

Gruppe 9: Future Societies: (Im)permeable Borders, Selective Solidarity, and Manufacturing of the Desired Citizen

Bureaucrazy

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There is broad agreement in scholarly work on migration that bureaucratic administrations can enforce boundaries that exclude some people from protection. The question has motivated discerning ethical ideas behind what people – bureaucrats or state officials do and link them to certain worldviews often associated with nationalism and racism. This paper explores the use of bureaucratic frameworks at immigration detention centers in Sweden and casts light at the labor that goes into assimilating aspects of reality to administrative protocols. Drawing on experience from situations where various administrative tools for doing tasks are used, the paper inquires to the possibilities of proceeding bureaucratically. When considering the realms that open, they invite us to reconsider what legal frameworks offer to border regimes. Instead of tracing the ethos behind the use of administrative tools, the paper casts light at the cumulative potential in making things administratively intelligible and thus documents the value of going “bureaucrazy”, be it still at the cost of sensitivity to the particular.

The Norwegian biopolitics of integration™- a case study

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What does integration mean? The question has been at the centre of political and public debates in Norway for the past four decades and is inextricably tied to the debate of issues of immigration, national identity, and belonging. This paper takes the question further to ask: what purpose does integration serve? I argue that integration policies in Norway are a neoliberal project designed to maintain the welfare for the majority population of Norwegian citizens at the expense of those who are subjected to the integration regime. Utilising Bourdieu’s “bureaucratic field” and Foucault’s reflections on neoliberalism, governmentality, and bio-politics as theoretic lens, I situate the day-to-day practices of street-level bureaucrats implementing Norwegian integration policies in the wider context of bio-political goals and neoliberal shifts underpinning the modern Norwegian welfare state. Rooted in empirical data from a small municipality, I present the fictitious city of Låsen as case study to explore how street-level bureaucrats implement these bio-policies based on their discretion, their role understandings as enforcers of state bio-policies, and their social imaginaries on integration in day-to-day practices on the ground. Through the case of Låsen, I illustrate how the commodification of integration work clashes with the social imaginaries of street-level bureaucrats, who struggle to implement the integration bio-policies as their work is impacted by local power struggles and neoliberal reforms, bringing the local integration infrastructure to the verge of collapse.

Too vulnerable to count? Categorizations of vulnerability in resettlement to Norway

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The resettlement program has often been described as a durable solution to the refugee crisis and to reach the most vulnerable refugees. However, the resettlement of quota refugees is not only a humanitarian response to improve the “lives of suffering others” (Fassin 2012), but also a means of control and regulating access to the nation state (Welfers and Bonjour 2021).

As resettlement – in contrast to asylum – is not codified in international law, admission states are relatively free in deciding whether, where from and whom to resettle (de Boer and Zieck 2020). Although officially such programmes claim to target particularly vulnerable refugees, admission states can and do formulate additional selection criteria in line with their security, economic and cultural interests (Mourad and Norman 2020; Brekke et al. 2021). Refugees are expected to be deserving of protection and simultaneously demonstrate their willingness and ability to ‘overcome’ their vulnerability and to become law-abiding and culturally malleable future members of their host societies (Welfers 2021).

Based on ethnographic fieldwork with Norwegian street-level bureaucrats selecting quota refugees for resettlement in Norway, this paper explores how street-level bureaucrats deal with dilemmas when faced with refugees, who they deem utterly deserving for protection, but who, because of their utter vulnerability, are deemed ineligible for integration – in other words, when refugees are too vulnerable to be protected. Focusing on the selection categories Women at Risk, Vulnerable Children and People with Disabilities, I ask, how the exclusion (or inclusion) of deserving but too vulnerable refugees is rationalized internally within UDI and IMDi and towards the UNHCR (and the refugees themselves), and what strategies are used to still alleviate the suffering of these refugees in spite of their rejection for resettlement to Norway.

‘Organized ambivalence’ towards refugee and migrant children’s vulnerability: explaining the gaps in discourse, decisions, and actions in three areas of Norway’s migration policy.

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Children who migrate and especially those who seek refuge have been designated as ‘intrinsically vulnerable’ and thereby gained special protection in ECHR legal reasoning (Peroni & Timmer 2013), in the EU asylum framework, and in national asylum legislations (La Spina 2021). However, the rise of “Fortress Europe” produces significant barriers to migrant and refugee children’s protection and inclusion in our societies, even while refugee children are discursively recognized as ‘the most vulnerable’. This paper explores empirically how the conceptualization of children’s vulnerability shape Norway’s implementation of migration policy in three policy areas: asylum, resettlement, and expulsion. The analysis identifies differences as well as similarities at the macro level, in the national migration policy, at the meso level, in the institutional structures and routines that channel implementation, and at the micro level, in the discretionary practices of the bureaucrats working within them. To make sense of the ‘organized ambivalence’ toward

children's vulnerability and deservingness of care that this comparison reveals, we draw on theorizations of institutions' 'organized hypocrisy' (Brunsson, 1989), as well as anthropological theorizations of the care/control nexus in bordering (Aradau 2004). The analysis is based on data collected through interviews and participant observation in UDI and UNE, as well as policy documents, legal sources, and policy implementation guidelines.

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Family Ruptures and Un-Belonging: Discomfort in Norwegian Childcare Protection and Migrant Families

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This paper responds to a heated social and political debate concerning Norwegian child protection services with a particular focus on migrant families reporting fear that the childcare protection services will "steal" their children and ruin their family, thus diminish senses of belonging and wellbeing. Based on face-to-face in-depth interviews with parents and childcare protection workers, and inspired by critical phenomenology, the paper points towards experiences of structural injustice, discomfort and un-belonging. I argue childcare protection practices to reflect a liberal paradigm in which social justice involves application of the same principles of evaluation and distribution to all persons regardless of their particular social position and backgrounds making a practice of difference-blindness as part of a structural injustice. Feelings of discomfort and senses of belonging, wellbeing, marginalization, and mental health. are not only products, but also 'do' things in the childcare protection service as they mobilize actions, decisions and interpretations, and are thus lively actants in the service production process. Reflecting on the assessment management that guide childcare workers' practices, the making and sustaining family and home are here at stake, and I suggest, tend to create senses of discomfort and un-belonging among migrant families as their views, narratives and truth are largely neglected. Also, many childcare workers experience a "bugging feeling" and discomfort as the protection services ignore migrant families' social position and background, thus contributing – intentionally or not - to structural injustice and disturbing migrant families' senses of safety, belonging and wellbeing.

(How) Do you see me? Exploring Norwegian local and regional newspapers' framing of residents and citizens of Syrian origin

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Syrians is a group that has rapidly increased in Europe and Norway since the war in Syria erupted in 2011. In 2015, Europe witnessed what would soon be called the refugee crisis, where hundreds of thousands of Syrians arrived into Europe, creating panic that later led to dramatic actions of restrictive border crossings to and within Europe. A great number of those who have applied for asylum in Norway, have been granted protection and constitute a large number of Norway's minority population today.

My article aims to analyze how local and regional newspapers in three different counties in Norway frame Syrian refugees. A frame is "an emphasis characterized in news reports, and it provides many modes of presentation in a positive or negative manner" (de Vreeze referred to by Liu J. 2023). Here, I intend to explore the narratives and the focus used in the coverage of these newspapers in 2015 – upon the arrival of most Syrian refugees to Norway – and in 2022, the year when many of the Syrian refugees were able to apply for, and have received, their citizenship in Norway. The ambition is to scrutinize how the local and regional Norwegian media see Syrian refugees, and what it tells us about the notion of "belonging" by both the Syrians and the locals.

The main research question of this paper is:

- How do local and regional newspapers in Norway frame Syrian refugees in their local municipalities and districts in the years 2015 and 2022?
- What are the main themes of the newspapers' coverage in these respective years, and what does this tell us about being a Norwegian "host" and being Syrian in Norway today?

Homogenous solidarity and elusive Norwegianness

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The selective nature of Norwegian solidarity towards different groups of refugees can be said to put a stain on the Norwegian national self-image as an egalitarian and tolerant society. 'Nordic exceptionalism' and the lack of acknowledgement of how colonial history has partaken in constructing national identity (Loftsdottir & Jensen, 2012), alongside cultural values and understandings of 'equality as sameness' (Gullestad 1992) can help explain some cultural dynamics that contribute to this kind of scenario, where some refugees are seen to be a 'better fit' for Norwegian society than others. This paper will take a critical look at Norwegian culture and explore some 'instances' that disturb national constructions of the tolerant Norwegian, through exploring connections between 'goodness', nostalgia, national identity and Norwegian 'cautiousness'. Using postcolonial theory and skin (Ahmed & Stacey 2001) as analytical points of departure, the paper will explore and discuss how Norwegianness is an elusive category, which might create specific conditions for practices of solidarity.

'Ukrainian refugee pets' and hierarchies of life in European humanitarianism

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In April 2022, I was in Medyka, the busiest border crossing between Poland and Ukraine. Tired and cold, Ukrainian refugees waited patiently to cross the border. As I observed the line moving forward, I saw dozens of cats, ferrets and dogs accompanying their owners on leashes or in crates and carriers. As a dog owner, I was happy to see these pets brought to safety. However, it also provided a stark reminder of all the times I had heard refugees on the Greek islands asserting that they were treated 'worse than animals.' Given the historical and colonial tendency to conflate non-white people with animality, might Ukrainian pets be considered more human than the refugees trapped in prison-like camps (cages) at the European border?

This paper will discuss my ongoing research (with Kristin Sandvik) on Ukrainian refugee pets and hierarchies of life in European humanitarianism. Using Norway as a case study, I describe the public, private and volunteer-based actors involved in the care and reception of Ukrainian companion animals and the various mechanisms, regulations and resources developed and mobilised. I further consider animals' affective and humanising powers and discuss how the Ukrainian 'pet exceptionalism' is shaped by class, racial and gendered dynamics mirroring humanitarian reason. While colleagues and policymakers have dismissed our project as a niche issue, I show that it opens broader discussions of humanitarian racism and anthropocentrism.

«Norge har gitt meg hvite hår» - en flyktningekvinnens søken etter hjem og tilhørighet i en distriktskommune i Nord-Norge

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I denne artikkelen utforsker jeg betydningen av hjem og tilhørighet i livet til Zhara og hennes familie. Zhara kommer opprinnelig fra Afghanistan, hun har vokst opp i Iran, er nå gift med Zharak som også er fra Afghanistan. Sammen har de 2 jenter som begge går i barnehage. Artikkelen baserer seg på erfaringer fra 1 års feltarbeid i Nord-Norge. Gjennom deltagelse i hverdagslivet hjemme, på introduksjonsprogrammet for flyktninger og i lokalsamfunnet har Anne og kvinnene samskapt dette materialet. I artikkelen undersøkes hjem ikke bare som et konkret, materielt sted, men også som en prosess som omhandler det å finne sin plass i verden i en mer eksistensiell forstand. Hjemlige aktiviteter som matlaging og religionsutøvelse er håndfaste eksempler på hvordan hjem og tilhørighet skapes og gjenskapes i praksis. I prosessen med å finne sin plass i verden kommer nye former for tilhørighet til syne, men også gamle former som er knyttet til opprinnelsesland og storfamilie, med sosiale bånd som strekker seg langt tilbake i tid.