Ticking boxes and clocking in: A critical view of gender mainstreaming in labour-market integration

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Ticking boxes and clocking in: A critical view of gender mainstreaming in labour-market integration

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ABSTRACT
Mainstreaming is a popular approach when seeking to address societal inequalities. Gender and migrant integration are mainstreamed within EU policy, both seeking to increase labour market participation as a means to redress inequality. However, there are limited references to migrant women within gender equality or integration policies at the EU level. The study dissects a subset of migrant integration projects in Sweden – a country lauded for having Europe's best integration policy while exhibiting the poorest results. The authors used non-participant observation and semi-structured interviews to identify pitfalls such as embedded stereotyping, undervaluation of cultural motivations, gender-washing, and methodological misalignment. Their findings show that gender and integration mainstreaming within the EU systematically position migrant women as a problem, despite the significantly important role they play within global labour markets. The authors conclude that migrant women may need to be included within gender and integration policy beyond the labour market.

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Introduction

We live in times of mainstreaming. As an approach, mainstreaming has been adopted through a great diversity of different initiatives, all with the best of intentions but with their own sets of challenges. The global adoption of the sustainable development goals, for instance, has sought to mainstream the greening of global, national, and local policy. This has included the mainstreaming of, for example, transdisciplinarity (Jahn et al. 2012), environmentalism (Gazzola 2013), fair trade (Low & Davenport 2007), biodiversity (Pierce et al. 2002), immunisation (Nyirenda & Flikke 2012), disability (Skarstad & Stein 2017), education (Higbee et al. 2010), immigration (Scholten 2019), and, most notably, gender (Moser & Moser 2005; Walby 2005).

The term 'mainstreaming', rich with promise, has become popular within public policy circles. However,

it has also become trivialised through repeated use, resulting in the meaning behind the approach becoming diluted and loosing clarity (Arora-Jonsson & Sijapati 2018; Meier 2018). Together, the loss of clarity and a great diversity of applications results in mainstreaming efforts that are confused and tempestuous (Moser & Moser 2005; Scoville-Simonds et al. 2020). In the same way in which a duck conceals its panicked legs below the water, a large body of still water can conceal a great deal of turbulence beneath – the mainstream shifts with the ebb and flow of the coalitions that sustain it.

Whilst mainstreaming deals with policy, the policies themselves directly impact upon the lives of real people. For example, gender or migrant integration mainstreaming seeks to directly impact upon women and/or migrants and their ability to gaining equality within their host countries. However, if mainstreaming

can mask the turbulence that exists within one stream (either gender or migrant integration), how does the approach fair when dealing with two streams simultaneously, and how do women migrants fair in the context of both gender and migrant integration mainstreaming? Therefore, the aim of this study is to explore the impact of mainstreaming gender equality, as directed by EU policies and strategies, in practice (i.e. within the on-ground local projects that seek to assist with the integration of migrant women[1] in Europe). Departing from a case study from Sweden, we pursue our aim by addressing two research questions: (1) How do labour market integration project leaders think about gender? (2) To what extent does EU gender and migrant policy contribute to the societal perceptions of migrant women? By so doing, we want to contribute to a deeper understanding of strengths and pitfalls of mainstreaming gender and migrant integration through participation in the labour market.

This paper begins by describing how gender mainstreaming has been enacted through policy and strategy at the EU level, and how gender mainstreaming has been adopted within migration and integration policy. We set out how gender is not always adequately addressed within migration and integration policy, nor how migration and integration policies make specific and direct considerations for migrant women. Using a case study of an EU-funded project in Sweden, we explore how despite Sweden having the best gender equality policy and migrant integration policy in Europe (Migrant Integration Policy Index 2019; 2020a; European Institute for Gender Equality n.d.), projects may still fail to address the needs of migrant women adequately in relation to the labour market. Our results and analysis provide four key thematic areas, which we then discuss in relation to the theoretical contexts: methodological misalignment (intersectionality), gender washing (commodification of migrants), cultural motivations (workfare), and stereotyping (both as a thematic and theoretical discussion) in the macro context of EU policy. In conclusion, we demonstrate how a focus on the labour market participation within both gender equality and migrant integration policy, at the EU and national level, may reinforce stereotypes and perceptions of migrant women.

Mainstreaming through the labour market

Gender mainstreaming within the European Union

The idea of gender mainstreaming was introduced within the EU as early as 1990, with the introduction of the Third Community Action Programme on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men, recognising that 'existing policies were failing to have any impact on the majority of women's lives and lacked coherence' (Bennett & Booth 2002, 439). In 1995 gender mainstreaming entered the core of international public policy at the 1995 Platform for Action of the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing. The platform secured the commitment of governments and United Nations institutions to incorporate a gender perspective in all policy-making areas (Pollack & Hafner-Burton 2000).

The EU is a pioneer in developing gender mainstreaming following the Beijing Declaration of 1995, putting mainstreaming equality onto the political policy agenda of member states and of explaining the process of implementation (Bennett & Booth 2002; Verloo 2005). The EU defines gender mainstreaming as: 'Equality between women and men is recognised by the EU as a fundamental right, a common value of the EU, and a necessary condition for the achievement of the EU objectives of growth, employment, and social cohesion' (European Institute for Gender Equality 2021).

Gender mainstreaming involves two reference frames, namely gender equality and mainstreaming. In many debates about gender mainstreaming, 'the conceptualization of this dualism between gender equality and the mainstream is central' (Walby 2005, 323). This mix of compromise and contestation can be analysed in various ways and its outcomes can be evaluated in multiple registers in different theories (Minto & Mergaert 2018). Also, when evaluating the outcomes of gender mainstreaming, there has been much debate regarding how 'success' should be defined. When it comes to gender mainstreaming there is no static definition of its success as what is perceived as possible is a social construct (Walby 2005). In other words, because gender mainstreaming focuses on the process its implementation is left open to varying interpretations with never-ending implications.

Moreover, experiences of gender mainstreaming have been mixed, leading to considerable debate about whether or not mainstreaming is a strategy worth pursuing (Bacchi & Eveline 2009). It has even been argued that 'gender mainstreaming has become a goal in its own right' (Andersson 2018, 458), which is in direct opposition to the EU's assertion that, 'Gender mainstreaming is not a policy goal in itself, but a means to achieve gender equality' (European Institute for Gender Equality 2021).

In Europe, one of the major issues of gender mainstreaming is the relationship of gender mainstreaming with other 'complex inequalities', such as ethnicity, class,

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[1]A migrant is defined as any person who is moving/has moved across an international border away from his/her habitual place of residence, regardless of their legal status, motive or length of stay (International Organization for Migration n.d.)

disability, faith, sexual orientation and age (Walby 2005). These complex inequalities are also mainstreamed at the European level in their own right. However, as will now be explored using the examples of gender mainstreaming and integration mainstreaming, difficulties are present when mainstreaming of two complex inequalities overlap.

Gender mainstreaming and migrant integration

Despite the European Commission's reference, in its *Strategic Engagement for Gender Equality 2016–2019*, to the impact that migration and integration was having upon its efforts to achieve gender equality within the EU (European Commission 2015), neither migration nor integration were included as priority areas within the EU Gender Equality Strategy of 2020–2025 (European Commission 2020), with the issue of migration is only mentioned with regards to the funding of specific actions aimed at migrant women and gender-based violence. Within the strategy, this represents a move towards intersectionality in EU policies and a gender-equal economy:

> Women's employment rate in the EU is higher today than ever before, yet many women still experience barriers to joining and remaining in the labour market. Some women are structurally underrepresented in the labour market, often resulting from the intersection of gender with additional conditions of vulnerability or marginalisation such as belonging to an ethnic or religious minority or having a migrant background. (European Commission 2020, 7)

Moreover, the association between gender equality in migration and integration, women's positions in labour markets, and the association between migration and gender-based violence show a specific problematisation of the question of migration and gender (European Institute for Gender Equality 2020).

The discussion of migrant women within the context of labour markets represents not only the importance that the EU's gender mainstreaming policies have placed on the labour market, but also signposts that participation in the labour market is considered one of two key steps to achieving full integration into a host country (European Commission 2018) (the other being the mastering of the host country's language).

Discrepancies exist between native-born women and women born outside the EU in their participation in tertiary education and employment, and the levels of employed persons who are overqualified for their positions. Migrant women are seen to have the worst outcomes within each of these indicators, as they more commonly take on family and childcare obligations (Williams 2012). Moreover, migrant women are more likely to be overqualified for the entry-level low-skilled jobs, typically in domestic roles, if employed at all. In part, both can be attributed to the problems migrant women encountered in getting their studies recognised and are less likely to have their skills formally certified than men (European Women's Lobby 2007). As such, migrant women face far more challenges than men when accessing the labour market, and therefore integrating as both migrants and women, a double disadvantaged that is consistently confirmed by research on this topic (Dumont & Isoppo 2005).

Whilst women migrate to the EU for different reasons, more women than men are admitted under family reunification arrangements, often having to wait more than a year before they can legally access the labour market (European Commission 2018). Arriving by this means also results in less structured integration, language, and training programmes than those provided for male economic migrants or male refugees (Liebig & Tronstad 2018).

Despite women accounting for 51.4% of migrants to Europe in 2019, a trend that has not changed significantly over the last 60 years (Migration Data Portal 2020), gender equality policy in the EU remains mainly void of specific consideration for migrant women. Moreover, women are not specifically discussed as a priority within the Action Plan on the Integration of Third Country Nationals (European Commission 2016), mirroring the works of its predecessor, the European Agenda for the Integration of Third-Country Nationals (European Commission 2011).

Despite the EU's commitment to mainstreaming gender equality in all areas of policy, the arena of migration has not been included within this development (Kofman et al. 2000). Moreover, Kofman et al. (2000) go as far as to suggest that EU policy towards migrant women only deals with migrants in the most general sense and, as such, is considered 'gender-blind', and when women are considered, it is only in a position of vulnerability or dependency upon a male.

Policies concerning mainstreaming do not cope well when more than one area is to be mainstreamed, for example, gender, and migration. As we have alluded to, migrant women are not well considered within neither the gender equality or integration and migration strategies at the EU level, despite the labour market being the focus of integration efforts and there being a body of evidence to show that migrant women are underrepresented and underpaid in the labour market.

Study area

To explore the impact of labour market related mainstreaming for gender equality upon migrant women in Europe, a Swedish project has been chosen as a case

study. Sweden provides an interesting static variable in this is dimension, as it is considered the most successful country within the EU with regards to achieving gender equality.[2] Sweden scores 83.6 out of 100 on its equality matrix, compared to the EU average of 67.4 (European Institute for Gender Equality n.d.). Given Sweden's success around gender equality, we position migrant integration as the changeable independent variable within the study.

In the same way that the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) has developed a model to measure the relative success of gender equality within the EU member states, Migrant Integration Policy Index (MIPEX) provides a model for evaluating migrant integration policy (Migrant Integration Policy Index 2020b). MIPEX evaluates 52 countries, including all EU member states, across 8 policy areas, which have been developed to create a multidimensional picture of migrants' opportunities to participate in their host societies. As such, MIPEX is a useful tool to evaluate and compare what governments are doing to promote the integration of migrants in their countries.

However, MIPEX only focuses on the policies for migrant integration, and not the success of the policies

in practice. Therefore, MIPEX evaluations need to be compared statistics, such as those provided by Eurostat Statistics Explained (2019), the statistical office of the EU. Eurostat provides high quality quantitative data on Europe across multiple themes, such as population and social conditions, which includes the labour market, social inclusion, migration, and income.

When comparisons are made between the MIPEX scores and Eurostat's data Sweden holds a unique contradiction. It is lauded as having the 'best' policy in Europe for migrant integration (Migrant Integration Policy Index 2019), but its outcomes are amongst some of the poorest (Eurostat Statistics Explained 2019). Figure 1 shows how 13 European nations ranked in with regards to their MIPEX and EIGE gender equality index scores in 2020, along with the percentage point differences between the numbers of native- and non-EU-born women in employment (Eurostat Statistics Explained 2019).

Sweden scores 78 overall (out of 100) for its integration policy, and 98 for its policy on labour market mobility. However, Sweden has the largest (of OECD countries) gap between migrant and native-born employment levels, with 57% of 15–74-year-olds born outside of Sweden having a job, compared to 67% of
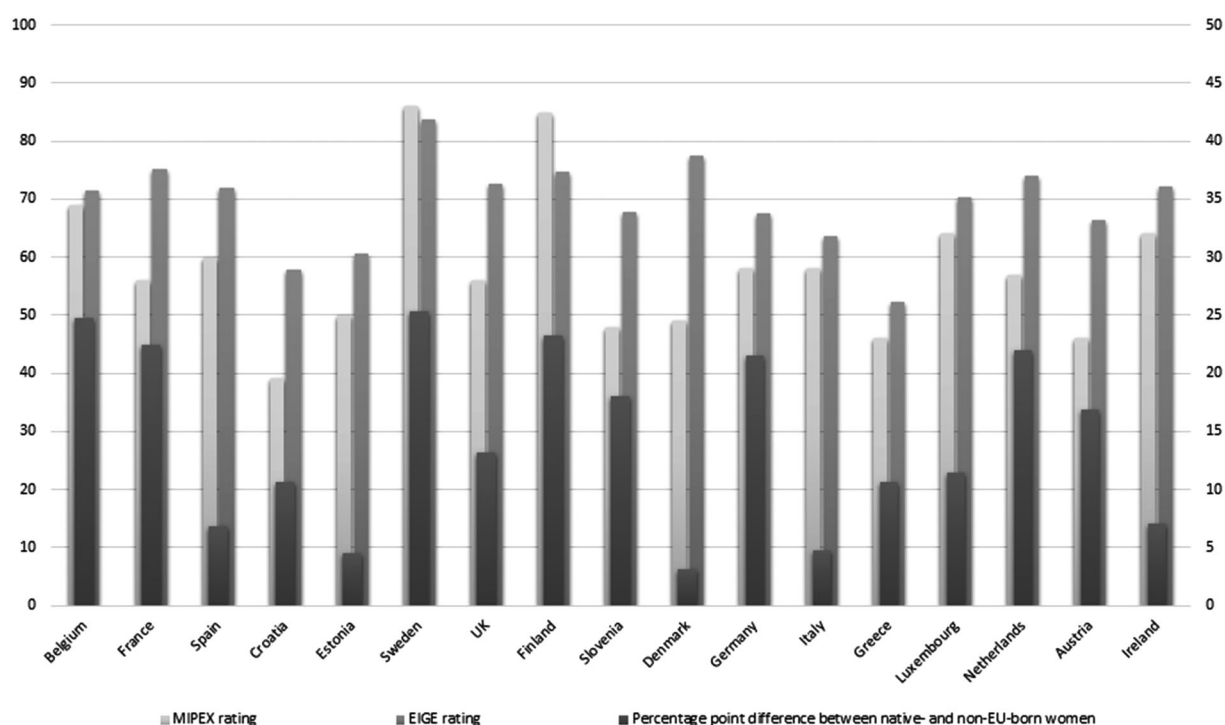
Fig. 1. Migrant Integration Policy Index ranking (Migrant Integration Policy Index 2019), Gender Equity Index ranking (European Institute for Gender Equality n.d.), and percentage point difference between native and non-EU-born women in employment (Eurostat Statistics Explained 2019) by country

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[2]Quantitative measures only tell part of the 'truth' with regards to gender equality, as opposed to more qualitative indicators and assessments (cf. Cook & Reichardt 1979; Canadian International Development Agency 1997; Bastia 2000).

native-born Swedes (OECD 2014; Eurostat Statistics Explained 2019).

In line to the European Institute for Gender Equality's Gender Equality Index (European Institute for Gender Equality n.d.), Eurostat data shows that, in Sweden, native-born men's and women's employment rates are both the highest and most equal in Europe. However, when employment levels are explored for Sweden's migrant population, the gaps between the employment levels of the native-born and foreign-born populations are amongst the highest in Europe. The gap is even greater when the data is analysed according to place of birth, with the percentage point gap between native-born and non-EU-born women in employment being one of the greatest in Europe.

Sweden's rate for non-EU-born migrant women's employment is above the European average, of 54.8%. It could be interpreted that the gap between non-EU-born and native women's employment levels is due to the extremely high levels of native women's employment rates. In other EU countries levels of native women's employment are not so high, for example the employment rates in Spain are 63% and 56.2%, and Italy 54.3% and 49.5% for native and non-EU-born women respectively (Eurostat Statistics Explained 2019). These statistics reflect a failure in gender policy to engage women in the labour market, irrespective of their country of birth. However, given Sweden's high rate of native women's employment we assert that Sweden's gender policy means that the context is favourable and successful in engaging women in the labour market. Therefore, their failure to increase the numbers of non-EU-born women in employment reflects in migrant integration policy.

The employment rates (%) for the population aged 20–64 years by country of birth and by sex for Sweden are detailed within Table 1. As such, Sweden provides a cogent example of how, despite exemplary national policy, migrant women experience poorer outcomes compared to migrant men and native-born women. In the same way in which this study uses Sweden as a national example within the EU policy framework, to understand Swedish policy 'in the making' fully one must explore the microscale of the various local projects and subprojects that enact it. To do so, we turn to the outskirts to Sweden's second-largest city of Gothenburg, with 610,000 inhabitants. Gothenburg's 'North-East'

(Nordöstra Göteborg) is an informal conglomerate of physically detached city districts north-east of Gothenburg, Angered, Östra Göteborg and Norra Hisingen, which share similar characteristics with regards to migrant population numbers, educational attainment, unemployment, health, and crime (Fig. 2).

Our specific case study revolves around a project launched in this area. The project, called Urban Rural Gothenburg (URG), was a three-year municipal project (2017–2020), partially funded by the EU (at 40%). The overarching aim of the project was to create conditions for green business development and innovation by utilising unused skills (an unemployed workforce), and natural resources (green city fringe areas) for the sustainable development of local communities.

Within the purview of URG, one specific subproject served as our initial case study. The subproject, called Green Integration, was developed as an outreach programme to assist in the integration of migrants by aiding them in creating jobs within 'green business development' Green Integration focused on an NGO in Gothenburg's 'North-East' conglommerate, its local host. The NGO was a visitor centre, a self-declared multicultural meeting place for residents, regardless of their gender, nationality, religion, or sexual orientation.

The visitor centre's staff estimated that at the start of the research period, autumn 2018, c.125 people visited the centre on a regular basis. The gender split was c.50 men and c.50 women, with half of the visitors aged over 40 years. According to the visitor centre staff, more than half of their visitors had attended formal primary education, but this was only for a period of two to six years. Only one in five had employment which required some form of specialist training. Moreover, only 50% of visitors had a permanent residence permit, with right to live and work in Sweden. The other 50% were refugees awaiting the outcome of their residency applications, therefore had no legal right to work or recourse for other integration activities to promote labour market integration, such as free Swedish language training.

Methodology

The research topic discussed in this paper is a complex one. It evokes powerful feelings and associations,

Table 1. Employment rates (%) for the population in the age group 20–64 years in Sweden by place of birth (Sweden, EU and non-EU) and sex (Eurostat Statistics Explained 2019)

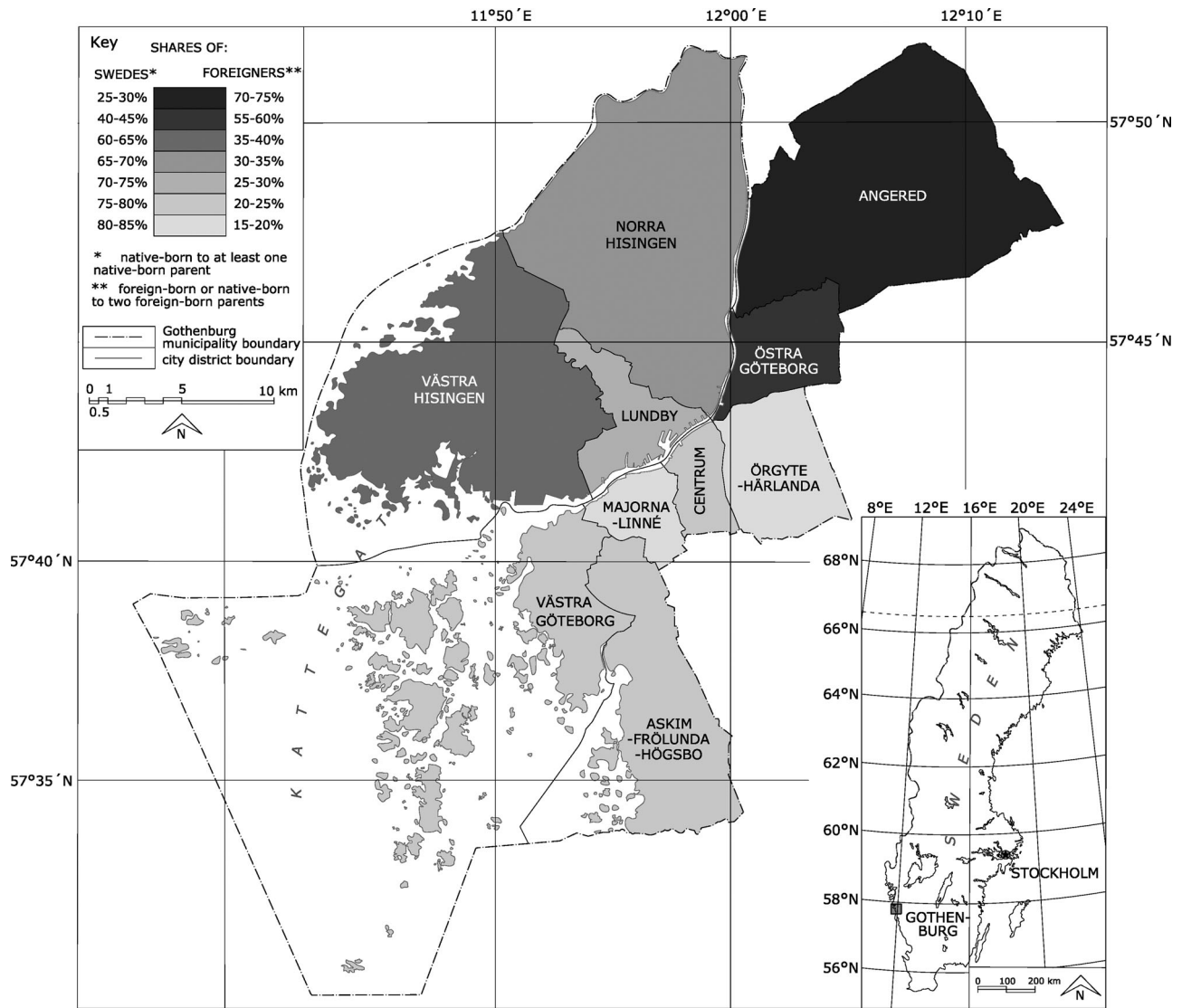| | Native-born | | | Foreign-born | | | Born outside Sweden | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | EU-born | | | Non-EU-born | | |
Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women
86.2	87.2	85.0	69.7	75.7	63.4	81.1	85.3	77.4	66.5	73.3	59.3

Fig. 2. Residential distribution of Swedes and foreigners within neighbourhoods and city districts of Gothenburg (based on Arsovski 2020)

remaining firmly entrenched in notions of space, place, and society. Ideas about gender, migration and integration are also highly politicised, often mixing probing scholarly insights with facile political points into an amorphous amassment of knowledge whose gamut is theoretically diverse, if not outright disparate. To avoid falling into the trap of preconception or even prejudice, but also to honour the context-sensitivity this topic requires, our study adopts an inductive research design. Inductive research involves the search for regularities, patterns, and themes from observation. Only once these have been identified, can the researcher engage with the theory to construe and develop possible explanations (O'Leary 2007; Woodwell 2014). Despite this being an inductive study per rationale, it does contain cycles of both inductive and deductive reasoning. Our research began with observations of Green Integration. We then

committed to engage with different theories in the broader fields of gender and integration.

Our approach to non-participation involved one of the authors sitting in on all five formal meetings that took place at the visitor centre with migrant women as part of Green Integration and being present on four occasions at the visitor centre when the Green Integration representative was present at the visitor centre for drop-in sessions. In line with canons of non-participation, the researcher had no engagement or interaction with the migrant women or other visitors to the centre, nor members of the project team during those meetings. Rather, the researcher positioned themselves at the periphery of their meetings, and thus observed and took written notes throughout the meetings.

Our first observation of Green Integration was at its first three meetings, in which the project was

being introduced to users of the visitor centre, who had been invited to the meeting by the visitor centre's staff. Green Integration was presented to the attendees by the three members of the project team, who also introduced the researcher and their role, which was to follow the project, with special consideration being given to the attendees. The researcher's role had already been introduced to the visitor centre' staff members. Both the attendees and staff members were accepting of the researcher. During these initial meetings the researcher attempted to engage the attendees in conversation to discuss their experiences of labour market integration projects. However, it was clear to the authors very early on in the study that migrant attendees, particularly the women, were not willing to engage in conversation with, and as such would be difficult to interview as part of the research.

Returning to our inductive research approach and the observations gathered from the first three meetings, we were able to identify a research aim and question which put focus on the integration subproject leaders themselves and not the migrants themselves. Project leaders were identified as key stakeholders within the process of migrant labour market integration as they held a great deal of influence over the ways in which projects are implemented and, possibly more importantly to the present study, were very experienced in working with migrant women and therefore were able to convey the women's needs, experiences and reflections on the integration process. Using an inductive research design has therefore allowed us to identify a research gap, which might have been created due to the research area being overly influenced by the use of 'grand theories', and thus was insensitive to the nicks of reality.

The empirical part of the study, as mentioned above, was conducted in two phases. The first phase corresponded to an observational period (eight months), followed by a second explorative phase, consisting of an intensive two-months period, in which the initial findings from the first phase were amalgamated using more focused methods of qualitative research. As such, this research utilised a mixed methods approach, which employed two distinct types of data collection, non-participant observation and semi-structured interviews, integrated through framework analysis to create a single set of coded data (cf. Teddlie & Tashakkori 2003). The framework method sits broadly within thematic or qualitative content analysis and identifies commonalities and differences in qualitative data prior to exploring relationships between different parts of the data, thus seeking to provide explanatory or descriptive conclusions around themes (Gale et al. 2013).

Phase one

Phase one of the study consisted of an eight-month period focused on the visitor centre and the Green Integration project. A researcher, the lead author of this paper, was assigned to the subproject to document its development, an appointment that was approved by the visitor centre management and confirmed with the visitor centre participants.

Non-participant observation was chosen as the best method to better understand the processes at play within Green Integration by letting them unfold in a non-invasive manner. It was also appropriate for unpacking relationships that stakeholders may be unable to identify themselves, and as such likely to be omitted within self-reporting data collection methods (Lui & Maitlis 2012). Furthermore, a non-participatory approach ensured that interference from the researcher in the observed processes was maximally reduced (O'Reilly 2009), without undermining the trust that may have been built between the subprojects and the migrant women that they are engaged with.

Phase one spanned the entirety of Green Integration, from initiation to its petering out. The assigned researcher was present at 10 meetings held at the visitor centre and was involved with many discussions (25) with the wider Green Integration team as the subproject developed. The migrant women were informed of the researcher's role within the first three meetings of Green Integration, as the visitor centre staff were informed of the researcher's position, they were able to inform other visitors who were not aware of the researcher's role in the Green Integration project.

In line with expectations of non-participation, the researcher had no engagement or interaction with the migrants or other visitors to the centre, nor members of the project team during those meetings. Rather, the researcher positioned themselves at the periphery of their meetings. Extensive field notes were taken during any observations and interactions that the researcher partook in or was privy to, which concerned the subproject, its actors, and its participants. A research diary was also kept allowing for critical reflection and wider contextualisation of the interactions and events that occurred.

Through the transcription and coding of the field notes from phase one of the study, two key themes were identified, which impacted upon the ways in which migrant integration policy impacted upon migrants' successful participation in the labour market.

These two themes were trust and gender. Whilst trust is described in a separate manuscript,[3] the study was developed to allow for the exploration of gender as a determining factor in how migrants participated within the labour market, as a key marker of successful integration.

As phase one formed the exploratory phase of the study, conducted to determine the nature of the problems concerning migrant women (Singh 2007), it laid the groundwork for phase two. This conclusive phase assumed an explanatory research design (Robson 2002) by focusing on how subprojects consider and engage with the needs of migrant women entering the labour market.

Phase two

The second phase of the study consisted of semi-structured interviews with the leaders of parallel integration subprojects under the URG umbrella. The eight subprojects were identified as those who sought to develop the conditions for migrant integration.

The broad theme of gender that emerged during phase one of the study was returned to, and further coded to characterise subthemes which then formed the basis of the exploratory questions within the follow-up interviews (cf. Cresswell 2003). Semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions encouraged participants to discuss the methods through which their projects sought to: (1) encourage migrant women's engagement with participation in the labour market; (2) understand why the projects were considered important in the wider social context; and (3) analyse what challenges or benefits they saw from targeting migrant women as a selective group (Rabionet 2011). The interviews were conducted within the subproject leaders'

places of employment (7), over the telephone (1) and at the subleader's residence (1), lasting between one and three-and-a-half hours. Interviews were transcribed ad verbatim and interpolated with the field notes.

The combined data was coded multiple times: first, by means of manually highlighting values within the transcripts, and second using ATLAS.ti version 8 to develop codes and categories within the data (axial coding) until the point of saturation was reached (Crittenden & Hill 1971). To guarantee anonymity, each interviewee was identified by a participant numbers ('P' number), along with their ages, genders, countries of origin, and respective roles within the subproject (Table 2).

Results and analysis

Drawing from the coding of field notes and interview transcripts, four main themes could be distinguished. These four themes are explored below in an analytical discussion informed by eclectic theoretical frameworks, set out to grasp the hidden challenges of gender mainstreaming in a concrete case. Being such a diverse and difficult research problem, we acknowledge that our analysis is unlikely to satisfy any particular standards in terms of completeness, especially within the concise format of an academic paper. By making our case, we welcome more research on the topic and more analytical unpacking of its many intricacies.

Methodological misalignment

The most common 'point of entry' for both government and non-government programmes into migrant communities is through community-based organisations (Wagemakers et al. 2015). Whilst community engagement is

Table 2. Interviewees' study identifiers, demographics and roles

Identifier	Gender	Age (Years)	Country of origin	Role
P1	Female	26–30	Sweden	Development manager within the EU-funded project Urban Rural Gothenburg, initiator, and manager of a community centre in an area with a high number of migrants
P2	Female	46–50	Former Yugoslavia	Sustainability strategist for the EU-funded project Urban Rural Gothenburg
P3	Female	51–55	Sweden	Social entrepreneur and practitioner working with stakeholder development and the offer of local experiences
P4	Female	36–40	Sweden	Researcher with experience from participation in labour market integration projects and food tourism
P5	Male	46–50	Chile	Practitioner implementing a labour market integration project within the regional government structure
P6	Male	60–65	Sweden	Founder of a community development project
P7	Female	46–50	Sweden	Researcher in collaborative product and method development
P8	Female	56–60	Iraq	Human rights activist and lawyer, employed by an enterprise agency assisting 'would-be' migrant entrepreneurs
P9	Female	31–35	Kenya	Visiting researcher from sub-Saharan Africa, leader of transboundary projects on gender

[3]'Outsourcing and the policy-outcome disconnect: A micro-level analysis of the Swedish integration programme in action' unpublished manuscript by Shelley Kotze and Mirek Dymitrow.

ideally a collaborative process, in practice, it is usually led only by the organisation. As such, community engagement can be used to coerce project participation without identifying local needs or using local capacities. Thus, a key issue within community-based engagement is whether projects want to empower the migrant community or to just promote project participation within an already funded organisation (Laverack 2017).

Within our study we identified that the subprojects were more led by the organisations, than driven by the needs of the migrant women or the migrant women themselves. This was expressed through the inability or unwillingness of some of the subproject leaders to adapt their methodological approaches to the demographics and needs of their participants. Given the design of the study, this analysis is drawn from observations of engagement with migrant women, interviews with the subproject leaders, and P9 (a visiting researcher from Kenya who had experience in migration to Kenya from its bordering countries, such as Somalia and South Sudan).

When engaging with groups of Somali women within Green Integration, an interpreter was needed, whereupon the subproject leader, invited a male interpreter. The majority Somali women felt uneasy having to speak through him, shown by hiding their faces, avoiding eye contact, and engaging in lesser discussion than in previous meetings where informal interpretation had been undertaken by Swedish/Somali-speaking women within the group.

Another misalignment was scheduling meetings on the same days as cultural and religious events elsewhere in the community, which resulted in proportionally very low participation rates. The subproject leader also gave little consideration for the education and literacy levels of the migrant women, as was demonstrated with the handing out of written material to a majority illiterate group and the signposting to Swedish-only resources. Whilst an effort was made to translate the text into their mother tongue, it did not negate the women's illiteracy.

Moreover, three respondents alluded to a need for better engagement with the methodological approaches that the migrant women would be more familiar with. It was suggested that working in a more hands-on and interactive manner, with simple tasks that all participants could perform, and which would enhance engagement, as well as developing role-modelling through the involvement of practitioners whose identities were closer to those of the migrant women:

> What we see is that they are super confident working on their own, but when they come to the Swedish society, they don't know how to speak […] I think language is one problem, but it's also that they are always, 'We need somebody from Sweden to speak for us. You explain so clearly what we are doing […]' That's their culture. So, I, as a Swede, have to stand beside them and we work together, instead of being in front them and telling them to run or walk. We walk together. (P7)

Within Green Integration the subproject leader was unable to formatively shift their methodological approach from speaking to a group from in front of a whiteboard. Only one effort to recruit role models was sought. The suggestion from other interviewees was that people's memories are very short, and once they become integrated there is little reflection on how they can assist those newly arrived in Sweden. This is associated with the limitations of the human memory. As Nora (1989, 12) argues, the concept of 'spontaneous memory' does not exist, and so 'we must deliberately create archives, maintain anniversaries, organize celebrations, pronounce eulogies, and notarize bills because such activities no longer occur naturally'. Moreover, this reflects a lack of interest back onto the migrants themselves and fails to address the shortcomings of the methodological approaches adopted within the subproject.

As such, the majority of the studied subprojects fall foul of Laverack's criticism, where the inclusion of migrant women as a focus group becomes tokenistic, akin to gender-washing, which we discuss as the next theme (Laverack 2017). A lack of consideration about the needs of migrant women calls for a greater need of intersectionality, which would recognise migrant women as a subgroup of migrants, as a subgroup of women, and as unlimited subgroups in their own right with regards to ethnicity, income, education, age, religion, and family context.

Gender-washing

The second theme is an overriding focus on women within projects as a means of promoting the project's validity and securing financial backing. We liken this to the phenomenon of greenwashing.[4]

Policies and strategies are not neutral devices and can cause or mask gender inequalities. Such policies increase the risk of 'gender-washing' by integrating gender as a concept into projects addressing gender inequalities simply because it is a requirement steered by national governments or donors under EU policies (Stratigaki 2005). This underestimates the deeper and

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[4]The term 'greenwashing', first used in 1986, when it referred to the ways in which hotel chains sought to promote their environmental awareness by increasing their market appeal without being sustainable.

long-term input required to challenge gender inequalities, as the addition of women makes is easier for projects to be turned into gender projects, regardless of its recognition of the needs of the women involved (Mason 2013). This results in gender washing, especially by project leaders whose agendas risk not being funded.

A recurring critique from the interviewees was a lack of knowledge about who personally and organisationally ran projects for migrant women and why. One critique that led to the popularity of gender mainstreaming from Beijing was that women-only programmes would not be sufficient to achieve gender equality, as it would place the responsibility on the part of the women to redress the power balances and attain equality. Whilst three interviewees shared these views, two others question why there is still money available for such women's projects and programmes to be set up and run:

> I've been approached by another partner in Urban Rural Gothenburg to work with another women's group, but I don't want to bring the two groups of women together. The [staff at the visitor centre] are needing their own money, so we must motivate that they have their own women's group. (P2)

> The government has projects that are focusing on women. The other fund, Sida [Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency] fund, have a big project with the refugee women, here in Sweden and outside Sweden. All these are talking about women, women, women, women […] Actually, nothing's happening with these issues and with this group, because we're all included if we're women, never mind if you've been working here or are educated […] It's different with the men because they make the differences between the male groups. They say 'No, he's not like them, he's this and that'. (P8)

The availability of money from national and international funding programmes within this context has fuelled an increase in such programmes, not because they seek to work towards gender equality but rather because that is where the money is. As such, projects are set up to fail, and the blame is easiest laid at the feet of migrants rather than the poorly formulated projects. This further complicates the case of migrant women, as reflected in EU policy.

Undervaluation of women's culturally motivated choices of non-standard gender roles

As we have previously alluded to, a great deal of emphasis has been placed on gender mainstreaming as a response to 'women-only' approaches being insufficient to overturn the patriarchal structures that generate and sustain said inequalities (Chant & Gutmann 2002). However, as Rathgeber (1995, 212) observes, any

changes in women's lives clearly entail changes for men, with shifts in the male/female power relations being 'a necessary precondition for any development process with long-term sustainability'.

Despite our focus on women within labour integration projects, all interviewees spoke about the involvement, or lack thereof, of men. When speaking about the roles of employees at a community centre, one interviewee commented that there was no stereotyping of job roles, and that men and women undertook any tasks depending on what needed to be done and who was available. However, this was not the case within the visitor centre itself, where we observed that the two female employees took on domestic roles, such as cleaning, tiding up, organising and cooking food and refreshments for visitors, whilst the sole male employee operated as an operational manager, or deputy to the visitor centre manager who, herself, adopted a hands-off management style.

However, a gender skew was evident when paid employment was not on offer. It was observed at the initial meetings of Green Integration that both men and women had been present, all questions aimed at the subproject leader within the meeting were from men with regards to the availability of paid employment. When it was made clear that there were no such employment opportunities (advice and signposting was offered instead), men dropped out of future meetings, leading to the Green Integration morphing into a women-only subproject.

Interviewees spoke of both the cultural and financial incentives that drove a differentiation between men and women's engagement with labour integration projects. One interviewee suggested that a family's preference for men to find paid employment was financially driven, as in Gothenburg North-East men's salaries are higher than women's. However, this data does not divulge the level of employment nor experience, which may have resulted in higher salaried jobs. This is amplified by migrant men often being more qualified and educated than migrant women, due to cultural gender norms in their home countries regarding education of girls (Jama & Barre 2019) Moreover, the financial motivation for sending the highest wage earner out to work is often due to the family's requirements for childcare. Childcare in Sweden is subsidised and not provided free of charge until a child reaches the age of three years, and even then only 15 hours are provided free of charge in Gothenburg:

> In Sweden we still have a problem, because for the same work, the same background, the same experience, the something you have been doing all the time with the work, the men take a salary that is 2000 Krona [SEK] more than women. So, when you're talking about equality, this is not equal. Economically it's not equal, so politically, culturally, society is not equal. (P3)

Whilst labour market integration is considered the driver for broader social integration in Sweden, two interviewees questioned as to why the focus, particularly with women, was on labour market integration, suggesting that because the process of cultural adaption takes time a focus on labour market integration should not be the first focus; rather, it should take place after wider social integration has taken place.

Moreover, three interviewees commented that there is an overriding and perhaps unjust focus on paid employment within the Swedish cultural context, further leading to assumptions that all those in work are 'good citizens', while those not working (for whatever reason) are not. Furthermore, this attitude has been translated into integration policy, with the focus being firmly placed at the door of labour market integration, thus making finding jobs for migrants a priority. However, as one interviewee argues, this approach is limiting as being integrated through finding paid employment does not safeguard inclusion into wider society:

> The labour market is about getting everyone to work in Sweden, I think it's important, but it's not a guarantee to be included or to be integrated. I know people who have been working all their lives here, in Sweden, but they're not integrated. They're isolated […] Actually, they've nothing to do with the big Swedish society. They never have Swedish friends, have never visited a Swedish home, so how do we talk about them being integrated? The work is important because, actually it's one important part of our lives, but it's not all your life. In Sweden they want to make your work everything about your life […] If you don't have work, you're not included. If you don't have work, you're not a good person. (P8)

The focus on labour market participation, so evident within the EU policy on gender equality and migrant integration, is reflected within the subprojects that seek to drive this engagement on the ground. However, this approach has been broadly criticised within our study, as it is commonly reduced to little more than a box-ticking activity. Furthermore, the results of ticking boxes are used at a national and EU level to characterise migrant women as non-working, and therefore a 'problem'.

Stereotypes of migrant women

It is acknowledged that a large number of projects associated with URG and which seek to integrate migrant women into the labour market focus, perhaps unwittingly, on the domestic role (e.g. cooking and cleaning). Our observations from within the visitor centre demonstrated that a large number of women were engaged with cooking and baking activities within the centre. As two interviewees affirmed, most migrant women are happy to take up these roles, as it provides them with a purpose within a charity setting without the requirement of speaking the Swedish language, there is a level of disagreement of how useful this strategy is within paid employment.

One interviewee suggested that encouraging women into domestic roles merely reinforces stereotypes that this is all migrant women are capable of. However, three other interviewees saw these stereotypical roles as a helpful stepping-stone providing migrant women with a level of familiarity in the unfamiliar context of paid work. Put differently, the migrant women are more easily able to adapt to the context of paid work outside the home when the job role is one they feel capable of achieving. Furthermore, the temporal aspect was emphasised, that is, what happens a year down the line, for example, whether there has been further training and development offered to allow the employee to progress in their career:

> I maybe agree a little with the people who are saying, 'This job is good for her because it is the first time she must wake up and go outside to work,' My critique is that five or ten years later they're still there […] I think this is the problem […] A lot of employers don't care about them [the women] because they're cheap. They employ them with support from society, the government puts in money to pay their salary, so the employer is not curious about her development. It's not their money. If they paid money, they would want this person to be better. (P8)

One interviewee made a distinction between two projects that the regional government runs, one to attract men, the other women, to the labour market, and which Green Integration was intended to recruit participants to (although it never fulfilled this goal). However, the job roles represented the familiar gender stereotypes, with the women's project being in the food production sector and the men's in technology and infrastructure. Whilst both projects were open to all, there was a marked gender split in uptake. This, it was suggested, is not only due to the cultural backgrounds of the migrants, but also how the Swedish practitioners targeted potential participants:

> I initiated a project where we got migrants working in school kitchens to develop their skills for the labour market and learn Swedish. There was a strong uptake, and the project was always full, but the men leave. They don't want to work in a kitchen, that's women's work. That's not the point of the project, we want people to stay in these work roles. When we can attract women, they stay, but the issue is getting them into the project. So, we developed a project that's aimed at men, in building railway infrastructure, in the hope that men will stay in those jobs longer. (P5)

As has been demonstrated, within the study there was a disagreement of how useful it was to employ migrant women in the labour market in low-skilled positions, characterised by care and domestic roles. However, there is little acknowledgement of the labour market landscape in which migrant women may be seeking employment. In the Swedish and wider EU landscape, there is an increasing need to fill domestic care with paid roles due to an ageing population and changes in the welfare care structures. Whilst these roles are often filled by migrant women, their contribution is not recognised as important, but more so it is used to characterise migrant women as unskilled, and therefore of little benefit to the EU economy.

Discussion

Whilst gender is widely accepted as a crucial 'force shaping human life', it has been 'regularly side-lined in research on international migration' (Pessar & Mahler 2003). There is a male bias in migration theory, literature, and policy, with migrants portrayed as male, single, and unburdened by gendered responsibilities that have been culturally and stereotypically applied to women (Yeoh & Ramdas 2014). Even when it is recognised that a migrant has a family, it is the male who is portrayed as the migrant, whilst his female partner is characterised as a 'tied mover' or a 'trailing wife' (Cooke 2001). Moreover, there is a lack of research on women migrants in the context of the labour market (European Parliament 2014), with research focusing on gendered issues, such as family planning (Curran & Saguy 2001).

The aim of our study was to explore the impact of mainstreaming gender equality, as directed by EU policies and strategies, in practice (i.e. within the on-ground local projects that seek to assist with the integration of migrant women in Europe). We have demonstrated that migrant women are often portrayed, as 'add-ons' in the migrant process. Our results and analysis have shown that this portrayal also manifests itself through the projects that seek to increase migrant women's participation in the labour market as a means of integration. This brings us to our two research questions: (1) How do labour market integration project leaders in Sweden think about gender? (2) To what extent does EU gender and migrant policy contribute to the societal perceptions of migrant women? In answering them, we build further upon our results and analysis, suggesting that the four identified themes are a reflection of how EU policy fails to tacitly deal with women migrants. Our discussion will focus on how the treatment of women as an 'add-on' to male migration policy impacts negatively upon the labour market outcomes of migrant women and reproduces stereotypical perceptions of them.

Whilst our case study EU-funded umbrella project and its subprojects engaged a great diversity of 'migrants', 'migrants' in integration projects are often referred to as a homogenous group, akin to the treatment of 'women' in gender mainstreaming. The migrants' home countries are not the only differentiating factor, but their heterogeneity spans across an entire range of identity markers. As such, gender becomes only one of the identities that may be targeted by migrant integration projects and therefore was not a consideration within all of the subprojects within the study.

There was little regard for an intersectional approach (Crenshaw 1989), which not only takes the form of the identification of different parts of one's identity with specific historic, social, or cultural moments, but that materializes in the interplay between various forms of social injustices and systematic barriers (Bates et al. 2017). Our study demonstrates that these social injustices and systematic barriers manifest themselves when accessing the labour market. Given that migrants are also referred to in a singular category, complex cultural identities needs to be considered when looking to engage diverse intersectional individuals, such as the migrant women.

One of the largest challenges of gender mainstreaming is its, often sole, interpretation 'as increasing women's participation' (Hannan 2004, 5). This was demonstrated within our research by the volume of funding that still exists to promote women-only projects aimed at labour market integration. However, reducing gender and integration mainstreaming to a mere counting-numbers exercise cannot substitute for concrete actions to address the priority and needs of the individuals involved. Therefore, in answering our first research question, gender is 'tokenistically' considered within the subprojects within our study, and when gender is considered a differentiating factor between migrants it is done so as there was a financial benefit for doing so.

As was alluded to within our analysis, changes to the welfare state, provisions of finances and childcare services affect the choice that families make with regards to which family member enters the labour market. This decision is perhaps simplified for families by the fact that men entering the labour market earn more than women, this is despite Sweden, as the host country, being regarded one of the most gender equitable countries in the world with regards to levels of employment and income (Eurostat Statistics Explained 2019; European Institute for Gender Equality n.d.). Moreover, when migrant women enter the labour

market, whether they take on the role of main-, co- or secondary-breadwinner, the unpaid caregiving practices at home are not simultaneously assumed by their male counterparts (Lutz 2011). As such, wage inequalities and care provision act as a deterrent to migrant women entering the labour market, and result in women migrants being the least integrated migrant group (Gallotti & Mertens 2013).

When migrant women do enter the labour market, is often into low-paid gender-stereotypical roles, such as cooking, cleaning, and caring. The rise in demand for paid domestic and care work has also seen a 'feminisation' of the workforce throughout the EU, has resulted in more women engaging in paid employment through these sectors (Lutz 2011). Migrant women are more likely to take on these roles in their host countries, as the roles are readily available and are often come coupled with government support for the employer to engage migrant women within such positions, as is the case in Sweden.

Furthermore, it is also acknowledged that the percentage of migrant men working within care and domestic sectors in the EU is higher than the percentages of native-born men within these sectors (SCB 2020). Migrant men and migrant women working in the care and domestic sectors share many of the same characterisations and are often overqualified for the roles that they take on, working part-time and with irregular working hours, often on temporary contracts (Triandafyllidou 2013). Whilst migrant men may struggle with their own masculinity within the sector, their employment cannot be interpreted as stereotyping (Scrinzi 2010). Stereotypes are: 'consensual beliefs about group characteristics that influence the perception, interpretation, and evaluation of others, sometimes blatantly but often in a manner so subtle that they are outside awareness' (Fein & von Hippel 2006). For example, the stereotype of women as caregivers, and the stereotype of men as manual and hard labourers, such as in driving and construction (Scrinzi 2010; Pérez et al. 2012). As such, in answering our second research question, the demands of the domestic care economies in Europe maintain the stereotypes of migrant women as uneducated, and therefore only capable of low-skill positions. The emphasis placed on the labour market as the most important factor for migrant women was questioned within our results and analysis. This is a criticism that is true not only for our case study country of Sweden, but also has been recognised within EU policy. Moreover, the problematisation of low labour market participation is interpreted as one of the negative headings placed upon migrant women, the other being

trafficking (Canoy et al. 2006). Integration is supposedly driven by labour market participation within the EU, thus poor integration is closely related to a lack of labour market participation. Hence, employment and integration are key to improving the public perception of migrants.

The targeting of marginalised groups to increase labour market participation is not a new phenomenon, nor one unique to migrant (Cooper 2012; Nordberg 2015; Farris 2017). Developments in workfare policies do not seem to protect groups classified as 'inactive' within the labour market, as the provided welfare and migration services in themselves have become commodified by social enterprises and thus have become a site of further exploitation (Cooper 2012).

Feminist migration scholars have analysed the gendered logic of workfare and the labour market integration programmes that target migrant women and found that they are implemented through workfare policies (Scrinzi 2011; Nordberg 2015; Farris 2017). These studies have shown that whilst EU policy reinforces the need for migrant women to be liberated and assisted into the labour market, workfare programmes steer them towards domestic roles, traditionally conceived as feminine (Scrinzi 2011; Farris 2017). However, empirically grounded research on the workings of labour market participation in relation to migrant women in the European context has been scarce (cf. Krivonos 2019), despite there being extensive evidence of migrant women's precarious labour market positions and lower employment rates. It is to this research gap that this study speaks.

The public perception of women migrants as non-participants in the labour market reinforces the two negative headings of women: as victim and dependent (Canoy et al. 2006). This echoes the discussions we undertook previously within this paper, which outlined the ways in which women migrants are problematised within gender mainstreaming, and migration and integration policy at the EU level. Moreover, this case study of projects at the local level also problematise migrant women in the same way, stereotyped as low-skilled, despite filling vacant domestic care services in Europe, and as dependent on their male partners in the face of welfare systems and an existing gender pay gap. Whilst there remains money available within the EU to promote migrant women's labour market participation, practitioners are often unaware of how to deal with migrant women, despite calls for greater intersectionality. Therefore, projects at the local level reinforce the detrimental cycle in the problematisation of migrant women as non-participants in the labour market.

Conclusions

The relationship between migrants and the labour market has shifted from characterising migrants as a problem, to the idea of migrants as a potential solution. However, this shift represents a complex social process, and as both conceptions coexist, they can be expressed as a binary of desirable and undesirable. Put more blatantly, certain migrants are seen as a potential solution, whilst 'others' tacitly remain a problem. In this paper, we have focused on the under-conceptualised 'other' – the migrant women.

EU policy proposals directed both at the gender mainstreaming and migration/integration stress increasing the labour market participation. Moreover, these policies and strategies have been shown to over-emphasise the benefits of 'good' migrants as those who come to the EU and work within highly skilled roles. Whether migrants are valued or not depends often on their ability and willingness to participate in the labour market, and especially in roles that are considered important by their host societies.

As Bacchi (2009, 174) points out, 'the predominance of these discourses drowns out the voices of those wishing to imagine a different kind of world where people are valued by more than their workplace "skills"'. The change in perception from migrants as a collective problem to migrants as desirable individuals tends to favour the single, male individual, who is armed with the adequate labour market competencies to enter the labour market in a skilled position. As such, this dualism of desirable/undesirable is highly unfavourable to migrant women.

Whilst gender mainstreaming has been positioned as a solution to achieving gender equality in the labour market, it has yet to become successful in addressing the specific needs of migrant women. Due to a focus on labour market participation in both gender and migration/integration policy at the EU level, migrant women are easily characterised as victims and dependent. As such, a full and careful consideration of migrant women within the mainstreaming of both gender and integration/migration policy seems the only way of honouring migrant women's needs and experiences beyond the labour market. This must include the place of care work in the global economy as a path towards a more just and equal society.

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