

## BOOK REVIEWS

**Andersson, Mette, Jacobsen, Christine M, Rogstad, Jon & Vestel, Viggo (2012) *Kritiske hendelser – Nye stemmer. Politisk engasjement og transnasjonal orientering i det nye Norge*, Oslo: Universitetsforlaget. 271 pp.**

This volume investigates the different types of political engagement among ethnic minority youth in contemporary Norwegian society. The point of departure is that critical events on both national and international levels have been decisive for mobilisation of political engagement. The authors make a connection among well-known international events such as the Rushdie affair, the Muhammad caricature drawings and the terror attacks of 22 July 2011 to “local” Norwegian events such as the Obiora case in 2006 and the Farah case in 2007, which are less known to the non-Norwegian international reader. The two latter cases involve the death of Eugene Obiora outside a social office after being apprehended by the police and the case of Ali Farah where an injured Farah was rejected by the personnel of the ambulance which had been summoned. Both cases were from different sides characterised as examples of prevailing but not recognised structural racism or structural discrimination. Common for both the international cases and the Norwegian ones is that the authors take the cases as means for mobilisation and employ them to ask a number of fundamental questions: How does the political engagement among minority youth differ from conventional political participation; who are the new actors/voices; what type of media is being used for transmitting their messages and claims-making; how does transnational affiliations and reflexivity influence the political engagement; and other questions. Seen in the perspective of existing literature, the questions they ask are not new, but are contextualised in the Norwegian case and dealt with through very rich empirical data. In this sense, they add positively to the literature on collective mobilisation.

The book contains 10 chapters which offer different empirical perspectives on the mobilisation of political engagement. The theoretical perspectives, outlined primarily in the first chapter, draw on literature from a broad range of research approaches, e.g. studies on political opportunity structures; social movement theories; and transnationalism. The authors – themselves social anthropologists and sociologists – draw especially on James C Scott’s theory on

power and hidden and public transcripts as means for understanding how and why people act (in this case ethnic minority youth). The main point is that the awareness of having a subordinated position spurs reaction and potentially mobilisation. The authors coin the notion of alternative scripts, that is, scripts which challenge and compete with public scripts, to illustrate that mobilisation, political engagement and resistance no longer need to be hidden but are enacted in the public sphere as well. The authors do not restrict themselves to this theoretical framework however, but introduce different approaches to particular issues and comparable literature throughout the chapters.

The book uses the notion of “new Norway” in the title. It is not really clear what is new here and how it differs from what was before and when it began. However, the authors do write that the informants – and hence the ethnic minority youth – have grown up in Norway and reflect about their shared experiences, a growing consciousness of being minority in the society one grew up in and being allocated subordinated positions. All these reflections become part of the identity work of the youth and in some situations a means for collective mobilisation. The empirical basis of the book is close to 50 qualitative interviews with members of both organisations as well as individuals. The authors describe the informants as being rappers, anti-racists, practicing Moslems and persons running websites and discussion boards for ethnic and religious minorities. The informants have different histories and experiences with formal and informal political engagement and belong to rather different spheres of society.

Focusing on several different forms of mobilisation and types of engagement can be seen as both a strength and weakness of the book. It sets the basis for a complex, detailed and interesting analysis as we are able to exactly get a glimpse of shared experiences and reasons for mobilisation and activism among the different types of actors. Here the different chapters each present empirical findings from the Norwegian context and are able to engage in discussion with the existing literature on similar forms of mobilisation and identity work in other national contexts. Generally, the authors are generous in their use of comparable literature and display an overview and knowledge of the research field as such which lends credibility to the analyses. On the other hand, the broad perspective makes the reader begin from scratch in some of the chapters, as the theoretical framework is supplemented with supporting theoretical perspectives

and literature. The result is rather general introductions to the topics, e.g. ethnic minority, culture and hip-hop, which at least for this reader are all familiar. Going more in-depth with a lesser number of forms of mobilisation and engagement could perhaps have added even more perspective to the particular literature on the given type of activism and mobilisation. That said, the chosen form offers good introductions to different types of research studies, for instance, on ethnic minority and media and on ethnic minorities, music and aesthetics. In this sense, it can be very helpful for readers not engaged in these particular research fields.

Another small point of critique relates not as much to the broad perspectives but to what have been included among these. As mentioned, the authors provide interesting analyses and come up with findings which can be related to studies elsewhere but somehow follow the main trends in the existing research. As the authors also demonstrate in the literature overview, there have been several studies on the role of rap and hip-hop as a means and tool for resistance, for articulating frustrations and emancipation, and for constructing minority identities. The authors add to the existing research in their interviews with Norwegian rappers as well as provide a more historical overview of the acts and persons involved in the hip-hop scene. However, we rarely find studies encompassing other types of musical engagement and performances. I find that the focus on this particular genre has been over-prioritised due to its roots and history which offers obvious parallels to the adaptation of rap culture and embedded modes of resistance and identity outside the USA. It would be very interesting to include the focus on other genres as well as including ones located in mainstream genres. Watching for instance the Danish version of X Factor shows that ethnic minority youth are highly over-represented. We have few research studies looking at the impact of such figures for identity work, for empowerment, for making religious and ethnic minorities visible and a part of the mainstream media and ultimately for mobilisation. Likewise, there has been very little focus on authors with ethnic minority background. What role do these authors play for example in identity work, renegotiating majority–minority relations and articulating minority positions? The authors of this book demonstrate an impressive overview of the field, and it would have been interesting to enter less analysed dimensions and contribute to expanding our perspectives as well as empirical knowledge.

Lastly, I would like to address the notion of critical events. Again, I think the authors provide a convincing, rich and interesting analysis of mobilisations interpreted in relation to particular events. They make good use of social movement perspectives and explain when and why mobilisation becomes a success and when and why it decreases. Also here, it might be unfair to ask for something they chose not to work with; nevertheless, I would find it interesting to understand mobilisations and political engagement taking place isolated from such critical events. Without any doubt, critical events serve as triggering events as the authors demonstrate throughout the chapters, but people – ethnic minority youth – also engage in political, cultural and social types of activism without triggering events. Newer types of social movements (with all reservations for different definitions) like the Swedish *Pantrarna* have for instance mobilised actively as a response to structural social exclusion and marginalisation of life-conditions in segregated areas in Swedish suburban areas (Göteborg, Stockholm, Malmö). As the name suggests, it links to the American Black Panther movement of the 1960s and in this sense establishes the historical and transnational links also identified by the authors of this book. *Pantrarna* is not easily explained with reference to external critical events and it is

questionable if personal critical events can explain the collective organisation they express. Therefore, I will argue that when focusing solely on mobilisations' surrounding events, we risk losing important mobilisations.

The authors have been working with the issues outlined in the book for years and their motivation and knowledge are clearly depicted in their collective work. As a scholar working with some of the same issues, I could wish for a comparable work on the Danish case. The book will be of interest to researchers working on social movements, ethnic relations and transnational belonging and formations. It is well written, offers a good overview of the existing literature – both Norwegian and international – and provides analyses of interesting empirical material.

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**Berg, Anne-Jorunn, Flemmen, Anne Britt & Gullikstad, Berit (eds.) (2010) *Likestilte norskheter. Om kjønn og etnisitet*, Oslo: Tapir akademiske forlag. 260 pp.**

This book represents a coherent ambition to analyse discourses and practices concerning production of differences and sameness in the Norwegian welfare state in terms of intersectionality, where gender and ethnicity takes centre stage. Intersectionality refers to the intertwining of difference-producing practices which, together and/or apart, may produce opportunity situations that favour or disfavour actors (individuals and groups) in different ways. The book consists of an introduction by the editors and seven articles discussing different aspects of equality/inequality producing processes in different ethnographic fields. All the authors work within a common theoretical frame based on constructivist oriented gender research, where gender is seen as processes that enact gender (p. 135). The authors thus share a theoretical foundation where action or enactment is the key concept to understand human society, and where gender as processes plays a critical role.

In the introduction written by the editors, we are presented with the ambition of the book, the common theoretical framework and key concepts that bind the articles together to a coherent discussion “about the Norwegian national order and how it is constituted in our time” (p. 31). Apart from intersectionality, which is presented as a sensitising concept and a methodological principle, the introduction discusses concepts like “majorizing” (majoritetsgjørende) and “minorizing” (minoritetsgjørende) that point to the empirically grounded processes of power relations rather than on preset concepts like majority/minority. In the same vein, the editors discuss the relations between “unmarked” and “marked” individuals and groups in terms of “the first” and “the other”, applied in several of the articles as processes of “firstness” and “secondness”. The editors finally present four “central concepts in the present debate about our own society” (p. 31) – gender equality, “Norwegianness”, majority and minority – and claim that all articles in the book in one way or another deal with the constitution, maintenance and change of these central concepts.

Theoretical approaches to the study of difference-making processes are rather scarce in the field of migration studies. The theoretical perspectives and concepts discussed in the introduction, mostly developed in gender studies, run through the articles and bind them together, at its best in complementary ways. All articles contribute in different ways to the coherence of this publication by raising several questions about essentialist and static concepts

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and understandings of equality/inequality producing relations and processes particularly related to gender and ethnicity/“race”. At its best, it is also an important model for how intersectionality can be applied to empirical studies. The coherent theoretical approach does however raise some concerns. A top-down approach where the analytical ambition is to analyse how certain categorisations are applied in different contexts must necessarily rest on the idea that these categorisations are relevant in all contexts; more or less universal. Another approach would be to ask what interests are enacted in different contexts, how these interests are understood by the actors, and which categorisations and power relations are enacted, confirmed and changed. My critical points will, however, address problems inherent to the book’s actual approach. First, I will briefly discuss the methodological constriction of the discursive approach. My second comment deals with the rather restricted sense of intersectionality that is applied, while my third comment concerns the understanding and use of central concepts.

Discursive practices, as public documents or other texts available to the public or as conversations and interviews, are the common empirical grounds of almost all articles in the volume. In the first article, Guro Korsness Kristensen discusses public discursive perspectives on fertility and wage-labour as minorizing or majorizing processes that categorise people as more or less equal and Norwegian. By analyzing texts and photos from journals and scientific magazines, and by applying intersectionality as a perspective, the author claims that some men (minority) are constructed as Norwegian, thus are majorized by being active child-carers, while women (minority) are made Norwegian and thus majorized by wage-labour. Here discourse analysis gives interesting perspectives on the way ideas of “Norwegianness” or “firstness” are presented in these texts, because the scope of the analysis is limited and the claim of the author empirically based and plausible.

In her generally interesting article, Berit Gullikstad discusses the inequality producing processes in four public nursing homes based on interviews with leaders and employees. The author asks whether and how one can combat discrimination and establish equality between employees by means of a conscious recruitment strategy for diversity and equality. In this context, I cannot see how discourse analysis, based on interviews, can grasp the plurality of aspects that are relevant in everyday interactions. When the author claims that the immigrant employees in the four wards are “minorized” as secondary care-givers by a process of culturalisation based primarily on their ethnicity and expressed by their language-inefficiency, I wonder if the focus on gender, ethnicity and sexuality may be too narrow. Class, age, religious affiliation, personal comportment and other locally defined categorisations seem to be made invisible by this rather narrow focus.

This point leads me to my second comment. Instead of focusing on gender and ethnicity as inequality producing categories, intersectionality aims at analyzing how gender, ethnicity, race, sexuality, class, nationality and other locally relevant categorisations are intertwined, mutually strengthening or weakening the power ratios of actors. This implies that the local context “decides” which categories are made relevant in the situation and the power relations between actors. The article by Britt Kramvik and Anne Britt Flemmen is a good example of how an intersectional approach can shed light on social processes where different aspects of persons are combined in different ways to enact different identities and relations. Here the authors discuss how equality, dignity and respect are negotiated in transnational marriages between Saami and non-Saami, Norwegians and Russians in Finnmark, a northern province of Norway. Their

argument is that a new diversity paradigm is evolving in Finnmark, building on localised negotiations of identities based on common everyday practices. This new diversity paradigm creates metaphors that enable bridges, not boundaries. Concepts such as “respect” and “dignity” contribute to an interesting and dynamic analysis where locally defined understanding plays centre stage.

In the last article, Anne-Jorunn Berg and Tone Gunn Kristiansen discuss how visible differences like gender and “race” seemingly are invisible in an official text about the Norwegian Introductory Program for refugees. In the text, the authors see visible differences as skin-colour and “race” lurking behind terms such as “newly arrived immigrants and non-Western immigrant” and stereotyped “minorized” women hidden in statements such as “there are fewer employed women than men among immigrant ...” (p. 243). But, is not the reader the creator or co-creator of the meaning of the text? When the reader (here the author) sees skin-colour behind the term “non-western”, is this not her creation based on her stereotypes? Or do the authors mean to have detected some kind of conspiracy where the “true truth” is hidden behind seemingly innocent concepts and phrases?

This brings me to my last critical comment that concerns the use of concepts. The authors use the term ethnicity/“race” without discussing what the concepts mean in different contexts. “Race” is in quotation marks, and a short introductory discussion explains that this is done to mark the authors’ ambivalence about the term, but they do not tell us what they want it to mean. The same goes for ethnicity, without quotation marks. In anthropology, ethnicity is seen as a processual and relational term referring to group consciousness and “boundary work”. In these texts, ethnicity seems to be used in an essentialist way, almost synonymous with nationality. And what about the Norwegian term “likestilling” (equality): is it self-evident and does it mean the same in all contexts?

My last comment also concerns the concepts of “minorizing” and “majorizing”/“secondness” and “firstness”. In my understanding, the rationale for using these concepts is to avoid the essentialist and static notions of majority and minority that freeze actors in positions irrelevant of context. The authors insist on “minorized” and “majorized” as positions that are locally embedded “doings” that may shift in different contexts. In spite of this ambition, the concepts are sometimes used in the same way as majority/minority to position groups. One example is in the interesting article by Anne-Jorunn Berg and Elisabet Ljunggren where they ask why entrepreneurship is encouraged for minorized groups (for instance p. 133, see also p. 243), a categorisation I interpret as rather static if they are referring to immigrant women in general. This unproblematised use of some terms and jumble in the use of minorizing/majorizing, terms that I find quite useful, is irritating and confusing for the reader.

In spite of these comments, I enjoyed reading the book and recommend it to anyone interested in critical theory. In the book’s last article, Donna Haraway is referred to saying that one should drop any ambition in knowledge production about seeing or explaining the “whole picture”. Instead, “the eye” or “seeing” is basic to scientific knowledge production and different perspectives or “eyes” together form complex understandings of social reality (p. 255). The volume *Likestilte norskheter* contributes to this ambition.

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## Note

1. All English translations from this book are made by the reviewer.

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**Brochmann, Grete & Hagelund, Anniken (eds.) Med bidrag fra Karin Borevi, Heidi Vad Jønsson og Klaus Petersen (2010) *Velferdens grenser. Innvandringspolitikk og velferdsstat i Skandinavia 1945-2010*, Oslo: Universitetsforlaget. 392 pp.**

*Velferdens grenser*<sup>1</sup> constitutes an extensive presentation. It represents predominantly comparative social history, but is additionally discussing issues within social policy, political science and sociology. The book is about the Scandinavian welfare states facing immigration since World War II. As more comparative research on Nordic societies without a doubt is needed, this book is most welcome as a general introduction to immigration in Scandinavian welfare states. The editors observe: "When the theme is social security and economic transfers, and the comparative frame is global, Denmark, Sweden and Norway end up in the same model. But the closer one gets to the concrete design of the model, the more striking become the differences".<sup>2</sup> The book deals with social policies in a situation where the systems were considered complete, but turned out not being complete when they faced the new challenges of immigration.

*Velferdens grenser* is mainly a descriptive book and does not open up theoretical definitions, discussions or debates about core concepts such as integration, national unity, nation-building and multiculturalism.<sup>3</sup> In this case it is, however, a completely sound strategy as broad overviews about the topic are rare, and the nexus between the welfare state and immigration has recently not been covered by much research. The approach provides a conceptual definition in which *what is and has become* in terms of *regime* defines the concept rather than an a priori analytical departure point.

The book is divided into five parts. The first part introduces the theme, the following three parts present the separate Scandinavian national cases, and the concluding part summarises and compares the cases from a number of thematic perspectives. The Swedish case is presented by Karin Borevi, and the Danish case by Heidi Vad Jønsson and Klaus Pedersen. Norway is presented by the editors Grete Brochmann and Anniken Hagelund who have also written the introductory chapter and the final comparative chapter. The chapters have a further subdivision into decades, which summarise the main developments in the immigration policies of the respective countries and periods. The approach is consequently also process oriented, and describes the respective paths to *what has become*. The book is written in three different Scandinavian languages, Danish, Norwegian and Swedish.<sup>4</sup>

Due to its state centric, comparative approach, the underlying theme of the study is integration of immigrants into Scandinavian countries with the aid of welfare state measures, and the dependency of integration on the particular features and varieties of the welfare state. The book contains much information about the welfare model, socio-political arrangements and principles, and administrative measures. Even political constellations, within national parliaments, between the state and municipalities and with the gradual emergence of populist parties are described. Brochmann and Hagelund conclude that Sweden and Norway are characterised by consensus in immigration policy, whereas Denmark has a higher degree of conflict orientation within this field. Sweden is the most liberal case and Denmark the most restrictive (control oriented) case, with Norway lying somewhere in between.

The temporal presentation about established actors, such as trade unions and political parties, being central designers of the regime in the early stages is illustrative. 1970s is seen as the establishment of integration policies, but also as a period of emerging social

problems. During 1980s and 1990s, the question about humanitarian immigration dominates, and since the millennium the entire immigration and integration regime is re-evaluated. The temporal narrative of the welfare state illustrates the way in which welcoming sporadic amateur measures were gradually replaced by systematic measures of state steering with specific requirements and increasing economic reasoning. This has to do partially with the transformation of the welfare state and the emergence of the "work line", which emphasises needs and rights being dependent on inputs and duties. In this process, the gradual departure from civil society arrangements in refugee admittance towards more state and municipality controlled management of humanitarian immigration is the prevailing feature. In the partial retreat of public arrangements in the general welfare system and the introduction of Public Private Partnership (PPP) projects, it is thought-provoking that civil society has not in a higher degree re-entered the field of immigration administration during the previous 10 years. This could have been examined in the book, but recent pressures on the welfare system, in terms of the change of management regimes, are not covered except for the emergence of the work line in welfare policies. It is also educational to observe that the administration differs between the countries, where Sweden has its specific administration in the Immigration Board, whereas Denmark does not have a specific administration. Sweden has also had other interesting administrative measures such as the liberal principle of own housing (Ebo) since 1994 in order to diminish problems in employment, but with unintended consequences in the concentration of immigrants in big cities with overcrowded dwellings. Previously open minded Denmark is sadly characterised by an increasing number of humiliating administrative measures and ethno-centric political discourses especially since the turn of the millennium. Norway in its turn borrows a little from here and there, without developing a clear line in its integration policies, but with the general aim of nation-building and emphasis on social citizenship.

Whether the policies are directed towards the control of flows or integrating newcomers is an important division. The emphasis in this book is on the integration, and in this the division between direct and indirect measures. As the Scandinavian welfare model is universalistic, indirect measures dominate. Identical socio-political measures cover both immigrants and natives, and tailored measures for immigrants are rare and almost exclusively restricted to refugees and asylum seekers. The question about universalism versus particularism in welfare regimes is well explained in the book. It is intriguing that the Danish integration allowance is a break with the universalistic system, as the level of the benefit is lower than the income support on the dole. But simultaneously the frontiers of the welfare state have not been very extensively described in the book, where differing rights (of for instance residence) would be linked to different degrees of social citizenship that often have temporal conditions. The question about language testing and testing of knowledge about the receiving society has been presented, but not questions for instance about temporal conditions for being entitled to dwelling based social security and the national health insurance. The book is thus rather abstract and general with emphasis on the welfare system, instead of describing conditions for welfare services and benefits. Consequently, the title of the book is somewhat misleading and in the original objectives for analysis, that is *ideologies, institutional moorings of the welfare and integration policies and concrete welfare measures*, the last is least covered by analysis.

The book illustrates informatively how immigration in Sweden and Denmark has in some periods become administratively an uncontrollable issue, with lots of unintended consequences due to

big entry numbers. The development of the public administration, especially on the municipal level and in large cities, has not kept pace with the rapid increase in numbers. This has been prevalent in refugee admittance and in housing. In Norway and Denmark, questions about family reunification policies and the asylum system have been problematic areas. These issues have been linked to questions about cultural differences and gender relations, especially in relation to arranged marriages, but also in relation for instance to honour related violence. Recently, work related immigration has become the main area of discussion, where the attracting of immigrant workers has been a goal in immigration policies due to the problematic demographical structure of the countries and the balance of resources. In this case, immigration is linked to possibilities of funding an extensive welfare state, and immigration has become strategic in economic policy. The book also illustrates how immigration has been a more politicised area of public debate and policy in Denmark than in Sweden or Norway. Whether differences between countries have effects on the integration of newcomers is discussed only shortly, without any clear, empirically grounded answer.

The book has been published in English in 2012 by Palgrave with the title: *Immigration Policy and the Scandinavian Welfare State 1945-2010*, and thus important insights about the Nordic model in immigrant integration are now also accessible for the larger international audience. *Velferdens grenser* is a welcome contribution to the discussion both on the welfare state and on ethnic relations and migration. The extensive approach of the book facilitates highlighting here only a few of the numerous discussions presented by the authors. The book can thus be recommended as an introductory reader in social policy and courses in ethnic relations at the undergraduate level in Nordic countries.

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## Notes

1. Which can be translated as the frontiers or alternatively borders of welfare.
2. My translation from Norwegian.
3. Multiculturalism is, however, shortly defined in the introductory chapter (pp. 27–28).
4. An English language article that summarises the main findings was published separately in this journal No# 1/2011, pp. 13–24.

**Hübinette, Tobias, Hörnfeldt, Helena, Farahani, Fataneh & Rosales, René León (eds.) (2012) *Om ras och vithet i det samtida Sverige*, Botkyrka: Mångkulturellt centrum. 239 pp.**

This anthology, *Om Ras och Vithet i det Samtida Sverige*, is an invitation and inspiration to critical discussions of race in Sweden. It is a textbook-orientated collection targeted towards higher-level students. The book makes several important contributions to Nordic critical race studies; first it offers a critical race perspective outside of the historically American perspective, acknowledged as a gap in the applicability of the concepts in other contexts. Second, it explores contemporary race and multiculturalism in Sweden from a range of experiences and contexts. The editors have successfully produced an accessible book that raises provocative questions about racialisation processes in Sweden and it is a well-worth reading for any student or researcher exploring race, ethnicity or immigration.

The anthology takes the position that race needs to be taken up in discussions on Swedish multiculturalism in order to challenge normative white culture. Additionally, it highlights that Sweden is multicultural as a result of its diverse population – not only from immigration. This separates the discussion from migration debates and enters into place-bound racialised power relations. In introducing the book, it is argued that in Sweden discussing race is taboo and that society and researchers alike must not shy away from discussing racialisation. “Colour-blind” approaches hide and mask how race is a central relational construct. Ignoring race denies the deeply ingrained connection between whiteness and Swedishness. Consequently, whiteness is privileged as belonging in Sweden. This entanglement between belonging and race, if unchallenged, will maintain and facilitate racialised structures in Sweden.

Beginning with the editor’s call to action, the reader is quickly taken into the challenges and multidimensional character of non-white experiences in Sweden. Three chapters in particular are worth highlighting. Ylva Habel’s background chapter, “Movements and layers within critical white studies”<sup>2</sup>, introduces critical white studies to new readers and situates these debates within a Swedish context. Astutely, Habel debunks the notion of “ethnic Swedes” as a “colour-blind” category. The term “ethnic Swede” she highlights is deeply connected to whiteness, thereby connecting belonging with whiteness. This is a powerful statement given the political correctness associated with this term and, as Habel points out, even the Swedish Prime Minister uses this term to establish a “mainstream” notion of white Swedishness. The chapter “Understanding racism in Sweden: On ice cream ads and the battle of norms”<sup>3</sup> by Oscar Pripp and Magnus Öhlander is especially poignant because a seemingly mundane event tests the boundaries of differing types of racism in practice. By studying over 180 media articles that debate the Nogger Black ice cream ads, which show graffiti style and asphalt graphics to promote the licorice flavour, the authors reveal the depth of the hierarchal race norm-system in Sweden and emphasise power struggles over who gets to define racism. Finally, Catrin Lundström in “Racialized Desires: The Other as exotic”<sup>4</sup> connects white male desire with the racialisation of Latina women in Sweden. Lundström shares interviews with young women who describe how white men objectify them into exotic, yet safe, racialised bodies symbolic of global geographies. The intersections among race, gender and class reveal the complicated relational power processes in building individual subjectivities in Sweden. These chapters uncover that race is a key organising principle in the politics of belonging in Sweden and therefore worthy of exploration.

Published by the Mångkulturellt Centrum (The Multicultural Centre) located in Botkyrka municipality, this book represents a strong connection between research and activism. The editors Tobias Hübinette, Helena Hörnfeldt, Fataneh Farahani and René León Rosales are all researchers who are active at the Mångkulturellt Centrum, Södertorn University College or Stockholm University. These experienced researchers in critical race studies bring together years of research within the Swedish context. The book consists of academic chapters written by a range of Swedish scholars from the fields of critical race and white studies, gender studies and ethnology. These chapters are complemented by a series of short vignettes by non-academic individuals from a variety of ages, backgrounds and experiences sharing their experience of racialisation in Sweden. The vignettes, from participants in the organisation Mellanförskalet (betweenness or in-betweenness loosely translated into English) described in Daphne Arbouz’s chapter, are an excellent and clever addition to the book, but unfortunately float ambiguously in

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the text rather than being integrated within the main thrust of the book. Perhaps this is metaphorically intentional but it does add unnecessary confusion to the structure of the book and undermines their valuable contribution to the discussion that the book hopes to engage. Nevertheless, these vignettes are illuminating in bringing forth the individual, personal and emotional experiences of people, no longer abstract. The voices of Madeleine Romero, Samuel, writer Astrid Trotzig and journalist Patrik Lundberg among others highlight how deeply ingrained race and racism is in Swedish daily life and provide a sense of urgency to the book's overarching arguments and themes.

The chapters and vignettes closely follow critical race/white perspectives and the theoretical challenges stem not from the anthology itself but from critiques of the theory in general. A drawback to the compilation, however, is that whiteness is taken for granted, and even as a homogenous universal instead of complicating Swedish whiteness as a multifaceted construct. Given its title, it begs the question: What does it mean to be white in Sweden? Why is white ethnicity central to Swedish discourse of identity? George Lipsitz (2011: 6) states that whiteness is learned, yet perceived as natural and, important to this text, place-bound. It is argued throughout the text that whiteness means privilege and power. Granted, they are probably correct in their assumptions, nevertheless, a critical eye to how this social category is continuously created and learned in the Swedish context would have lifted their argument into a stronger relational conceptualisation of race and whiteness. For example, a chapter on white non-Swedes' encounters of Swedishness, or a discussion on the complexity of white Swedish identities, may have provided a platform for teasing out contextual complexities in race relations. Nonetheless, their argument remains poignant and this anthology is an important offering in literature on race in Sweden.

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## References

Lipsitz, G 2011, *How Racism Takes Place*, Temple University Press, Philadelphia.

## Notes

1. Author's own translation. The original chapter title is: "Rörelser och schatteringar inom kritiska vithetsstudier".
2. Author's own translation. The original chapter title is: "Att uppfatta rasism i Sverige: Om glassreklam och normstrider".
3. Author's own translation. The original chapter title is: "Rasifierat begär: "De Andra" som exotiska".

**Kraler, Albert, Kofman, Eleanore, Kholi, Martin & Schmoll, Camille (eds.) (2011) *Gender, Generations and the Family in International Migration*, Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press. 394 pp.**

This volume edited by Albert Kraler, Eleanore Kofman, Martin Kholi and Camille Schmoll provides a rich collection of contributions on the multiple connections among international migration, gender and family relations. The book aims to move beyond what the editors define as the "compartmentalisation" of existing studies of the migrant family, and develops an inter-disciplinary dialogue by bringing together contributions from different disciplines, including politics,

geography, sociology, anthropology and policy studies. Particularly important is the argument about the necessity to map how legal, political and policy "regimes" in receiving countries frame the way in which migrant families have been understood, represented and made an object of intervention. This issue has been widely overlooked in contemporary studies of migrant families, partly as a consequence of a more general and persistent disconnection between, on the one hand, a political- and policy-oriented approach to migration and, on the other, field-based socio-anthropological studies of kinship and family relations.

A second important aspect addressed is the disconnection between a stereotypical representation of the family as developed by media and political debates and the lived reality of migrant families. The editors rightly note how, in the last decades, we have witnessed in many European countries (and beyond) a widening gap between changing and diverse family life and narrower – if not simplistic conceptions – of the family as articulated by national and supranational legal and policy frameworks. In this line, as many of the chapters show, "the migrant family" – and the gender relations underpinning it – have been increasingly represented in national political debates in problematic terms: first, as an antinomy of the modernity of "national" family and gender models; second, as an expression of cultural backwardness; and, finally, as the site of generational and gender conflicts. Notable in this context is the political representation in many receiving countries of migrant men as the bearers of patriarchal and misogynist values, which is assumed to be the cause of domestic violence and a threat to the safety and well-being of "national" women. In contrast, various contributors of this volume show how legal and policy frameworks impact on the process of family formation and how this frequently leads to the exacerbation of family conflicts. As such, inter-generational and gender violence should not be considered as a "timeless" and "natural" dimension of the migrant family, but rather as a potential result of the interplay among different – political, policy, economic and social – factors.

The book is organised into four sections. The first section investigates the family as a moral and social order to highlight how "what a family is" has become a site of controversy and negotiation among different political, institutional and informal actors. Particularly relevant are the studies of Sarah van Walsum and Ralph Grillo. The former highlights the construction of "the migrant family" in the Netherlands as the antithesis of modern liberalism and secularism. The latter shows how, in contemporary Britain, "the family" has become an important idiom through which cultural difference and the *otherness* of migrants and minorities are forged.

The second section takes up the relevant role of labour in shaping gendered relations within migrant families. The chapters engage with feminist studies which, since the 1990s, have put into question the conventional representation of migrant women as "following subjects". In this line, the interesting analysis developed – among other chapters – by Gillian Creese, Isabel Dyck and Arlene Tiger McLaren demonstrates how the social capital of migrant kin women may lead to processes of re-skilling and labour market inclusions of their husbands.

The third section explores the role of marriage in transnational mobility while also taking into account the powerful role of the state in framing the definition of family values and relations. The state emerges in different contributions as playing an active role in the construction of a stereotypical definition of migrant family values and norms (i.e. as "backwards" and "patriarchal"). Particularly valuable is the study of Annett Fleischer on Cameroonian men marrying German women, not least because the analysis offers an insight on

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the relatively under-researched topic of migrant masculinities, and on the role of “legal insecurity” in the framing of men’s identity.

The final section offers insight on the logic of care and intergenerational arrangements in transnational families and combines more conventional studies of unskilled migration with the less studied dimension of middle-class skilled migrants. The work of Paolo Boccagni and Ludovica Banfi on Italy compares the care arrangements developed among Ukrainian, Polish and Ecuadorian migrants and interestingly argues how the term “transnational” reveals to be more appropriate to understand the working of intergenerational relations than conjugal ones. Equally interesting is the analysis of Aurélie Varrel on Indian skilled migrants. By going beyond a methodological individualism usually adopted in the study of professional forms of mobility, Varrel highlights how a moral and emotional commitment towards family members informs kinship involvement of Indian migrants returning to India.

The editors identify some key reasons for the increasing academic interest in the migrant family, as it developed in the last two decades. Among the most important ones, they discuss the *diversification* of family forms and relations that result from shifting patterns of migration as well as from changing legal provisions. One may well connect the analysis developed in the book with the wider debate on the “new migration in Europe”. This label addresses the increased variety of routes, destinations and, crucially, of migrant profiles in contemporary flows towards mainland destinations as well as the unprecedented role of “the political” in shaping the social forms of people’s mobility. The book innovatively shows how the growing diversity of migrant families is shaped by (legal) selective processes of reunification and by a “politics of suspiciousness” as enacted by administrative authorities. This aspect is further analysed in relation to the growing European involvement in the legal definition of family migration policy. The latter, as many contributors show, oscillates between logics of inclusion and exclusion. Particularly relevant for the discussion of the relation among migration, legal framework and politics is the study of mixed and binational marriages insofar as they create a tension in the majority–minority relations. Marriage across ethnicity, race and nationality is increasingly seen with “suspicion” by the State as an instrumental gateway to citizenship, and is openly

contrasted by right-wing rhetoric of national purity. Finally, the analysis of binational and mixed marriages leads to a discussion of a third relevant aspect in the contemporary phenomenology of the “migrant family”, that is, transnational mobility. In this respect, transnational marriages are one among several emerging forms of reproduction of family relations through international mobility, alongside much less researched issues of parental care and adult–children relations.

By bringing together all these issues within a single framework of analysis, the book gives a valuable contribution to the under-researched relation between families, migration and contemporary politics/policies. As already mentioned, one of the most important and original features of the book relates to the adoption of what the editors define as “methodological pluralism” in the study of contemporary migrant families. Most contributions reaffirm the necessity to bring an ethnography of “politics” and “policies” back into the analysis of the migrant family, and to analyse the role of the state in framing the terms and conditions in which kinship comes to be understood and experienced.

If anything, the book might have benefited from a consideration of and engagement *with* the classical and more recent literature on kinship in migration. Relevant for the analysis developed in the volume would have been, for instance, the pioneer work of Sylvia Yanagisako on Japanese–American kinship, the ones of Gerd Baumann and Alison Shaw on South Asian families in London or the more recent studies of Katy Gardner on ageing and transnational care among Bangladeshi migrants. This would have allowed for a more nuanced analysis of continuities and differences in the historical and social changes of the family in migration, thereby avoiding what at times emerges as an overemphasis of the novelty of studies of the migrant family as developed in the last decade. Nevertheless, the book represents an important step forward towards the interdisciplinary analysis of the family in migration and offers a rich and stimulating scenario of different national contexts. It will certainly be of interest not only to scholars of sociology, anthropology, migration studies and policy analysis, but also to a wider set of readers working in social work, NGOs, voluntary sector as well as to policy makers.

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