**MAINSTREAMING INTEGRATION
GOVERNANCE (UPSTREAM)**

UP STREAM
MAINSTREAMING
INTEGRATION
GOVERNANCE

UPSTREAM Policy Brief Nr. 2

The Politics of Mainstreaming:
A Comparative Analysis of Migrant Integration Governance in Europe

Ilona van Breugel, Xandra Maan and Peter Scholten

Mainstreaming integration governance

Mainstreaming is often seen as the new 'trend' in the governance of migrant integration in Europe. Although often interpreted and framed in very different ways within different (local, national, EU) policy settings, mainstreaming captures a 'turn' in integration governance at various levels, including the EU, national and local levels. Mainstreaming is mostly known as a policy technique used in areas such as gender, disability or climate policies. However, less is known about the mainstreaming of immigrant integration policies. The UPSTREAM project defines mainstreaming in integration governance as a *shift toward generic policies oriented at a pluralist society and involving poly-centric forms of governance* (Van Breugel, Maan, Scholten, 2014).

The politics of mainstreaming

This policy brief summarizes the main findings from the second phase of the UPSTREAM project, focused on the rationale of mainstreaming: *what is mainstreamed to achieve migrant integration, how have mainstreamed integration policies been developed in terms of policy processes, and why did governments decide to mainstream?* This report brings together the findings from France, Poland, Spain, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom and the EU. The selected countries all have different governance structures in the domain of integration; the level of centralization differs, for example, between France, the Netherlands and the UK and there is a distinction between 'old' immigration countries (such as France, the Netherlands and the UK) and 'new' immigration countries (such as Poland). A study was also conducted of the mainstreaming of integration governance from the EU level. Within the country studies, the project looks at national policies as well as at two cities that were selected on the basis of their differences in terms of integration policies. They are Saint Denis and Lyon (France), Amsterdam and Rotterdam (the Netherlands), Warsaw and Poznan (Poland), London-Southwark and Bristol (UK), and Madrid and Barcelona (Spain).

Clear trend towards generic and poly-centric integration governance

Our analysis shows that what most cases have in common in terms of mainstreaming is a trend from group-specific policies to *generic policies*. In almost all cases, in as far as group specific measures have been adopted in the past, there was a clear trend towards embedding integration measures into generic policy areas such as housing and education. Whereas this may be nothing new for France with its Republicanist tradition, this is a change of direction for countries like the Netherlands and the UK which have a more multicultural policy history. We observed that while new immigration countries tend to adopt specific measures wherever considered necessary, 'old' immigration countries, such as France, the Netherlands and the UK, only do so for specific groups of newcomers.

Furthermore, in terms of governance, we observed a clear trend away from state-centric modes of governance to more *poly-centric governance*. This clearly involves an increase of complexity in the field of integration governance, involving a large set of governmental and non-governmental actors in the policy process. This assigns a more prominent role to the local level in particular. In the Netherlands, the UK and Spain, the local level has clearly become more prominent in terms of integration governance. This sometimes leads to significant discrepancies in integration governance between cities within a country, as well as between the local and the national level within one country. This 'local turn' in integration governance clearly underlines the need to look at mainstreaming at both the local and national level.

In terms of poly-centric governance, the EU plays a particular role. National political contestation of migrant integration has limited EU involvement in the field of migrant integration. This allows for a 'mainstreamed' approach to migrant integration at the EU level, as formulated in the European Common Basic Principles of Integration and in the Common Integration Agenda. At the same time, the EU has played an important role in the diffusion of the idea of mainstreaming, primarily via open methods of coordination. This applies in particular to relations with new member states, where various schemes to mainstream integration governance were promoted, but also in relations with the local level, city networks in particular.

Diversity orientation is part of mainstreaming at the urban level but not at national level

We also found significant variation in terms of the different forms of mainstreaming. This shows that mainstreaming should not be seen as a monolithic process. This applies in particular to the cultural dimension of mainstreaming, or the whole society orientation towards embracing diversity. At the national level this diversity orientation appears largely absent (except to some extent in the UK and Spain). In contrast, at the local level this diversity orientation is part of mainstreaming efforts. This applies to cities in both 'new' and 'old' immigration countries. Furthermore, this diversity orientation is also part of the EU mainstreaming approach, and in fact plays an important role in European city networks where knowledge and best practices in this regard are being exchanged.

No connection with mainstreaming in

areas such as gender, disability and climate	The lack of a diversity orientation in national integration mainstreaming marks an important difference with how mainstreaming is understood in other policy fields such as gender, disability and climate. Whereas in those areas mainstreaming involves the development of a generic sensitivity for gender, disability and climate, this seems less the case for integration mainstreaming, at least at the national level. At the local level, integration mainstreaming seems more similar to mainstreaming in those other areas. What is remarkable here is that no clear references to mainstreaming in those areas were found in any of the cases we examined.
Discrepancy between national and local mainstreaming	The findings concerning 'what' is mainstreamed clearly relate to what we found on 'how' mainstreaming was adopted and 'why'. The discrepancy between national and local interpretations of mainstreaming is also reflected in the frames used to legitimate mainstreaming. At the national level, mainstreaming is framed particularly in terms of promoting equality, anti-discrimination and individual responsibility. In contrast, at the local (and the EU) level mainstreaming is more often framed in terms of super-diversity. We found that this even applies to cities that are not super-diverse in the theoretical sense, such as Warsaw. Furthermore, at the national level mainstreaming appears to be particularly driven by political factors and the need for austerity measures and, in some cases, government retrenchment. The politicization of migrant integration appears to have created a setting, especially in 'old' immigration countries, where group-specific measures are less politically desirable. Furthermore, the economic crisis has prompted governments to cut on integration spending, which might explain why a diversity orientation is less manifest at the national level. Mainstreaming may then become a vehicle for decentralization (UK and to some extent France), or retrenchment (the Netherlands). In contrast, at the local level, problem pressure seems to have been a more important engine behind mainstreaming. In some cases this relates to focus events or incidents that revealed the need for a more comprehensive approach to diversity, in others the recognition of the super-diverse character of city populations provides a more important explanation for why cities choose to mainstream.
Mainstreaming and proxy-policies	The trend toward (partial) mainstreaming that we found in most cases clearly involves a widespread use of 'proxy-policies.' Proxy policies mostly involve needs-based or area-based measures that indirectly may still primarily target migrants. Especially in the UK and the Netherlands, area-based mainstreaming involves policy strategies targeting neighborhoods where many migrants live, rather than targeting migrant groups per se. Such a strategy can also be observed in the French approach to *'Urban Priority Zones'*, or in the Dutch approach to *'Krachtwijken'*. A clear example of a needs-based proxy strategy can be found in the Dutch case, where parents' educational level replaced parents' ethnic background as the basis for financing primary education. Also in the EU case there is a clear focus on specific needs or barriers that may be disproportionally felt by migrants, such as early school leaving, access to services, etc.

However, in various cases, the EU case in particular, we did not find evidence that proxy policies were designed with migrant groups in mind. Also in France, the presence of migrants does not play an explicit role in the definition of Urban Priority Zones. This may signal that mainstreaming by introducing proxies can contribute to diluting integration policy preferences. In some cases, especially in the Netherlands and to some extent the UK, we did find evidence that proxies were deliberately defined as a replacement for group-specific measures. In the Netherlands, the availability of ethnic statistics played a key role, especially at the national level, in calibrating area-based and needs-based policies (such as the financing of schools) in terms of how effective they are in addressing migrant-related issues.

Challenges to effective integration governance

This analysis of the politics of mainstreaming integration governance identified several challenges in terms of the potential effectiveness and impact of mainstreaming, which will need to be examined further in the following report on the practice of mainstreaming. First of all, the trend of poly-centric governance dramatically enhances the complexity of integration governance. What are the consequences of the discrepancy between mainstreaming with a diversity orientation at the local and EU level and without this orientation at the national level? Does this lead to decoupling?

Furthermore, governance literature reveals that in complex settings, maintaining a coherent policy message and communicating policy aims within policy networks are of the utmost importance; to what extent does mainstreaming integration governance involve such a coherent message and communication, or does it risk dilution of integration policy altogether? Regarding generic policies, the question is to what extent these manage to reach specifically vulnerable groups; is mainstreaming something that works in particular for second generation migrants, and are specific policies still required for specific groups and for first generation migrants in particular?

Finally, an important issue that emerged concerns the presence or absence of ethnic statistics. Although this did not appear as an explanatory factor for whether or not mainstreaming was implemented, it may constitute an important factor in the implementation of mainstreaming, as the presence of ethnic statistics could help monitor the group-specific impact of generic policies.

Policy lessons and relevance

The UPSTREAM projects seeks not only to inform EU, national and local policy-makers as to how they might improve their own deliberately designed mainstreaming strategies, but also to demonstrate instances where mainstreaming is already taking place, and how they might more effectively work with those implementing practitioners. The analysis that was summarized for this policy brief aims to develop in particular a deeper understanding of how and why mainstreaming should, or should not, take place. From this analysis, a number of lessons can be derived for policymakers and other stakeholders involved in mainstreaming at different levels:

- Mainstreaming is not a monolithic process; it comes in different shapes in different settings, fitting the specific problem, political and policy setting.
- Mainstreaming as applied in national policy settings often differs from how it is applied in local and EU settings.
- Mainstreaming integration governance often continues to address the issues that are felt by migrants (as well as others) by means of proxy policies, such as area-based or needs-based policies.
- In comparison to mainstreaming in other fields such as gender and disability, mainstreaming in integration governance is often only 'partial' because of the absence of efforts to promote a diversity orientation.
- Mainstreaming provides opportunities in terms of generic and poly-centric policies, as well as challenges in terms of the risk of watering down policy responsibilities and priorities.

The full analysis of the Politics of Mainstreaming is available for download on the project website www.project-upstream.eu

Contact

For more information on UPSTREAM, this policy brief, or any questions in this regard, please contact:
Ms. Ilona van Breugel
Erasmus University Rotterdam – Department of Public Administration
vanbreugel@fsw.eur.nl
T: +31 10-4082039

Project partners

- **Erasmus University Rotterdam** (project coordinator): Dr. Peter Scholten, Ilona van Breugel, Xandra Maan
- **Migration Policy Institute Europe**: Dr. Elizabeth Collett, Meghan Benton
- **Universitat Complutense Madrid**: Prof.dr. Joaquin Arango, Dr. Elisa Brey
- **Centre of Migration Research**: Ignacy Jozwiak, Dr. Joanna Nestorowicz, Dr. Magdalena Lesinska
- **COMPAS**: Dr. Ben Gidley, Dr. Ole Jensen
- **INED Paris**: Prof.dr. Patrick Simon, Dr. Melodie Beaujeu

Key Reading

- Alexander, M. (2003). Local policies toward migrants as an expression of Host-Stranger relations: a proposed typology. Journal of ethnic and migration studies, 29(3), 411-430.
- Amiraux, V., & Simon, P. (2006). There are no Minorities Here Cultures of Scholarship and Public Debate on Immigrants and Integration in France. *International journal of comparative sociology*, *47*(3-4), 191-215.
- Bertossi, C. (2011). National Models of Integration in Europe A Comparative and Critical Analysis. *American Behavioral Scientist*, *55*(12), 1561-1580.
- Cantle, T. (2012). *Interculturalism: the new era of cohesion and diversity*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Collet, E. and M. Petrovic. (2014). The Future of Immigrant Integration in Europe: Mainstreaming Approaches for Inclusion. Brussels: MPI.
- De Zwart, F. (2005). The dilemma of recognition: administrative categories and cultural diversity. Theory and Society, 34(2), 137-169.
- Simon, P. (2008). The Choice of Ignorance: The Debate on Ethnic and Racial Statistics in France. French Politics, Culture & Society, 26(1), 7-31.
- Spencer, S. (2011). The migration debate. Bristol: The Policy Press.
- Van Breugel, I., Maan, X., and Scholten, P. (2014). Conceptualizing mainstreaming. UPSTREAM Report 1. Erasmus University: Rotterdam.
- Vertovec, S. (2007). Super-diversity and its implications. *Ethnic and racial studies*, *30*(6), 1024-1054.
- Vertovec, S., & Wessendorf, S. (Eds.). (2010). *The Multiculturalism Backlash: European discourses, policies and practices*. Routledge.
- Wood, P., & Landry, C. (2008). *The intercultural city: Planning for diversity advantage*. Earthscan.
- Zapata Barrero, R. (Ed., 2015). *Interculturalism in Cities: Concept, Policy and Implementation*. Northampton: Edward Elgar.