CHAPTER 4

Femonationalism, Neoliberalism, and Social Reproduction

Marginalized though we have been as women, as white and western makers of theory, we also marginalize others because our lived experience is thoughtlessly white, because even our "women's cultures" are rooted in some western tradition.
—ADRIENNE RICH, "Notes toward a Politics of Location," 219

The contemporary mobilization of women's rights by nationalist parties and within civic integration policies as a way of stigmatizing particularly (though not exclusively) Muslim populations has been profoundly divisive for feminists. Since 9/11 the non-western migrant—and specifically Muslim—woman question has indeed been the site of lively debates engaging feminist intellectuals, politicians, and activists across western Europe (and the western world). As I began to discuss in chapter 1, in the Netherlands, France, and Italy some prominent feminist intellectuals and women's associations endorsing secularist arguments, female politicians (some of Muslim background) from left to right, as well as femocrats in key gender equality agencies have publicly denounced Islam as an exceptionally misogynist religion. According to them, Muslim practices—above all veil wearing—should be condemned and banned from public spaces. On the opposite side of the spectrum, well-known feminist intellectuals, antiracist female politicians, and women's organizations in these same countries have criticized such a characterization of Islam not only as an overgeneralization, but as also a reason for increased Islamophobic and anti-immigration sentiments. In short, they regard these positions as running the risk, fundamentally, of aligning feminism with racism. It will come as no surprise to the readers of this book that my position is close to that of the second group. Furthermore, I believe that we should not consider those feminists

and femocrats whose arguments *converge* with nationalists and neoliberals in anti-Islam campaigns as being "instrumentalized" by the latter—an approach that is as patronizing to them as is the idea that Muslim women are agentless victims to be rescued. In other words, while feminism—as the general notion of women's liberation from patriarchy—has certainly been opportunistically appropriated by the PVV, FN, and LN in their struggle against the non-western and Muslim male Other, those feminists, women's organizations, female politicians, and femocrats who have openly supported policies repressive of Muslim religious and social practices in the name of gender justice should not be considered as naïve political actors. Rather, they should be regarded as political subjects whose anti-Islam concerns are informed by specific theoretical paradigms and animated by determined motivations and goals. What remains to be further clarified, however, is the specific nature of such paradigms, motivations, and goals and their concrete implications.

Feminist critical voices have proposed thoughtful interpretations of the aforementioned phenomenon. In particular, in all three countries under scrutiny, they have emphasized the framing of feminism, or the participation of some feminists within anti-Islam agendas, in terms of "new affinities between feminist and sexual politics," "strategic opportunities" to advance feminism, feminists' "identification" with a republican/secularist project, or as a type of sacrificial convergence in which the fight against Muslim patriarchy is placed in antagonism with antiracist battles.[1] However, regardless of their particular positions and characterizations of the reasons for some feminists and femocrats converging with nationalist right-wing parties in the denunciation of Islam, most scholars have focused on the realm of political rhetoric. They thus have highlighted the arguments, premises, and political implications of the feminist endorsement of anti-Islam agendas, but not their economic ramifications.[2] While building upon the above interpretations, this chapter demonstrates that the feminist and femocratic convergence with anti-Islam agendas is not limited to rhetoric. Rather, it also involves the economic realm and produces very concrete consequences in the lives of the Muslim and non-western migrant women involved as well as for gender justice more generally. I thus propose to shed light on a specific point of such a convergence taking place in the socioeconomic sphere that has hitherto been widely overlooked: namely, the role played by some women's organizations and femocrats in the development

of the neoliberal economic aspects of the civic integration programs for third-country nationals (TCNs). In the previous chapter I discussed how civic integration programs in all three countries have contradictorily addressed non-EU/non-western migrant women as mothers to be educated into models of western European parenthood, but also as backward, victimized subjects who require emancipation through subtraction from their alleged segregation in the private sphere. Building upon this approach, the Dutch, French, and Italian neoliberal governments since 2007 have activated policies seeking to promote also non-EU/non-western migrant women's employment. This chapter charts how the implementation of these policies, however, has functioned through directing migrant women undergoing civic integration programs toward the care and domestic sector, or social reproduction.[3] Non-EU/non-western migrant women have been encouraged, that is, to undertake employment activities that have traditionally been conceived as vocationally feminine and against which the western European feminist movement engaged in historical battles. In other words, even though the explicit intent of these policies was the promotion of the economic integration and independence of migrant women and their participation in the public sphere, they have de facto contributed to locating these women in the private sphere. What I am interested in highlighting here is how these policies have been not only supported but in some cases also designed and actively implemented by some of the female politicians, women's organizations, and femocrats who have been prominent in denouncing Islam in particular for limiting Muslim women's opportunities in the public arena.

Given these premises, this chapter aims to demonstrate that the current convergence between the anti-Islam feminist front and anti-Islam and anti-immigration nationalist and neoliberal political agendas in the name of women's rights exposes a radical performative contradiction, whose effects are potentially disastrous for women's struggles in general. A performative contradiction occurs when there is a mismatch between theory and practice, proposition and performance, or, for instance, when the principles that guide political action are contradicted by that very action.[4] Though radical performative contradictions can also be conducive to progressive politics—as in Judith Butler's compelling treatment of the performative contradiction of the notion of universalism of rights in the hands of oppressed subjects—I here use this notion to emphasize above all

(though not exclusively, as I shall explain in the conclusions) their detrimental consequences.[5] Specifically, I analyze the performative contradiction of those feminists, women's organizations, and femocrats supporting economic integration policies for non-EU/non-western migrant women in the particular Islamophobic and racist context in which this contradiction has emerged. This is not the performative contradiction of oppressed subjects (as in Butler's analysis, for instance), but of political subjects who have internalized (wittingly or unwittingly) the presuppositions and role of the oppressors. Thus, I look at women's organizations' and femocrats' implementation of policies concerning non-EU/non-western migrant women's economic integration in the realm of social reproduction as a specific "performance" that, while being presented as an instrument through which migrant (and Muslim) women should be enabled to *undo gender*, instead produces and intensifies both the conditions for racial discrimination and for *doing and perpetuating gender roles*.[6] In other words, the feminists, women's organizations, and femocrats who endorse measures proclaimed to be the best means for achieving the goal of women's liberation from assumed patriarchal cultures do not simply sacrifice antiracism in favor of antisexism. Rather, they reinforce the conditions for the reproduction at the societal level of Muslim and non-western migrant women's segregation, traditional gender roles, and the gender injustice they claim to be combating. I thus demonstrate that the support accorded by some feminists, women's organizations, and femocrats to economic integration policies for non-EU/non-western women in the name of women's rights ends up (unwittingly) jeopardizing precisely the latter.

In order to understand the conditions of possibility for, and the trajectory of, such performative contradiction, I first illustrate the neoliberal logic behind the economic aspects of civic integration programs at the EU level. I thus chart the ways in which the focus on employment as the main area of attention for migrants' integration within the EU agenda has concretely been translated in the case of non-EU/non-western migrant women in the Netherlands, France, and Italy. Here, I show in particular how this focus has been supported by the gender equality agencies at the EU level, and implemented by women's organizations and femocrats in all three countries under scrutiny. I will also discuss the specific narrative concerning women's economic independence that was mobilized in the process and the concrete outcome of these policies in effectively chan-

neling migrant women toward the social reproductive sector. Second, I propose that we must reconstruct the complex feminist genealogy of the notion of economic independence, and the related concepts of productive work and productivist ethics, as opposed to social reproduction. This critical reconstruction shows that the tension between these two realms, that is, production and reproduction, and the devaluation of the latter by the western European feminist movement, has unwittingly contributed to the reconfiguration of social reproduction as a sector occupied by the most marginalized and fragile fringes of the workforce, that is, migrant and Muslim racialized women. Finally, I discuss how such a feminist performative contradiction is also rooted in what I call the western feminist teleology of emancipation through productive work. I thus show the modalities through which such a teleology of emancipation leads to the projection of the experience of western European women's struggle for emancipation as representative of the experience, past and future, of all women.

Gendering Integration as Workfare

In the growing literature on the gender dimensions of civic integration policies across the EU, the fact that these policies "interpellate" non-EU/non-western migrant women not only as cultural recipients and mothers (as discussed in chapter 3), but also as waged workers has been, with very few exceptions, entirely overlooked.[7] Yet the economic integration of migrant women has been one of the primary goals of the European guidelines on the integration of TCNs, particularly from 2011 onward. As anticipated in the previous chapter, in 2011 the EU released two new documents regarding the integration of migrants in Europe: the 2011 Communication and the 2011 CSWP (Commission Staff Working Paper). While still defining "the twin process of mutual accommodation" between migrants and receiving societies as the underlying principle of integration in Europe, the new 2011 Communication registered two important developments as compared to the 2005 Communication. On the one hand, the changing demographic (i.e., aging) as well as "social, economic and political context" were repeatedly invoked as elements that integration policies must consider a priority.[8] On the other hand, more emphasis was placed on the "will and commitment of migrants to be part of the society that receives them."[9] In other words, the 2011 documents called attention to the context of the aging of

the European population and of the deep economic crisis at the time in order to justify more selective criteria in immigration policies. That is, the EU recommended that migrants should be allowed in on the basis of the economic needs of European countries: thus, these documents invoked a politics of stricter border control to limit entrance to only workers who could contribute to labor shortages for certain EU member-states. Hence, the 2011 Communication calls integration a "way of releasing the potential of migration," as the opening section of the new communication puts it. In particular, "Legal migration can help to address these issues, in addition to maximizing the use of the labor force and skills already available in the EU and improving the productivity of the EU economy."[10] Furthermore, in the changed social, economic, and political context, the two most pressing challenges were identified as "the prevailing low employment levels of migrants, especially for migrant women," and the "rising unemployment and high levels of 'over-qualification.'"[11] As the 2011 Communication further emphasized,

> Integration is an ever evolving process, which requires close monitoring, constant efforts, innovative approaches and bold ideas. The solutions are not easy to define but if migrants integrate successfully in the EU, this will represent a significant contribution to the achievement by the EU of the targets it has set in the *Europe 2020 Strategy*, namely to raise the employment rate to 75% by 2020, to reduce school drop out rates to less than 10%, to increase the share of the population having completed tertiary education and to lift 20 million people out of poverty or social exclusion.[12]

The centrality of migrants' employment to the European agenda on the integration of TCNs is thus clearly delineated. Against this backdrop, we can understand better why throughout this document gender equality is considered mostly in relation to employment. As the 2011 Communication states, "Employment rates of migrant women are substantially lower than both the average employment rate and the employment rates of migrant men. As participating in the labor market is one of the best and most concrete ways to integrate in society, efforts to reduce these gaps must target both labor migrants and migrants who come to the EU in the context of family reunification or as beneficiaries of international protection."[13] The

document thus recommends that "introductory programs for newly arrived migrants, including language and civic orientation courses[,] . . . *should address the specific needs of migrant women* in order to promote their participation in the labor market and strengthen their economic independence."[14]

As the above quotations testify, the privileging of work as the main arena of intervention for promoting equality between migrant men and women at the EU level thus stems from the strict linkage between recent integration/migration policies and the so-called Europe 2020 strategy. The latter is the master plan elaborated in 2010 by the European Commission (EC) to set the parameters for fostering the European economy by increasing the activity rate of the EU population to 75 percent by 2020. The Europe 2020 strategy is the ratification at the EU level of the "job first" principle, which began to be adopted throughout the EU in the late 1990s and has since been activated particularly during the 2007–2011 financial crisis. Accordingly, the solution prescribed by the EC in order to boost the sluggish European national economies and to increase their competitiveness on the global markets is to guarantee that three-fourths of the working-age population is in some form of employment, that welfare states and public expenditures are dramatically re-dimensioned, and that social benefits are individually tailored and made conditional upon demonstration of "genuine" unemployment by their recipients, namely, of actively seeking a job, even if unsuccessfully. By adopting the job first principle and the 75 percent goal as its organizing perspective, it has been argued that Europe is increasingly moving from a regime of *welfare* toward one of *workfare*. Rather than a system based on forms of general solidarity linked to the rights of citizenship, in other words, Europe is turning toward a system based on selective and temporary contractual relationships, which discriminates between the deserving and undeserving poor and de-universalizes citizenship rights.[15] Although as old as industrial capitalism itself, the current workfare system coincides with contemporary neoliberal capitalist ideology in a particularly felicitous way; focus upon individual responsibility and commodification of all aspects of social life are, in fact, the landmark of workfare policies.[16] Welfare provisions are assessed against market principles, and social schemes—like unemployment benefits—are framed as contractual obligations according to which beneficiaries should demonstrate unremitting

commitment to becoming "useful" cogs in the productive machine in order to receive social assistance.

The neoliberal ideology informing workfare policies is even harsher when it comes to certain categories of migrants. Whereas "high-skill" migrants are in some countries exempted from civic integration assessments, "low-skill" migrants moving for family reunification, or what French ex-president Nicolas Sarkozy famously termed "inflicted immigration" ' (*immigration subie*), are subjected to severe workfare programs. In most EU countries the participation of newcomers in training activities and orientation courses aimed at speeding up the integration of (certain) migrants into the labor market has thus become an obligatory requirement for the granting of residency rights. However, if the ideological infrastructure informing the "cultural" requirements of the civic integration policies is gendered (as I discussed at length in chapter 3), the presuppositions of these economic requirements, or workfare measures attached to civic integration, are no less so. The need to promote non-EU/non-western migrant women's employment as one of the best ways to facilitate their integration is in fact recast as an opportunity that European policy makers (including some women's organizations as well as femocrats as we shall see) offer these women in order to facilitate their emancipation. The "Strategy for Equality between Women and Men 2010–2015," which represents the work program of the EC on gender equality, states that "to reach the Europe 2020 objective of a 75% employment rate for women and men, particular attention needs to be given to the labor market participation of older women, single parents, women with a disability, *migrant women and women from ethnic minorities*."[17] Furthermore, the official documents of the EC outlining the parameters for migrants' integration present this notion very clearly; accordingly, work becomes "one of the best and most concrete ways to integrate in society."[18] Integration packages at the national level, therefore, as already noted, "should address the specific needs of *migrant women* in order to promote their participation in the labor market and *strengthen their economic independence*."[19]

A proliferation of statistical data, cross-national studies, and policy documents have increasingly been deployed at the EU level in recent years, highlighting migrant women's lower employment and activity rates when compared with those of migrant men.[20] More or less explicitly, the lower

rates of participation of these women in the workforce are attributed to their backward cultural backgrounds, which are deemed responsible for keeping Muslim and non-western migrant women in a state of subjection and economic dependence and, therefore, not encouraging them to enter the paid workforce.[21]

In light of this, it is important to note that in the case of non-EU/non-western women who arrive in Europe as family members, the emphasis on work as an instantiation of integration is not only informed by the workfare strategy of the EU but also originates in the particular interpretation of gender equality that has been put forward by the gender mainstreaming agencies of the EC. In spite of the multiple recommendations provided by an ad hoc committee on the gender dimensions of integration, which pointed to the social-economic, the cultural, and the political as spheres deserving specific consideration when implementing gender equality policies for migrant women (recommendations that are, in themselves, not unproblematic), the EC official documents list employment as the major sphere in which gendered integration should be pursued.[22] Focus upon employment as the main terrain of gender equality for migrant women, in other words, has been informed by a certain feminist perspective—which in the contemporary conjuncture converges with certain dimensions of neoliberalism, as I will argue below—according to which it is work that sets women free; work outside the household has thus been recast as the litmus test for benchmarking the level of equality between men and women in society.[23]

Although not explicitly presented as workfare, but rather as an instance of gender justice through women's economic independence, emphasis upon the need to mobilize the female workforce—including its migrant component—in order to achieve the goals set by the Europe 2020 strategy is one of the main points at which the paradoxical convergence of feminism and neoliberal (as well as xenophobic) political agendas takes place. The paradox arises, in the first place, because the neoliberal philosophy of workfare informing the economic strategy of the EC arguably conceives of work as a "duty" for citizens and as the sine qua non condition for noncitizens to reside in Europe, whereas some feminists' and femocrats' embrace of the job first principle for migrant women is still justified by concerns for women's economic autonomy and informed by a conception of work

as a "right." In other words, work is foregrounded, on the one hand, as an obligation and, on the other hand, as an entitlement. But what are this paradox's concrete consequences for the lives of migrant women at the nation-state level?

Integrating Gender (and Race) as Care Work

The promotion of non-EU/non-western migrant women's participation in the labor market has received more attention at the nation-state level since the establishment of the European Integration Fund for Third-Country Nationals (EIF) in 2007. The fund's aim is "to support the efforts made by the Member States in enabling third-country nationals of different economic, social, cultural, religious, linguistic and ethnic backgrounds to fulfill the conditions of residence and to facilitate their integration into the European societies."[24] In this context, article 4, 2(c), of the same directive (2007/435/EC) identifies migrant women, alongside children, the elderly, the illiterate, or the disabled, as one particular group whose integration the EIF aims to enhance further. Following on from the European directive and seeking to secure the resources provided by the integration funds, since 2007 a number of programs have been adopted to promote the participation of non-EU/non-western migrant women in the national labor market. Noticeably, in all three countries on which this book focuses, some women's organizations and femocrats have been on the front line in putting forward proposals to encourage migrant women's integration into the workforce.

The case of the Netherlands is particularly emblematic. As discussed in chapter 3, in 2003 the then minister for Integration and Immigration, Rita Verdonk, in cooperation with the minister for Equality Policies, promoted the creation of the Participatie van Vrouwen uit Etnische Minderheden (PAVEM; Participation of Ethnic Minority Women) commission. It was composed of six politicians, including three women from different political parties: Princess Máxima (now queen of the Netherlands), Lilian Callender and Yasemin Tümer, two "well-integrated" women of migration descent originally from Surinam and Turkey, respectively.[25] The main task of PAVEM was to propose concrete policies to tackle the "isolated position of women from ethnic minorities" in Dutch society.[26] Under the motto "If you educate a mother, you educate a family!" PAVEM elaborated the princi-

ples behind the integration study materials and test, which were meant to assess migrant women's parenting models and behavior according to criteria informed by notions of "proper" Dutch motherhood (see chapter 3). In 2007 the then minister of Education, Culture and Science, also responsible for gender equality, launched the "Duizend en één kracht" (A thousand and one force) project, which had been previously designed by PAVEM. This time the project targeted migrant women as (potential) workers. With orientalist overtones already in its very name, the program sought to encourage women undergoing civic integration programs to participate in civil society by inviting them to undertake volunteer work.[27] In a bizarre twist of means and ends, *unpaid* volunteer work was presented as the *via maestra* for reaching the goal of economic independence. The project thus stressed the opportunities provided by working as a volunteer for those migrant women who wished to discover their strengths, to assess their capabilities, and thus to be ready for future paid employment. As Kirk and Suvarieriol note, the project was implemented despite the availability of research results conducted by the Dutch Institute for Social Research (SCP) that showed that most migrant women interviewed would not welcome unpaid volunteer work.[28] In particular, they would not wish to carry out the specific type of volunteer work that the project mostly encouraged them to take: that is, care work in hospitals and children's facilities, or care-domestic work in homes for the elderly and in the homes of the disabled. As stated by some of the women interviewed by the SCP, "Why should I do that if I won't get paid?" and "I also care for my household and my children, and I also do that voluntarily, that is enough!"[29] The project was not an isolated initiative. Since 2007 in the Netherlands similar projects have been implemented thanks to the resources made available by the EIF. For instance, DonaDaria, a Rotterdam-based organization for promoting gender equality, has carried out projects initially targeting Moroccan and Turkish women, aimed at encouraging their "emancipation" through volunteer work. With a view to allowing them to leave their homes and to become active participants in Dutch society by learning possibly marketable skills, these women were placed as volunteers in hospitals and home-care facilities to provide care and domestic help.[30] In an interview I conducted with a prominent member of the Dutch migrant women workers' network RESPECT NL, she recounted the many stories of migrant and ethnic minority women receiving social benefits who are regularly requested to work

or to volunteer as care-domestic workers.[31] Similarly, the Dutch immigration expert Sarah van Walsum noted that "Dutch municipalities have been pressuring unemployed ethnic minority women and housewives to take up low-skilled work in the care sector."[32] In the Netherlands, then, neoliberals who are promoting workfare, state-sponsored gender equality agencies such as PAVEM, as well as some women's organizations have converged not only in asking non-EU/non-western migrant women to work for free but also in encouraging them to enter the social reproductive sector. As the Raad voor Werk en Inkomen (RWI; Council for Work and Income) stated, migrant women in the Netherlands can be very important in alleviating labor shortages in the healthcare sector, which thus requires "more investments in order to overcome existing obstacles."[33]

Although the request for migrant women to undertake volunteer work in the care sector is not found either in France or in Italy—or at least not in an official capacity—the situation in these two countries is not dissimilar from that of the Netherlands when it comes to implementing economic integration for women migrating from outside the EU and the Global South. In France since 2009 the law on migrants' integration has established a "professional portfolio" (*bilan de compétences professionnelles*) as an obligatory requirement for all signatories of the Contrat d'Accueil et d'Intégration (CAI; Contract of Reception and Integration).[34] Migrants who sign the CAI must take a three-hour course, during which their scholastic certificates and documents supporting their skills and work experience are assessed. According to the official data released in 2011, 58.7 percent of all signatories of the CAI were provided with a professional portfolio; 65 percent of them were women.[35] The implementation of the obligatory professional portfolio was presented to the public as a way of promoting the integration of migrants, according to the idea that "access to employment is one of the priorities of the French government with the aim to facilitate the integration of newcomers in French society."[36] Furthermore, it was envisaged as an instrument for tackling the disadvantaged position of the migrant population in the labor market, particularly of its female component. According to a study conducted in 2009 by the Département des Statistiques, Études et Documentation, under the auspices of a general inquiry promoted by the French government, "Enquête Longitudinale sur l'Intégration des Primo-Arrivants," women were the majority of incoming migrants during that year (52.3 percent), mostly entering France for reasons of family reunifica-

tion (62.3 percent).[37] Even though, on average, women were more educated than men, the inquiry showed that after two years in the country, migrant women's higher levels of education did not translate into success in the labor market, where they experienced more difficulties than men in finding a job. Moreover, the study also showed that the large majority of the incoming women (64 percent) had been active in the labor markets of their countries of origin before they moved to France, thereby rebutting the widespread idea that women of non-western (particularly Muslim) countries are by definition confined to the home and lack economic independence. Indeed, it was in France that, after two years, they had become housewives and had stopped actively seeking employment. "Migration therefore," the study concludes, "reduces the chances of participating in the labor market, especially if you are a woman."[38] Various causes of this phenomenon are identified: poor or insufficient mastery of French, difficulty in reconciling work and childcare, inadequate or unrecognized educational qualifications, and so on. In other words, as Camille Gourdeau notes, migrant women's difficulties in the labor market are regarded as their own fault, and reference is never made to the discrimination they face in the job search, particularly if they wear a veil, as several studies have demonstrated.[39] In this context, the establishment of the professional portfolio as a tool for facilitating migrants' integration in society through work assumes new significance. Although it was presented as a way to assess the skills and attitudes of incoming migrants in order to help them find the right job, the professional portfolio has instead become an instrument to control the encounter between supply and demand in the labor market, with an eye mostly on the latter. The strategy for tackling migrants'—and particularly women's—lower rates of activity and employment has in fact directed them not toward the sectors for which they have educational qualifications and/or work experience, but toward sectors that face labor shortages. Since the end of the 2000s, French governments have signed agreements with the representatives of economic branches that have difficulties in recruiting native-born workers; these include the Agence Nationale des Services à la Personne (ANSP; National Agency for Human Services), the cleaning and social economy sector, and restaurants and hospitality. In the words of an interministerial report on immigration, these are the "sectors that, despite the crisis, are in need of labor supply."[40] The channeling of migrant women undergoing civic integration toward

the care and cleaning/domestic sectors in France, like in the Netherlands, is also implemented through specific programs financed by the EIF.[41] Since 2008 the Pôle Emploi (a French job center system)—which coordinates with several associations that have been beneficiaries of the EIF funds since 2008 like the Centre National d'Information sur les Droits des Femmes et des Familles—signed an agreement with the Ministry of Immigration and the ANSP in order to promote household services as an employment opportunity for the migrant women undergoing the integration program.[42] Furthermore, the EIF has regularly funded an organization based in Bordeaux, Promofemmes, to provide training to migrant women to help them find jobs in the cleaning sector and hotel industry.[43]

All in all, the encouragement of migrant women to be active in the labor market and the identification of mechanisms (like the professional portfolio) intended to help them overcome the obstacles they find have de facto directed them toward those jobs that French women and men do not want to take: housekeeping, cleaning, babysitting, nursing, and other care work.[44] Despite their higher level of education and previous work experience—as the research results noted earlier demonstrated—non-EU/non-western migrant women in France, like in the Netherlands, are systematically channeled toward the social reproductive sectors.[45]

The implementation of civic integration policies in Italy at the time of writing is still in its initial stages. Its dynamics and effects, therefore, cannot be fully assessed. Nevertheless, we can attempt an analysis of the gender dimensions of the type of economic integration promoted herein by looking at some trends and programs that are already in place. The Dipartimento per le Pari Opportunità (Department for Equal Opportunities), which is the main state feminism agency in the country, has been one of the main promoters of campaigns portraying migrant women as particularly vulnerable to becoming victims of domestic violence.[46] Accordingly, the department's measures targeting non-EU/non-western migrant women—whether or not within the terms of civic integration—have been dominated by programs addressing gendered violence as mainly a problem within migrant communities and thus as a primary field of concern in issues of women's integration. In this context, the department has implemented a number of policies in which the prospects of employment for women with a migration background are increasingly emphasized. In particular, the Italian approach to women's "economic integration" has so

far been to institute programs and training courses with the aim of providing migrant women with the "right" skills to enter the labor market successfully. When we look at the specific skills these programs teach, we again find that many of them direct migrant women toward care work. For instance, the department in 2013 funded the program "Io . . . lavoro!" ("I . . . work!"), which aims to provide free professional training to migrant women so that they can work as carers for the elderly (*badanti*).[47] At the end of the 2000s prominent Italian women's equality agencies also outside state bureaucracy—though often cofunded by various ministries—have designed programs within the framework of the EIF for migrants, in order to foster the economic inclusion of migrant women. Here the Crisalide Project developed by Nosotras is of particular significance. Nosotras is the name of a widely known organization that was founded in 1998 in Florence by a group of both migrant and Italian women in order to address issues of emancipation and equality. In 2009 the organization was granted by the EIF to carry out the Crisalide Project. "The name of the project [i.e., Chrysalis]," in the words of the organizers, "contains in itself the metaphor of the insect pupa that will become butterfly and represents the dream of freedom and independence that comes true and that we wish to all women."[48] The project's objective was to foster the social and economic integration of migrant women through personalized forms of support, potentially enabling them to become autonomous. In 2010 Nosotras made initial results from the Crisalide Project available through a brochurelike publication, which explains the project's rationale as well as its main assets. Though the whole project is presented as an example of best practices involving migrant women both as users and (in some cases) as social workers themselves, the images, narrative, and concrete results shown and recounted throughout the publication disclose the presence of specific gendered and cultural stereotypes underlying the representation of migrant women. First, throughout the publication the migrant woman targeted by the project is exemplified as a veiled Muslim woman. The brochure thus shows the journey toward autonomy through cartoons representing, initially, the veiled woman with a baffled-looking face while the (presumably) native woman helps her understand how to access social and health services, or how to find a job and, in a final cartoon, the migrant woman alone with a happy face as someone in the process of starting up a new life yet, this time, without the veil. The journey of the migrant woman toward autonomy is

represented not only as a path through which she will eventually become conscious of her rights, but also as a journey toward unveiling, or taking off what in western European imagery has come to symbolize oppression and lack of independence. Second, the publication lists work placement and professionalization as some of the key objectives of the project. The main examples of professionalization courses included in the brochure, however, are courses to become a nurse and/or a personal carer for disabled or elderly people. There is an interview with one of the organization's social workers in the brochure. Commenting upon the majority of job offers migrant women mostly find through the Crisalide Project, she says they are "in almost all cases jobs as carers." Finally, I will briefly refer to the Care Assistants Search Agency (CASA) pilot project, which was supported by the EIF in 2011 and coordinated by the Italian social consortium COIN. It aims to address "the increasing need for long term and quality care of older people and people with disabilities by facilitating and supporting the integration of third countries nationals in the EU."[49] CASA is particularly significant not only for its scope—involving Germany and Greece, as well as Italy—but also for its main objective: to establish an EU-wide recruitment agency that supplies care seekers with care givers from third countries. The project explicitly names migrant women as a key audience to be helped to "find better jobs and facilitate their social and economic integration into European Society." Hence, CASA listed (a) providing work for "trained immigrants specialized in long term care: home nursing, home help for older people, assistance to people with disabilities"; (b) promoting "new opportunities for social and professional inclusion to immigrant workers through appropriate vocational training"; and (c) enhancing immigrants' "social and economic integration" as its main aims. Ultimately, like in the Netherlands and in France, in Italy too this brief overview of concrete projects aimed at implementing integration measures for non-EU/non-western migrant women undergoing integration programs shows that economic integration for these women ends up confining them to the care and domestic sector.

In spite of the differences among the three contexts in terms of the articulation of general civic integration policies with specific measures aimed at promoting non-EU/non-western migrant women's employment, the

care and domestic, or social reproduction, sector appears to be the only branch of the economy where these women are encouraged to work, even to volunteer. In all three countries key state gender equality agencies and women's organizations thus have implemented the recommendations of—and received funds from—the EC requiring that women from outside the EU and the Global South are in some form of employment, and have directed them toward care and domestic jobs. In so doing, however, they have contributed (wittingly or unwittingly) to the reproduction of care and domestic work as a gendered—and increasingly racialized—labor market. In other words, by responding positively to civic integration policies' call for workfare and supporting the realization of programs that assign female migrant workers to the care, cleaning, and domestic sector, these gender equality organizations have de facto converged with neoliberal workfare ideology, which claims that migrant women's integration and emancipation require them to be active in the labor market. It is worth noting, however, that these gender equality organizations' proposals, unlike those of neoliberals, see migrant women's work as an opportunity for them to gain economic independence and emancipation. In other words, according to a well-known theme from the history of feminism (on which more in the following section), women's emancipation is seen as resulting from participation in production.

The question that remains, then, is why is this same notion of women's emancipation through participation in production now being used to push migrant women into social reproduction? I propose to shed light on this dilemma by briefly revisiting the debates on economic independence and women's emancipation that have traversed the history of feminism from the outset. In particular, I will succinctly reconstruct a critical genealogy of the notions of productive labor, productivist ethics, and social reproduction in relation to the broader historical, social-economic, and institutional shifts in the context of which these notions emerged and were transformed.

Productive Labor, Productivist Ethics, and Social Reproduction: A Critical Feminist Genealogy

Focus on women's economic independence and their equal access to the labor market was a mainstay of the feminist movement from the outset. In 1792 Mary Wollstonecraft praised the virtues of work as compared with

the devitalizing domesticity imposed on bourgeois women by codes of middle-class femininity. These "trifling employments," she complained, had "rendered woman a trifler."[50] Article XIII of Olympe de Gouges's *Declaration of the Rights of Women and Citizen*, dating from 1791, called for women to enjoy an equal share with men with respect to duties as well as painful tasks, including "the distribution of positions, employment, offices, honors, and jobs."[51] Until the first half of the twentieth century, the demand for women's access to the paid workforce was part of the broader package of claims concerning women's equality in all spheres of social life: political, economic, and reproductive. It was the specific insistence on women's economic equality, however, that divided liberal and socialist feminists more than any other issue. Whereas liberal feminists fought for the inclusion of women in the realm of economic production, thereby rebelling against middle-class women's condition of seclusion in the private sphere, socialist feminists were influenced by the struggles of peasant and working-class women, who had already been incorporated into the labor market for a long time.[52] Though they endorsed women's full participation in the workforce, socialist feminists thus did not regard work as the ultimate site of women's emancipation and liberation. Rather, waged work—albeit being conceived as a precondition for women's emancipation in some instances—was also regarded as the exploitative condition that equalized working-class men and women and positioned them against the same enemy, that is, capital.[53] Work under capitalism was, therefore, something to refuse, reorganize, and transform, rather than something for which to fight to have as a good in itself. "Each new concession won by the bourgeois woman," wrote Alexandra Kollontai, "would give her yet another weapon for the exploitation of her younger sister and would go on increasing the division between the women of the two opposite social camps. . . . Where, then, is that general 'woman question'? Where is that unity of tasks and aspirations about which the feminists have so much to say?"[54] At this stage, when the rise of the feminist movement across western Europe coincided with the emergence and consolidation of mass industrialized societies and the harsh social inequalities that such industrialization generated, social class (but also race, though in different ways in different countries) divided women more than gender could unite them.

It was the advent of Fordism in the twentieth century and the development of the so-called breadwinner model that fundamentally created the

potential for the modification of the sexual division of labor in a way that created the potential for the modification of the sexual division of labor across social classes and thus offered one common ground for women's solidarity. At different stages and places in different countries, Fordism—which began in the United States in the 1920s and was then applied to western Europe after World War II—imposed a novel societal configuration informing all domains of public and private life. Fordism was a regime of "intensive accumulation" characterized by mass production, relatively reduced working hours, high wages for the labor aristocracy, and mass consumption made possible by the family income of the male breadwinner.[55] Behind the male-breadwinner model there were a number of assumptions about gender roles, particularly concerning the division of labor between men and women in the household. Men's responsibility was to provide the main income for the family, whereas women's duty was to attend to domestic chores as well as tasks such as caring for children and often also the elderly. The strength of the model and of the gendered division of labor that went with it in the specifically western European context was ensured by a number of welfare provisions that allowed the survival of the mono-income family, both middle- and working-class: income stability, benefits for the dependent spouse and school-age children, tax reductions, the wide availability of loans and mortgages for the purchase of durable commodities and property, and so on. The nuclear, heterosexual, and traditional patriarchal family was the key social unit in which productivist discipline was reinvigorated. Henry Ford himself was convinced that "a stable and disciplined labor force was reproduced through the institution of the traditional family, and he required that his employees adhere to the model."[56] In short, female dependence was inscribed into both the notion of the family wage and Fordism. A further assumption on which Fordism and the breadwinner model were based concerned the nature of care-domestic, or reproductive, work, as *nonwork* and *nonproductive* and, consequently, as an activity that is not entitled to a wage. Though Fordism was not in itself responsible for the devaluation of reproductive work—which had begun earlier on—it helped strengthen the gender division of labor and further expand its impact upon the working classes.[57] In other words, in the aftermath of World War II, when Fordism became hegemonic across western Europe, the majority of both middle- and working-class women were housewives.[58] Under Fordism, thus, reproductive work came to signify

not only for middle-class women but also for working-class women the very features of women's dependence itself: a lack of social consideration, segregation in the household and isolation, the absence of skills, and servility. The definition of what constituted "proper" work was thus not only a narrowly descriptive device basically coinciding with work outside the household, but also a highly moral and normative one, its features, rhythm, skills, and discipline being informed by, and in turn informing, what Max Weber famously called the western capitalist work ethic (*Arbeitsethik*).[59] The capitalist work ethic was a "productivist" ethic, strongly prescribing what constituted valuable and nonvaluable activities and individuals in society. The supposedly unproductive nature of reproductive work carried out in households, mostly by women, inevitably identified women as less valuable. The division between waged, productive work and unwaged, unproductive work was, therefore, first and foremost a gendered division. As Kathi Weeks aptly puts it for the American case (in a way that can be easily extended to western Europe),

> Unwaged women (and those waged women who found themselves judged in relation to this normative model), not subject to the morally purifying and invigorating effects of work discipline, were a justifiably dependent class. The work ethic could then be embraced as a masculine ethic while non work—a rather more expansive category including everything from leisure practices and consumption work to unwaged agricultural, household, and caring labor—was devalued by its association with a degraded femininity.[60]

It is in the context of Fordism, with its leveling of women from different social backgrounds to the status of housewives, and with its specific mode of devaluation of social reproductive work, that I propose to understand second-wave feminism's demand for equality in the economic realm and for women's access to waged labor in western Europe as a "tool" for their emancipation. This was indeed a demand that cut across different feminist political currents.[61] The definition of reproductive work in the household as disempowering for women and thus the indication of waged work as an emancipating condition were henceforth appropriated by most feminists. On the fringes of Marxist feminism there were voices more critical of the Fordist construction of domestic and care work as nonwork. They did not

consider waged work as a site of emancipation, but instead advanced analyses for recognizing the capitalist need for configuring care-domestic work as an activity carried out within the nuclear family. However, the majority of feminists tended to stigmatize it and emphasized the need to escape from it.[62] From the mid-1960s onward, the productivist ethic was shared by a large range of women's organizations and intellectuals, not only liberal ones representing the interests of middle-class women, but also by then-influential women's organizations linked to the traditional parties of the working class, for instance, the Unione Donne Italiane (Union of Italian Women) in Italy and the Union des Femmes Françaises (Union of French Women) in France, both associated with the communist parties in their respective countries.

With the advent of so-called post-Fordism and neoliberalism, since the late 1970s and 1980s women's widespread entrance into paid work has become a reality. Albeit at different paces and with different percentages, the majority of working-age women across most of western Europe have been incorporated into the labor force. From the mid-1990s onward, for instance, women's rate of employment in this book's three focus countries has grown at dramatic speed: 7.7 percentage points in France, reaching 59.7 percent in 2011; 16 percentage points in the Netherlands, reaching 69.9 percent in 2011; and 11.1 percentage points in Italy, reaching 46.5 percent in 2011.[63] In spite of the differences concerning the characteristics of this growth and the transformations involved in each country's gender and welfare regimes, women's increasing employment has indeed constituted, in Maria Karamessini and Jill Rubery's terms, a case of "converging divergences" between different western European contexts.[64] However, the conditions in which this phenomenon has taken place are very different from the ones that were dominant under Fordism. If Fordism was the era of manufacturing, relative stability in jobs and income, and of the availability of extensive social welfare provisions, which allowed even the mono-income working-class family to maintain decent living standards, post-Fordism is the era of the service sector, where job flexibility, part-time or casual contracts, and the erosion of welfare provisions have come to dominate the lives of mono- and dual-income families. In a scenario dominated by a lack of job security, uncertainty, and economic instability, women's wages have not only become necessary and valuable, but in recent times and in some cases have even become the only ones on which many families have been able to

rely. During the recent global economic crisis (2007–2011), female workers (both migrant and nonmigrant) in western Europe have been less affected by the crisis than men, with the Netherlands, France, and Italy constituting no exception (on which more in chapter 5).[65] Some commentators have gone so far as to call the recent recession the *he*-cession.[66] Under post-Fordism and neoliberalism the consequences of women's incorporation in the workforce for gender roles and for feminist demands themselves have thus been dramatic. Struggles for women's access to the workforce have been increasingly replaced by campaigns for equal pay and equal opportunities in the workplace; denunciations of the glass ceiling preventing many women from achieving positions of leadership have gone together with the establishment of institutional rules that require companies to apply gender quotas and affirmative action. Although the range, target, politics, and main vision underlying the notion of gender equality and consequently feminist positions in this conjuncture have been diverse and fragmented, the variant of feminism that has come to dominate mainstream debates and institutional settings has undoubtedly been the liberal and now increasingly "neoliberal" one.[67] By privileging a definition of gender equality as "sameness" with men and as "equal opportunities" for women to be included in the public sphere, liberal and now neoliberal feminisms have adopted conservative strategies that do not challenge the fundamental tenets of the neoliberal capitalist social formation. Campaigns for women's attainment of positions of power have thus increasingly dominated the mainstream debate on gender equality. Although the fight to break through the glass ceiling still represents a minority of the demands of the female workforce, with most women instead being busy trying to avoid "falling through a structurally unstable floor," the majority of women in western Europe are now effectively incorporated into the sphere of production.[68] *Yet social reproduction has not disappeared*. Either seeking a happy balance, or negotiating some kind of frustrating deal, women are still confronted with the daily demands of reproductive tasks.[69] Despite the significant changes in gender roles that have accompanied women's entrance in large numbers into the workforce, numerous studies show that working women still attend to social reproductive work more than men do. The dominance of productivist ethics and the privileging of an equally productivist political agenda among mainstream feminist and women's circles have not been matched by any similarly forceful campaigns for the provision of

public care services for families, elderly, and the disabled. Rather, even the modest or insufficient public care facilities provided in most western European countries are increasingly being swept away by neoliberal politics or commodified (on which more in chapter 5), leaving most families in a situation in which the time available for social reproduction is shorter and shorter and (increasingly often) redistributed onto the shoulders of migrant women.

Western Productivist Ethics for Non-Western Reproductive Workers

Against this background, I propose to shed light on why it is that economic integration policies targeting non-EU/non-western migrant women have ended up pushing these same women toward the care and domestic sector. In particular, the critical genealogy of western feminism's productivist ethics I outlined earlier might help to unravel the paradox emerging from the mismatch between, on the one hand, some women's organizations' and femocrats' calls for migrant women to enter the workforce in order to become economically independent and, on the other hand, the disconcerting reality that migrant women are being pushed to work for free (like in the Netherlands) or else systematically shunted into the private sphere, or social reproduction. In other words, the work these women's organizations and femocrats ask migrant women to undertake *is precisely the work from which western European feminists wanted to escape*: *namely, social reproductive labor*. Certainly, the fact that jobs in the reproductive sector, in which migrant women find themselves confined, are now paid wages introduces an important difference when compared with the situation that second-wave feminists denounced: namely, that of the Fordist housewife who had to perform social reproductive work "for free."[70] In a sense, the new configuration of social reproduction as waged work vindicates those feminists who have always fought for the recognition of domestic work as productive work and, therefore, as entitled to a wage.[71] However, the payment of reproductive work in today's western European societies does not in any sense amount to its social rehabilitation. On the contrary, care and domestic work continues to be perceived as unskilled, low-status, isolated, servile, and dirty; it thus continues to be socially stigmatized, very poorly paid, and undesired by most western European women.[72] As I will analyze in

more detail in chapter 5, the latter's unavailability for these jobs—through lack of time and/or will—has effectively meant that the reproductive sector has become a migrant women's niche. The conditions of the care and domestic sector, with its antisocial working hours, low pay, and social stigma, make it very unattractive to those "national" workers who still have a wider range of employment choices and protection networks as compared with "non-native" migrant workers.

To be clear, I am not suggesting in any way that we should blame western European women, or western European feminists, for wishing to escape the segregative condition of the housewife, nor do I argue that they are responsible for this condition now being "externalized" to migrant women. What I am proposing, instead, is that we critically reconsider the notion of productive work as the site of, or tool for, women's emancipation. This notion has played a significant role in the stigmatization of social reproduction in a way that has limited the possibility of thinking about alternative scenarios for accomplishing this emancipation. In other words, we need to revisit and interrogate the "productivist ethics" of western European feminists and the understanding of social reproduction as a site of women's subjection rather than work that needs to be reconceived as a social activity and a public good. Feminism's productivist ethics in fact now weighs on the shoulders not just of those women who uphold alternative ideas of social reproduction and emancipation and are confronted with the daily struggle to combine work and care, in the absence of public and affordable care facilities. It also weighs heavily on the shoulders of migrant women, who are called upon to "clean up" this whole mess—literally.

The Western Feminist Teleology of Emancipation

On the occasion of welfare reform in the United States in 1996—instituting workfare that disproportionately affected black single mothers—Gwendolyn Mink noted that "if racism has permitted policy makers to negate poor single mothers as citizens and mothers, white middle-class feminism has provided policy makers with an excuse. White middle-class feminists' emphasis on women's right to work outside the home—accompanied by women's increased presence in the workforce—gave cover to conservatives eager to require wage work of single mothers even as they championed the traditional family."[73] This is a strong stance, no doubt, and one that needs to

be understood in the context of the debates among US feminists regarding the effects of the welfare reforms of the 1990s on African American women.[74] Nevertheless, Mink's comment is useful for my attempt to explain the paradoxical situation in which some feminists, femocrats, and women's organizations promote the notion of productive work and economic independence as an instance of non-EU/non-western migrant women's possible emancipation, while encouraging them to take—or silently pretending to ignore that they take—the jobs feminists historically considered the symbolic and concrete markers of women's dependence and subjection. Following in the vein of Mink's apt comment, I contend that when feminism's productivist ethics converges with neoliberal workfare policies, which inevitably target the lives of poor women (migrant and nonmigrant alike), forms of oppression and exploitation based in race, class, and gender are the inevitable result.

When feminists, femocrats, and women's organizations champion civic integration policies encouraging non-EU/non-western migrant women to work with the promise that this will enhance their integration and economic independence, they tacitly encourage them to adopt western feminists' notion of emancipation through productive labor. In other words, the call for migrant women to work can be read as the recommendation that they should pass through the same stages as those experienced by western European women in the twentieth century in order to achieve the hard-won equality the latter allegedly enjoy. The productivist ethics that encourages migrant women to work thus morphs into a *teleological notion of emancipation*. Accordingly, women's integration into the workforce is regarded as a necessary stage in their journey toward the telos of full emancipation. Or, to put it differently, work becomes that stage supposedly allowing women to free themselves of the conditions of subordination, economic dependence, and isolation that the reproductive, or private, sphere is deemed to represent. The western European feminist teleology of emancipation is based on two main implicit assumptions. The first assumption is that nonwestern women, and especially Muslim women—who can be regarded, as I previously noted, as the contemporary embodiment of what Chandra Mohanty called the "Third World Woman"[75]—are a homogeneous, monolithic entity defined above all by backwardness and *object status*. According to this still-widespread and deeply rooted idea, the characteristics of the nonwestern woman are subordination, passivity, and victimhood; differences

of social class, religion, sexuality, and so on play a lesser role in terms of the definition of her identity and concrete living conditions. Indeed we see how, in spite of the variety of countries, regions, social backgrounds, languages, and religious traditions of the thousands of women going through the requirements of "civic integration" in order to secure their visas, this teleology of emancipation conceives mainly of one non-western female ideal-type: *the victimized object*.[76] It is to this ideal-type of woman that some women's organizations and femocrats—among others—offer integration into the workforce as a way out of her assumed status of subjection. The second implicit assumption is that emancipation is constituted by a set of obligatory stages that must be the same for all women. Waged labor thus becomes the stage through which women must pass in order to enter into the space of proper, western emancipation.

By grounding itself upon these assumptions, western feminism's teleology of emancipation through productive work recalls very closely the teleology of development that informed modernization theories during the 1960s.[77] In the period following World War II and during the construction and consolidation of the contemporary global capitalist market, these theories proposed a geography of the world divided fundamentally between developed (the West) and underdeveloped (the rest) countries. Complex postulates were elaborated to account for the developed world's "greater prosperity" and recipes were offered to underdeveloped regions for them to achieve economic success. In a nutshell, such recipes were based on a reconstruction of western social-economic history as a sequence of stages—from feudalism, to modernity and industrialization, to the affirmation of the capitalist mode of production on a global scale—that non-western countries needed to complete in their race for development. Various critical schools (*dependentistas*, world-systems theory, postcolonialism, and so forth) subjected developmentalist and modernization theories to powerful criticisms, denouncing all their imperialist, Eurocentric, and racist presuppositions.[78] By assuming what Johannes Fabian called "temporal distancing," these theories suggested in particular that western and non-western countries had historically gone through different temporal stages.[79] The temporalization of the relationship between the two regions of the world was founded on the idea that western and non-western nations had been historically autonomous and independent from one another. In this way, wealth and poverty, development and underdevelopment could be justified

as the result of discrete histories: that is, as the outcome of the interplay of factors that were *endogenous* to each region. At the same time, the fact of western Europe's prosperity as compared to the pauperism of the non-western nations also served to infuse the former with moral superiority and entitlement to assume the role of the master for the "inferior" non-western nation. Modernization and development theorists thus mystified underdevelopment (an obviously highly contested term) as an entirely "non-western" problem, rather than as largely the result of western colonialism and continuous exploitation of the resources of non-western regions.

I contend that with its stereotypical representation of non-western and migrant (especially Muslim) women as backward and dependent, and its call for them to enter the workforce in order to become "economically independent"—namely, to follow the path western feminists claim to have traveled on their own path to emancipation—feminists, women's organizations, and femocrats endorsing economic integration policies for migrant women are treating these women like developmentalist and modernization theories treated underdeveloped nations: they are always one (or more) steps behind and thus have to "catch up." As in the case of the non-western nations, the conditions of relative poverty and exploitation in which migrant women find themselves in western Europe qua migrants are presented as an instance of "temporal distance" and as the result of their endogenous "cultural" deficiency. However, not only do western European nations bear a good share of the responsibility in creating the historical conditions in non-western countries that encourage migrants to leave them, but these western European nations (and the West more generally) construct and also maintain domestically the very conditions that keep migrants in general, and migrant women in particular, in a state of precariousness: namely, insecure rights, institutional discrimination, and economic segregation within racialized and gendered niches of the labor market.[80] Even more important, we should note that, just as the exploitation of non-western countries' natural resources permits the West to keep its patterns of production and consumption, it is also migrant women's socially reproductive work that permits western European women and men not only to have the "cheap" care that enables them to be active in the labor market, but also to retain the illusion that gender equality has been achieved—at least for "them." Arguably, then, the western feminist teleology of emancipation through productive work stems from the projection

of the historically specific and geographically circumscribed experience of western European women as representative of the experience, past and future, of all women. The historical trajectory of western European women is thus universalized as the criterion by which all women's emancipation should be assessed.[81]

Feminism's Temporal Distancing and Temporal Disjunction

In this chapter I proposed that the nature of the contemporary convergence of feminists, femocrats, and women's organizations in the Netherlands, France, and Italy with anti-Islam/anti-immigration politics in the name of women's rights becomes more intelligible if we look at a specific and mostly overlooked point of their encounter: that is, the call for non-EU/non-western migrant women to work. It is a point of convergence of particular salience for those western European feminists advocating anti-Islam measures with the proclaimed objective of freeing Muslim women from their segregation in the private sphere. Liberation from the private sphere and integration into the public sphere constituted a historically unifying battle for feminists in western Europe. If we consider the so-called three waves of the feminist movement from the retrospective position of the novelties—socially, economically, and politically—introduced by the Fordist organization of labor and the gendered societal model that it helped consolidate, they can be seen as deeply embedded within (albeit not exhausted by) the broader context of pre-Fordist, Fordist, and post-Fordist societies. Whereas first-wave, western European feminism in the pre-Fordist period of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was largely divided along class lines, with middle-class, peasant, and working-class women experiencing too much division to elaborate a common political agenda around the "pro-work" slogan, Fordism in many ways created the conditions for second-wave feminism at large to coalesce around such a slogan, beyond class divisions. The housewife constructed by Fordism was, indeed, in western Europe a figure that existed across class boundaries. Second-wave feminism's largely common demand for women's participation in the workforce thus expressed the desire of a large majority of women not to be confined to the sphere of social reproduction and to enter the sphere of production. The debates in the so-called third wave

of feminism today take place in post-Fordist times, in which a large portion of western European women has entered the labor market. Within a framework dominated by neoliberalism, however, this entrance occurs in an increasingly unequal societal setting and in very unequal ways. Though many women are now brought together by the experience of work, the conditions of that work—in terms of salary, forms of contracts, career paths, working hours, and economic sectors—are internally very different and divisive. Alongside the class divisions that these differences inevitably reinforce, however, racial divisions also have to be taken into account. Non-western racialized women are now part of the western European workforce and population more generally, in ways never experienced before in recent western European history. And it is at this particular juncture that the call for non-EU/non-western migrant women to join the workforce in order to be better integrated and economically independent is not a unifying feminist demand. On the one hand, such a call reproposes an old Fordist feminist register in a very different, post-Fordist context, and it targets predominantly non-western migrant women. It thus differentiates among women along fundamentally racializing lines. On the other hand, feminists', femocrats', and women's organizations' invitation to migrant women to enter employment has de facto been translated into concrete policies directing these women toward jobs in the care and domestic sector. That is, migrant women have come to occupy the spaces within the realm of social reproduction that western European feminists sought to leave behind in their quest for emancipation. In a quasi-"temporal disjunction"—which is predicated upon the temporal distancing between western and non-western women inscribed in the teleological narrative of emancipation through productive work I discussed earlier—several western feminists are thus caught up in a radical performative contradiction. While they intend to promote policies that can free non-EU/non-western migrant women from the gender constraints seemingly inscribed in their "cultures," some femocrats and women's organizations in particular implemented measures that instead maintain and further exacerbate the segregation of these same women into highly gendered and racialized labor markets. While sacrificing antiracism in the name of gender equality for all women, these western European feminists, women's organizations, and femocrats thus have endorsed (wittingly or unwittingly) a neoliberal workfare agenda that heavily

discriminates against migrant women and ultimately undermines gender justice in general. The preservation of social reproduction as a socially stigmatized and feminine activity in fact affects not only migrant, racialized women, but also the struggle against the maintenance of gender roles as such.

Conclusion: Convergence Is Not Identity

I should like to conclude with a word of methodological caution, as well as of hope. Convergence should not be mistaken for identity; nor should the merging of contemporary feminist, femocratic, and women's organizations' demands for economic equality with neoliberal workfare for migrant women be understood to herald a broader historical "elective affinity" between feminism and neoliberal capitalism.[82] By pointing to the temporal disjunction according to which many western European feminists, femocrats, and women's organizations invoke an older Fordist demand and offer it to non-EU/non-western migrant women from a position of privilege and in the changed conditions of post-Fordism, I am attempting to stress the discontinuity between the two feminist moments. That is, I am arguing that second-wave feminist demands for women's integration into the workforce, as they were put forward in the 1960s and 1970s, need to be understood in the historical context in which they were elaborated, as I have repeatedly emphasized.[83] Today's feminists', femocrats', and women's organizations' reiterations of that same set of demands for non-western migrant women, and in a context in which neoliberal workfare politics makes those demands entirely compatible with an Islamophobic and gender-biased political agenda, are thus a case not of temporal continuity but of disjunction. To be sure, it is a temporal disjunction grounded in a fundamentally, and not new, western supremacist perspective, one that assumes that non-western migrant women are fundamentally backward and victimized objects, whose hope for emancipation is assumed to lie in them committing to catch up with their western sisters. But the conditions of re-production and, above all, the implications of such a western supremacist position need to be analyzed in the current conjuncture in order to reveal their contradictory contemporary results. The understanding of the convergence of feminism and neoliberalism on economic integration policies for migrant women—that is, one crucial facet of femonationalism—in terms of a performative con-

tradiction enables us to advance a radical critique that shows the negative consequences of these policies for gender justice in general. By exposing this performative contradiction, that is, by pointing to the counteremancipatory processes that are set in motion when racial discrimination is justified in the name of emancipatory goals such as gender justice, we place ourselves in a position that allows us to think theoretically and politically about how to move beyond this contradiction.[84]