



The General Political History and Its Construction of “The Immigrant”, 1945-2014

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The general political history and its construction of “the immigrant”, 1945-2014

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General description: RQs, objectives and theoretical framework (600 words)

This paper investigates how the State in its documentary sources identifies, categorizes and classifies “the immigrant” from 1945-2012. It explores the ways in which the changing problematisations of “the immigrant” are subjected to the historical development of the welfare state policy areas, e.g. areas of social, educational, housing, labour market, integration, law and economic policies. By taking its departure from the social history since WWII of how the deviant becomes an immigrant that is disturbing “the public good” or “the collective”, the objective is moreover to examine the social and symbolic constructions of “the immigrant” in close relation to the state transformation processes from the era of welfare state to the era of neoliberalism (Nielsen 2011, Pedersen 2011, Sainsbury 2012).

This paper argues that the history of the term immigrant is causally linked with perceived pathologies of cultural and family background, law and order, gender, housing, employment, welfare burden and educational performance (Green and Grosvenor 2012). Moreover, that the term has been employed as the catch-all for things having to do with country of birth, language, ethnicity, religion, marginalisation and discrimination. Embedded in these alleged pathologies are “truth statements” whose syntax constructs “the immigrant” as “cultural-other”, “social-deviance” and “welfare state problem”.

The project is theoretically informed by the Bourdieuan and Wacquantian sociological notion of the state as a bureaucratic field, focusing on the way in which the state crafts itself when addressing the political history’s symbolic forces of “the immigrant” as an object of categorisation and classification, whereby it continuously remakes and rethinks itself

(Bourdieu 2005a, Wacquant 2009). In order to analyse the documentary sources which represents policy texts with strong values and categorisations, thus tied to symbolic and social relational forces, I use the political sociology approach where relations between social dynamics and structures on the one hand, and state policies on the other, are the focus of attention (Ball 2006: 43-54, van Zanten 2005: 672, in Moldenhawer and Øland 2013). To further explore the inner logic of the social and symbolic categorisation and classification practices of “the immigrant” I find it useful to draw on the notion of political field conceptualised as “a field of forces and a field of struggles aimed at transforming the relation of forces which confers on this field its structure at any given moment” (Bourdieu, 1991: 171).

Methods/methodology (400 words)

The data used in this paper are selected documentary sources, especially governmental publications (e.g. general policies in terms of the texts called ‘Foundation for Government’ (‘Regeringsgrundlag’ in Danish, commissions, white-papers, reform and working-groups’ recommendation). Furthermore, essential governmental publications, composed by the different ministries which have been appointed to develop specific policies on “the immigrant, immigration and integration” since the 1945s are examined. These documentary sources are texts written by state policy makers and government officers, which will constitute the raw materials for the histories of “the immigrant” and state development processes. These sources will be analysed to see how the presence of “the immigrant” have been identified, categorised and classified in close relation to the state transformation processes from the right to welfare to the obligation of workfare and an expansive prisonfare (Wacquant 2013). The sources will be read as authoritative statements about the social and symbolic constructions of “the immigrant” (Bourdieu 2005b).

In order to encapsulate the political history of how the categorisation of “the immigrant” has been exposed to welfare, workfare and prisonfare policies, I build my selection of documents on a preliminary periodization of what happens when the Danish welfare state encounters the world in terms of immigration since 1945 (Hvenegaard-Lassen 1997; Jønsson 2013; Jønsson and Petersen 2010; Moldenhawer and Øland 2013). As such, the selection of the governmental publications will be guided by the way in which the categorisation of “the immigrant” as a target group of intervention has been described historically in accordance with the shifting ministries appointed to act on behalf of the problematic “immigrant”. Roughly described, the ministries regarding specific policies on “the immigrant, immigration and integration” has changed from Ministry of Justice (until 1960s), Ministry of Employment (until 1971), Ministry of Social affairs (until 1982), Ministry of Interior and Justice (until 1993), Ministry of Interior (until 2001), Ministry of immigrants, refugees and integration (until 2011), Ministry of Social and child affairs and integration (until 2012).

The material will be indexed and coded in three analytical steps (Sommer and Møller 2012). First, I will register the issues relating to “the immigrant” as such, for instance numbers, language, culture, family pattern, employment, housing, education and crime. Within this analytical step the characteristics of issues relating to various groups of immigrant will be classified. Secondly, I identify the ways in which issues were made of circumstances defined

as problematic. Thirdly, I elaborate a diachronic analysis of the state transformation processes (Kjær and Pedersen 2001, Steinmetz 2011).

Expected outcomes (300 words)

The paper contributes empirical knowledge about the historical changes in Denmark of “the immigrant” of categorisation and classification, 1945-2012. By questioning the immigrant-thinking in State documentary sources, the paper aims to contribute with writing about “the immigrant” as a feature of historically specific social and political relations. In a broader perspective it contributes knowledge about the political history of how the social and symbolic constructions of “the immigrant” have been exposed to welfare, workfare and prisonfare policies, and how these processes can inform knowledge about state transformation processes from the era of welfare state to the era of neoliberalism.

Intent of publication:

The paper is part of a collective research project “Professional interventions as a state-crafting grammar addressing “the immigrant”. The paper is intended for publication in the journal *Globalisation, Education and Society*.

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