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“Needed but Undeserving” – Revisiting the Liberal Paradox

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Abstract

Immigrant policies in Denmark, as in many other European countries, have become strongly politicized over the past decade. On the one hand nation-states have a political wish of limiting specific types of immigration. On the other hand most states have a need for several types of migrant labour. Hollifield termed this dilemma ‘the liberal paradox’. The balance between an urge for control and humanitarian obligations has led to the development of very ambiguous policy designs. The same tendency can be found in Denmark. Instead of upholding the Universalist principle embedded in the Nordic welfare state model public policies and the attribution of public goods and rights increasingly are developed within a hierarchical system of civic stratification leading to welfare chauvinism and increased social polarization. Both the liberal paradox and the construction of target groups can be analysed in terms of policy narratives. In our paper we identify and analyse such narratives and investigate how different migrant groups (labour migrants, refugees) have been positioned in the Danish welfare state and policy framework.

Nation-states of today face many challenges pertaining to immigration. Attempts to control and manage migration have been problematic and there are growing tensions in many countries in relation to the immigration issue. Many countries have sought refuge in restrictive policy frameworks in attempts to appease immigrant-sceptical voters. Increased heterogeneity in the countries have been regarded as a threat to national and social cohesion and ultimately as a threat to national identity and the social contract of the country. Such perceptions have fuelled mechanisms of welfare retrenchment and chauvinism. Moreover, immigrants have been regarded as a security problem and linked to issues of terrorism. All in all these challenges, if not new then intensified, have in many places led to a political

backlash against immigration. At the same time global processes and transnational businesses and markets have made it necessary to remain open and stay in competition for the “best and brightest” workers. Most countries are indeed dependent on migrant labour, both skilled and un-skilled, and this need will only grow in the future due to demographic developments. In that sense, 2010 was a negative turning point for European demography and estimates show that in 2050 the European population will have decreased by 60 million people. Moreover, immigrants –the negative perceptions in the populations – are a factor for economic growth. 40% of the Fortune 500 companies were started by immigrants or their children, and immigrants in general fill out an important part of the European labour markets (Forbes, 2011). Despite this development, states – including EU countries – are increasingly concerned with controlling and regulating various forms of immigration. How can states at the same time remain open and pursue closure? James F. Hollifield developed the argument of the migration state and the liberal paradox (1998; 2004). He outlines the liberal paradox in the following way: “the economic logic of liberalism is one of openness, but the political and legal one is one of closure [...]. How can states escape from this paradox?” (2004: 887). He shows how the states historically have tried to solve problems of labour shortages by opening for temporary flows of migrant labour but as history shows the expected temporariness turned into permanent settlement strengthening the dilemma. Closing off channels of legal migration opened up for increased flows of irregular migration as there were still jobs to be filled. Hence, there are no short-fix solutions to turn to. States are increasingly linked together through trade and investments and if they want to promote this development – which the neo-liberal economy urges and requires most states to do – they must also be prepared to manage increased flows of labour migration (cf. Hollifield, 2004: 902). Engagement in military interventions in Iraq, Afghanistan, Libya and elsewhere as well as the continued arrivals of irregular migrants in Southern Europe have re-articulated the discussions of burden-sharing and moral obligations in relation to assisting and accommodating refugees.

In this article we revisit the notion of the liberal paradox as a mode of understanding developments in the policy regimes on immigration. We focus particularly on the case of Denmark but the analytical framework could in theory be applied elsewhere. Our pre-supposition is that the on-going economic recession has made the liberal paradox even stronger. The crisis affects the national labour market and hits natives as well as foreigners (Collett, 2011). Moreover, the financial situation may have spill-over effects from issues of labour markets and labour migration to other types of migration flows such as accepting refugees, asylum seekers and family migration flows. The on-going crisis has spurred the construction of deserving and undeserving groups and has been contextualized in both discursive and material retrenchments of rights and developed new forms of exclusion and inequalities. Despite the crisis, the Danish state still needs migrant labour (Rambøll, 2012) and therefore has to maintain openness while the crisis also and simultaneously serves to legitimize closure. The policy developments since the turn of the millennium give a clear indication of this paradox (Jørgensen and Meret, 2010; Jørgensen and Thomsen, 2012). Access to the labour market has been made far more flexible for some groups than for others; specialised migrant labourers met fewer barriers than family-reunified migrants or asylum seekers. However, also in terms of access to residence permits, to citizenship, to social benefits and political rights we find both the development of liberal policies and restrictive policies. Policy outputs include issues of redistribution and recognition and the social construction of target groups. Public policy outcomes favour groups presented to be “deserving and entitled” (Schneider and Ingram, 1997; 2005). Public policies not only deliver services or implement goals – they carry messages. Policies constitute and consolidate particular ways of thinking about social problems and social groups (Stone, 2002). The construction of migrant target groups in this sense becomes a way of managing immigration. These are constructed as dichotomies between entitled/not entitled and deserving/undeserving (in terms of civic, political, and economic rights). Such policy designs make it possible to act

according to the “voice” of the population (political gains in hard-line policies) and being open to particular types of migrants (financial/market gains in openness) through distinctions between wanted and unwanted migrants. Target group constructions carry messages of who is a benefit to the state and the public good and who is believed to be a burden. Consequently they prompt action and legitimize particular policy designs. We combine this understanding of target group constructions with an emphasis on policy narratives. We understand target groups to be constructed, legitimized and/or contested through particular narratives containing a setting, a plot, characters and disseminated towards a preferred policy outcome (Jones and McBeth, 2010; Shanahan, Jones and McBeth, 2011; van Eeten, 2007). Consequently, the overarching focus of this article is to identify and discuss the social construction of target groups articulated in the policy narratives in a Danish context. Our theoretical assumption is that the target group constructions illustrate the liberal paradox which again can be used to explain policy developments over the last decade.

In the analysis we work with different types of empirical data. When analysing policy narratives we understand policy output in a broad sense and include legislative documents, action plans, regulations, political agreement texts, and declarations as well as parliamentary proposals for policies and laws. Moreover we draw on texts from the media and outputs from civil society actors such as trade union journals, web pages, political party programs and other material. We are interested in what Yanow has termed “constructed texts” as opposed to authored texts (1995). Constructed texts go beyond the individual text by providing an aggregate unit of analysis, which in our case consists of different outputs articulating a specific policy narrative (van Eeten, 2007). In the analysis of policy narratives we include material from 2008 till today to be able to capture articulations of the economic crisis. The analysis of the legal framework and policy development goes back to 1998 to be able to capture policy developments over time.

The article first provides an elaborated understanding of our analytical framework. The following part looks at the contextual background of the case, discusses the developments in the legal framework and analyses dominant policy narratives. We draw especially on Ingram and Schneider and on how different target populations become subjects for different goals, tools, rules and rationales legitimating problem definitions, allocation of resources, benefits and/or sanctions. The concluding section discusses the implications of policy narratives and social construction of target groups in relation to social justice (and redistribution/recognition), citizenship and democracy.

Narrative Policy Analysis and the Social Construction of Target Groups

Narrative policy analysis locates the role of policy narratives in the policy process (Shanahan, Jones and McBeth, 2011). Although there are different approaches, narrative policy analysis in general draws on a post-structural (e.g. Fischer, 2003; Stone, 2002) and social constructivist ontology seeking to examine “the social construction of facts and the primacy of values in the policy process” (Jones and McBeth, 2010: 331). What the different approaches share is that they understand narratives as containing specific elements: a story with a sequence of events (McComas and Shanahan, 1999; Stone, 2002), a plot, actors (heroes, villains, victims) and consequently induce calls for action and preferred policy outcomes (Jones and McBeth, 2010). Deborah Stone captures the logic of this structure in the following way: “Definitions of policy problems usually have narrative structures; that is, they are stories with a beginning, middle, and an end, involving some change or transformation. They have heroes and villains and innocent victims” (2002: 138). Emery Roe also sees policy narratives as central for understanding the policy process. He defines these as: “those stories – scenarios and arguments – that are taken by one or more parties in the controversy as underwriting and stabilizing the assumptions for policymaking in the face of the issue’s uncertainty, complexity or polarization” (Roe, 1994: 3). What can be summarized

from these approaches is that policy narratives contain diagnostic, prognostic and motivational aspects (and in some ways resemble critical frame analysis, e.g. Benford and Snow, 2000). In the present analysis we are interested in a particular set of narratives, which deal with immigration in relation to the nation-state and welfare state. These constitute our “constructed texts”. We are interested in narratives outlining stories containing explanations for migration, facilitation of migration, and consequences of migration. We look at the “naming” and “blaming” of particular characters (migrants, politicians, labour unions, EU, and contextual circumstances such as the recession), which legitimize specific policies and prompt political action. Furthermore we will argue that policy narratives pertaining to migration besides always being contextualised can be analysed in relation to the social construction of target groups. The storylines of policy narratives identify and delineate particular target populations. They legitimize, support or contest given policy solutions. Looking at the role of narratives for policy-outputs makes it possible to look also at politics of immigration and thereby at dynamics of policy-making, often neglected in policy analyses which solely look at output. Combining the narrative policy framework with Ingram and Schneider’s understanding of policy designs provides an analytical grid making it possible to show how the different target populations become subjects for different goals, tools, rules and rationales legitimating problem definitions, allocation of resources, benefits and/or sanctions and basically political action. Policy narratives serve to legitimize the target group constructions. *Goals* are stated in objective and technical terms, but are nevertheless social constructions of a perceived problem. Defining a particular goal – based on a specific representation of the problem – will benefit some and burden others. *Tools* are the elements/instruments in a policy which cause agents or targets to behave in a special way to solve the problem and reach the defined goal. *Rules* are procedural aspects of policy design which indicate who is to do what, where and when (Schneider and Ingram, 1997: 97). Eligibility rules define the intended recipients of a policy and define who is entitled and who is not. Rules can be flexible or they can be strict depending again on the target group. They can be universal or they can target selected groups. *Rationales* explain, justify and/or legitimize the policy design.

Social constructions of target groups can change, but do so very slowly and show strong persistence. Schneider and Ingram conceptualize the target group constructions in terms of the negative or positive messages they convey as well as in terms of whether they define the different groups as being powerful/weak, deserving/undeserving, and entitled/unentitled (Schneider and Ingram, 1997). These distinctions can be related to the actors of the policy narratives. Burdens are oversubscribed and benefits undersubscribed for the undeserving groups and vice versa for the deserving groups. Schneider and Ingram argue that “[m]uch of the dynamics of policy design for dependent people hinges on separating the deserving from the undeserving” (ibid: 124). The target group constructions may lead to policy tools which end up marginalizing and excluding groups in society rather than enabling them to, for instance, enter the labour-market. Such policy logics can be regarded as degenerative policy-designs. These are in Schneider and Ingram’s own words: “systems [that] are characterized by an unequal distribution of political power, social constructions that separate the ‘deserving’ from the ‘undeserving’” (1997: 102). In such a system group-based political inequalities and divisive policy designs reinforce in ways which threatens democracy (Soss, 2005: 293). They convey different messages about how the government works, how it responds and how it values the particular target group. Those messages affect the target groups’ orientation to government, to identity, to political participation, to citizenship and to democracy itself. We regard this system of target group constructions as central for the policy narratives supporting and constituting the liberal paradox which ultimately helps us explain why and how migration management takes place as it does in our case study of Denmark.

The Development of Danish Immigration and Integration Policies

The development of the Danish immigration and integration policy resembles the development in other West European countries. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, labour migrants arrived in the country to fill out gaps in the labour market. The assumption was that they would leave again one day but as happened elsewhere, many migrants stayed and made use of the possibilities for family reunification. The oil crisis of 1973 led to a migration stop, which still stands. A new comprehensive labour market program has never officially been introduced, only special and targeted programs. In 1983 Denmark adopted a new Aliens Act introducing the so-called *de facto* protection category for refugees, which broadened the basis for asylum and at the time was one of the most liberal refugee policies in Europe.¹ Access to asylum was changed in 2002 where the *de facto* category was removed and restrictions introduced in both immigration and integration policy. The change was due to the change of government in 2001. The Conservative-Liberal government had the parliamentary support by the Danish People’s Party. The Danish immigration and integration policy framework has been restrictive and in several ways an inspiration for “integration new style” pursued by other European countries during the 00s (Hedetoft, 2006; Jönsson and Petersen, 2012; Jørgensen, 2012a; Jørgensen and Emerek, forthcoming; Jørgensen and Thomsen, 2012). It has been characterized as “an ethnic model of civic integration” (Jørgensen, 2009) and as a philosophy of integration situated between “liberalism and nationalism” (Mouritzen and Olsen, 2013). Diane Sainsbury depicts the development as a move from “reluctant inclusiveness to exclusion” (Sainsbury, 2012: 228).

In brief, the main goal of the immigration and integration policy of the 2000s was to change the composition of the immigrant population, to manage migration by making it difficult to obtain family reunification and asylum (abolishing the *de facto* protection category), but less difficult to enter as a labour migrant and student, for instance. Making access easier for some groups does not imply that these immigrants are included fully. As Sainsbury captures with her catchphrase above there is an underlying reluctance towards accepting immigrants as such. Since the 1980s and especially in the 00s access to citizenship and even permanent residence has become more restrictive. Denmark has multiplied the requirements for naturalization and increased stringency. As a result, that the Danish naturalisation rate in the mid-00s was only half of Sweden’s (Sainsbury, 2012). In Denmark naturalisation is regarded as a crowning of affairs – a token of successful integration, whereas naturalisation has been regarded as instrumental for integration in Sweden. In Denmark, you can only apply for naturalisation after at least nine years of residence and if you have not received social benefits for more six months within the preceding five year period before applying. Voting rights for non-citizens have been restricted and now require four instead of three years’ legal residence. These examples all show that Denmark has never really acknowledged the permanent character of immigration. The current labour market arrangements all seem to have the same baseline – that immigrants can contribute for a number of years but are not necessarily expected to stay forever. Another implicit aim is to protect not only the welfare state but also the social order. A recurring narrative in relation to asylum seekers, family migrants and labour migrant is the idea that everyone would want to live in Denmark, and hence the need to manage immigration.

While it is easy to identify the Social Democratic/Social Liberal government’s changes to the immigration policy, assessing the integration policy shows more continuation and path dependency. Parts of the integration framework continue the approach taken with the Act of Integration from 1998. The rationale in the revised approach was that to be able to deal with the serious problems related to (lack of) integration, Denmark had to re-

¹ The Aliens Act also introduced a number of restrictions, e.g. tightening of citizenship requirements. A main aim of the revision also was to curb the number of asylum seekers even though the category of protection was broadened (see also Sainsbury, 2012).

strict the access of newcomers. Secondly, the main goal was to promote self-sufficiency, hence making labour market participation the means and the goal for integration. Thirdly, the immigrants were perceived as being responsible for their own integration (this was spurred through incentives and sanctions, formalised in the integration contract). An incentive was that extra efforts would be rewarded and lack of efforts “punished”, for instance in the access to permanent residence and naturalisation (Regeringen, 2002; Ministergruppen for bedre integration, 2003; Regeringen, 2005). Alongside these goals there was an implicit (and to some degree explicit) demand for assimilation situated in discussions on cultural values and cultural struggles. These policy goals (and embedded rationality) have set the path for the main developments in the last decade (Regeringen, 2010a; Regeringen, 2010b). In 2011 the government changed again and the Social Democrats, the Socialist People’s Party and the Social Liberal Party now hold power. This has led to a number of changes and a new strategy but the overall path is one of continuation (Regeringen, 2012). It should be mentioned that the new government removed the so-called poverty benefits (more on this later) and most of the point-based systems for obtaining permanent residence and for family reunification respectively.

Even though they have been abolished, the poverty benefits illustrate how categories of deserving/underserving are coupled with categories of wanted/unwanted and situated in the policy framework. The introduction benefit was in place from 1999-2000 after which it was removed for being discriminatory. It targeted newly arrived foreigners only and basically implied that newly arrived were entitled to a lower level of social security assistance than regular citizens (Ejrnæs, 2001). The lower benefit (the policy tool) was believed to create an incentive to find a paid job and hence reach the policy goal of self-sufficiency. However, the policy tool also served the implicit purpose of making it less attractive to come to Denmark, i.e. attracting welfare scroungers. Similar rationales have informed policy tools previously, e.g. raising the number of required years of stay in Denmark to be eligible for pension (already in 1973) (Jørgensen and Emerek, forthcoming; see also Goul Andersen, 2007). The criticism leading to the abolishment of the introduction benefit, however, resulted in non-targeted approaches with biased effects (in reality affecting immigrant target groups) in future policy-making (Bach and Bjerregaard, 2008; Blauenfeldt, Hansen and Johansen, 2006). The start help, for instance, can be regarded as picking up the policy goals of the introduction benefit. It stipulated that all citizens must have lived seven out of the last eight years in the country to be eligible for full benefits. This would also include Danish citizens having spent years abroad, but in practice it mainly affected immigrant. Later developments again show a marked tendency to strengthen the target groups. The introduction of the point-based system for permanent residence permits through an agreement between the former government and DPP stated explicitly that: “a share of the foreigners residing in Denmark will probably never be able to obtain permanent residence in Denmark” (Regeringen 2010b: 1). In practice, this meant that categories of denizens, which the originator of the concept Thomas Hammar believed would be a disappearing phenomenon in the future (he was writing in 1994), in reality turned out to be a permanent hierarchy of social stratification (cf. Morris, 2002). It should also be emphasized that although the Danish People’s Party’s impact on immigration and integration policies is easy to detect, the social construction of target groups and construction of categories of deserving/entitled/wanted and the opposite can be detected in the approach taken by the Social Democrats and Social Liberal parties and likewise characterize the policy framework today. Moreover, these policy distinctions are supported by the general population. The data from the election survey in 2011 shows that a majority agrees that immigrants should not be entitled to the same level of social security as native Danes:

The election data since 1994 shows that the PDI (pct. strongly agree/agree – strongly disagree/disagree) in all election years has been negative (although to different degrees) or, in other words, support for distinguishing between welfare rights to immigrants and natives (see van Oorschot and Uunk, 2007 for an international perspective on attitudes

to immigrants’ access to welfare rights). In 1994, the distance was 42 per cent (as in 2011), 31 per cent in 1998, 28 per cent in 2001, 20 per cent in 2005 and 10 in 2007 (Danish Electoral Studies 1994-2011). It is also worth noticing the increased distance between 2007 and 2011, which are years of financial crisis. The negative reactions to immigrants do not relate to access to welfare rights, but reflect a broader hostility. The media have reproduced derogative stories about immigrants (Green-Pedersen and Krogstrup, 2008) and labour migrants.

Although it is often taken as a key premise that policies should be responsive to public preferences (e.g. Dahl, 1989) – as can be assumed from survey data and actual policy development – it is possible to argue here that this does not imply that policies become more democratic. On the contrary, we will argue that the policies increasingly have become targeted, and offering benefits to some but not to others based on the logic of who is believed to contribute to society and who is not. This distinction likewise becomes the rationale for managing future migration.

Social Target Groups and Policy Narratives in a Danish Context

In the following section we analyse policy narratives and construction of target groups within two dimensions of immigration policies, in relation to labour migration and asylum seekers. Although they can be regarded as distinct aspects of immigration policy there are overlaps, especially on the level of policy narratives. For instance, narratives on asylum relate to labour market and tax contribution. Looking at both target group constructions and policy narratives allows us to demonstrate how recognition and redistribution are underlying all these aspects.

Labour Markets and Managed Migration

The mechanisms for managing labour migration as well as the policy narratives supporting, legitimizing or contesting present arrangements are essential for understanding the balance between openness and closure. On the one hand, labour migrants come to work and in that way contribute to the welfare state and in principle could become part of the broader citizenry. On the other hand, they are contenders on the national job market. As Bridget Anderson argues in a new book: “labour markets are key site for the construction of us and them, and foreigners taking jobs has been a trope of concerns about aliens and immigrants for generations” (2013: 10). Their presence on the labour market makes it visible that there are national citizens who cannot live up to the ideal of being the “flexible neoliberal subject” (ibid: 7) in constant development and instead end up as waste of modernity (Bauman, 2004). Politicians and policy makers respond to this challenge in different ways. In Denmark the response has been a selective framework of schemes targeting different types of foreign labours.

Table 1. Refugees and Immigrants should be equally eligible to same welfare rights as Danes, also if they are not Danish citizens

	Frequency	Per cent	Valid Per cent	Cumulative Percent
	Strongly agree	314	3.8	5.2
	Agree	670	8.0	11.1
	Neither agree nor disagree	1054	12.7	17.5
Valid	Disagree	1451	17.4	24.1
	Strongly disagree	2061	24.8	34.2
	Don't know	478	5.7	7.9
	Total	6028	72.4	100.0
Missing	System	2297	27.6	
Total		8325	100.0	

Table 1 is not exhaustive in the sense that it includes all regulations and laws pertaining to labour migration, asylum and family reunification. The chosen arrangements are the main initiatives and regulations developed to tackle these specific issues. Besides the four labour market arrangements there are special regulations for “researchers”, “athletes”, “self-employed”, “trainees”, who are all entitled to easier access and exemptions from the family reunification rules, tax deductions and more.² Again a positive construction of the target groups at stake. These are all wanted groups. In addition, anyone, including asylum seekers and persons with expired work and residence permits, can apply for these schemes as long as they meet the criteria. Hence in this regulatory framework it is mainly a distinction between having/not having human capital. In some schemes human capital is “culturalised”, but culture in general plays a far more prominent role in the policy narratives on migration. The balance between benefits (incentives) and burdens (sanctions) is visible in the immigration and integration policies in general and is mainstreamed into the labour market policies (see Breidahl, 2012). The Act on Active Employment Efforts stipulates how municipalities should enforce the national integration program and introduction program. The integration program targets refugees and family-reunified foreigners and consists of education in Danish language, courses on Danish society, culture and history; and – important for the discussion on harmonization – employment-directed offers in the form of supervision, upgrading of skills, apprenticeship, employment with salary support and mentor support. The integration program is compulsory and settled in the integration contract. If the contract is breached the person may partly or fully lose their social benefits if they receive such. This contract is in force until the immigrant receives permanent residence. The introduction program is directed at foreigners who come to Denmark to work, accompanying spouses, students, au-pairs and EU-citizens who come to work and live in Denmark. It consists of the same elements as the integration program but participation is voluntary.

The regulatory framework is both legitimized and contested in different policy narratives. Policy narratives use different tropes and far more explicit diagnoses than are found in the policy framework. Most of the narratives we identified either explicitly or implicitly relate to the labour market.

Economic contribution narrative

This narrative emerges from the construction of the contributing versus the burdening migrants as presented by political parties and other political agenda setting agents. This narra-

² http://www.nyidanmark.dk/en-us/coming_to_dk/work/work.htm

tive is articulated both by pro-migration actors and actors who are critical of or against immigration. This leads to different plots. Besides constructing particular target groups, it draws out distinctions between entitled and unentitled. When people are allowed to enter the country it constitutes a danger for native groups, for instance competition for the same jobs or redistribution and access to welfare rights. If newcomers are allowed the same welfare rights, there will not be money for deserving and dependent native groups such as pensioners, one part of this narrative claims. An example on this logic is the following statement by Danish People’s Party’s Peter Skaarup: “The paradox is reinforced by the fact that the government cannot afford for example to extend the benefit period for unemployed Danes, but apparently has more than enough money to pull more refugees here, which for the most part will never be properly integrated or contribute to the welfare state recovery – on the contrary” (Peter Skaarup, *Jyllands Posten*, 12 Oct 2012).

In an article by representatives from the Danish neo-liberal think tank CEPOS, the authors claim that a point system that favours highly skilled migrant worker would benefit Danish economy whereas low skilled labour migrants who seek better living conditions would harm the economy: “in many cases it can be argued that Borja’s concerns about the importance of social benefits for immigration might be even more relevant in Denmark” (Christensen and Hunnerup 2008). The authors develop a narrative that highly qualified immigrants are beneficial for a developed economy for several reasons:

They earn more and therefore pay more taxes and generally have a lower consumption of social benefits than the lower qualified; they contribute to a higher degree to increasing productivity in businesses and in many cases they bring new competences, talents and knowledge with them; and finally they actually contribute to decreasing economic inequality, as they increase competition within the highly qualified labour force in the country, and therefore contribute to keeping salary increases down (Christensen and Hunnerup 2008).

This narrative of the “good” migrant is constructed and presented as the story of this target group being (part of) the solution to various labour market challenges and problems. An important part of the plot is that they contribute more than they cost. This element of the narrative serves a strategic purpose of crafting a particular discourse which fit with the highly skilled migrants are within the economic rationale developed above perceived as contributors and recognized as deserving of entry, stay and employment in Denmark.

The rationale of attracting foreign labour is not merely based on an economic logic but also a logic of consequentiality regarding cultural and ethnic differentiation. Education is not only measured on the degree but also on the national context as evident from Table 1. Having a university degree therefore does not necessarily qualify the applicant to a position. The Danish Green Card agreement states that a Master degree from a university in Pakistan is often assessed as a two year study or a bachelor degree at a Danish university. The agreement favours educations from universities in Western countries and does not recognize educations from for example Arabic or African countries, which makes the redistribution of permits dependent on the recognition of various national educations. The cultural logic behind this seems to be structural discrimination of non-westerners and is backed up by the current opposition: “the large proportion of immigrants from Western countries (2/3) is a result of the politic of the VK government (former Danish government). To me it is not important where you are from. But the statistics show that Western immigrants contribute more to society than non-Westerners”, says Inger Støjberg from the Liberal Party (Politikken. 2012). She adds: “The government’s policy makes it easier for the wrong people to come to Denmark and allows increased immigration of people who cannot contribute to society”. The narrative elements expressed by Støjberg are similar to the previous example, but represents another narrative that distinguishes between Western and non-Western immigrants rather than high and low skilled immigrants. This integrates a cultural logic and an economic logic where arguments based on the contribution to the national economy is linked with national origin and a division between Western and non-Western countries.

This narrative also represents the positions of wanted and unwanted migrants, which also reflects the deserving and the undeserving construction. Another version distinguishes between potential foreign labour, which in this case is regarded as beneficial and wanted, vis-à-vis foreigners already living in Denmark with formal skills not recognized by the Danish state.³ Immigrants from Turkey, Pakistan and Iran living in Denmark have difficulties gaining recognition of their degrees from their home countries and are demanded to take a Danish education (Politiken, 15 Feb 2012). This changes the roles in the narrative plot, and immigrants living here are portrayed negatively as incompetent, whereas skilled foreign labour is regarded a solution to economic stagnation. This plot leaves few solutions as the immigrants cannot be expelled and are categorized as a burden.

The economic contribution narrative included different migrant groups and not only newly arrived migrant workers. The question of costs was very much in focus under the previous government. In 2010, the government supported by the Danish People's Party formed a task force to calculate the costs of non-Western immigrants and their children to the Danish state. The present government terminated this work in 2013, stating that the calculation was irrelevant (Information, 17 Jan 2013). Likewise there has been a stronger focus on recruitment but also retention, e.g. symbolized in a new agency *Danish Agency for Labour Retention and International Recruitment* formed in early 2012. One implication is that the economic contribution narrative is being contested as reconfigured.

Welfare scroungers narrative I

Low skilled migrant workers and asylum seekers are overrepresented in the narrative of welfare scroungers. This narrative emerges from an increasing focus on particular migrant groups being a welfare burden followed by a demand for restrictive immigration control. Eastern European workers have also been denominated scroungers by various politicians, among them Villy Søvndal from the centre-/left party Socialistic People's Party (SF): "They don't have the right to scrounge just because they are from Eastern Europe" (Søvndal, 2008). This construction of the target group implies that they "abuse" EU citizens' right to welfare services. The welfare scrounger narrative is in particular used in relation to the debates of changing the social welfare system from a universalistic model based on equal rights to a system based on differentiated rights that has to be earned. The policy actions called for have already been introduced over the years (i.e. the accumulation principle for pension mentioned above). The plot of this narrative connects to the idea suggested previously that most people in the world would choose to live in Denmark if they had the chance due to the inclusive and generous welfare system. The welfare system as such is not problematized, but rather how to protect it from the "villains" – the welfare scroungers. The real deserving *and* dependent target group in this narrative is needy Danes, e.g. pensioners and hard-working labourers.

Social dumping narrative

The welfare scrounger narrative connects to a narrative of social dumping most often articulated by labour unions, interest organisations and political parties on the left and the right. The attitude towards low skilled workers has changed more drastically than towards high skilled workers since the crisis in 2008/2009 (Jørgensen and Thomsen, 2012). The discourse has hardened further towards low skilled worker who are increasingly accused of social dumping and stealing jobs from Danish workers. The trade union 3F magazine has since the EU enlargement in 2004 published numerous articles about labour migrants from Eastern Europe. At the end of 2012 the magazine published an article entitled "Companies

³ Educational backgrounds are assessed by Danish Agency for Universities and Internationalisation.

fire Danes and hire Eastern Europeans” about the extent of replacing Danish workers with cheaper Eastern European workers, using the crisis as an excuse. The trade union expresses: “The reality is that many workplaces replace Danes with Eastern Europeans under the cover of the crisis” (3F, 20 Dec 2012). In the article professor Henning Jørgensen from Aalborg University, states: “the 3F trades are hardest hit by social dumping and competition from the East”. Another example of this narrative is from the former Prime Minister, Lars Løkke Rasmussen, from the Liberal Party:

And can we pressure the government to a cash benefit reform that does away with the painful dilemma that we let tens of thousands of unskilled Eastern Europeans into the country, while a similar number of Danes on social benefit with unemployment as the main problem is available so we do that too. There's perspective in that. It is constructive (Børsen, 17 Nov 2012).

This example reflects how the economic rationale used in relation to low skilled workers is characterized by were on the other hand when it comes to highly skilled the attitudes is more positive competition the keeps wages down which strengthen the competitiveness of Danish companies. This sentiment does not seem to apply for low skilled workers where keeping wages down is referred to as social dumping. Even though migrant workers aren't directly criticized, their position and contribution to the national economy and Danish society are not recognized. Also the political left draws on this narrative. The leftist Red-Green Alliance very strongly calls for measures against social dumping and argues that the welfare state will be undermined (Enhedslisten, 2013). They are not against labour migration but it has to take place under equal conditions. Both the Social-Democrats and the Socialist People's Party have made similar claims. They have also used culturalised versions claiming that labour immigration regardless of the pay-level will deteriorate working conditions and impede technological development – a narrative articulated already in the late 1960s/early 1970s (see Jørgensen and Thomsen, 2012). The villains in this narrative are “capitalists”, companies and private employers seeking to increase their turn-overs, and the victims are the Danish (especially blue-collar) labour force and ultimately the Danish welfare state model.

The social dumping narrative has been fuelled by the accelerated migration from Eastern European EU countries and increased unemployment due to the economic crisis. Eastern European workers are often viewed as contenders who are mainly in it for their own personal gain and do not contribute to Danish society. Current debates regarding restrictions on the rights to social welfare services and benefits will challenge the motivation and possibilities of integration of the many newly-arrived immigrants. EU citizens have the right to social services and insurance schemes in Denmark as long as they reside legally and meet the same general requirements as the national citizens. This means that Polish workers no longer need a work permit to work legally in Denmark. Eastern European labour migrants are in various ways stigmatized through the way they have been portrayed in the media and the political discourse. They are being constructed as a specific target population (cf. Ingram and Schneider) that requires specific policy actions. The trade unions are concerned both with illegalized activities such as black labour and with illicit behaviour, for example when Eastern European workers are accused of wage dumping in terms of pushing wages downwards to the absolute minimum and thereby going below the norm agreed in the negotiations. Headlines in the media such as “The invasion from the East” and “Indecent to dump wages” are examples of this discourse. Trade unions and political parties express concern about social dumping caused by cheaper foreign labour

The asylum framework – dependents but not necessarily deserving

The asylum framework has taken a restrictive turn since 2001. The framework is based on different categories of asylum possibilities each having their own criteria. What is noticeable is that, rationales for offering asylum are closely connected to national interests. Humanitarian concerns do not automatically trump economic concerns (see Table 2 next page).

In the table we draw explicit attention to §8 of the Foreigners' Law and the regulations on UN-quota refugees. The emphasis on integration abilities is an example on how refugees are not selected in terms of need for protection but also according to their potential contributions (or the other way around of not becoming a persistent burden). In practice it for instance has resulted in prioritising refugees from Myanmar and refugees with a Christian background.

Compared to the EU27 countries average recognition rate (19.2 per cent in 2011) Denmark had a slightly lower rate (18.9 per cent) but higher than for instance Sweden (13.8 per cent) (Eurostat, 2012: 4). The number of asylum seekers arriving is not high however in 2011 it was approx. 3,800 persons (INM, 2013). The debate is nevertheless characterized by tropes as refugees "pouring into the country" or "flooding the country" and especially so after the newest asylum agreement offering improved conditions for rejected asylum seekers cooperating with the authorities (Justitsministeriet, 2012). A letter to the editors in the daily JP Aarhus sums up this perception:

The Danish borders are "open windows". Legal and illegal immigrants pour into the country. Denmark has always been a popular country to seek asylum in, but after the new socialist government took office, it was rumoured out there in Asia and in Europe, that the opportunities for asylum is better here than in other European countries (JP Aarhus, 19-10-2012).

The author in practice makes no distinction between legal and irregular immigrants, they are all the same. Likewise does the letter disregard the fact that Denmark receives extremely low numbers of immigrants compared to the Southern European countries but the actions called for are policy messages which send the signal that immigrants are not welcome.

Main tools have been to remove incentives for attracting asylum seekers based on the rationality that liberal asylum policies will increase the inflow which again is connected to issues of integration and sustaining the welfare state. One example is the "harmonisation" of the accumulation principles for pension. Refugees previously were exempted from the principles but now they also have to have had legal residence in the country for 40 years to be entitled to full pension. If they arrive at the age of 62 or above they are not entitled to anything at all. This makes the criteria universal for all citizens but refugees do not have same life-trajectories as ordinary citizens and do not choose when to escape their country. Danish People's Party legitimated the revision with the statement "that we grant refugees protection, does not imply, that they also are given economic special treatment" (Politiken, 17.12.2010). This small revision provides a strong example on how distinctions of entitled and deserving are carried out in practice. Here the message from Danish People's Party is that the refugees may be dependent but not deserving. This characteristic is prominent in the policy narratives constructing the different target groups and their welfare rights.

Table 2.

ASYLUM FRAMEWORK						
	Goals	Tools	Rules	Rationales	Target Group Constructions	Policy Messages
Asylum regulations	To offer protection To curb the number of asylum seekers	Criteria for assessing the credibility of asylum seekers Conditions for stay while waiting for decision (low economic benefits, must stay in camps (except for rejected asylum seekers in stage 2), must not work Recognized refugees must enter integration-program, e.g. stay for three years in selected municipality	International conventions Eligibility criteria before, during and after the asylum process	Restrictive eligibility requirements necessary for making sure that the system is not misused.	Dependent and deserving Potential fraud economic motivations for leaving the home-country rather than genuine reasons Sometimes connected to illegal migration	Must be protected but only if 'genuine'
Selection of UN-quota refugees The Foreigners Act, §8	Offer residence to refugees under the Refugee Convention from 1951	Special stipulation about 'integration capabilities', i.e. foreigners' ability to take root in Denmark and "enjoy" the permit	After agreement Denmark accepts approx. 500 refugees per year Assessment criteria include language skills, educational background, work experience, family relationships, networking, age and motivation	Refugees	Dependent Weak and strong refugees. Weak group are perceived to be a burden and not wanted	Refugees are not equally valued. Specific backgrounds prioritized

Welfare scroungers narrative II

The welfare scrounger narrative has a version targeting asylum seekers. The baseline is that refugees in reality are “economic migrants” not deserving of this status category. This narrative is often supported by facts found after a person has gotten asylum. For instance in questioning how it later is possible for a refugee (Somalis, Iraqis) to visit if the home-country if really was that dangerous to live there. The real motivation for moving was to gain hold of the welfare benefits of the receiving country. The direct response to this narrative came in 2010 where the government revised the regulations so that refugees visiting their home-countries without accept will have their residence suspended for ten years (Regeringen, 2010a).

A letter from a reader to the newspaper *Information* in 2012 sums up the content of the asylum seeker/welfare scrounger narrative. A Steen Flemming Jørgensen responds the asylum agreement in 2012 in this way:

Can I ask a question in this debate: how many refugees should we take in? And why do they not return to their home country? Millions of people live in Iran and Iraq. Ought they also to be perceived as being in danger of their lives or persecuted? No I didn't think so. Now the government with the help from the Unity List ease the conditions for asylum seekers. Already these people have had better conditions and economic support. With the same hand, the government has made it harder for Danes who are on social benefits. Here there was no mercy, when money should be saved. Perhaps the government should find out if not the decline in voter support was due to the peculiar policy of providing those who do not have Danish citizenship good and better conditions while people with Danish citizenship are made poorer (Information, 20 Sep 2012).

We quote the letter in length here as it illustrates both the overall plot, shows who is to blame, questions the legitimacy and deservingness/entitlement/dependence of the asylum seeker and provides a diagnosis of what will happen to the truly deserving and entitled group – the natives. Asylum seekers become contenders for scarce resources.

Humanitarian obligations narrative

Destabilizing and removing legitimacy of the status category of being refugee also informs a related narrative on humanitarian obligations. The former minister of Integration Rikke Hvilshøj articulates this redefinition when she during a parliamentary debate about deportation of asylum seekers to Iraq says that “in any case are we sending refugees back. But rejected asylum seekers” (Folketinget, 2007). Whereas refugee is a category indicating that a person has fled from danger against his/her own will, the category of rejected asylum seeker indicates that the person is not a genuine refugee and legitimizes exclusion from the state and removes moral obligations.

However, the main component of this narrative is the claim that Denmark cannot offer endless support to the world's needy population. The Think-tank CEPOS sums it up: “We cannot make logically coherent immigration policy solely based on humanism, although it is a welcome starting point” (Christensen and Dahl, 2008). Although humanitarianism indeed is noble it is also counter-productive as the result will be that the Danish state will become poorer and ultimately make it impossible to offer assistance to refugees. The solution here is to be far more selective in the entrance requirements also for refugees and use the growth in economy to help refugees where the help is best spend – in the local community. Danish People Party, not sharing the neo-liberal logic of CEPOS – also draws on this type of narrative plot. Besides questioning the legitimacy of the refugee they add that help is best spend as close as possible to where the refugees come from. This logic

from CEPOS to DPP can also be related to the approach on European level consisting of externalization of the asylum process and development of “partnership programs” and the “global agenda” (e.g. Gammeltoft-Hansen, 2011; Jørgensen, 2010).

The humanitarian narrative is closely connected to construction of the deserving and undeserving, which is reflected in the criteria for being granted asylum. Within the last year there has been a large increase in Roma asylum seekers from Serbia, an EU candidate country. During the first month of 2013 between 50 and 70 Serbs arrived weekly at the asylum camps, which made them the largest group of asylum seekers in Denmark. In order to combat this development a number of initiatives have been introduced such as serving lunch at the asylum centre instead of food money, no pocket money and chartered flights with rejected Roma asylum seekers return to Belgrade. The policy narrative supporting this decision is very clear about the plot of exploiting the lucrative Danish asylum system by the Roma villains and that action in terms of policy/regulation restriction

There is no doubt about that our consistent effort has worked. It is totally unacceptable that Serbian citizens are applying for asylum in Denmark when they haven't got the slightest chance of getting it. We have witnessed an obvious abuse of our regulations and asylum system, and we have therefore introduced a number of initiatives to stop the flow. It seems to have worked (Morten Bødskov, Minister of Justice).

Asylum seekers are generally viewed as an economic burden, who might in various degree be needing but not necessarily recognized as deserving.

Serbs should not seek asylum in Denmark. It will not count, and we will have to explain to the Serbian government. We have enough to do to create space for Syrians fleeing the civil war. It helps to undermine the asylum system for those people who really have need of asylum (Jacob Bjerregaard, Social Democrats).

The plot in this policy narrative is constructed around the humanitarian rationale of who are more needed and deserving than others as well as the rationale of “we can't save the whole world”.

De-legitimizing and criminalizing narrative

The former narratives are connected to another narrative plot which connects to both labour migrants and asylum seekers and to immigrants as a general category. Refugees and asylum seekers are coupled to notions of illegality. In these narratives stringency in the control and entry requirements is the only solution. Danish People's Party for instance says that: “We should not reward human smugglers who speculate in weak immigration regulations” (Politiken, 08-04-2012). The conflict in Syria leads to headlines about “illegal refugees pouring into Europe” (e.g. Politiken, 26 Apr 2012).

Eastern European citizens are in many cases constructed as deviants because of episodes of criminal offences, in some cases minor offences, which have been generalized to the whole target group. The “Eastern gangs” is frequently used in the media and public discourse which makes especially the male Eastern Europeans potential criminals. In Denmark as in most other EU countries it is in particular people with Roma background who are constructed as criminal and dangerous villains.

In the summer 2010 the Danish Immigration Service decided to administrative expel 14 Romas who had camped illegally in the Copenhagen area. They received entry ban for two years but, expulsion was contrary to Danish law and EU rules. The decision has now being changed: “The 14 Romanians who were administratively expelled last year, have complained to the Ministry of Integration. We have now evaluated the cases, by orders of the Supreme Court, and conclude that there were insufficient grounds for expulsion” (Kim Lunding, Head of the Ministry of Integration, 2011). The conclusion has brought on political attention. The reaction from the integration spokesman from the Social Democrats, Henrik Dam Kristensen, was that there is not more to discuss about the Supreme Court's decisions, but:

EU citizens have special rights, but they should not be able to be destitute in another country. A society must be able to defend himself against beggars and thieves gangs who only arrived in the country to commit a crime [...] If the incoming EU citizens get too much protection in this country, we must see if we can intervene “purely Danish” or whether it should be in the EU (Kristensen, 2011).

The message in this quotation is quite clear about how one should consider a change of the rules if they do not provide sufficient measures of protection against criminals crossing the borders. Peter Skaarup from the Danish People's Party wanted the Roma case the government table a snap: "It is an extreme weakness of our law, if you cannot deport Roma, who profoundly disturbing public order," said Peter Skaarup. He also applies a narrative that stigmatizes this target group as being criminal and dangerous when he expresses that; We can expect a summer where a lot of Roma will come to Denmark. If the signal from the Supreme Court withstands, it will make work harder for the police. The kind of behavior and crime, of some Roma, will lead to expulsion/deportation. Less than a month after the Supreme Court decision an agreement to re-establish the Danish border control was made between the government, the Danish People's Party and the Christian Democrats. The policy narrative of the criminal and dangerous migrants and refugees served as a tool to achieve the goal of controlling and restricting the inflows of unwanted migrant despite of the freedom of movement within the EU. The negative attitudes also are found in the population. In a survey done in 2012 the respondents are asked to list which immigrant group has the lowest status. Having the possibility of giving more answers the result creates a hierarchic grouping of immigrant groups. 67 per cent state that Roma has the lowest status. This is followed by Africans 50 per cent, Arabs 38 per cent, Eastern Europeans 28 per cent and immigrants and Asians both 4 per cent. This is illustrative for the understanding of target populations. Both the Roma populations and Eastern Europeans have the legal right to stay in Denmark due to the EU cooperation and yet their status is very and quite low.

Coming to an end – consequences

Social inclusion of newcomers can combat the emergence the emergence of persistent social and political divisions in society which weaken the functioning of democracy (Sainsbury, 2012: 3). If this argument is accepted we can ask why the Danish policy framework apparently seeks the opposite solution. The analysis of the policy framework and regulations shows that migration is managed through a selective and exclusionary strategy seemingly affecting the most vulnerable group the hardest, i.e. refugees. Immigration policies do not strive for social inclusion but for identifying and attracting the “best and brightest”. As Sainsbury argues in her book based on her comparative analysis of welfare rights in Denmark and Sweden, “an inclusive welfare state regime does not necessarily lead to an inclusive incorporation regime” (Sainsbury, 2012: 111). Issues of redistribution are constructed through policy narratives on who are entitled to what and who indeed are deserving of assistance. Offering too much assistance or benefits to non-citizens causes debates on the fairness of the redistribution and claims that “Danes are deprioritized compared to refugees” (e.g. Jyllands Posten 05 Oct 2012). This of course is not an exceptional Danish dilemma but one that can be recognized all over Europe, US and elsewhere (e.g. Anderson, 2013). The policy responses have been different attempts to manage migration. To make sure that the country at stake is attractive outside the borders for selected groups and having “firm but fair” approaches inside the country (e.g. the rhetoric of Blair, Cameron and Miliband in the UK and as shown in the analysis of Denmark). This brings us to the question if we can detect a liberal paradox in Denmark and what it looks like in present times?

The distinction between wanted and unwanted immigration is evident throughout our selected policy dimensions, i.e. labour market arrangements and the framework for asy-

lum (and could be extended to family reunification see for instance Jørgensen, 2012b; Rytter and Liversage, forthcoming). Different Danish governments have sought to solve this problem by designing and implementing targeted policies which both attract and reject. As an example the former Conservative-Liberal government and DPP in 2011 agreed to give municipalities a € 3,350 bonus for each immigrant they repatriated via the repatriation program. The agreement stipulated that the municipalities were obliged to offer repatriation to all immigrants who contact the local authorities regarding employment, education and other issues. For some, repatriation could offer new life perspectives, but the symbolic value of the proposal sends a powerful signal that you may stay, but you do not necessarily belong here. This incentive was abolished by the new government but shows how policy messages are embedded in the regulations. On the other hand we as mentioned find increased attention on how to attract and facilitate skilled migration as the agency Danish Agency for Labour Retention and International Recruitment is an example of. It is not necessarily easy to reject unwanted groups however, as a consequence of international conventions for instance, so the policy framework is based on different tools and rules striving toward the goal of attracting the “good” migrant. Revisions such as removing the exemption for the accumulation principle for pension for refugees save little money but sends a policy message. It is symbolic politics which emphasises that this specific group of newcomers not shall expect a welfare haven. It is questionable how many refugees are studying pension plans before deciding to escape from their home-countries and have such studies be decisive for where they end up, so the revisions have other purposes such as appeal immigrant sceptical voters. Yet there *is* a belief among some political parties, e.g. Liberal Party and Danish People’s Party that less stringency will serve as a magnet for unwanted immigrants (recent example DR, 16 May 2013). These convictions again departs from national interests and concerns and not from structural causes, e.g. increased number of asylum seekers due to the international conflict in Afghanistan and the national conflict in Syria. Thereby, they also provide an illustration on how the liberal paradox is shaped today.

Politics of immigration reveal that categories are not stable or fixed – they are volatile as Anderson argues (2013: 2). Categories send out policy messages and judgments on who is needed for the economy, what count as skilled, who will be(come) a burden, who should be given residence and citizenship etc. Demarcating who is entitled excludes those who are valued as not entitled but at the same time defines the “good” citizen and privileges of membership.

We have argued that focusing on narratives provides a chance to understand the dynamics of policy-making. Regulations and laws don’t just appear but are produced in an on-going process of negotiation, support and contestation. In this process we find the policy narratives which support, stabilize, legitimize or contest specific policy problems and solutions. They call for action and it is possible to investigate why a particular tool is being used by looking back at the target group it is supposed to affect and the narrative portrayal of this group. In the tables below we have tried to summarize the connection between target group constructions, policy narratives and the policy tools.

Table 3. Narratives and tools targeting labour migrants

Policy Narrative	Target Group	Narrative portrayal	Anticipated Policy Tool	Policy Tools supported through narratives
Economic contribution and development/ growth I	Highly skilled and specialized labour migrants	Creating a diverse and innovative. Making Danish industries more competitive. Recognition/redistribution	Selective migration control Point-system	Special schemes (labour market access) Attracting talent
Economic contribution and development/ growth II	Highly skilled labour migrants vs. non-selfsupportive migrants	Wanted/unwanted Deserving/undeserving	Labour migration management	Open borders, closed boxes (welfare servicers)

Table 4. Narratives and tools targeting refugees

Policy Narrative	Target Group	Narrative portrayal	Anticipated Policy Tool	Policy Tools supported through narratives
Humanitarian obligations vs. the welfare state I	Refugees/asylum seekers “Majority population”	We cannot help everyone. Refugees are best helped locally. Increasing national growth and competition will secure the funding needed to help refugees	Managed migration – point-system Intertwining of migration and asylum policies (neo-liberal principles – distinction between wanted/benefit vs. unwanted/burden)	Special schemes (labour market access)
Humanitarian obligations vs. the welfare state II	Refugees/asylum seekers (unentitled/undeserving Deserving citizens/Danes)	Lack of integration Erosion of welfare state Recognition/redistribution	Restrictive refugee policies (externalization of asylum systems)	None – return to policies of the previous government

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