to be a clear trend throughout the results.



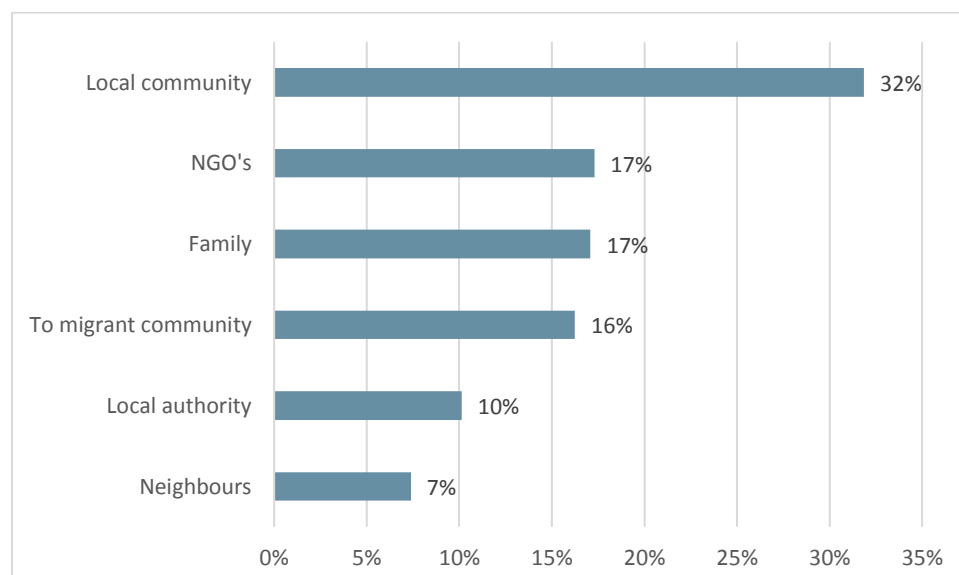
Q: In your opinion, how important or unimportant is the role of each of the following actors for successful integration?



Some additional insights this question provides is the fact education institutions are ranked the highest, despite Knowledge as a dimension being ranked as the 4th most important amongst the 6 dimensions of integration in the previous section. This difference emphasises how where considering actors, and therefore more explicitly relationships and networks, the emphasis of different dimensions can shift.

However, in the interviews, there was a variability not seen from the survey responses. But this varies depending on whether it is a family, or an individual - priorities change. This shows from the photo elicitation.

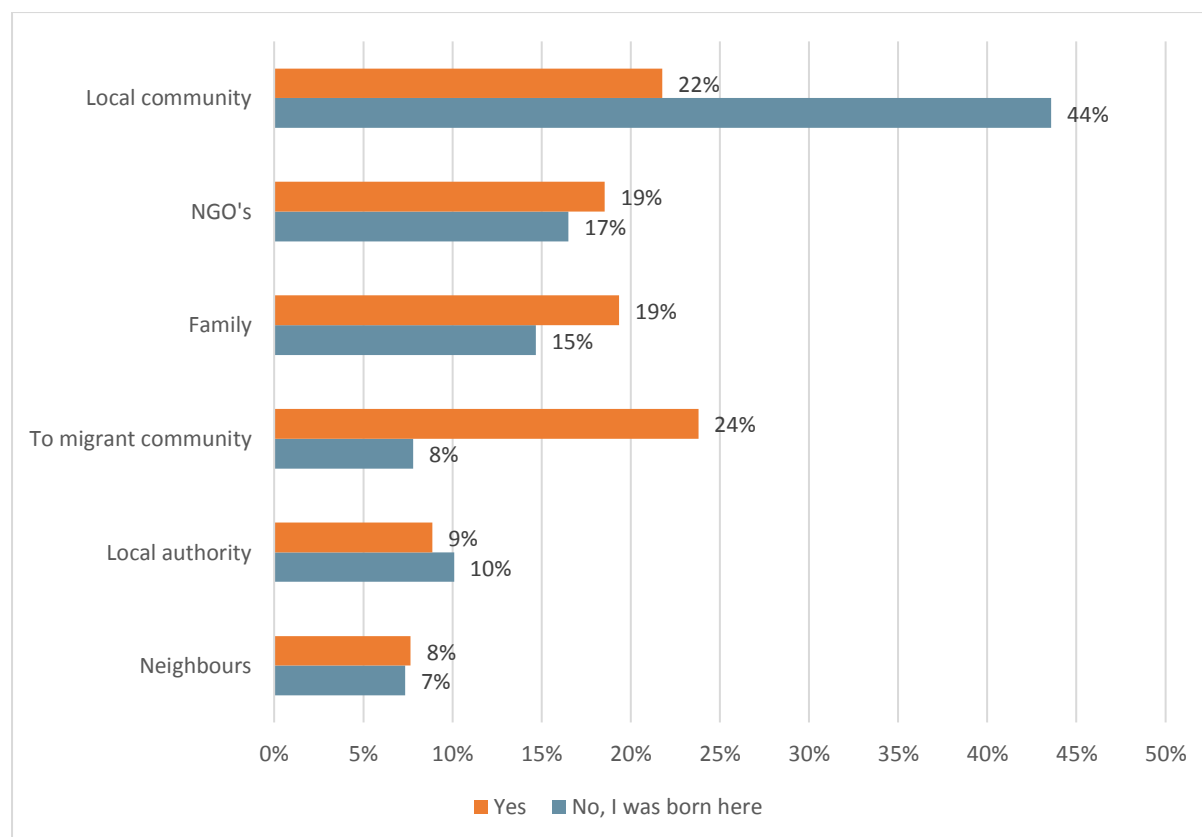
Q: Where do you turn for practical support to increase your sense of integration? (N=466)



The Figure above asks the question of the importance of actors again, however focuses more broadly on a local scale, and only allows participants to select a single choice. The results show a clear result in the importance of the local community with 32% of respondents selecting it, 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 interpersonal group than that of '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 they were in is compared against those who instead said were born there, a strong contrast emerges. Whereas only 22% of those who migrated to the city reported they would turn to the 'Local community' for integration support, 44% of those who were born there said they would. And whereas 24% of migrants reported turning to the 'Migrant community' for integration support, only 8% of those born in the city said they would. This on the one hand nicely supports Wessendorf's (2018) view of the 'crucial acquaintances' of migrant integration being forged between other migrants as 'bridges' of social capital. But on the other hand, this result represents a point in the survey where the distinction between which group is doing the integrating suddenly becomes blurred, and suggests a certain success in the rationale of the methodology. The question that emerges is whether those who identified as being born in the city were answering from their perceived perspective of a migrant, or instead from their own position as a 'local'? If it is the former, then the difference between responses is significant, and represents a clear disjuncture in perspective on integration between both groups. But if the reason is the latter, then it means those born in the city have been answering the questions of integration from a personal perspective, i.e; as a natural human process not limited to those who cross borders, but as a universal experience faced by anyone in their daily lives.

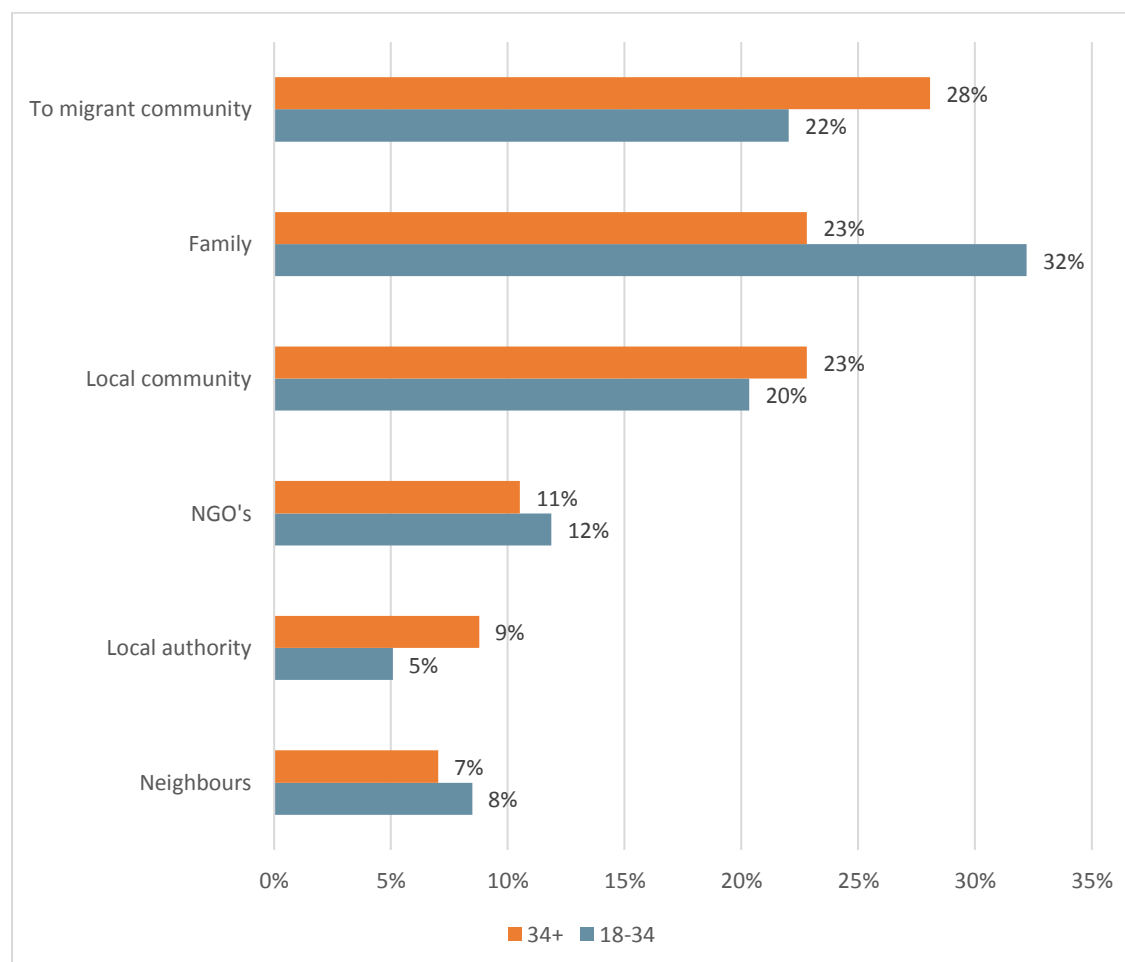
Q: Where do you turn for practical support to increase your sense of integration? Migrant against born in city. (N=466)



Differences in where participants turned to for integration support amongst those who identified as migrating to their city also differed across gender: Men were more likely to turn to the local authority for support than women (13% against 8%), as well as to neighbours (10% against 6%). Whereas women were more likely to turn towards NGO's (20% against 14%) and family (18% against 16%).

There was also an age difference: Those aged 35+ were also more likely to turn to the local community than those aged between 18-34 (35% against 29%) and neighbours (9% against 6%). Whereas 18-34 year olds were more likely to turn toward family (19% against 16%). When looking specifically at those who identified as migrating to the city, this difference between 18-34 year olds turning towards the family for integration support more than 34+ year olds is even greater (32% against 22%).

Q: Where do you turn for practical support to increase your sense of integration? 18-34 year olds against 34+. (N=466)



Multiple lives

From the exploration of the different dimensions of integration as found in the survey and interview data, there are a number of trends and patterns that have emerged across groups in terms of the priorities in dimensions of achieving integration.

However, despite this, priorities for integration certainly can change depending on circumstance, and the needs of a young person newly arrived in a city will differ to that of a more long-standing parent with dependants, or a person born within the territory in their later years experiencing uncertainty over more newly arrived groups.

As such, to approach the subject of integration through a delineated framework that could include all seems unlikely, but to individually categorise all groups with targeted interventions seems equally unfeasible due to the inherent diversity and multitude of experience.

Instead, it seems essential to recognise the diversity in trajectories of integration, and that each individual will be situated on a different point or stage of integration. Policy design should recognise these different trajectories, and seek to remove blockages, rather than constraining integration into certain forms.

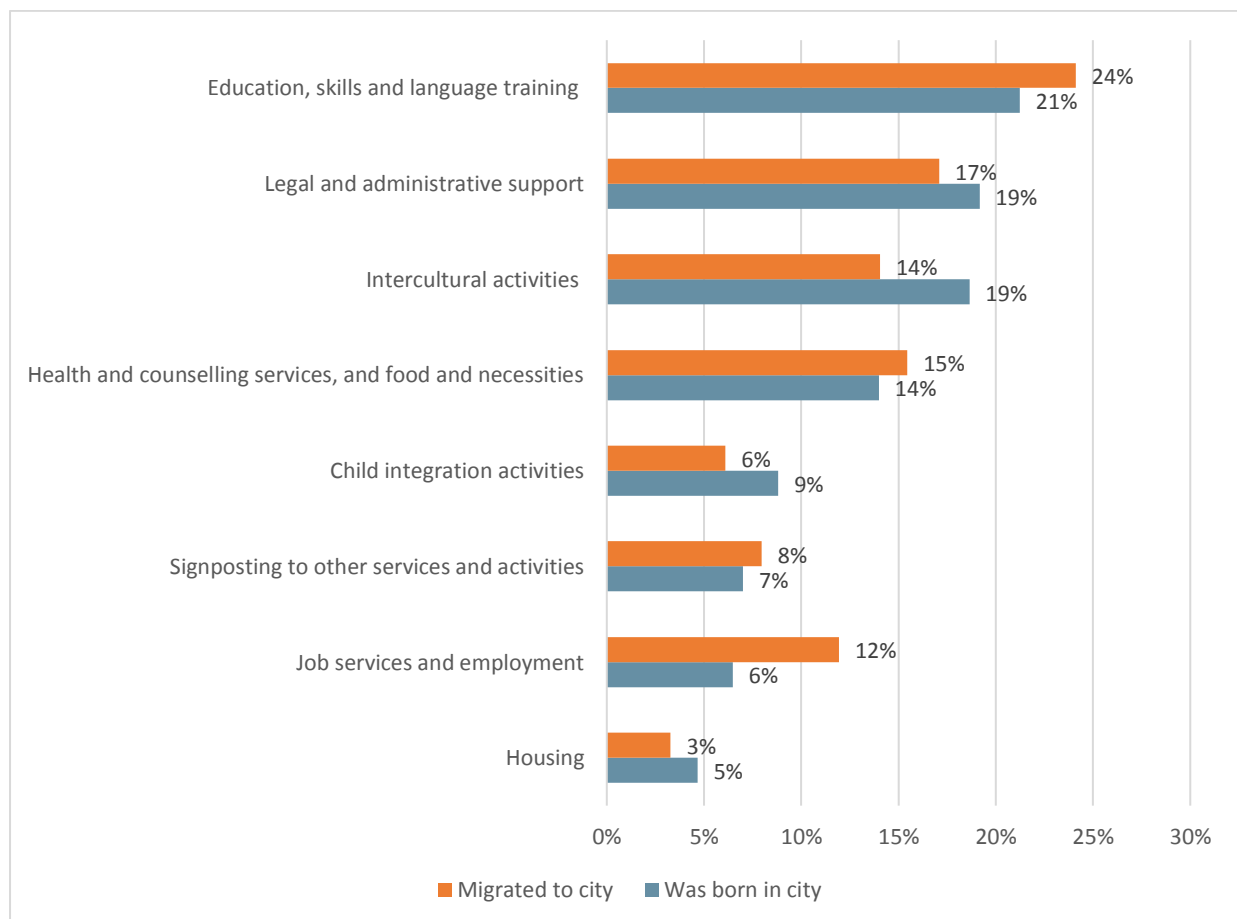




"I am very pleased to explain to you why I chose this photo. When I left my home, my mother was looking at me and crying because I told her I was going to Europe and that I didn't have the money and documents for the plane to do so. ...On the day of my departure, my mother accompanied me to the door and was left alone watching me leave and she had tears and I also looked at her and stood still with tears. This photo, found on the web, reminds me of that moment, exactly that day when I started my journey." Senegali, Male, Cagliari, Italy.

Assessing the visible practices of integration

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

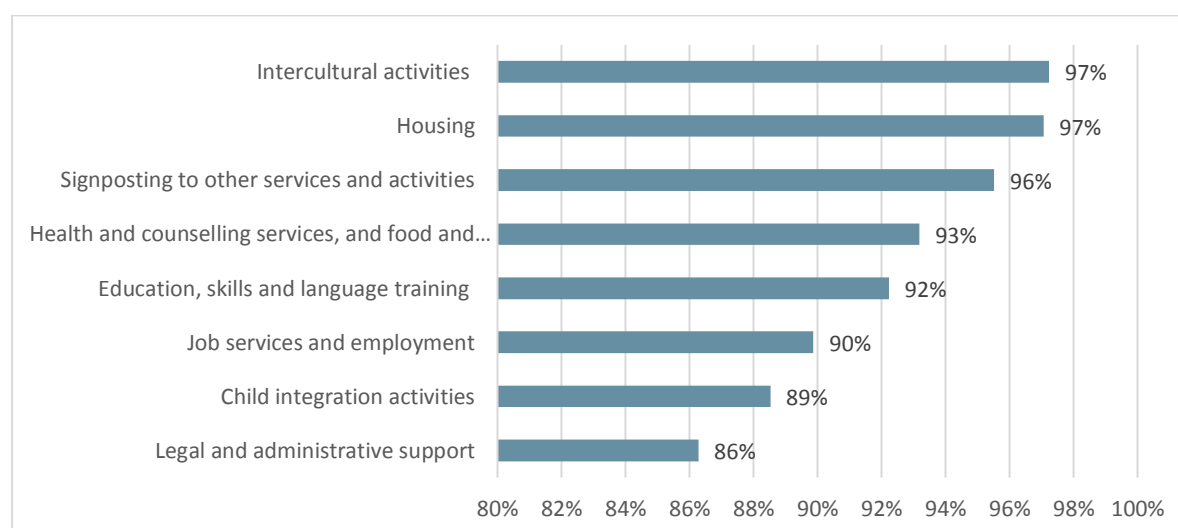


This section covers a part of the survey which aimed to explore more explicitly the specific integration practices of each territory, in order to assess the effectiveness of current integration methods already in place. To do so, each partner provided a list of the most established integration practices 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 integration provision across the territories. The **Figure above** shows the types of services from each practice which 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.

Comparing between the groups the results mostly only vary slightly, however there is a clear difference between employment services, with those who migrated to the city having twice the rate of familiarity than those who didn't (12% against 6%). There is also a variation within 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 the interviews, where language support was one of the most frequent mentions amongst all categories of respondents in regard to essential integration support services, since knowledge of the local language was necessary in order to access all other forms of services, resources and networks. Legal and administrative support was the second service participants across both groups were most familiar with, which was also a common theme in the interviews, since having valid paperwork and documents was essential before other factors such as housing and work could be formally acquired.

The rate of familiarity with these top two services could be related to the finding that security is the top priority before any integration efforts can take place; 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 the previous section, 'having secure accommodation' was ranked as the most important factor in supporting integration by respondents. On the one hand this result could mean participants have not been seeking out housing support as much as other services, but on the other, contrasted against other findings in this analysis, it is more likely housing support services are either absent or inaccessible across most territories. This is also supported by the **figure below** which asked participants whether the practice they chose was effective in supporting integration, which revealed housing services as the most effective form of service delivery with 97% of respondents agreeing, suggesting it would be a service most would seek out.

Answered "yes" to question 'Is the practice effective in facilitating social integration?' (N=413)

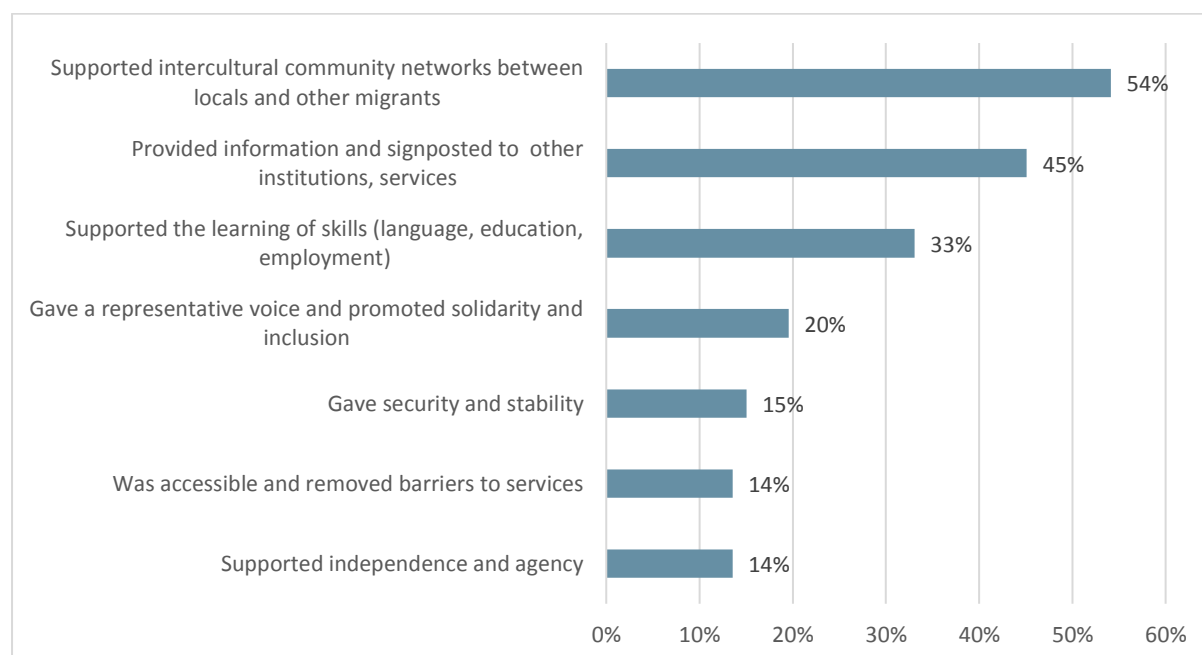


Comparison across those who stated migrating to the city and those who were born there is not displayed in figure above since there was little variation to be found. Across groups however, intercultural activities came out on top as the most effective form of integration service (97% of respondents agreed), which is also a service respondent had most familiarity with. Interestingly, despite legal and administrative support



services being the service most participants are familiar with, it is seen as the least effective of the set, although 86% of respondents still agreed it was effective. This is a finding that is explored in more detail later on.

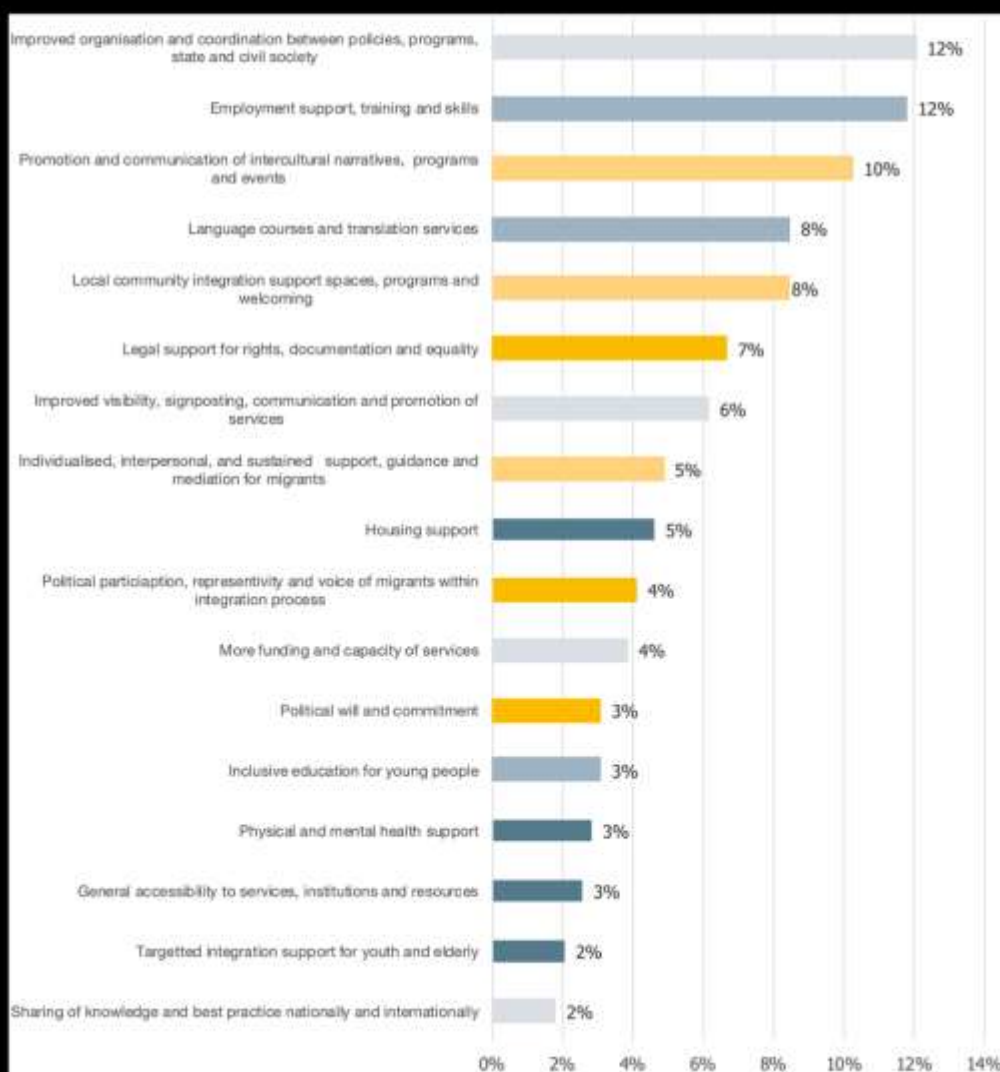
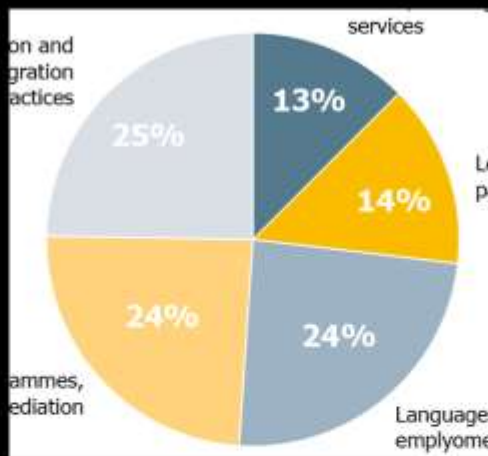
Q: Why was it effective? (N=133)



A follow-up question of 'why' was given to the 133 participants who answered yes to a practice being effective. These answers were categorised within themes and can be seen in the **figure above**. These answers tended to reiterate the aim of the form of service they had selected, and so was not entirely informative, however some insights can still be found. The most common category of answer, with 54% of respondents stating it as a reason for effectiveness, was the support of intercultural community networks between local and other migrants. This is interesting, since it arises far more frequently than the reason of 'security and stability', despite this being an integration factor deemed most important in other questions. This could perhaps be attributed to the question being one of hindsight, rather than foresight. In that, when the question of integration is more generally and conceptually asked, security comes out on top, but when participants are asked to explicitly reflect on the experience of an integration service, it is the intercultural networks that reveal themselves first and foremost as having been the most valuable aspect.

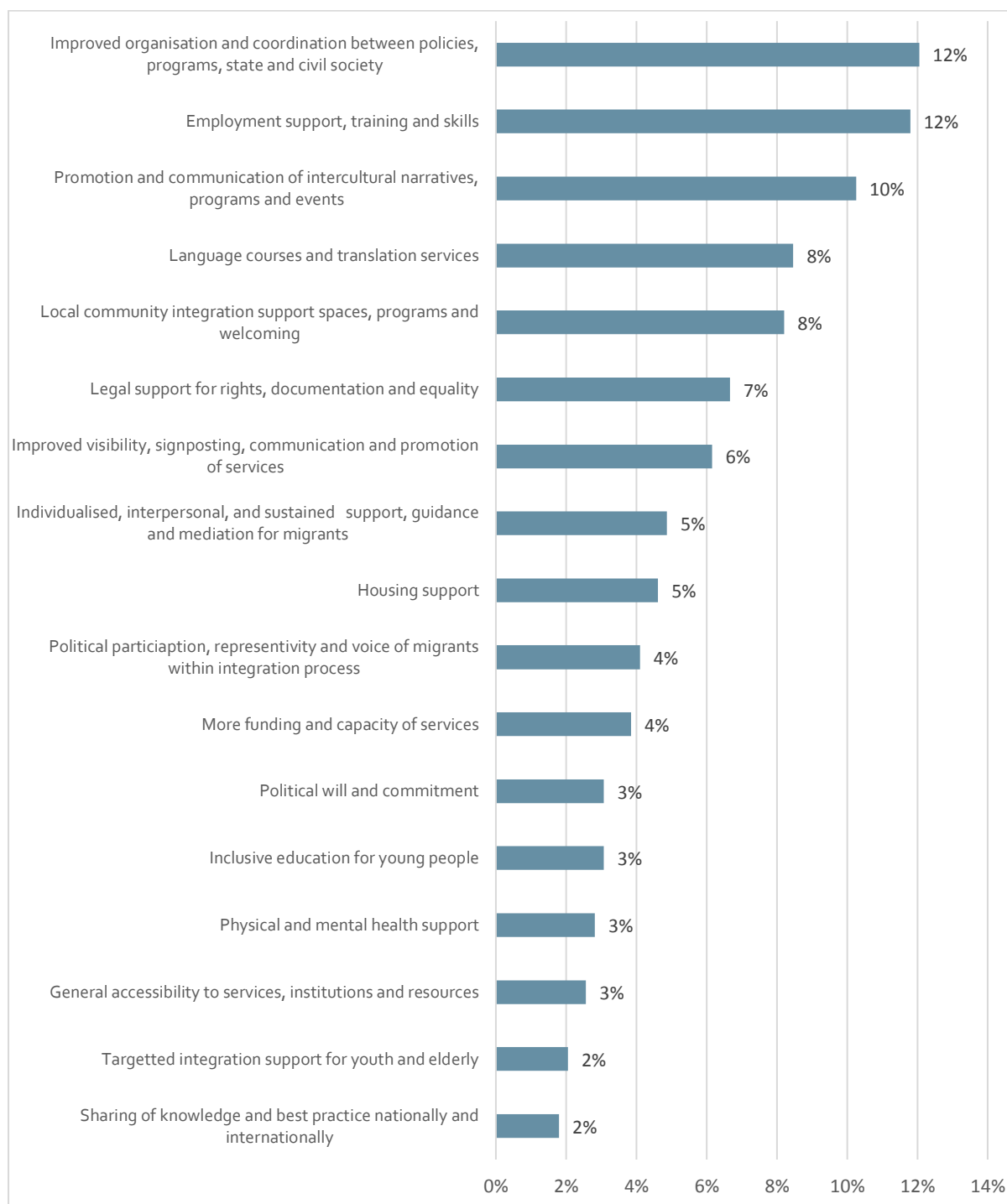
Q: What do you think is missing in terms of integration support services? (N=246)

Lastly, the **Figure below** shows the results of a question which asked participants which integration support services they thought were missing from their territory. Answers were hugely varied, with some reflecting on the absence of specific services, others on their effectiveness, and others on more emotional and psychological factors. As such, there are a large number of categorisations of responses which can be viewed as a summary of all the previous questions within this section.



Coordination, organisation, and communication of integration practices

This category was raised by a quarter of respondents, and referred not to the specific integration service itself, but the more technical aspects of its delivery and organisation. The most frequent sub-factor within this category within 12% of responses was the coordination of different integration organisations, NGO's, groups and institutions, with a common view being that integration services felt disjointed and poorly connected. Other sub-factors included the poor visibility and promotion of what practices existed (6% of responses) and the sharing of knowledge and best practice both locally and internationally (2%).



"A coordination team made up of the different entities and organizations that work in the migration sector."

"A hub where all services converge and/or can be coordinated."



"Coordination of all relevant institutions and joint work and assistance in the integration of our new citizens."

"I think there is a lack of real coordination of the various realities (foreign communities, volunteering, public bodies, etc.) working for integration. There is fragmented and contradictory information on rights/obligations and on how to access services."

Intercultural programmes, welcoming and meditation

Mentioned by 24%, this category focussed on the more humanistic and communal element of integration practices, with the most frequent sub-category (10% of responses) relating to the organisation and promotion of intercultural activities. The absence of spaces within the local community which could support welcome initiatives and community engagement was specifically mentioned by 8% of respondents. And lastly, 5% of respondents felt that a more personal and individualised form of service delivery was missing, in which new arrivals could be supported by a cultural mediator throughout their integration process rather than constantly moving from service to service where their situation would have to be re-explained.

"A permanent common space where access is for socio-cultural exchange and a home space of convalescence for immigrants without a family network."

"Real and concrete possibilities of interaction between the local community and migrants."

"A counter that supports you throughout the duration of your procedure";

"Civic education courses and local and locally-based meeting facilities"

"Higher focus on involving them in a community. So far that was just done by giving money and social benefits but in no way that is helping integration."

Language, education, skills and employment

This category of language, education, skills and employment has been addressed in many other parts of this analysis, and was mentioned in 24% of responses. Within the sub-categories, employment support came out as the second most frequent response out of all the categories with 12% of respondents stating adequate services were missing. Language and translation services fell below this at 8% of responses, with inclusive education for young people falling lower down at 3% of responses. Surprisingly, inclusive education for young people was the only factor which showed variation between those who reported migrating to the city as opposed to being born there (5% against 1%).

"Public services are not connected, officials do not speak English so even migrants/refugees who speak beyond their mother tongue, English, French cannot communicate adequately."

"Free language lessons, assistance in dealing with official matters (e.g. room markings and indications of direction in several languages, especially in places of registration of residence)"

"Professional figures and effective connections that can help migrants to get through the procedures to get a job."

"The possibility to have documents and work faster."

Legal support, representation, participation and equality

Mentioned by 14% of respondents, this category included the sub-categories of support for legal documentation, but also wider themes of political representation, participation within society, and the equality of rights. As outlined earlier, legal and administrative support was viewed as the least effective service across the territories and is seen in the **figure below** as being explicitly mentioned as a subcategory by 7% of respondents. Reasons provided usually related to overly bureaucratic procedures, large barriers in accessibility and comprehension, and was a key area of frustration for respondents. The subcategory of political participation and representativity was mentioned by 4% of respondents, and the absence of political will and commitment, usually in reference to national leadership, was raised by 3%.

"A less complicated bureaucracy, the difficulties of obtaining documents does not facilitate searching and finding a job with a contract."



"The exclusion of many migrants from having a valid residence permit is a great obstacle to integration. Illegal immigrants do not exist on a legal level. They are ghosts that cannot integrate, being excluded from the society in which they live."

"A general problem which is a barrier to providing proper integration services is the lack of a strategic and systematic approach to integration at the national level. This is exacerbated by the lack of political commitment to integration."

Accessibility and provision of health, housing and support services

The final category, mentioned by 13% of respondents, relates to general service provision. The absence of support for housing was raised by 5% of respondents, which is a result lower than expected considering it was the service respondents were least familiar with. Further down the list, support for physical and mental health was mentioned in 3% of responses, followed by general accessibility of services (3%), and targeted support for the youth and elderly (2%).

"Providing, promoting and ensuring sustainable affordable and secure housing and accommodation solutions is a key service that is missing."

"Whenever I need to get any public service, for example, access to health security or apply for my residence permit, I get terrible service, and people in public places don't treat you well."

"Our healthcare system needs to be supported by an effective cultural mediation service for all non-citizens that access healthcare facilities independently."

"Securing the future, providing a decent life for children, and not to be left in the middle of the road to the unknown."

Urban encounters: Relationships as a practice

In reviewing the literature, spatial practices for integration policies are often focused on places which are 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. In this, Fiddian- Qasmiyeh (2015, 2016a) relates integration to diverse forms and practices of what she called as "urban encounter": with and between different people, places and services, temporalities and materialities, beliefs and desires, and sociocultural and political systems. For her, the reading of integration from a hospitality lens is fatalistic and it is more productive to substitute it by the lens of "being together" and "being with". Urban encounters can allow for the recognition of challenges and potentials that emerge from the everyday encounters among people (hosts, citizens, migrants, refugees) being together and being with each other.

Urban encounters take different forms, occupy different spaces and times, some are induced and others are born by everyday lives encounters. Four broad urban encounters spheres emerged from the interviews which are: institutional, commercial, religious and social. Whilst the open-ended survey questions in this analysis used thematic analysis; the creation of categories of responses which best fit the results, for the question on personal practices answers were instead coded within the five urban spheres revealed from the interviews. This was since the question of personal practices were best understood in the wider narrative of individual integration experience. Interviews from Ioannina were particularly revealing of how practices are lacking in many areas whether in terms of language acquisition, access to housing, education and most importantly daily interaction with others living in the city. It was also note mentioning that negative perceptions were described as a practice that is counter impacting other potential practices in the future;

"Good practices begin when you look at the other person and see a person, in the sense, you very often make the mistake of looking at other people and seeing and thinking that they are alien, that they come from who knows what reality. Instead, if you look at the other person and see the person, everything starts from there, you know that that person has a different experience from yours, but the cases of life could have led you to be in his place and therefore you must always be empathetic and put yourself in someone else's shoes. So good practices also arise from this state of mind in my opinion, that is, you have to approach it in the best possible way". Ioannina, Greece



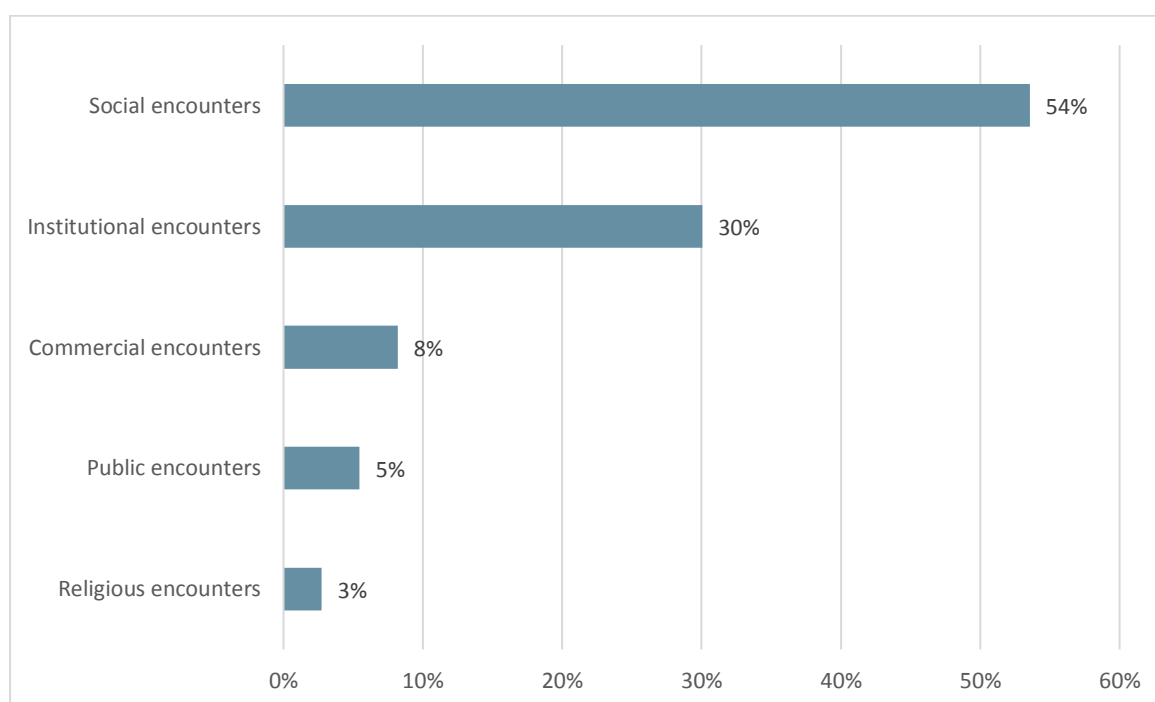
Gender related encounters were a recurrent theme in the interviews and there was a sense amongst the interviewees that gender plays a certain role.

*"Usually, there were almost 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. There are many ethnic groups, different religions, many different people". Brescia, Italy.*

Women as default caretakers of their children have more urban encounters from men. Their daily lives entail several additional activities with their children which exposes them to a wider pool of people and spaces. Having said that, in certain cases, women are hindered by the lack of economic independence from their partners and thus have limited mobility compared to others.

*"Greek lessons are provided by some N.G.O. but they are held in the center of the city **but due to the ticket of the urban many women are unable to go**". Ioannina. Greece.*

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



Institutional encounters:

Respondents listed many programmes and activities of integration such as language training centers, scholarship programs for artists coming from endangered countries (ICORN), immigrant support centers, European Solidarity Center, and schools. Most of these programmes were initiated in an institutional environment. What was interesting to note is that respondents commented about the efficiency of these programs when interaction was the most with the program initiator. This is why many respondents referred to schools as great encounters for children as well as for their families.

"...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 are learning through physical contact. It wasn't easier because of the corona". Sisak, Croatia.

How state rules are negotiated: in the survey, one participant mentioned returning to a government practice on different days and getting different results, suggesting the emotional relational character even of legal structures and frameworks.



Commercial encounters

One respondent suggested that multi ethnic product shops can be potential spaces to get to know the other. In his point of view, ignorance of the other way of life creates a certain distance and does not create needs to connect. For example, shops that only sell Chinese products will likely be visited by Chinese community and thus exclude such spaces from encounters with others. In his opinion *"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"*.

Religious encounters

Many respondents refer to religious events, spaces and practices as opportunities to know the other from within and outside the community. One respondent referred to Ramadan dinners as special, lively and pleasing moments that created solidarity and brought up suffering stories.

"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" Brescia, Italy.

Other respondents referred to the religious community as a networking inducer which helped them to integrate. *"The Islamic community in Sisak also helps a lot in our integration and we are connected with them"*.

Few respondents praised the church and its supporting youth programs as a great tool for integration *"Church in Zagreb deals with and works on the integration of asylum seekers and asylum seekers and I am involved in the youth program"*.

Social encounters

Many respondents referred to socializing as a main driver for integration as it opens up channels of communication. However, the common denominator for all encounters was to build a network of relations, finding friends and belonging to a community as two respondents from Brescia put it through: *"To have friends in that community, local friends, because you need to get involved in the dynamics of the community"*. From Ghana to Brescia, Italy.

"So, 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". Victor, Brescia, Italy

Socializing extended over a variety of activities; cultural, agricultural, sports, artistic, culinary and many others. Many respondents expressed the values and benefits of socializing;

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

"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".

"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 with a field".

Conclusion: An urban encounter with and between spaces: Here and there

The above findings were representative of the emerging urban encounters as diverse forms and practices with and between different people, places and services, temporalities and materialities, beliefs and desires. One of the main issues that came out within the findings is the unboundedness of integration to a time or space. Integration starts from the day one person moves to a new place to live a new life. Two responses to the photo elicitation exercise were the most revealing about the practice of integration with the self from the place a person arrived to. The photos, respondents decided to share are a depiction of a place that brings



home to their new lives. Previous encounter exported to their new lives that makes them feel safe and secure. *"...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 male- a Family of five children- Sisak, Croatia.

Looking at this practice as an urban practice with the place is a form of integration that is built into daily life whereby people are trying to build the new rhythm of their lives by finding connections to their previous lives. *"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, Male, Zagreb, Croatia.



Integration starts from the first day someone wakes up to find himself/herself in a new way of life and integration practices start to build up from that moment onwards. *"... 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 coziness, not partying. You can go to the toilet, take a nap. Anything goes."* Polish, works for an American consultancy company in Gdansk, Poland. Originally from Gdynia



Conclusion

The present report 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 unpacking and problematizing the notion of integration, and related research and policy. Firstly, integration is often used to implement social control. Secondly, there is not necessarily the *need* to integrate. Host societies 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, depending on different levels of privilege, capitals, status and networks. This is rather more relevant. The discourse on integration should be completely reframed as a discourse around urban equality and right to the city. Thirdly, integration is a state-centred concept grounded in the distinction between host/guest and citizen/migrant. There is a sense that ‘they’ are being incorporated into ‘our’ codes, into our spaces. Integration is still unfortunately seen as the ability of the other to adapt to the context and the society. Yet the question on integration should also be around how the 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 through 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. Integration must be reframed as forms and practices of urban encounter, as ‘relational’ practices, extremely subjective and non normative, process-based and emplaced.

Through this research we attempted to go back once more to the notion of integration, question 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 in the surveys and interviews. 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.

