

## INTEGRATION OF IMMIGRANTS: A TWO WAY PROCESS

*Dragana AVRAMOV\**

### Introduction

This paper draws on the findings from the research project "Needs for female immigrants and their integration in ageing societies' (FEMAGE, SSP4-CT-2005-022355), co-funded by the European Commission within the Sixth Framework Programme.

The interests within the European Research Area (ERA) for demographic research are quite topical. Facts and figures about population ageing and immigration stocks and flow have become in the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century part of the general knowledge and the quest for new research relates in the first place to the use of demography as background information for addressing socio-economic and cultural implications of population dynamics. As consequence, the specific call under which the FEMAGE project was funded related to the issues of acceptance and integration of immigrants.

Our general theoretical approach builds on the acknowledgement that the responsibility for integration of immigrants rests on many actors: immigrants themselves and governments and institutions, but also citizens in the receiving society (see for example: Avramov & Cliquet, 2004; Bommers & Morowska 2004; Sharpe, 2001, Zlotnik, 1990). That is why we set out to capture the viewpoints of natives, immigrant women and the key policy stakeholders in view to provide a broad knowledge base for policy development and implementation.

Our paper relies on three major complementary data sources. The first, Population Policy Acceptance Survey (PPAS) with a migration module was a large-scale survey undertaken between 2000 and 2003 in eight EU countries (the Czech Republic, Germany, Estonia, Hungary, Austria, Poland, Slovenia, and Finland). It addressed the attitudes of nationals towards

\* Population and Social Policy Consultants (PSPC), Brussels.

immigration and integration of migrants (Avramov, 2008). The second is the quantitative survey undertaken in 2006 in the same countries among purposefully selected groups of immigrant women on their experiences, attitudes and expectations with respect to their immigration, integration, emancipation and provisions for old age (Kovács, Melegh, 2007). In 2007 we implemented focus groups in order to confront the key stakeholders with the findings from the two research instruments in view of promoting informed interactive policy deliberations. In this paper we use the results of the European Focus Group held in Brussels which had as a specific aims to deliberate on the desirability and feasibility of the European institutions – the European Parliament, the European Commission, the European NGOs - and women who are themselves immigrants and are active at the transnational and international level, to achieve a greater impact in the formulation and implementation of gender-friendly immigration and integration policies at all levels of governance.

The focus on women was driven by the European Union's policy quest for knowledge-base to underpin integration policies in view of feminization of migration trends.

The multi-method approach under the FEMAGE project obviously did not allow for comparative analysis of data *per se*, but it enables us to draw lessons from the key findings and identify the most pertinent policy challenges. It is a type of research in which integration of migrants is seen through the eyes of both the nationals and the migrants themselves (Avramov, Cliquet, 2007) and in which synthesis is drawn via reflexive methods of approach.

### **Data and Methods**

The migration module was part of the Population Policy Acceptance Study (PPAS) in which we studied a broad array of issues related to family, work, gender relations, and ageing (Höhn, Avramov and Kotowska, 2008).

The module has information on perceived number of foreigners and growth in numbers, opinion on foreigners, attitudes towards migration, perceived advantages and disadvantages of immigration, attitudes towards integration of migrants, attitudes concerning return migration, attitudes towards national migration policies, and attitudes towards population trends and population-related policies in general. It captures the 'population climate' in the host countries with quite different migration histories, different profiles of female immigrants, different welfare regimes, different levels of population ageing

and potentials for integration of migrants. The database enabled us to look at the interweaving between attitudes and expectations towards migration and foreigners and about other demographic events which impact peoples' life.

The PPAS data include information gathered from 11,980 women and 9,827 men between 2000 and 2003 (Avramov, Cliquet, 2007). For the present contribution we have selected only data from 20 to 59 year old women in view to comparing the key findings among native women with the same age group of immigrant women who were interviewed. This choice was topic driven, since the focus of the FEMAGE project is gendered. It is, however, relevant to note that the views of native men and native women about migration issues are remarkably similar in all the countries.

The 30 interviews in each country with the immigrant women consisted of two parts: a narrative part and a complementary structured questionnaire. The first recorded the respondents spontaneous views on their life course, key events - life-story high points, low points, and turning points - that they themselves considered to have marked their life, their migration history and relationship to the sending country, and their story of gaining residence (legality) in the host country (Melegh and Kovács, 2006).

The second part aimed at recording, by means of a complementary structured questionnaire with additional open and closed questions (182 in number), the respondents' socio-demographic and socio-economic characteristics, in particular activity and employment status, their household structure, their migration biography and family history, including family of origin and relations with family in country of origin; their identity formation and integration experience (education/work; language/culture, social relations), their perception of the nationals in their host country and their experienced forms of discrimination, their attitudes, preferences, and expectations about migration and integration and emancipation policies, access to social protection, and expectations about one's own old age. In the structured questionnaire part we ensured that issue that may not have been spontaneously raised by the interviewee herself in the narrative, but are central to our research topic, were also addressed. In the structured questionnaire, we included as far as possible and meaningful some of the questions to which natives had given their answers in the PPAS migration module (Avramov, Cliquet, 2008).

The immigrant women were selected according to their country of origin purposefully to capture groups that are more extensively present in the host country. In each country we interviewed 15 women from each of the two different ethnic groups. They were women 20-59 years old who lived in the

host country since at least 3 years. In total 239 immigrant women, belonging to nine different ethnic groups, were interviewed: in the Czech Republic Romanians and Turks; in Germany Russians and Turks; in Estonia Russians and Russian Muslims; in Hungary Chinese and Ukrainians; in Austria Bosniaks and Turks; in Poland Ukrainians and Vietnamese; in Slovenia Bosniaks and Russians; and in Finland Kosovo Albanians and Russians.

The European focus group was held on 3 October 2007 in Brussels and lasted from 2 pm till 6 pm. It included one member of the European Parliament, one head of the cabinet of a member of the European Parliament, one staff member of the cabinet of a European Parliamentarian, one secretary general, one president, and one policy migration officer from women's or migrant women's non-governmental organisations, one representative of a Chamber of Commerce, one employer of migrant women third country-national, one journalist from a third country, and one policy analyst from a European think-tank. The group consisted of one man and nine women, most of whom are actually migrant women.

### **How Native and Immigrant Women See Each Other?**

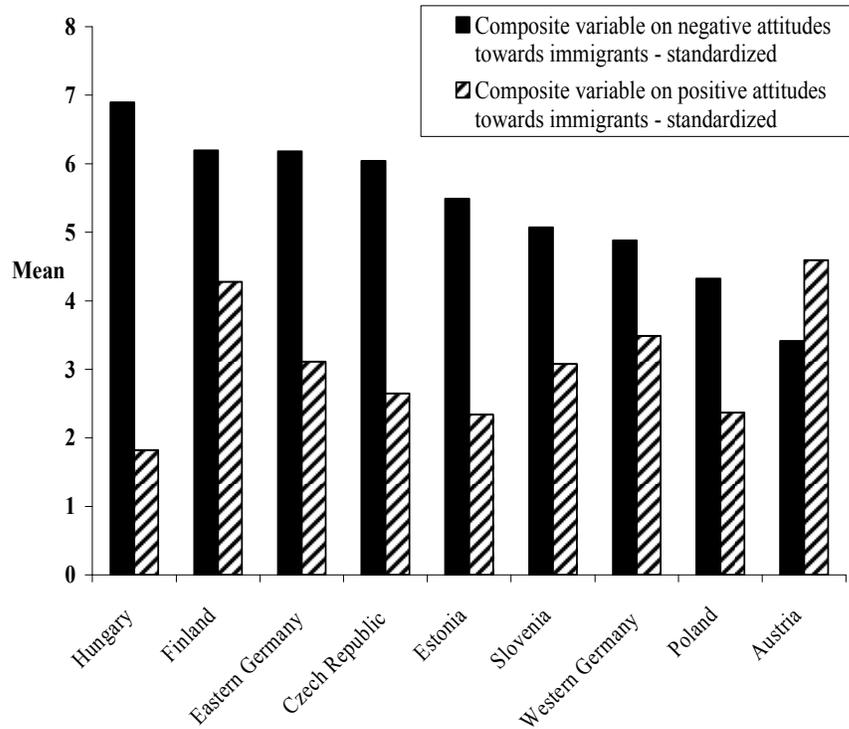
In the survey of natives we explored the framework conditions for acceptance and integration of immigrants. One of the key research questions was: are immigrants perceived by people in their host country more as an asset or as a threat?

Our research analytically documented that the vast majority among the native populations expresses fear of foreigners, more particularly as competitors in the labour market. When measuring positive<sup>1</sup> and negative<sup>2</sup> attitudes of nationals about immigration and immigrants we observe that natives share a larger number of negative than positive views, more so in the East than in the West (Figure 1). The exception is Austria.

<sup>1</sup> The composite variable on positive attitudes towards immigrants and their integration encapsulates: advantages of cultural exchange; needs for labour; right to vote in local elections; right to vote in national elections; right to citizenship; amnesty for illegal migrants; right to political asylum; right to be elected; immigration is necessary; immigration should not be restricted at all.

<sup>2</sup> The composite variable on negative attitudes towards immigrants and their integration encapsulates: spread of crime and terrorism; immigrants take away jobs; no room for foreigners; all illegals should be expelled; fines to companies employing illegals; non-integrated foreigners should return to their country; expel asylum seekers whose request has been turned down; immigration is unnecessary people should rather have more children; no new foreigners.

Figure 1.  
**Mean number of statements (= agrees or fully agrees) on positive and negative attitudes towards resident foreigners in the country, female nationals aged 20-59**



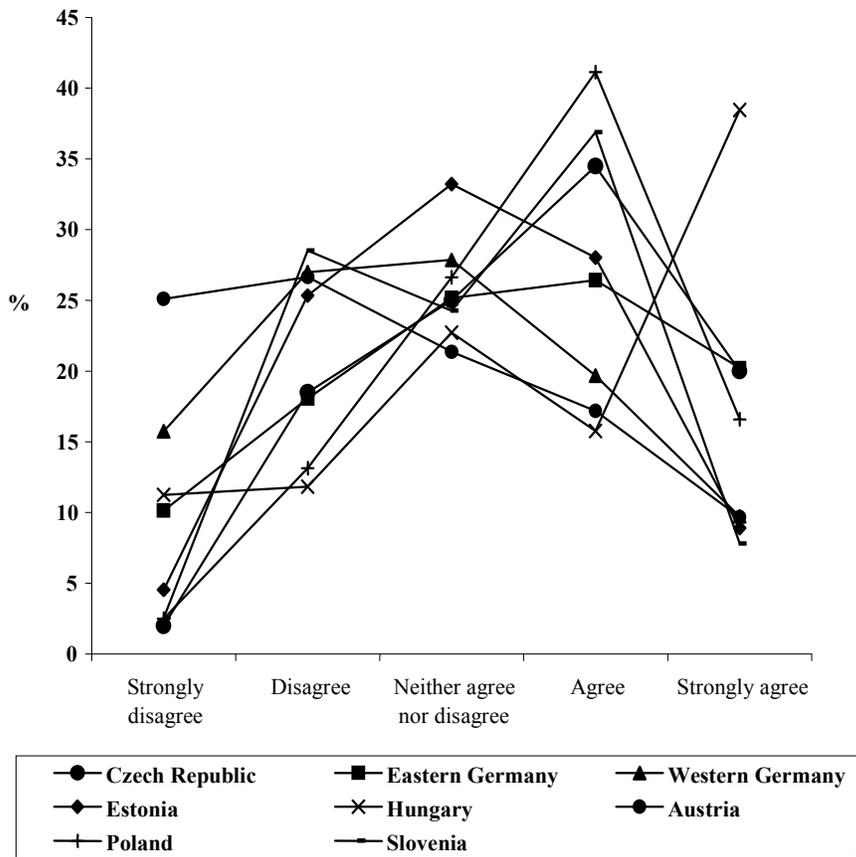
\* Standardized for number of items per country.  
 \*\* Standardized for number of items per country and number of items in the composite variable on positive attitudes.  
 Source: Avramov, Cliquet (2007) Manual, Structured Questionnaire, Codebook and SPSS File of the FEMAGE-MIG Database.

In most countries, a large majority is of the view that there are too many foreigners a substantial proportion thinks that foreigners take away jobs, and that foreigners favour the spread of crime and terrorism.

Attitudes about the labour market disadvantages of the presence of foreigners predominate over attitudes about advantages. By way of example, in Poland, the Czech Republic, and Hungary, more than half of the female respondents believe that foreigners take away jobs; in Slovenia and Eastern Germany it is 45% and 47% respectively; in Austria and Western Germany it is 27% and 30 % respectively (Figure 2).

A multiple classification analysis (MCA) of the number of positive and negative attitudes towards immigration and integration of immigrants for eight predictors (country, urbanization, sex, age, education, activity status, equalised income, importance of religion in life) shows that country is the most important differentiating factor. Among the personal characteristics of the respondents education is the most important differentiating factor both for the prevalence of positive and negative attitudes. Namely, the higher educational levels are positively associated with a higher number of positive attitudes and negatively with the number of negative attitudes towards foreigners and their integration.

Figure 2.  
**Answers to the question "Do you agree with the statement: Foreigners take away jobs", female nationals aged 20-59, in percent**



Source: See Figure 1.

In the interviews of immigrant women we asked how they perceive natives. The large majority of migrant women perceive the natives in a very or quite positive light. In Estonia, Poland, Finland and Slovenia all interviewees had largely a positive perception of natives. In Germany and Hungary 9 out of every 10 and in the Czech Republic and Austria 8 out of every 10 migrant women has a very or quite positive perception of natives.

We also explored how they as migrants feel to be perceived by natives. Although the viewpoints vary somewhat from one country to another, the overwhelming majority share the opinion that as migrants they are positively perceived by the natives (Table 1). In Hungary and Slovenia, this viewpoint was shared by all interviewed women, in the Czech Republic, Estonia, and Finland it was 9 out of every 10. In Austria 8, in Germany and Poland 7 out of every 10 migrant women believe that natives have a very or quite a positive perception of them.

Whereas the majority share both positive attitudes towards people in their host country and have themselves quite positive or very positive perception of natives, a significant minority shares negative perceptions. The difficulty in establishing one's place in a host country can be associated with the generalized feeling of dissatisfaction that translates into very negative perception of people in the host country. This can be illustrated by the 29 years old, Russian with a university degree who performs elementary occupation and has been living in Germany for six years. She suffers enormously from the loss of social status which the migration brought about. She believes that natives have a very negative view of her.

Table 1.  
**Views of female migrants on how natives perceive migrants, and how they themselves perceive natives (number of cases)**

	Perception of migrants by the natives	Perception of natives by the female migrants
Very negative	1	1
Quite negative	25	16
Quite positive	142	137
Very positive	34	62
Total	202	216
<i>Source: See Figure 1.</i>		

Almost 7 out of every 10 interviewees are of the view that the natives in the host country most of the time try to be helpful. Three out of 10 think that

they are not helpful. This negative feeling is somewhat more present among the Turkish, Romanian and Kosovo Albanian migrant women.

### **Needs for Immigrants**

Immigration is often referred to in policy circles and in media as a partial remedy for the expected decrease in the population size. Our research shows that in most countries the majority of natives are not in favour of replacement migration as remedy for population decline. However, our research also shows that between-country differences in attitudes towards immigration that would be used to counteract population decrease are huge. Most of the female respondents in Finland, 7 out of every 10 are in favour of such immigration, and only 1 out of 10 is against immigration as a compensation for population decrease. In Austria the female respondents that share the same position are slightly more prevalent than those who have expressed a disagreement (39% versus 37%). Respondents in the three ex-communist countries hold quite different opinions: only 3% of Estonians and 5% of Poles, and 7% of people in the Czech Republic would favour 'replacement' immigration. Immigration as means for compensating for the low natural growth of the population is not favoured in Germany either, although this attitude is not as prevalent as in the above three countries. Female respondents in Eastern Germany are less inclined to accept immigration as means to deal with population decline than those from Western Germany (Figure 3).

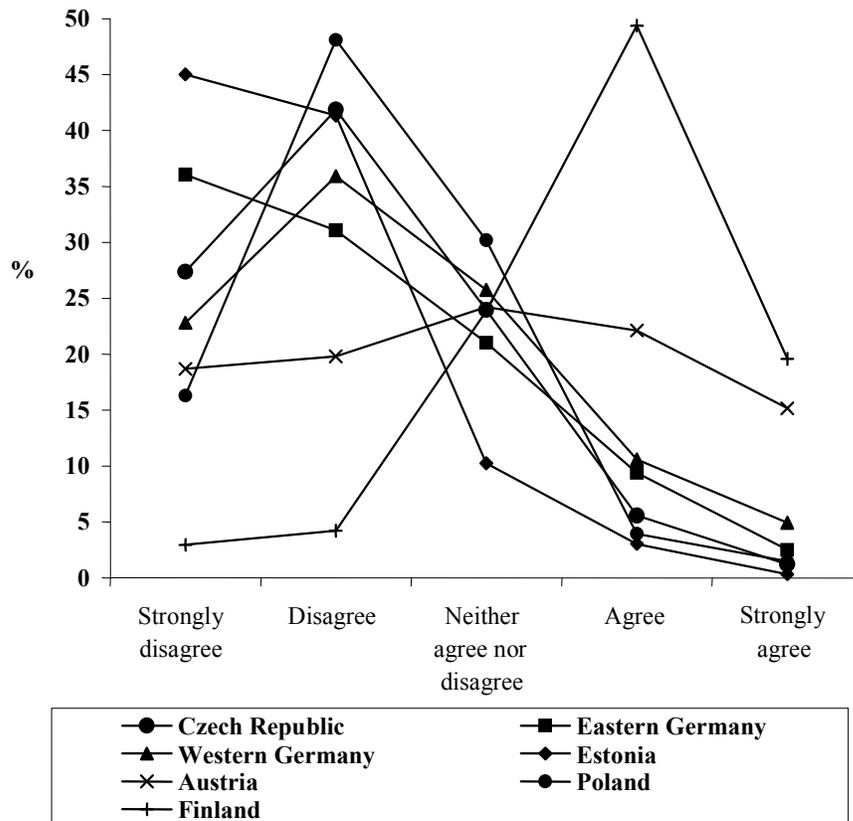
At best immigrants are seen as necessary to do the jobs natives no longer want to do. In Slovenia, Western Germany and the Czech republic 3 to 4 out of every 10 female natives are of the opinion that foreigners are necessary to do the work we no longer want to do, whereas in Hungary this is the viewpoint of only 1 out of every 10 respondents.

Immigrants themselves obviously perceive and experience needs for their contribution in the host country through different eyes. For those who are qualified and eager to work the first experience is that their skills are underused.

The striking communality in the experience of migrant women is that of temporary or permanent deskilling. Relating educational level to occupational status shows that 4 out of every 10 interviewees with post-secondary education performed activities below the level of technicians and associate professionals. The comparison of the first activity after migration with the present activity of migrant women with a university degree also illustrates clearly the prevalence of temporary and permanent deskilling: 4

out of 10 women had a first activity which lay below their present high-status occupation and another 4 out of 10 still fulfil an activity below their high educational schooling (Table 2). As Kovács, Melegh (2007) stress in the narratives of migrant women deskilling is a major experience and even those who regain their status that corresponds to their qualification go through a difficult period for maintaining their status.

Figure 3.  
**Answers to the question "Do you agree with the statement: Immigration is necessary to increase because the population decreases?", female nationals aged 20-59, in percent**



Source: See Figure 1.

Deskilling of migrant women clearly points to the controversy between the advantages for employers who draw on capacities of overqualified workers to perform less rewarding jobs, and the weak negotiating position of migrant

women with respect to access to paid work. The 'no choice' situation in which many migrant women find themselves may lead to misunderstandings about the meaning of integration from the perspective of host countries, which is often identified with integration into paid work, and quest for integration as seen through the eyes of migrant women themselves.

Table 2.  
**Deskilling and upward mobility among migrant women  
with a university degree**

Change in status	Number
First activity < present high status occupations	24
First activity = present high status occupations	10
Present activity < university education	25
Unclassifiable/student/unknown	16
Total	75
<i>Source:</i> See Figure 1.	

### **Expectations Towards Integration**

The overwhelming majority of natives in all countries expect foreigners to make a very strong effort to adapt to the host country. The meaning of integration and the importance attached to integration are reflected in the viewpoints of natives about the significance of mastering the language and abiding by customs and rules of the host country, and in the opinion that those foreigners who do not integrate should return to their own country. The overwhelming majority of the nationals in most countries agree that foreigners are obliged to learn the language and to get used to customs and rules of the host country. In most cases, more than half of the respondents also share the view that foreigners who have not integrated after five years should return to their own country (Figure 4).

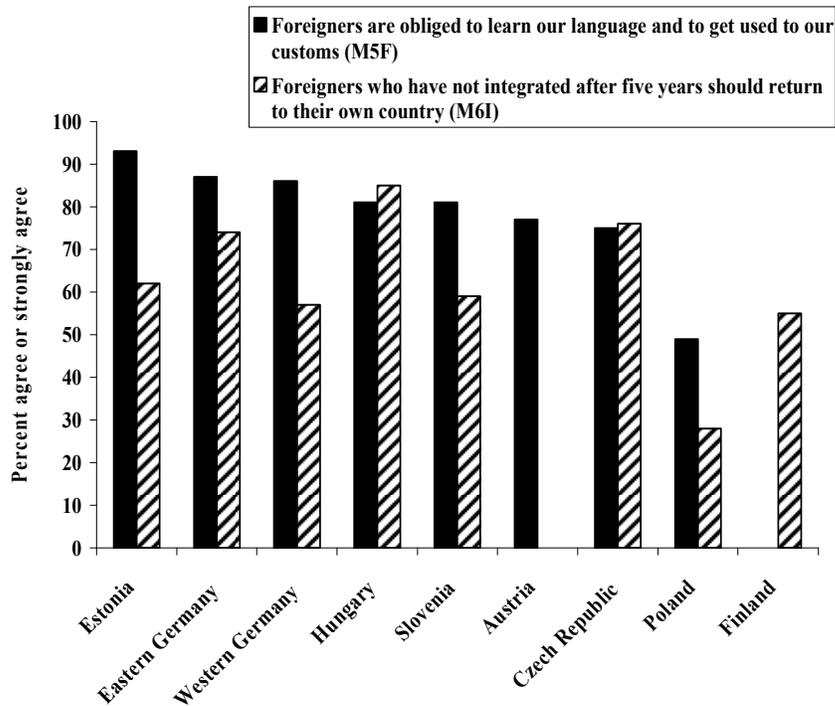
The agreement with the statement that the integration of foreigners should be fostered is somewhat weaker, but those in favour of the presence of foreigners are at the same time in favour of fostering integration, hence, do not appear to favour an approach to multiculturalism that enhances cultural 'separateness' of immigrants.

Integration into the political life and decision making process via voting rights does not get majority approval in any country. The majority of the population in all countries agrees that illegals should be expelled (Figure 5).

The quest for permanence and integration is shared by the overwhelming majority of immigrant women. The majority of the interviewed migrant women has acquired or has the intention to acquire naturalization in the host country, most feel at home in their host country, and a substantial majority would migrate again to the host country or does not want to return to their country of origin. If they had to make a choice all over again, 7 out of 10 interviewees would migrate again to the host country. This view is even somewhat more prevalent among Russian, Romanian, and Bosniak women, but less among Turkish and Russian Muslim interviewees.

Figure 4.

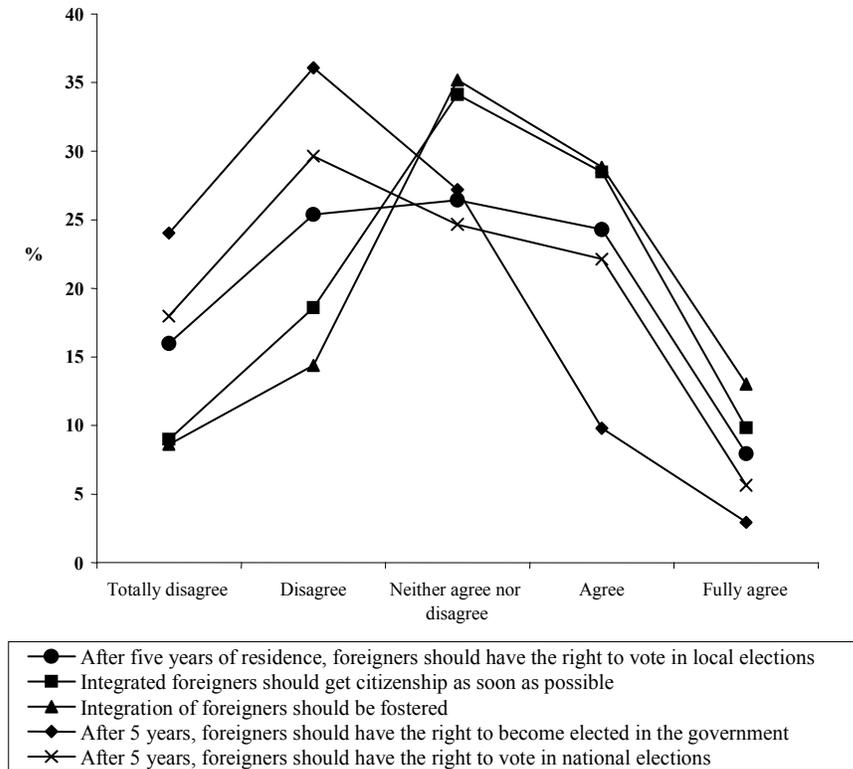
**Percentage of female respondents aged 20-59 that agree or fully agree with the statements *Foreigners are obliged to learn our language and to get used to our customs and rules (M5F)* and *Foreigners who have not integrated after five years should return to their own country (M6I)*, by country**



Source: See Figure 1.

Almost all want to stay in the host country and they rarely raise the possibility of migrating further into another country. Some foster a vague ideal of going home when they become old.

Figure 5.  
**Frequency distribution of attitudes on policy measures aimed at integrating immigrants, female nationals aged 20-59 (pooled data)**



Source: See Figure 1.

The desire to settle and integrate is prevalent, but for the migrants it is a tough and long-lasting process, so clearly illustrated by the transitional stage in which most migrants find themselves.

On the basis of the narratives we aimed at reconstructing what present life course perspectives immigrants create in their new host societies with regard to migration, integration, gender and ageing. "Altogether we can see that migration of women is complex transformation of social and personal spaces with huge difficulties in combining different gender, social and cultural goals. Female migrants have to be very adaptive all the time in order to redistribute the costs of migration" (Kovács, Melegh 2007). Due to the high

cost of adaptation strategies migrant women give little if any considerations to arrangements for their own old age.

Female migrants, settling down in their late middle ages, face most serious problems of integration. They leave behind their families, and professional careers, which they cannot properly validate in their new social space. Some of the most isolated self-representations are related to this age group (Kovács, Melegh 2007).

### **Pathways to Integration**

In view of the importance of the knowledge of the language of the host country, it is significant that out of 237 interviewed women who have been resident 3 or more years in the host country there are 42 whose knowledge of the language is still bad or very bad. The largest numbers are found among Vietnamese, Chinese and Kosovo Albanian women. Among these ethnic groups 4 out of every 10 women has not acquired a fair knowledge of the language of the host community. Among Turkish women it is close to 3 out of every 10.

The majority of interviewed women, 7 out of every 10 are wage earners or entrepreneurs. The most active are Chinese and Vietnamese, predominantly generating income as entrepreneurs. The least active are Turkish and Kosovo Albanian women.

Integration is a process and, the majority of interviewed migrant women are, after three or more years of residence, either still in a transitional stage or have forged a multiple cultural identity. With respect to the use of mother tongue and language of the host country there is a dynamic balancing. The majority of migrant women use the native language at home and with the children. Specifically, some 7 out of 10 interviewees use mostly their mother tongue, 2 out of 10 use the language spoken in the host country, and 1 out of 10 uses mostly a third language. Roughly the same proportions are observed for the language mostly spoken with the children. The information about language most spoken with friends show a slightly stronger shift towards the mother tongue, but a substantial shift is reported for the language spoken at the workplace: the ratios native and host country language are practically reversed (Table 2).

Also the distribution of the languages of the mass media consulted point to a transitional integrative process for the majority of migrant women. Whereas only one quarter of all female migrant interviewees use mainly media in the

language of the host country, more than half use media in both their native language and the language of the host country or another language; less than 2 out of 10 interviewees stick to media only in their mother tongue.

This transitional integrative stage in language matters and social relations is evident in the narratives as most of the female migrants present themselves as being in an in-between status in general (Kovács, Melegh, 2007).

Table 3.

**Language most spoken at home, with the children, with friends and at the workplace, all ethnic groups**

	Language most spoken			
	At Home	With the children	With friends	At the workplace
Mother tongue	174	119	149	28
The language spoken in the host country	47	31	68	155
A third language	14	17	19	18
Total	235	167	236	201
<i>Source: See Figure 1.</i>				

Among the migrant women interviewed, overall, endogamic relations prevail, but we also observe strong ethnic differentials: Bosniak, Kosovo Albanian, Chinese and Vietnamese interviewees show a very high prevalence of ethnic endogamy; Romanian and Turkish women take an intermediate position, whereas among Russian and Ukrainian interviewees exogamic partnerships predominate.

The structured questionnaire of the interviewed female migrants included two major groups of questions which pertain to social relations with the nationals (friends, doctors, shopping, membership in associations), and questions on the native-migrant in-group/out-group relations.

Four out of 10 female migrant interviewees have friends who mainly are from their country of origin, whereas the same proportion has mixed friendships. Only somewhat more than 1 in 10 has mainly friends from the majority population in the host country. The Chinese and Vietnamese interviewees are clearly more ethnocentric oriented.

Some 9 out of every 10 respondents consult doctor(s) irrespective of their ethnicity, and only one 1 of 10 consult doctors of their own ethnicity or nationality or who speak their language. On the question in what shops the

interviewees usually buy food, 6 out of 10 answers 'predominantly in shops of natives'. Very few buy food predominantly in shops of people of the same origin. Approximately one third buys food in both types of shops. As far as membership of organizations can be identified, it appears that almost 7 out of 10 female migrant interviewees are not involved in organizations, 2 out of every 10 are member of ethnically identifiable organizations, and only 1 out of 10 is involved in organizations of the host country.

We did not directly address the feelings of belonging, but we have some information on whether the interviewees feel at home in their host country, and what they like and dislike about the host country. The majority of interviewed women do feel to be very much or quite at home in their host country. Some 2 out of every 10 women feel only a little bit or not at all at home. These feelings of not being 'chez soi' are more prevalent among the Chinese and also the Turkish migrant women.

With respect to what women like about their host country compared to their home country the vast majority identified one, two or three aspects that are better addressed in their host country. Positive aspects mentioned cover a broad variety of advantages going from rights and security, to health care, working and living conditions, social relations and even environmental issues.

### **Experience of Hostility and Discrimination**

We addressed the question of experienced or perceived hostility and forms of discrimination in the host society in the structured questionnaire. The reasons for discrimination were analysed for nine identity features: migrant, nationality, language, ethnic group, religion, race, gender, age and other. Answers about discrimination on those nine features were cumulated in a composite variable.

Concerns about hostility of natives towards migrants appeared to be very prevalent. In Germany, Czech Republic and Austria 7 to 8 out of every 10 women are concerned about native's hostility. In Hungary, Slovenia, Finland, and Estonia it is 5 to 6 out of every 10 migrant women. The lowest shares are found in Poland where only 3 out of 10 respondents feel concern over native's hostility towards migrants.

Personal experience of discrimination is rather prevalent also. Among women in Germany, Austria, the Czech Republic, and Hungary (6 to 7 out of 10) have personally felt discrimination. In Estonia, Finland and Poland 1 out of 2 women had experienced some form of discrimination, whereas in

Slovenia it is 2 out of 5. According to ethnic group, Turkish, Romanian and Chinese interviewees report highest experience of discrimination.

As may be expected, those immigrant women who felt discriminated because of being a migrant, at the same time feel to be less at home in the host country.

The experience of discrimination relates in all countries first and foremost to being a migrant. One's own nationality and language are the two other most prevalently perceived causes for discrimination, followed by ethnicity, religion, gender, race, and age. There is, however, quite some variation between the host countries considered: the Czech Republic stands out for the items 'migrant' and 'nationality', Estonia for 'language' and Austria for 'ethnicity' and 'religion'.

Turkish women report the maximum number of discrimination factors: being a migrant, being Turkish, and being Muslim. The Chinese perceive being discriminated for their language and race.

The question "How secure do you feel in this country?" was not asked to measure specifically xenophobia. Three out of 10 female migrant interviewees had mixed feelings about security, felt unsafe or had bad experiences the others felt very secure or quite safe in the host country. Only 4 out of 214 respondents specifically related their feeling of insecurity to xenophobia. On the other hand, eleven respondents specified that the security level in the host country is clearly higher than in their country of origin.

### **Emancipation, One's Own Old Age, and Life Satisfaction**

As far as concerns emancipation, more in particular concerning gender roles and task division, it appears that the views of the female nationals and female migrants are largely identical. More in particular both groups in majority agree with 'modern' statements about gender roles and task divisions, such as 'Job is a way to independence for women' and 'Working women are highly respected'. A more mixed picture exists about the statements expressing 'traditional' views, - e.g. for the statement 'Family life suffers when the woman has a full time job' the nationals are somewhat more traditional, whereas for the statement 'What most women really want is a home and children' the migrant women are agreeing somewhat more.

With respect to provisions for old age, the expectations of nationals and migrant women for being taken care of in old age, there seems to be no salient difference: both population groups expect in large majority to be

helped by partner and/or children. However, a substantial part of the migrant women is not well preparing for their age of retirement and fears they won't be able to support themselves in old age. Moreover, the preferred age at retirement lies lower among the female migrants than among the female nationals. Migrant women are at a considerably higher risk of having poor work-related benefits at high age.

Regarding life satisfaction, the large majority both of the female nationals, aged 20-59, and the migrant women appear to be satisfied with most of the aspects that have been investigated. We find also identical associations between the satisfaction variables in both surveys and similar associations with some personal characteristics. However, in general, the satisfaction figures lie somewhat lower for the migrants than for the nationals. This is especially the case for household income.

### **Challenges of Survey Findings and Recommendations for Policies**

The surveys undertaken in the early 2000s show that the natives are concerned about the presence of foreigners and that the negative populist reactions to migrants are pervasive. The actual number of foreigners does not appear to matter at all. Countries such as Poland with 0.1% of foreigners, the Czech Republic, Hungary and Slovenia where foreigners account for roughly 2 percent of the total population, Germany with 9 percent, and Estonia with 26 percent of foreigners, all have in common that some two-thirds of their nationals are of the opinion that there are too many foreigners in their country. In Finland, where foreigners account for just under 2 percent one quarter of natives think that there are too many foreigners. In Austria where like in Germany foreigners account for some 9 percent of the population, 1 out of 2 natives thinks that there are too many.

Notwithstanding the existence of heterogeneity within the countries as well as between the countries, in general among nationals negative attitudes about immigration prevail over positive ones. The views that immigrants are needed as contributors to the host society are not shared by any significant number of native women in any of the studied countries.

The prevailing population climate indicates that migrants are expected more-or-less on their own to find their socio-economic place in the host society or else leave. Political participation of foreigners in local elections, largely promoted in policy circles, especially at the European level, is rejected by the overwhelming majority of natives.

Natives more often share views about threats and disadvantages that migrants bring, such as crime, terrorism, and loss of jobs for natives. On the basis of the general population climate in the host countries we can conclude that one of the pillars for successful integration of immigrants, their massive acceptance by the natives is remarkably fragile.

The population climate is however also underpinned by ambiguous attitudes of natives as there seems to be a significant minority that sees negative consequences of migration but that also extends the look beyond disadvantages of the presence of immigrants in their country. One third to almost one half – depending on the country – of the nationals agrees that the presence of foreigners is positive as it allows for cultural exchange.

Immigrant women themselves express a more positive perception of natives than the native women of immigrants. The majority of migrant women think that the natives are helpful. They appear to see themselves through the eyes of the natives in a more positive light than what the popular reaction to migrants show in our research. This feeling that they are positively seen by natives goes nevertheless hand in hand with the fact that the majority of migrant women are concerned about hostility towards foreigners. This concern is prevalent also among those who have not personally experienced discrimination. One third to one fourth experienced discrimination on the basis of being a migrant, having a different nationality or language. So here again, we identify a significant majority concerned over the generalised sense of hostility and a significant minority that has personally experienced discrimination.

We can conclude, on the basis of the selected key findings highlighted in this contribution, and those stemming from our broader research-based reflections, that there is great need for policy adaptation and reform to address all citizens, natives and immigrants.

- The national population needs to be targeted by the migration policy discourses in view of sensibilization, information, and education as to the real magnitude of the presence of immigrants, their potential for contribution to the host country and migrants' quest for permanence and integration.
- Measures which are proposed at highest policy level (or introduced) need to be well explained. By way of example, benefits for the host country of granting the right to vote in local elections to immigrants, right which is not favourably seen by the overwhelming majority of citizens, need to be well explained.

- There is a strong need for early assistance to immigrants in general and women in particular, immediately at arrival in the host country to shorten the painstaking integration and prevent lasting deskilling.
- Early assistance must include better guidance to access language courses and other skills to complement those with which immigrant women come and acquisition of knowledge and understanding of the basic values and norms of the host society. This quest comes from both sides – the native and immigrant women.
- Immigrant women need to become quickly equipped with knowledge about expectations of the host society regarding baseline norms and values, and civil and social rights (including access to pensions) available to the citizens in the host country.

### **The Follow up to the Two Surveys and Policy Relevant Conclusions**

Findings from the surveys of women third-country nationals residing in each of the 8 EU countries and from the survey among nationals regarding migration matters produced were summarized and sent to the focus group participants prior to the meeting.

Also included was a list of questions that were considered relevant for the debate so that the participants could reflect on them in advance. The questions were considered as a starting point from which further discussion, and further questions, could develop. They were:

- In your view, how can governments and European institutions best deal with the predominant or widely spread negative attitudes towards immigrants?
- In your view, what are the advantages of immigration for our societies?
- In your view, what are the most important elements for a successful integration of women migrants? Which skills do they need to have?
- In your view, are there gender-specific measures to facilitate integration of women migrants?
- From your personal experience and work, how have you experienced discrimination and exploitation of women immigrants?
- How to assist women who are experiencing discrimination and exploitation?
- How can deskilling be prevented or avoided?

- How can national and European institutions facilitate access to social protection and especially pension rights for migrant women?
- In your view, should European institutions, such as the Parliament and the EC, have a stronger role in defining the framework for immigration policies?

Some of the most salient issues raised and conclusions drawn as they relate to the policy choices which should be made at national and European level may be summarized as follows:

- There needs to be more clarity at the state level as to how immigration is perceived and how the message is passed to the population. It does not suffice to acknowledge that Europeans are ageing, that we need immigrants to do some jobs, and to implicitly pass the message that we predominantly need somebody to do the 'dirty jobs' or to fill-in the needs in professions in which governments have underinvested in the past.
- A coherent migration policy and clarity about the overall role of immigrants in European societies is needed at all levels of governance also in view to counter people's fears. All too often, public authorities, as well as political parties, and media send out mixed messages about immigration, or even inflame xenophobic reactions by associating the sense of socio-economic and personal insecurity with the presence of foreigners.
- New issues in the migration debate which are coming to the policy fore, such as the blue card, circular migration, the need for attracting highly skilled workers, need to be addressed together with the 'old' issues such as the recruitment and integration of unskilled labour.
- Migratory movements and immigration policy are growingly complex. The concept of 'migrant' refers to many situations and is often confusing. There is a different immigrant population in the western part of Europe and in the eastern part. There is also a difference between migrants from third countries and migrants from eastern member states to the western part.
- The emigration from eastern member states creates in these countries a need for immigration from other eastern European countries. There is no completely free (labour) movement within the EU (from new member states to the old ones) and moreover, in the member states, there is no integration policy for migrants from other EU countries. The early policy assumption that migrants from the new member states would remain only temporarily for seasonal or other temporary jobs, was proven wrong. Xenophobic reactions emerge now also towards eastern European workers from member states and are voiced as 'our own unemployed should get priority'.

- Migration biographies of women and men are quite different. Although women immigrants are a heterogeneous group, they need gender-specific support. This is important because in addition to general integration policies, specific measures need to be tailored for a variety of situations in which immigrant women find themselves.
- Most female immigrants have in recent decades come to the EU via family formation or family re-unification. Immigration to the West implies for many immigrants considerable changes in traditional family roles, both for men and women. Access to affordable language courses and information about the fundamental features and values and norms of the host society are basic types of support that public authorities need to provide.
- Although forcing people to take language classes, raises several perplexities, an obligation may be a facilitating factor, especially for women from more traditional families, to allow them to become more involved in the society in their own right.
- The heterogeneity of immigrant women, as it affects needs for specific support, was saliently described by a woman active at grass-root level "We support immigrant girls and women. Their needs are very different. Sometimes we support them as women, sometimes as mothers, sometimes as immigrants. We have different projects to support them on their way to emancipation or integration. That is not always the same thing. Sometimes emancipation within their own ethnic group is necessary, sometimes we have projects with their husbands, to prepare the grounds and enable the integration process."
- Immigrant women who come with higher level education experience that their diplomas are not recognized and that they are obliged to do jobs below their initial education. Acceptance of deskilling may be considered as an adaptation survival strategy since for many women the priority is to start earning a salary. However, if immigrants with higher education get trapped in unskilled jobs, after some time they lose their capacity to integrate at the level of higher skill jobs which corresponds to their initial education. This depreciation of skills with which immigrant women come, results in a loss of human capital, for the immigrant as well as for the host society.
- Many immigrant women are not well preparing for old age or are not expecting a secure pension. This is a serious problem, especially since many are working either in weak economic sectors, or are working in the grey (black) economy. Many lack appropriate knowledge about the opportunities and necessities to prepare for retirement.

- For the economically active women there is a growing need for the portability of pension rights, i.e. taking along pension rights and social benefits from one country to another, both in cases of longer-term and in cases of seasonal and circular migration.
- A migrant woman, third-country national, summarised saliently challenges and responsibilities for integration policies: "... how to put all the issues together: deskilling, immigrants getting a job, pensions? To tackle the pension issues, the problem should be dealt with in the beginning starting with access to jobs and recognizing diplomas. In this respect a big part of the integration of migrants is also a responsibility of the host country and its institutions. If you say that immigrants should work, but their diplomas are not recognized, how can they perform well? When immigrants have many language schools from which to choose but the courses are unaffordable how can they cope? And then there are the bilateral relations between countries for recognizing diplomas, social protection, and pension rights... these are all issues outside the control of individual immigrants. We should not focus only on the migrants themselves and forget the role of the host country. The biggest responsibility for their choices are in the hands of immigrant women themselves, it is their life after all, but let's not forget the responsibility of the host society".
- The importance of European institutions and actors in defining standards and the framework conditions for the effective immigration and integration policies cannot be overestimated. In view of the diversity of national legal frameworks and practices, some of which are ineffective and/or inappropriate, more convergence towards good practices in legislation and policy formulation and implementation are a must. The universality of challenges associated with the management of immigration, be it legal or illegal, humanitarian-driven or planned, and integration of large numbers of people on the move require involvement of many actors. High level institutions such as the European Parliament and the European Commission are well placed to ensure that the gender aspects of immigration and integration of women migrants gain centrality in policy formulation.

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***Dragana Avramov***

**Integration of Immigrants: A Two Way Process**

*S u m m a r y*

This paper builds on the surveys undertaken under the FEMAGE project in eight countries (the Czech Republic, Germany, Estonia, Hungary, Austria, Poland, Slovenia, and Finland) among natives on attitudes about migration and immigrants, interviews in these countries with immigrant women about their migration experiences, and policy deliberations among European stakeholders about policy options for addressing needs for immigrants in ageing societies and needs for their integration in the new home country.

In this paper we have chosen to first address five critical questions:

- How native and migrant women see each other?

- How is need for migration viewed?
- How is integration perceived?
- What are the perceptions and experiences of discrimination?
- Emancipation and perceptions of one's own old age, and life satisfaction

Then we identify policy implications of our survey findings. Finally, we discuss policy choices and draw conclusions about needs for tailoring of integration policies based on the reflexive approach and involvement of the key policy stakeholders active in European institutions and multipliers such as international NGOs and media.

**Key words:** *immigration, population ageing, feminization of migration, integration of immigrants, migration policies*

**Dragana Avramov**

### **Integracija migranata: dvosmerni process**

#### *Rezi me*

Rad se zasniva na podacima istraživanja FEMAGE projekta sprovedenog u osam zemalja (Česka, Nemačka, Estonija, Mađarska, Austrija, Poljska, Slovenija i Finska) među autohtonim stanovnicima o stavovima prema migracijama i imigrantima; intervjuima sa ženama imigrantima nastanjenim u tim zemljama o njihovim migracionom iskustvu, i političkim deliberacijama među ključnim akterima na evropskom nivou o političkim opcijama u cilju usklađivanja potreba za imigracijom u društvima čije stanovništvo stari, i potrebama migranata da se integrišu u novoj domovini.

U ovom radu prvo postavljamo pet kritičnih pitanja:

- Kako se uzajamno vide autohtoni stanovnici i žene imigranti?
- Kako ocenjuju potrebu za imigrantima?
- Kako gledaju na integraciju imigranata?
- Kako sagledavaju i ocenjuju iskustva diskriminacije?
- Kakva je veza između emancipacije i viđenja sopstvenog starenja i osećaja zadovoljsva svojim životom?

Potom razmatramo političke implikacije ključnih nalaza iz naših istraživanja. Na kraju diskutujemo o političkim opcijama i iznosimo zaključke o načinima da se usklade integracione politike. Zaključci počivaju na refleksivnom metodološkom postupku u koji su uključeni ključni politički akteri iz evropskih institucija i multiplikatori kao što su međunarodne nevladine organizacije i mediji.

**Ključne reči:** *imigracija, starenje stanovništva, feminizacija migracija, integracija imigranata, migracione politike*