

**BOOK REVIEW****Keskinen, Suvi, Skaptadóttir, Unnur Dís, and Toivanen, Mari. 2019. *Undoing Homogeneity in the Nordic Region: Migration, Difference, and the Politics of Solidarity*. Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge. 210 pp**

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Research on migration in the Nordic countries often frames diversity as starting post-1960s (3, 21), when international migration from outside of Western Europe was seen to challenge the social cohesion of these supposedly homogeneous countries; therefore, as societal security is often understood as strengthened through cultural homogeneity, migrants are often depicted as a potential threat (2–3, 21). However, as this edited book *Undoing Homogeneity in the Nordic Region: Migration, Difference, and the Politics of Solidarity* clearly illustrates, this narrative ignores the indigenous Sámi and national minorities that have been residing in the region, who historically have been framed by the state as problematic, resulting in harsh assimilation policies and repression to maintain an image of homogeneity. The editors Suvi Keskinen, Professor and Academy Research Fellow in the Centre for Research on Ethnic Relations and Nationalism (CEREN) at the University of Helsinki; Unnur Dís Skaptadóttir, Professor of Anthropology at the University of Iceland; and Mari Toivanen, Academy of Finland Post-Doctoral Researcher at the Swedish School of Social Science, University of Helsinki, effectively disrupt the narrative of homogeneity through this interdisciplinary book with chapters focusing on the indigenous Sámi, national minorities, and migrant groups side-by-side. This starting point highlights crucial parallels between treatment of these groups, illustrates that notions of a homogeneous nation were achieved through repression and assimilation, and leads us to new questions relating to solidarity.

The book is a Nordic anthology, which is divided into three parts, totaling 12 chapters. Part 1 is unified through histories of homogeneity and difference and lays a strong foundation to frame the book. These chapters illustrate how 'national mythmaking' (47) is a storytelling process that includes some groups while excluding others, and where old cultural and ethnic diversity were conveniently excluded from the narrative when new cultural diversity post-1960s took place (30). Part 2 addresses the governing and negotiating of differences in the present day. These chapters highlight how minorities are problematized and

often considered responsible for their own problematization, while the majority society, structural considerations, and exclusionary mechanisms are often left unquestioned; each of these chapters illuminate the importance of questioning the larger, macro structures at play. In Part 3, viewed collectively, these chapters highlight the securitization process that can take place when a group of individuals is perceived as problematic and a threat to society.

While I found all of the chapters to include important insights on their respective topics, five chapters particularly captured my interest. With a focus on majority society positioning of minorities, Teemu Ryymin (chapter 2) investigates Norway with a historical lens, Niina Siivikko (chapter 4) examines Sámi representations in the media, and Priscilla Ringrose and Elisabeth Stubberud (chapter 8) conduct a media analysis on two documentaries. Ryymin (chapter 2) examines Norwegian narratives of ethnic and cultural homogeneity from a historical perspective, arguing these narratives often presuppose homogeneity pre-1960s that 'is at odds with the historical experiences of cultural, linguistic, ethnic, religious, and social diversity in Norway' (21–22). He provides historical evidence to denote how the notion of Norway as a homogenous society was established and offers thoughts as to why such notions continue to persist. Siivikko (chapter 4) examines Finnish media representations of the Sámi in the 1960s and 1970s, the time of the 'Sámi Renaissance' and the duality of being Sámi but also being a part of the Finnish nation-state. She convincingly argues an examination of media representations sheds light on the positions of the Sámi where ethnicity is utilized as a sign of difference and highlights how the positioning of the Sámi by the majority resulted in certain strategies within Sámi communities in the fight for rights. Ringrose and Stubberud (chapter 8) analyze two Norwegian documentaries—on the Kven (Norwegian-Finnish) and on the Norwegian-Pakistani communities—and issues of national identity and belonging with consideration for the notion of 'national fantasy' (119). In this way, they explore the ways in which Norwegian society 'makes sense of itself and its "others"' (134). Examining both old and new cultural and ethnic diversity in one chapter was an interesting approach to exploring the negotiation of identity and belonging in Norway.

Shifting the focus to minority perspectives, Daria Krivonos (chapter 7) examines the case of young, unemployed Russian speakers in Finland, and Markus Himanen (chapter 10) looks at the case of Bulgarian and Romanian street workers' experiences with policing. Krivonos (chapter 7) argues that in the case of young, unemployed Russian speakers, whiteness is utilized as a mechanism to attempt to 'reinscribe themselves into citizenship' and therefore deserving of welfare benefits while unemployed (115). The frame of welfare chauvinism and whiteness appears to be an effective lens to illuminate aspects behind the narratives of participants and, thereby, to better understand their perspectives. Himanen (chapter 10) investigates Bulgarian and Romanian street workers' experiences with aggressive public and private policing in Helsinki; the narratives from street workers provide powerful insights and criticisms to current approaches to policing and left me considering the ways in which this research may better inform future policing practices.

I interpret 'national mythmaking' (34), 'national fantasy' (119), and 'imagined communities' (1) as foundational concepts that the book is built on, which highlight the myth of homogeneity and its exclusionary mechanisms in the nation-building process. By placing Nordic research on the Sámi, national minorities, and migrants in the same book, it becomes clear that those perceived as different are often problematized, justifying securitization processes and ignoring societal mechanisms that may result in exclusion. With this approach, the editors and authors are successful in their goal of 'undoing' homogeneity in the Nordic region.

Based on the title of the book, I was expecting more explicit content on politics of solidarity; however, politics of solidarity is primarily addressed by the editors in the introductory chapter (chapter 1). Referring to Ålund, Schierup, and Neergaard (2017) the editors address

that placing blame on migrants and their children for the erosion of the welfare state may be interpreted as 'an exclusionary form of politics of solidarity' (13). In this way, those considered 'Others' are often excluded from solidarity and are, rather, targeted by processes of securitization. With this as the frame, they call for other kinds of politics of solidarity and acknowledge 'a careful reading' of the book demonstrates that new forms of politics of solidarity are taking place (14).

This book provides many important contributions to the field; however, I think two aspects deserve particular mention. First, while some authors have referred to homogeneity in the Nordic region as a myth (see for instance, Gullestad 2002: 67–69), this is the first contribution I am aware of that comprehensively disrupts the narrative through its combination of demonstrating how history, present governing, and social implications—in this case securitization—have created and continue to build on the narrative of homogeneity despite evidence suggesting otherwise. Second, the combination of exploring the situations of the Sámi, national minorities, and migrants provides many insights and perhaps new questions to the field; the editors stress the importance of historically and contextually specific analyses (13) while demonstrating the value of examining various forms of heterogeneity and diversity in the region.

I highly recommend this book for individuals interested in migration studies, Nordic studies, studies of indigenous and national minorities, and processes of nation building. Particularly, I think this book presents an important call to Nordic migration researchers to frame post-1960s migration in light of existing heterogeneity in the region.

### Competing Interests

The author has no competing interests to declare.

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