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Overview / Editorial

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‘Integration’ has been established as the preferred rubric for academic discussions, popular polemics and political proposals concerning migration, difference and social futures in globalised nation-states, particularly in western Europe. This amplification owes much to its perceived, corrective relationship to ‘multiculturalism’, widely – and erroneously – regarded as a ‘failed experiment’ requiring rehabilitative action on issues such as social cohesion, ‘shared values’ and variously grounded common ‘ways of life’. While this shift far exceeds any ordinary etymological or definitional controversy, both terms invite similar forms of ambivalent reading. In Shohat and Stam’s discussion of the wild polysemy of multiculturalism, the idea, they argue, is useful because it can be made to insist on a ‘constitutive heterogeneity’ (2008: 3) that refuses the foundational constructions of a national ethnos. The converse is equally plausible; much of the scattergun opprobrium directed at and through the idea of multiculturalism is a consequence of its pronounced sense of imposition, an unwelcome and unasked for amendment to a pre-existing monoculturalism. For this reason, ‘the very idea of multiculturalism, the ideology, disturbs out of proportion to what in fact it may be’ (Elliot and Lemert 2006: 137).

While integration has been revitalised, in contra-distinction, as a soothing and unifying notion, it also presents an intractable ambivalence. Integration is not a novel preoccupation; it is arguably the foundational question in modern sociology, and the shape-shifting problematic of the nation-state (Richmond 1984). Despite this established historical tension - and the clear lesson that projects of integration pursued in relation to territorial and linguistic borders; ethnic, class, gender, regional and religious distinctions; and in the service of manifold manifestations of ‘ethnic genius’ (Appadurai 2006) can never be completed – the idea of integration in public debate in western Europe is imbued with a terminal charm. It is used to hint at an often unspecified but desirable end-state, an end-state defined primarily against a current state of *dis-integration*. This allows political action in the service of integration to be varnished with a programmatic confidence. Calls for more integration frequently involve a confident teleological sense of a future-to-come, a sense that is entirely at odds with the social conditions that renders integration discourse so politically compelling. Herein lies the key tension. ‘Integration debates’ are never held by their mediated protagonists to be sufficiently open, honest or mature, despite their intensity, frequency and insistence. The idea of integration is a promise of control made in conditions rendered *dis-integrated* by, among other issues, the fact of this future promise - the balm thus intensifies the affliction.

This special issue of *Translocations* examines versions of this promise in Ireland and western Europe, the conditions in which they are made, the states and agents of dis-integration they envision, and the ways in which they are unsettled and contested. More particularly, it has sought to consolidate and build on the useful work on the politics of integration in Ireland featured in previous editions of the journal. To this end, it combines selected European perspectives, a range of

new, peer-reviewed research, and a series of ‘revisitations’ by authors who have published widely cited and influential work in this journal over the past three years.

As Rogers Brubaker (2001) documents, the idea of integration has been re-formulated within a shift to what he terms ‘transitive’ forms of assimilationism, given significantly different political expression in France, Germany and the United States. Since its increasingly regular use from the 1990s onwards, integration has become the dominant frame through which the relationships between immigration, labour market incorporation/insertion, language diversity, societal values and cohesion are understood. From specific interventions in the realm of ‘community cohesion’ to philosophical discussions concerning the necessary conditions for liberal (and social) democracy, integration is the preferred term of engagement (Joppke 2007). Yet as a term, integration is both fashionable and elusive: following Raymond Williams, one may describe integration as a contemporary keyword, and as Williams reminds us, there is little to gain in pursuing an ostensive definition that fails to grapple with both a general complexity of usage, and with the particular modes of political and cultural mobilization within which a term is accented and contoured. Furthermore, Williams’s caution against fruitless positivism is particularly useful in a European context where the politics of integration garner legitimacy and stickiness through transnational dynamics of comparison and convergence. In commenting on the synergistic, transnational rejection of multiculturalism, Liz Fekete notes that this shift is mediated both cross-referentially and through particular idioms conveying states of integration, or challenges to it: *laïcité* in France, ‘community cohesion’ in the UK, ‘standards and values’ in the Netherlands, ‘*Leitkultur*’ in Germany (Fekete 2009, pp. 62-3). Ireland, it has been noted, is particularly porous when it comes to the circulation and assemblage of transnational governmental and managerial discourses (Cronin et al 2009), and for this reason the special issue has sought to bring together recent research on the politics of integration in Ireland with European contributions that reflect on these processes of transnational mobility and influence.

In a section of invited European perspectives, Charles Husband provides a multi-layered exploration of the development of ‘counter-narratives to multiculturalism’ in Britain where, as Ben Pitcher (2009) has recently noted, a simultaneous rejection *and* celebration of multiculturalism - the rejection and discipline of ‘excess’ and the concomitant appropriation of diversity - has been central to New Labour’s recalibration of a Britishness adequate both to the ‘war on terror’ and a wider ‘species multicultural drift’ (Hall 2009). Liza Schuster’s essay documents and discusses the politics of ‘waiting’; the experience of young men from Afghanistan sleeping rough and waiting for a chance to get to the UK or Germany and claim asylum. In ‘place’ - in Afghanistan - these asylum-seekers are the globally mediated subjects of human rights, rights on which the legitimacy of humanitarian war rests. As matter out of place, their rights are displaced also; ‘...exiled from their countries of origin by violence and poverty, and exiled from European society by a pernicious network of laws, regulations and directives that condemn them to waiting for a chance to make a future for themselves.’ Maria Stehle, in a consideration of shifting constructions and projections of the ghetto in German public discourse, examines how 1970s spectres of the threat of Harlem, and contemporary visions of the risk of Clichy-sous-Bois transplanted, construct the ghetto as a harbinger of future dis-integration. As an interior space outside, it is imagined as a colonial interiority that is used to produce senses of Europeanness that in turn increasingly define the ‘national’. In her study of citizen journalism, the *Jyllands Posten* cartoon controversy and the viral logics of Geert Wilders’ film *Fitna*, Bolette Blaagaard examines the paradoxical ways in which social media networks and processes of instantaneous global connectivity are as likely to support parochial allegiances and intensely mediated expressions of nationalism, calling into question the often overly optimistic association between globalising technologies and more cosmopolitan solidarities.

The section of peer-review articles exploring the politics and practices of integration in Ireland appear at a moment when the integration landscape is changing. Arguably, official discourse in Ireland spent considerable time congratulating itself on discovering some magic formula by means of which to avoid the hard-shelled nationalist discourses – in recognizably right-wing and more curiously ‘liberal’ iterations - so evidently on the rise across Europe. Many policy makers (as Gerry Boucher reminds us herein) firmly believed that at the height of Ireland’s economic boom the rising tide would indeed lift all boats, and when the tide receded our ‘guests’ would simply go home. As forecasts go, even by contemporary standards this was a terrible one, lacking even a rudimentary understanding of international migration, distinct differences and changing patterns in the circuitry of migration and transnationalism, and of course, the fantastical financial underpinnings of Ireland’s economy. As Éidín Ní Shé notes in her consideration of state policy responses, the valorisation of a globalized economy and a globalized workforce was rather hollow in content. As a consequence, the side effects of the crisis on ‘New Irish communities’ must be of central concern to this research community.

The recent International Organization for Migration (IOM) thematic study, *Migration and the Economic Crisis in the European Union*, contains an overview of the situation in Ireland. The picture this report paints is of sharp decreases in immigration from new European Member States since 2008, out-migration by former immigrants, and, overall, the return of negative net migration. But, importantly, many of the migrants who came to Ireland in the previous ten to fifteen years are not leaving. Most of our ‘guests’, often labeled the ‘New Irish’, were never likely to simply leave in direct response to economic conditions, as if the complex lives of nearly half a million persons would react directly to a single (though crucially important) variable in those lives. Recent estimates indicate that foreign nationals continue to account for over twelve per cent of the total population. And for those workers, family members, friends, students, asylum seekers and refugees a future of economic and political crisis is unavoidable. The cosy assumption was that immigrants would leave when times got tough. Times are tough: jobs are becoming evermore scarce, funding cuts have impacted upon integration interventions. But history is not an abstract agent. A central question for ‘tough times’, then, is how much tougher will ‘we’ make it for people who have migrated?

Undoubtedly, the most obvious policy response to immigration and the economic crisis in Ireland has been to enact more restrictive and stratifying policies while maintaining the shiny surfaces of intercultural rhetoric. In this issue the editors open with an essay in which we aim to call attention to the deep connections between immigration, integration and security. The current legislation on immigration and residency in Ireland provides a key moment in which to observe these connections. It may overtly concern conditions for entry, entitlements and residency rights, but it is also centrally about deportation and security. These are now integral dimensions of the field of ‘integration’ internationally, and these developments pose a series of questions for future research in Ireland. The articles on integration in Ireland pursue a range of different themes, foci and spaces of integration. Ruth McAreavey’s study works to unpack the ways in which questions of language operate in different modalities of integration. Yuko Chiba and Alessia Passarelli, in their contributions, present qualitative and ethnographic work on the dynamics of integration in specific institutional spaces; in the case of Passarelli a multi-sited study of migrant integration into the Protestant Church of Ireland, in Chiba’s work the impact of segregated educational institutions on the process of migrant integration pathways and experiences in Northern Ireland.

As well as Éidín Ní Shé’s consideration of state integration policy, two further articles tackle questions of governmental discourse and ‘preferred subjectivities’. Maja Halilovic-Pastuovic examines the development of ‘interculturalism’ as a regime of governmentality, whereby the more complex experiences and internal dynamics of communities – in this instance, Bosnians in Ireland –

are smoothed over through programmatic and highly mediated discourses of ‘diversity’ and its appropriate manifestations. Aoileann Ní Mhurchu develops this line of critique with a theoretical challenge to the dichotomous subjectivities imagined within integration discourses, imaginaries that seem incapable of recognising the ways in which social ties, bonds, affectivities and relations already exist in society in Ireland. These new studies are complemented by a section entitled ‘revisiting integration’, in which several contributors were invited to reflect on their previous work on integration questions for *Translocations*. Gerry Boucher directly recalls his work by focusing on the persistent lack of a coherent integration policy in Ireland. Instead of such a policy there is a ‘guest-worker presumption’ embedded in a laissez-faire policy that aims to protect the national interest above all. Boucher predicts a future of partial integration and exclusion. Whilst we tease out our own approach in an introductory essay, we also follow Boucher by noting the *ad hoc*, laissez-faire and limited nature of policy and the complex situation on the ground.

In a similarly critical reading, but from a somewhat distinct set of theoretical suppositions, Ronit Lentin develops her critique of discourses of ‘diversity’ and ‘interculturalism’ to pose questions adequate to the political-economic crisis in Ireland. An irony of Irish interculturalism, so frequently, and simplistically presented as an improvement on (failed) multiculturalism, is that it replicates the top-down community politics of European state multiculturalisms, and situates migrant organisations in a funding landscape where they must strategically engage with and appropriate these discourses. However, as Lentin argues, the real problem with diversity-speak is the ways in which it can only function by delimiting those that can be institutionally approached as ‘diverse’: ‘So when neo-liberals speak about “too much diversity” and “social cohesion”, they are, on one level, undoing diversity, and calling for closer immigration controls. But on another level they are reiterating policies of multiculturalism that see culture as fixed and already there, enabling the state to negotiate with leaders of ‘other cultures’ whose diversity should be managed, mainstreamed, regulated and controlled to suit the interests of the market state, while keeping the voices of the racialised out of the conversation.’

Chris Gilligan’s essay critiques the ways in which Northern Ireland is ignored in the ‘vast literature’ on integration policy, a lacuna that also means that the region is ‘implicitly segregated from the study of British society’. Gilligan’s critique suggests that the inclusion of Northern Ireland would disturb somewhat settled modes of approaching the sociology of integration in Britain and Ireland. However this disturbance – particularly conceptually – is both necessary and potentially fruitful. Finally, Mary J. Hickman develops the theme of ‘monocultural imaginings’ broached also in Lentin’s work, and in so doing, invites us to move past programmatic and euphemistic notions of integration in Britain and Ireland. In a formulation that strikes us as equally relevant to the enormous work of social mobilisation and organisation necessitated by the political-economic implosion of neoliberal orthodoxies in both settings, Hickman suggests that ‘...cohesion is not about absence of conflict but rather a collective ability to manage the shifting array of tensions and disagreements between different individuals and between and within different collectivities of people. It is in the provision of this environment that social cohesion, rather than a problematizing policy of community cohesion, lies.’

The regular community platform section features two contributions, by Marian Tannam, and Liam Leonard and Paula Kenny, examining pertinent questions of training and praxis on issues of equality and integration.

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