



GLOBAL DIVERSITIES

Digesting Difference

Migrant Incorporation and
Mutual Belonging in Europe

Edited by

Kelly McKowen · John Borneman



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Global Diversities

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Over the past decade, the concept of 'diversity' has gained a leading place in academic thought, business practice, politics and public policy across the world. However, local conditions and meanings of 'diversity' are highly dissimilar and changing. For these reasons, deeper and more comparative understandings of pertinent concepts, processes and phenomena are in great demand. This series will examine multiple forms and configurations of diversity, how these have been conceived, imagined, and represented, how they have been or could be regulated or governed, how different processes of inter-ethnic or inter-religious encounter unfold, how conflicts arise and how political solutions are negotiated and practiced, and what truly convivial societies might actually look like. By comparatively examining a range of conditions, processes and cases revealing the contemporary meanings and dynamics of 'diversity', this series will be a key resource for students and professional social scientists. It will represent a landmark within a field that has become, and will continue to be, one of the foremost topics of global concern throughout the twenty-first century. Reflecting this multi-disciplinary field, the series will include works from Anthropology, Political Science, Sociology, Law, Geography and Religious Studies. While drawing on an international field of scholarship, the series will include works by current and former staff members, by visiting fellows and from events of the Max Planck Institute for the Study of Religious and Ethnic Diversity. Relevant manuscripts submitted from outside the Max Planck Institute network will also be considered.

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ISSN 2662-2580

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ISBN 978-3-030-49597-8

<https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-49598-5>

ISSN 2662-2599 (electronic)

ISBN 978-3-030-49598-5 (eBook)

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This Palgrave Macmillan imprint is published by the registered company Springer Nature Switzerland AG. The registered company address is: Gewerbestrasse 11, 6330 Cham, Switzerland

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1

Digesting Difference: Migrants, Refugees, and Incorporation in Europe

Kelly McKowen and John Borneman

Since the turn of the century, millions of migrants have crossed and re-crossed Europe's lattice of internal and external borders. In 2017, approximately 52 million of them had moved for work, their opportunities multiplied by the eastward enlargements of the European Union in 2004 and 2007 (International Labour Office [2018](#)). Millions more, displaced

This collection draws on contributions from two conferences, sponsored by the Princeton's Program in Contemporary Politics and Society and the Princeton Institute for International and Regional Studies (PIIRS). These were "Xenophobia and Social Integration: Forms, Functions, Facilitators, Inhibitors" (2015) and "Digesting Difference: Modes of Social Incorporation in Europe" (2018). A few of the chapters were subsequently presented and refined at the 2018 biennial meeting of the European Association of Social Anthropologists in Stockholm. We thank PIIRS for funding and support. We are also grateful to Parvis Ghassem-Fachandi for a close read of our penultimate draft of this Introduction.

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by war, endemic violence, and persecution in countries like Somalia, Bosnia, Iraq, Afghanistan, and most recently, Syria, are seeking or have been granted asylum. There are also kinship migrants—the wives, husbands, children, and extended kin brought by the aforementioned groups within or outside the legal framework of family reunification. Finally, in a swiftly warming world, there are climate refugees, those fleeing crises caused by the conjunction of environmental catastrophe, imperiled economies, and dysfunctional political systems (United Nations 2018). In the near future, tens of million are expected to be displaced in sub-Saharan Africa and South and Southeast Asia alone. The result of these movements is a new, kinetic, and “super-diverse” (Vertovec 2007) Europe, teeming with an ever-expanding array of identifications, communities, languages, dialects, memories, and histories. It is a Europe where difference is organized not merely by borders but within and across their physical and imaginative horizons.

The most critical long-term issue posed by migration to and across Europe is not the multiplicity of diversities, however, but the confrontation with particular forms of difference that challenge the integrity of extant social bodies and create the possibility for reconfiguring circuits of mutual belonging. In popular, scholarly, and policy discourse, this is framed in the hegemonic terms of “integration” (Rytter 2019).

We argue against using this vernacular term for analytic purposes. Integration remains underspecified, referring variously to migrants’ employment outcomes, educational attainment, language acquisition, or participation in political institutions. The emergence of “civic integration” programs in recent decades (Joppke 2007) has broadened governmental intervention, as policymakers now aim to flesh out the skeleton of inclusion with “culture.” In courses and programs, migrants learn about traditions, cultural scripts, and national rituals while being encouraged to adopt an attitude of tolerance for difference in the name of mutual respect. Here, integration becomes a matter of recognizing holidays and histories, of adopting values, and of learning to “do as the Romans—or Dutch, Germans, Norwegians, and so on—do.”

There is a notable thinness to concepts of integration, despite attempts to include all possible variables. These concepts typically share a state-centric vision of integration. All share an insistence on reducing complex processes to relatively straightforward indices of success or failure. Their shortcomings quickly become apparent when one tries to use them to recognize and describe an empirical reality that exceeds employment statistics, graduation rates, or civic integration certificates. Whatever their import, these indicators cannot capture processes wherein identities are revised and adopted, where traditions are jettisoned and appropriated, where the borders of everyday belonging are drawn and redrawn. Brought up against the reality of contemporary Europe, thin integration concepts leave much to be desired. We count at least six critical issues.

First, thin concepts conceive of integration processes as teleological rather than experienced unevenly in time and with fluctuating ambivalence. For most migrants, the ends of integration remain open and evolve, encompassing recognizable outcomes but shifting goals. These goals may involve employment, education, and retraining but are also shaped by a host of interactions and exchanges that occur outside of the workplace, school, or retraining course. Further, the linear understanding of integration begs various questions about a migrant's status when measurable gains are lost. For instance, when migrants lose work, are they de-integrated (or disintegrated)? If so, are the non-migrant unemployed not also de-integrated? What becomes of the integrated migrants or non-migrants whose skills and education are made redundant by economic or technological changes? And what to make of a migrant who learns the local language, celebrates national holidays, but faces discrimination and persistent exclusion? A "thicker" concept would embrace the possibility that the destinations of integration cannot be divined beforehand because they are constantly changing even among the people who move toward them. Moreover, it would grasp that the processes we call "integrating" are productive of novel social bodies, of which both migrants and non-migrants are constitutive actors.

A second deficiency of thin conceptions of integration is the mistaken idea that integration is something that is done either *to* migrants by the authorities or by migrants to themselves, who may have to explicitly disavow elements of their identity to gain acceptance (see Fuglerud 1997).

In either case, this concept perpetuates the idea that migrants, as the sole or primary locus of change, are to be absorbed into some pre-constituted, unchanging whole. There is little concern, for instance, in “how immigrant groups respond to citizenship laws and integration policies, and how their presence and participation affect the meanings and practices of citizenship” in general (Bloemraad, Korteweg, and Yurdakul 2008, 170). And even when scholars and policymakers protest that their vision of integration involves both migrants and non-migrants, the implicit premise is that integration is a collaborative process wherein the former aim to become more like the latter, as measured using the aforementioned indicators.

This is curious, as migrant movement toward the non-migrant norm is at times perceived by migrants and non-migrants as problematic, even dangerous. This was the case, for instance, in Norway, where the emergence of a slang-filled ethnolect of Norwegian called *kebabnorsk* was widely greeted not as evidence of generative mixing between foreign- and native-born Norwegians but a threat posed by the former to the latter. Turks met a similarly ambivalent audience in Germany, ultimately appropriating the derogatory term for their ethnolect, *Kanakensprache*, as a form of self-identification. In Norway, language anxiety helped spur policymakers to implement new language requirements for prospective kindergarten workers, reifying the connection between quantifiable measures and colloquial understanding of integration. In Germany, by contrast, since the 1990s Feridun Zaimoğlu, who has been praised as a poet of the German language and won many literary awards, helped introduce *Kanakensprache* into German prose. A thicker integration concept would elucidate these developments, discovering in them a process of asymmetrical co-production—one that is at times responsive to, even appropriate of, policy but at other times runs parallel to, even independent of, it. Such elucidation would make space for a broader array of actors, including not only migrants and settled non-migrants but the waves of humanitarian actors and international activists who materialize at the sites of migratory crisis (Cabot 2019a, b).

Third, thin concepts of integration offer only a partial and highly selective account of where new patterns of inclusion and exclusion unfold—or do not. Once more, the indicators of integration orient and selectively

filter our gaze. Scholars look, for example, at civic integration courses (Rugkåsa 2010) where official histories and invented traditions (Hobsbawm 1983) are promulgated alongside strongly worded encouragement to find work. They look also at the labor market, where that encouragement, mixed with the imperatives to support oneself and one's family members, including those left behind, compels an often-desperate search for employment (see Rytter and Ghandchi, this volume). They look at schools to see how first- and second-generation children are faring compared to their non-migrant peers. They look at the spatial organization of urban areas and read conclusions into the distribution of peoples, weaving "myths of failed integration" (Andersen and Biseth 2013) from the concentration of peoples in the centers, pockets, and suburbs of European cities. In other words, they situate immigrants into the places where integration is easily measured, failing to appreciate that this ease comes at the expense of the more nuanced understandings that may emerge when one considers all experiences, encounters, exchanges, including emotional and erotic entanglements (see Ghassem-Fachandi, this volume), as potentially integrative or disintegrative.

Fourth, there is the emphasis on "citizenship" and the associated language of official rights and obligations. One need not deny the importance of formal civic, political, and social rights (Marshall 1950) to nonetheless contest the use of citizenship as either the basis of or proxy for integration. Cases abound where rights are extended but not accessible, accessible but their invocation is deemed inappropriate or indicative of failed integration, or where the language of rights is not robust enough to express the more personal and intimate aspirations of new arrivals. Even when rights are granted, non-migrants often demand new citizens do more than follow the letter of the law, as the hegemonic understanding of integration is more or less synonymous with cultural assimilation (see Brubaker 2001). Migrants are called to mirror non-migrants in everyday tastes and habits (see Butticci; Bendixsen and Danielsen; Sohail, this volume). Often, migrants, who refuse to abandon aspects of their previous selves and desires, are perceived as indifferent to this mirroring and its associated social pressure, provoking offense and even aggression in some non-migrants.

If the legally inspired conceptualizations of citizenship are precise but too narrow, the anthropological ones are inclusive but too diffuse. In anthropology, citizenship is often detached from legal rights and entitlements to become a catch-all metaphor with various membership qualifiers—biological, sexual, flexible, agrarian, pharmaceutical, and so on. With respect to migrants, concepts of “cultural citizenship” have proven most influential. But whether these focus on “the right to be different ... without compromising one’s right to belong” (Rosaldo 1994, 57) or “the cultural practices and beliefs produced out of negotiating the often ambivalent and contested relations with the states and its hegemonic forms that establish the criteria of belonging within a national population and territory” (Ong 1996, 738), they imply terms and forms of membership that are not remade by the encounters and exchanges between people who are themselves being remade. A thicker concept of integration would capture the relationship between the sociolegal extension of rights and entitlements, their actual accessibility, and the role that both play in hardening, dissolving, and creating boundaries of belonging and shared understandings of alterity (Isin 2002).

Fifth, thin concepts of integration tend to explicitly or implicitly center on national membership and belonging (Wimmer and Glick Schiller 2002), at the expense of providing analytical attention to other affiliations and pathways—of friendship, neighborhood, city, occupation, trade union, political movement (see Cabot, this volume)—that also figure prominently in migrant and non-migrant experiences. This neglect may also lead to overemphasizing artifacts and practices deemed essential by some actors to national or ethnic traditions. A thicker concept of integration would focus less on the constructedness of traditions than on their inventiveness and evolution, as well as the diversity of practices and policies intended to regulate them (Sahlins 1999). Further, integration, national and otherwise, is not opposed to but includes transnational and global dimensions and its effects on local inclusion and exclusion. Globalization and capitalist expansion have undermined the ability of states to regulate territoriality through assertions of national sovereignty, which makes security, enclosure, and integration more difficult. New social media and other forms of information technology can undermine national projects or inflect them with transnational audiences through

the relatively unchecked dissemination of ideas across time and space. A more extensive concept of integration, then, would not jettison the nation and its representations (Rytter 2010) but decenter it. It would emphasize that identifications are nested, situational, and multiple and that national identity and belonging are but one dimension of a broader complex subject evolving under pressures and with possibilities. When a person settles in a new place, integration is not always experienced incrementally but often through “jumps” or shifts between dimensions and scales, creating emergent forms of belonging in, say, new friendship circles, neighborhoods, civic associations, or investments in workplace or leisure cultures. Simultaneous pulls on belonging are the norm, not the exception.

Finally, thin concepts of integration engage problematically in “groupism,” or “the tendency to take discrete, sharply differentiated, internally homogeneous and externally bounded groups as basic constituents of social life, chief protagonists of social conflicts, and fundamental units of social analysis” (Brubaker 2002, 164). Groupism in scholarly and policy literature often involves an excess of “culturespeak” (Hannerz 1999), in which the commonalities and differences between peoples are reified using an anachronistic concept of culture (Wright 1998). Here, cultural distinctiveness typically features as the explanation for otherwise incomprehensible practices. In doing so, it does not render differences palatable or acceptable. Rather, antipathy is displaced from practice to culture and from culture to group. Although the anthropological concept of “culture” has been used to enlarge the space of intelligible discourse between peoples (Geertz 1988), it may also serve to justify the distance or inequalities between peoples, or the complete exclusion of foreigners from a native “culture.” For example, Wikan (2002), writing of Norway, argues that the government invoked culture in the 1990s to legitimate different socioeconomic and educational governmental standards for migrant and non-migrant populations. This, she argues, fostered striking inequalities in what is otherwise an equal society and showed conclusively that what is construed as culture is not what anthropologists intended it to be, becoming, instead, “a new concept of race” (Wikan 1999; see also Stolcke 1995).

While arguments have been marshaled for and against abandoning the culture concept altogether, there are reasons for using it—and that of the group—within the framework of a thick, “complex” (Eriksen 2007) approach to integration. Construed as an ongoing process of sharing and contesting meanings, culture directs our attention to the actual encounters between lifeworlds mutually imagined as sharing and differentiating along group lines. With respect to groups, a thicker concept would do away with groupism while still acknowledging that humans typically think of themselves in group terms and aspire toward the constitution of bounded bodies or maintenance of the ones that they have inherited. And, critically, people still understand their own integration trajectories in terms that emphasize the sociocultural boundaries that separate one group from another (Barth 1998).

These six limitations capture an array of some of the theoretical issues that plague thin concepts of integration. Still, identifying the limitations of a concept is not meant to discourage study of the phenomena it seeks to describe. Integration remains a concern for scholars, policymakers, and publics because it points to a high-stakes question that both migrants and non-migrants ask and answer on a daily basis in thousands of different ways: Who are *we* becoming (Eriksen 2011)? How is the influx of labor migrants, refugees, kinship migrants, and others changing the sociocultural fabric of contemporary Europe? Here, anthropologists can offer a thicker concept, anchored in the empirical substrate only accessed by “being there” (Borneman and Hammoudi 2009) among migrants and non-migrants. We call this thicker concept “incorporation.”

A Thicker Concept

Incorporation is a non-linear, inter-subjective, and multi-scale process. We are certainly not the first to use the term (see Brettell 2008), though some critical dimensions of the concept have not been elaborated. The sociologist Thomas Faist (2009), for example, has proposed that diversity itself, in its multiple referents, should be considered as a new mode of incorporation in Europe. Anthropologists Nina Glick Schiller and Ayse Çağlar (2009) have theorized incorporation as a local process canalized

by patterns of post-industrial urban restructuring in a neoliberal, globalizing world. Cities, they show, position—and are positioned by—the incorporative trajectories of migrants. Focusing on migrants and born-again Christianity, Glick Schiller et al. (2006) argue that city scale helps account for which institutions become central in these trajectories. More narrowly, the politics scholar Rafaela Dancygier (2017) has examined the political incorporation of European Muslims, detailing the recruitment of Muslim candidates for office and the cultivation of new electoral blocs in the United Kingdom, Germany, Austria, and Belgium. At the center of her account are the dilemmas confronted by traditional political parties and their new members and constituents, whose ideas, commitments, and aspirations may diverge from those typically espoused by their parties. In short, processes of incorporation change not only political participants but parties and the political system itself.

Other aspects of incorporation, as we use it, have been anticipated in literatures on assimilation and acculturation. Our use differs in key respects, however. For instance, assimilation is typically defined as a process whereby one gives up what one is—identity markers, cultural traits, and habits—as a condition of becoming a member of another, established group (Park 1914). As Sohail (this volume) demonstrates, assimilation still figures as an aspiration for some migrants, who see this shedding of otherness as a condition for enjoying the acceptance, even esteem, of some non-migrants. However, the ethnographic record does not support the notion that this stripping process ever fully succeeds, or that integration of a stranger leaves the non-migrant “culture” unchanged (Waters and Jiménez 2005). Rather, migration spurs mimetic and reciprocal processes of incorporation and estrangement within a single social field. While migrants incorporate meanings, goods, practices, and habits into their performative repertoire, they inevitably refashion them and return them, changed, to circulation. In turn, when communities incorporate new people into their groups, they are also transformed.

Acculturation, as developed by the Boasian school of anthropologists in the 1930s, comes closest to our understanding of incorporation. In seeking a theoretical framework to study the changing experiences of native Americans and freed African slaves in the Americas, the Boasians focused on how “groups of individuals having different cultures come

into continuous first-hand contact, with subsequent changes in the original cultural patterns of either or both groups” (Redfield, Linton, and Herskovits 1936, 149). Acculturation offered a way to insist that new arrivals, indigenous groups, and settlers were changing through “first-hand contact” shaped by asymmetries of power, misunderstandings, and selective appropriation. Contrary to popular understandings, the leading figures in the Boasian tradition recognized, rightly, that encounters do not produce stable cultures into which the respective sides could be integrated. Change was required of every sub-group in the evolving whole.

One of the inspirations in the work of these scholars was the attempt to respond both to the diffusionist model conceptualized by Leo Frobenius, which tracked the flow of beliefs, activities, and “traits” across space, and to the cultural model conceptualized by J.G. Herder, which contextualized these traits as functioning within discrete social wholes. A sophisticated early attempt in 1923 by Boas’ first PhD student, Alfred Kroeber, presaged the work on acculturation. Kroeber made the astute observation that “every culture shows [a receptivity] toward cultural material worked out by other cultures,” but that “as soon as a culture has accepted a new item, it tends to lose interest in the foreignness of origin of this item, as against the fact that the item is now functioning within the culture” (1948, 65). This receptivity of culture to the foreign or new is counter-balanced, however, by a desire for social stability. And those desires for stability and continuity, Kroeber argued, “tend to be considerably stronger than [culture’s] active or innovating faculties” (65). New traits, wrote Kroeber presciently,

may meet with anything from eager acceptance to bitter hostility. But since it does represent innovation and change, the traits that are being introduced will expectably encounter some resistance ... or their acceptance may have unforeseen consequences that prove to be upsetting. ... Intra-society transmission of culture in time must normally tend toward persistence, [while] intersocietal transmission in space tend toward[s] change. (220)

Particular cultures, he concluded, flourish precisely because of their “compositeness” and “assimilativeness” (67).

Kroeber's points hold for contemporary Europe: receptivity to innovation and change, then, always provokes some form of opposition yet produces vibrant societies more capable of adaptation. The contemporary valorization of innovation, change, and mobility should not lead us to dismiss as irrational the increased world-wide resistance—sometimes violent—to currents of people, ideas, and goods that may disturb imagined sociocultural equilibria. Popular resistance to immigration within Europe is to be expected when linked to the disintegration brought about by the hyper-globalized markets that followed the Cold War. Today social media and new means of disseminating (mis)information afford xenophobic populists opportunities within democratic political institutions to foment such opposition and create internal social dissensus around immigrants, particularly those of Muslim background. In the proportional representation parliamentary systems typical of most European countries, one needs only a small, alienated part of the electorate to secure critical anti-immigrant seats in legislative bodies. Right-wing parties across Europe have grown their support by attracting voters with inflammatory rhetoric and imagery that lay the blame for their collective misery and sense of dislocation at the feet of migrants. This is ironic, given that the stability and reproduction of contemporary European lifecourses depends on receptivity to the labor, economic, and cultural exchanges that arrive from outside.

Driven to satisfy this need for innovation stimulated from the outside, and confronted with inescapable difference, the reproduction of both individual and social bodies catalyzes processes of incorporation at various scales and intensities. Bodies are made of many parts, they have interiors and exteriors, and they have surfaces that interface with the outside. These parts move together to form a living entity with an image of itself and its relative permeability. For migrants and non-migrants, the creation of new social bodies—that is, incorporation in the sense of constituting new wholes—involves a process wherein sociocultural difference of peoples is itself incorporated, or “ingested.” What follows is a metaphorical “digestion,” whereby the particulates of difference are linked together to reconstitute the body in altered form. Here we might take a cue from William Robertson Smith (1894), who links kinship to the communal meal and incorporation of the guest. For Smith, kinship is created among

commensals by sharing the same substance in a feast. No feast is complete without a sacrifice, and no sacrifice is complete without guests—that is, non-kin. In order to eat together and create solidarity, people must be kin or, when guests are present, *become* kin. One becomes kin by sharing in the substance of the feast, and thereafter shares in the protections afforded kin. Incorporation, then, is not merely a matter of ingestion. It involves ritualized sharing and acts of mutuality, which themselves presuppose a body that is incomplete without the guest. Much as the food is incorporated into the individual body, the guest is incorporated into the image of the social body.

The critical question is: *what differences* are to be incorporated and into *what*? In today's Europe, the national unit still provides the frame within which people typically imagine incorporation. In turn, these units are conceived of as democratic and bounded, containing distinct though indeterminate enfranchised peoples. As Lefort (1986, 303–4) argues,

Democracy inaugurates the experience of an ungraspable, uncontrollable society in which the people will be said to be sovereign, of course, but whose identity will constantly be open to question, whose identity will remain latent. ... Power appears as an empty place and those who exercise it as mere mortals who occupy it only temporarily or who could install themselves in it only by force or cunning. There is no law ... whose foundations are not susceptible of being called into question. Lastly, there is no representation of a center and of the contours of society: unity cannot now efface social division.

Today's European populists, in the fascist tradition, try to fill this empty space with an image of an already united people, needing no outside, no guests, no digestive process to create commensality. What these far-right populists ignore is that their own social bodies are constituted through real and imagined encounters with migrants. Difference has in some sense already been digested to draw new circuits of inclusion and exclusion.

To be sure, encounters alone do not determine how difference is digested as part of incorporative processes. The nation-state, with its laws and policies, its bureaucracies and administrative arms, sets many of the

terms of incorporation. Of primary importance in this regard are policies directed explicitly toward inclusion or exclusion of migrants. These include resettlement programs, specialized social assistance schemes, civic integration courses, and frameworks for the evaluation of education credentials from other institutions in other countries. Each of these has potential to influence where and under what conditions the encounters and exchanges between migrants and non-migrants take place. As such, they constitute part of the institutional terrain that migrants navigate while seeking to build new lives and livelihoods. The rest of the institutional terrain is generated in large part both by policies that are not designed and implemented with the express purpose of influencing migrant outcomes (e.g. unemployment benefit schemes, education policies) and by civil society institutions that operate alongside, even in opposition to, the policies and institutions of state. Government policies, associated with everything from social welfare to the regulation of the labor market and working conditions. In reality, they dissolve and create deep bonds between people, as well as between people and the state. They also create exclusions or categories for the purposes of exclusion.

With respect to incorporation, exclusion takes at least two forms. One form aims to maintain an image of the body as already complete, often representing other individuals and groups as “indigestible” for reasons of incompatible symbols, practices, values, histories, and so on. This form of exclusion involves the attempt to reproduce recognizable social bodies precisely through the systematic exclusion or expulsion of those newcomers whose incorporation would transform these bodies. This refusal to “eat the other” is a refusal to be made of the other. What is important to note, however, is that such indigestion is the product of an imagination that is unknowingly open to the modification of social bodies. The social body that would be reproduced is itself always something new, something subject to continuous alteration by incorporation of things from outside of it. In short, it is already a product of various unidentified, perhaps forgotten but essential processes of incorporation. Thus a fundamentalist approach seeks to sever these circuits of incorporation, and in doing so, produce heretofore non-existent bodies defined less by their content than by the commitment to maintaining an effective barrier

between themselves and others. In short, attempts to revive a previous body cannot actually do so; they can only invent.

The second form involves the exclusion not of people but of symbolic residues that may foil the successful reproduction or production of new social bodies. This may take the form of shedding languages or customary clothing or habits of propriety and hygiene that lend themselves to exclusion in the new environment. Or it means jettisoning “invented traditions” or downplaying historical narratives that had previously served to legitimate difference, separation, and even subordination. Some things—discourses of criminality, terrorism, itinerant lifestyles, particular religious ontologies—cannot be readily digested in a new environment, as holding onto them risks inducing “indigestion” in social bodies. Migrants themselves may experience a form of experiential indigestion, as their attempt to incorporate symbols, meanings, and practices into everyday life reveals the former to be incongruent with conventional understandings (see Butticci, this volume).

In contrast to other concepts, incorporation better captures the multiplicity of actors, processes, and ends that typically fall within—and, unfortunately, outside of—the ambit of “integration.” Working ethnographically, the volume’s contributors offer direct insight into these actors, processes, and ends. In their work, they point to where Europe’s “unbridgeable differences” (Hervik 2004) are bridged, if only momentarily, and to where difference is digested to produce the rudiments of a new and enduring sense of mutual belonging. Their ethnographies also foreground the radical ambivalence of these processes, attentive to when incorporation in key indices of membership does not lead to belonging, when ethnocultural boundaries dissolve or are reified, and how new borders and new forms of discrimination, exclusion, and dysfunction are experienced. But as they thicken our understanding of integration with ethnography, an important question remains: What is *European* about these modes of incorporation?

Europe: A Culture Area

The individual studies in this volume speak to national contexts from local ethnographic engagements. Across them, there emerges Europe, a macro-ethnographic unit whose differences defy the same kinds of engagement that are possible at smaller scales. Europe is nonetheless the focus of this book. A continent of 500+ million people spread across an array of ethnic groups, countries, and geographies, Europe is a diversity of diversities, yet forms a cultural unity when set against other internally diverse geographic culture areas, such as India, South or Southeast Asia, or Papua New Guinea. Still, Europe cannot be reduced to a common membership, to a unified polity represented by the European Union, or even to a coherent project of shared values or historical commitments. Rather, Europe's diverse parts hold together in continual integrating and disintegrating processes. Local patterns are subsumed in regional ones, regional in national ones, national in continental ones; diverse peoples in experiencing these scales become more European while simultaneously differentiating in a loose interplay of parts and whole. These loosely bounded units form a discursive field sufficiently interconnected by institutional, historical, and sociocultural similarities to permit identification and analysis. In short, we and our contributors treat Europe as a "culture area" (Lederman 1998), where we might identify a family of issues that arise through incorporation across European cases.

Of the many things that characterize this culture area, three are worth briefly discussing in order to provide critical context for the study of European modes of incorporation. First, there is the distinctive complex of occidental relations with the foreign. Europe has always been defined relationally, in terms of various outsides, at times geographically (vs. "the Orient" or Africa), at other times religiously (vs. the pagan, the Muslim), racially (vs. the non-white), or economically (vs. Third World, the Global South). Today, the incorporation of people from this multiform outside is haunted above all by a particular geopolitical other: Europe's former colonies dating back to the fifteenth century. Most of the continent's current migrants and asylum-seekers in fact come from former European

colonies, their arrivals following waves of decolonization, most during the second half of the twentieth century.

Many of these migrants, though initially guest workers or students, have made continental Europe their home. Given the long-term effects of centuries of domination, resource exploitation, and the movement of people to and from the colonies to Europe and back, this history can be said to compel a moral claim on Europeans. After all, the continent's extraordinary economic growth during the last 500 years cannot be imagined without colonial exploitation and plunder. Modern welfare states and relatively stable democracies arose in part at the expense of those who remained or were placed outside. In some cases, such as France's relation to West Africa, or Great Britain's relation to India and Pakistan, recognition of this moral obligation has, arguably, led to the granting of citizenship to some former colonial subjects. In Europe today, however, such moral claims appear to carry less and less weight. For the last half century, Europe has structured its post-colonial relationships more around labor needs and current human rights claims than the moral implications of its prior histories. Economic and human rights rationales are still important, but anti-immigrant movements and a backlash to multiculturalism have perhaps diminished the sense that the fact of colonialism should itself justify proactive steps toward incorporating others.

Beyond Europe's longstanding relationship with others outside the continent, there are also institutional commonalities across the continent. One of the most recent is the welfare state. Beginning in the late nineteenth century, most European countries followed the lead of Bismarck's Germany in developing social legislation aimed at addressing issues associated with health and well-being of the growing working classes. Insurances for workplace accidents, illness, and unemployment, alongside pensions for the elderly and material aid for widows and children formed the rudiments of the modern welfare state, which soon branched into various "welfare regimes" (Esping-Andersen 1990). Today's migrants thus do not meet one European social model but several, each with different incorporative potential (on the Danish case, see Olwig and Paerregaard 2011). The social democratic welfare regimes of Scandinavia, for instance, are characterized by comparatively generous benefits and social services administered by large public sectors on the basis of legal

residency, citizenship, or work-history. These welfare regimes institutionalize close relationships of exchange and reciprocity between the individual and the state over the life-cycle. By contrast, the liberal welfare regime of the United Kingdom offers a relatively thin social safety net, forcing the individual to rely to a greater extent on the labor market and family ties to make ends meet, particularly in difficult times.

National welfare regimes must feature in discussions of European incorporation in part because they help to account for why the popular discourse and policy of integration revolves around employment and education. Welfare regimes, whether the comprehensive versions offered by the Scandinavian countries, the limited ones found in the British Isles, or the intermediary models found in continental Europe, socialize the costs of unemployment through taxation. At times, this can foster the perception that society is neatly carved into “makers” and “takers.” On top of race or ethnic-related antipathies, this dichotomous view of the social balance sheet may stigmatize groups who, for various reasons, avail themselves disproportionately of the benefits offered by the welfare state. That migrant groups in some contexts, such as eastern Europeans in Scandinavia, are employed at higher rates than non-migrants, typically escapes the attention of domestic media and cynical politicians who understand that outrage at the other typically sells newspapers, attracts viewers, and wins votes.

Welfare regimes are also critical to discussions of incorporation because they help to make sense of what makes Europe an attractive destination for migrants. Beyond social, labor market, healthcare, and education policies, modern welfare regimes institutionalize stable lifecourses and, to different extents, create the possibility for intergenerational mobility through public institutions. Building on this insight, Borneman (this volume) examines the perceptions and experience of the “holding environment” of the welfare state—a psychosocial dimension of the latter which transcends benefits and services; it presents some migrants with a distinctive form of security and stability that enables them to care for themselves and others and thus create optimal conditions for a mutual belonging.

In addition to colonial histories and the modern welfare regimes, the European culture area is characterized by an ongoing process of

aggregating nation-states into a single, relatively permeable, supranational body while stabilizing national diversity. These seemingly contradictory ends are integral to facilitating Europeanization and making Europe a distinctive culture area (Borneman and Fowler 1997). Europeanness registers not via official symbols of the EU or in opposition to nationness but by the different constituent nationalities themselves: for example, “being Danish” (Jenkins 2012) or “being Norwegian” (Eriksen 1993) are preconditions for belonging to Europe. It registers through the mobilities and encounters associated with the EU’s various expansions (e.g. to Eastern Europe, the Balkans) and openings (e.g. to Israel and Turkey). There are, for instance, the fellow Europeans, particularly from the East, who have moved to the West to fill labor shortages. There are the asylum-seekers swept onto Greek shores or recovered off Italian coasts, drawn by the promise of comparative safety and stability. There is the extended travel regime of vacations outside one’s country of origin. And there are the well-heeled retirement communities of northern Europeans tucked in various corners around the Mediterranean. Europeanization here registers as an enabler of movements and the instigator of new forms of incorporation. It registers also as new exclusions, such as using Turkey and Algeria as new borders to stop those in flight from entering Europe.

While the European culture area certainly encompasses more than colonial histories and legacies, modern welfare states, and the ever-evolving project of European integration, these three factors directly and indirectly inform each of the chapters in this volume. As such, they help us to understand what exactly is *European* about a collection of ethnographies that speaks from perspectives kept close to the ground to address broader, continent-wide processes.

Overview of the Book

The chapters that follow fall into four loose groups, each building thoughtfully upon the questions, arguments, and accounts of those which proceed it. The first consists of three chapters that theorize arrivals’ fitful attempts to sort out things—and themselves and others—in their new

countries. We begin with Chap. 2 by Borneman on the German welfare state and the socio-psychological nature of confronting difference and being incorporated into a distressed “holding environment.” In this account of a single refugee, incorporation figures as a process wherein migrants and non-migrants frame reciprocal demands and modify internal images of one another. This process requires security and continuity, which in Germany is associated with the *Sozialstaat*, or “social state.” Borneman’s analysis points to something critical about the relationship between social security and incorporation: European welfare states do not merely extend membership to newcomers and sculpt their trajectories in and out of the labor markets or benefit schemes but foster an environment where the social and psychological preconditions of more fundamental forms of mutual belonging can emerge. Welfare states, alternatively viewed as vulnerable to migrant dependency or dependent on migrant productivity, appear to mitigate some issues and anxieties. Still, cutbacks in social welfare for permanent residents exacerbate others and give rise to a backlash against migrants.

Staying with Germany, Sohail in Chap. 3 reports on an ethnographic study of migrants’ projects of self-transformation in Berlin. Focusing on mimesis and a shared fixation on authenticity and falsehood, he probes changes since the emergence of the *Willkommenskultur* discourse in 2015. Contact between refugees and non-migrants, he finds, appears to stimulate mutual desire to become otherwise. Sohail’s ethnography challenges a reductive reading of integration discourse, finding instead that for his refugee interlocutors it was not the pressure to integrate but their self-perceived failure to do so that engendered lingering resentment. As a study of incorporation, it echoes the core insights of the preceding chapter, as both foreground the psychological dimension of incorporative processes wherein encounters with difference catalyze creative activity aimed at adjusting and modifying the self as new arrivals adapt to novel circumstances and relations.

This all-Germany section concludes with Ghassem-Fachandi in Chap. 4, who offers a rare account of incorporation that revolves around refugees’ and non-migrants’ confrontation with intimate experiences of the erotic, which includes but is not limited to the sexual and the marital. The question of incorporation here is not about flags or folk costumes,