

# Abstracts

## **Clarity and Ambivalence in a Housing Area that Might be Called a Ghetto**

By Signe Grønbæk and Dorthea Funder Kaas

In this article, the authors make a suggestion as to how minority studies can and should challenge the prevailing conception about how the regulation of ethnic housing, popularly known as 'ghettoisation', hinders ethnic minorities' integration into Danish society. The most prevalent theory is that the constructed reality about the ghetto and its residents consolidates a segregational mentality about 'us' and 'those others' which actively contributes to further polarisation with an ethnic bias. This creates a spiral of stigmatisation through the (re-)production of negative and stereotype narrations about the ethnic minorities living in the so-called ghettos which is in itself a greater hindrance to the process of integration than the tendency towards segregation itself. Based on their extensive fieldwork in a selected housing area, the Sydvestkvarter, the authors focus not only on the residents with ethnic minority backgrounds, but also the Danish professionals who work with integration in this housing area. The residents' opinion of the housing area is one of ambivalent strategies that are developed in connection with a desire both to exist in and to protect themselves against the dominant discourse on ghettos. This has to do with the ethnic minorities' twofold view of the housing area as being both a problematic ghetto and a safe residence. The twofold view is part of a strategy that is directed towards evading the stigma with which they are branded. Trans-national strategies have also been studied. The ethnic minority residents' commitment to two different geographical and cultural contexts, as these are expressed in trans-national day-to-day praxis, comprises an alternative understanding of integration and provides security in daily life – a security that can be seen as an important precondition for integration into Danish society. The resources that the authors focus on in connection with such trans-national praxis constitute an alternative access to integration than that predominantly considered, and also challenges the national truth about ghettoisation as being a hinder to the integration of ethnic minorities.

The authors' research as discussed in this article provides a basis for arguments emphasising the importance of retaining focus on the social importance of ambivalence and ghetto discourse for those people living in housing areas that have been branded as ghettos.

## **The Shortest Possible Route into the Labour Market – a Paradox of Integration**

By Sine Grumløse, Pia Hansen and Sara Priskorn

The authors of this article set their focus on the integration policies of Denmark, which are at present gaining expression in an integration strategy oriented towards the labour market. This is a strategy in which the individual's self-support is integrated and which is focused on having this individual connected to the labour market as quickly as possible. The authors have no desire to question the fact that employment is important for refugees' and immigrants' integration into society. They do, on the other hand, problematise the methods and consequences of this labour-market aimed integration of refugees and immigrants. Three main paradoxes are emphasised. Firstly, that integration policies seen in a socio-political perspective tend to increase rather than reduce the inequality of society. The strategies that are taken into use, particularly the meagre support benefit, the starting aid, can be considered a breach of extensive decades of welfare and social policies, whose main purpose has been to reduce poverty and economical inequality. Secondly, this integration policy strikes especially hard at highly educated refugees and immigrants because this group are employed in unskilled occupations to a much greater degree than comparably educated Danes. Education from abroad is evaluated as being much lower than Danish education in the same professions, while even those refugees and immigrants who have Danish educations have difficulties in entering the Danish labour market. This means that it is highly relevant to set a focus on discrimination and the exclusion of ethnic minorities. The authors further maintain that it is necessary to understand and focus on those structural barriers in society that make refugees' and immigrants' access to the labour market difficult. This opens for a cultural-critical analysis of the Other seen as a conceptual structure of the modern Western world, which focuses on how we construct arguments that explain and quite simply normalise our necessity for putting pressure on a specific portion of the population.

## **Perspectives on Integration. Opportunities and Obstacles for Integration among Young Refugees – and in Anthropological Research**

By Karna Kühnell Gautier

One field that has often been a subject of research among anthropologists (including the author of the present article) is that of how political visions on integration become praxis among the refugees concerned, and for the professionals who have the responsibility of implementing those visions. The result is often a demonstration of the gap between such visions on integration and reality.

The basis for this article lies in the author's many years of research during which she has studied young refugees' access into Danish reality. She has followed young, unaccompanied refugees from their arrival in Denmark, through the waiting period while their applications for asylum are being processed, and then followed those young people who have been granted asylum or provisional residence permits in various Danish communities. The young peoples' patterns of activity and behaviour in the pre-asylum period (while their applications were being processed) is then related to their later existence and integration into Danish society. It is then

apparent that life at an asylum centre ends up by being regarded as merely temporary, as an experience of futility, of non-involvement and of negative self-concept. The author contends that these feelings relate to the fact that the young people see their lives as being in an indeterminate state and not as being 'real', and that they therefore often can find no real reason for showing interest in the activities in which they are supposed to be interested. The author then compares this with the young refugees' later experience with integration into Danish communities during which these same young people must discontinue the (self-)conceptions and behaviour they became accustomed to in the period of pre-asylum. If this is adjustment to take place, these young people must have opportunities for moving from a position on the outer fringes of Danish society to a more central position – they must experience genuine opportunities for development and gain perspectives for their future.

Based on the standpoints depicted during fieldwork, some comments are made as to opportunities and obstacles in anthropological research based on the fact that anthropologists themselves to a very great degree set the conceptual and theoretical framework for their interest in and understanding of 'integration'. Contributing to an understanding of the problematics of integration is both useful and relevant, and can indeed indicate various types of better solutions. However, the anthropologist can and also should contribute broader perspectives with a critical investigation of how these problems are defined in both a societal and anthropological sense. This is not because anthropologists are to be standard-bearers for a special issue – for example by assuming a specific normative standpoint and trying to influence representations – but because this is a question about professional conduct, about proper handiwork. Criticism should be practiced in relation to our fields of research and their construction – and to the anthropological understanding of these issues.

## **Connecting Ethnicity, Gender and Urban Space**

By Annie Elise Geilman

The article explores Bangladeshi and Somali women's experiences of living in Cardiff, the capital of Wales, in order to understand what affect their experiences. The focus is on the relationship between ethnic and gender relations. This is explored in relation to their social networks and housing preferences.

The main argument is that ethnic and gender relations affect how the women construct social networks and where they prefer to live. In the research process, it became clear that other factors also had an impact on the women's experiences. They include: age, English language skills, religion, mobility and divisions within each of the communities.

For the majority of the women, networks with co-ethnic provided the principal basis for social life. Gender divisions in the social networks were pronounced. For both Somali and Bangladeshi women, perceptions of appropriate female behaviour within Islam and their culture had an impact on how they acted in different settings. There was a difference between "professionals" and "the business group" within the Bangladeshi Community. Whereas the former socialised in mixed environments, the latter tended to socialise with women only. A link between social networks and the women's English language skills was evident. Many women with little English language skills did not have any contact with people from other backgrounds because they did not speak English well enough. Age influenced the kind of networks that

the women constructed as primarily young Bangladeshi and some Somali women had formed networks with people of different ethnic backgrounds, e.g. with other Muslims. They generally spoke good or fluent English.

In terms of housing preferences, many women attached importance to living close to co-ethnics. Gender relations only had an impact on few women's preferences. Rather, other factors affected the women's preferences. Many women with little English language skills favoured living close to co-ethnics whereas it did not matter for women with good English language skills, women who were mobile and young women. Living close to mainstream and specialist facilities was seen as important.

## **Minority Women and the Media**

By Rikke Andreassen

In so far as the great majority of ethnic Danes do not have any personal contacts with persons who have obvious minority backgrounds, it is the presentations in the news media that are the primary source of information about these minorities. During the past three decades, the news media have presented women with an obviously minority background as being oppressed, and Islamic head scarves as being symbols of this oppression. The recurrent news coverage of these minority women as being oppressed – as victims of violence on the part of their husbands and as being subjected to the enforced wearing of head scarves – operates on two levels. On one level, the media contribute to the construction of stereotype conceptions of these minority women as being oppressed and on another level, contribute to the construction of specific conceptions about ethnic Danish women and 'Danishness'. This article modifies the stereotype description of minority women in the media by showing, for one thing, that Islamic veiling is not necessarily an expression of oppression, but can also express the courage of one's convictions in that head scarves can act as a means of evading objectification. In addition, the article shows how gender and race inter-sectionalise in the media's descriptions of women with an obviously minority background. Most importantly, the article elucidates that media descriptions of minority women as binary opposites to ethnic Danish women has serious consequences for the construction of Danishness: when minority women are presented as victims of violence and Islam is described as the cause of such violence, ethnic Danish women then appear as being liberated and Danish society as being non-violent and non-oppressive towards women. The media's presentations of women with an obviously minority background take place in 'us'-versus-'them' narratives in which 'their' oppression emphasises 'our' emancipation. Such presentations in the media contribute to the continuation of the myth that full equal rights exist between the sexes in Denmark.

## **Home and Homelessness among Somali Men**

By Tina Kallehave

The greater part of our Somali immigrants have – just as in the rest of Scandinavia – been arriving in Denmark since the late 1990's. In the approximately 15 years that have passed since then, their daily existence has developed in numerous directions.

Homeless shelters of Copenhagen have in recent years witnessed a distinct increase in the

number of inhabitants with a Somali background, leading to a sense of puzzlement as to the nature of a correlation between the many Somali homeless and the often extremely important social networks found within any given Somali community, a puzzlement which this article seeks to explain. The article employs as a basis for its empirical study, a range of interviews with Somali men and members of their homeless shelter's staff, and begins by offering a coherent definition of the sociological criteria necessary for the establishment of homelessness as an admissible demographic categorisation of certain individuals within Danish society. This categorisation is thus shown to entail for the individual in question, a lack of any proper residence and the absence of important social relations. The article will then analyse the status a selection of Somali homeless men, employing the above criteria as a basis for an investigation focusing on the subjects' tightly knit social relations. In this manner, the analysis stands apart from other such studies of refugees and the homeless, which all maintain as their point of reference the exclusionary structural characteristics of society.

Taking as a basis the state- and lifemodes theory's concepts regarding social recognition, subject and alienation, it will be shown how the lives of two Somali men are comprised of a complex struggle for recognition. The analysis shows how such complex struggles for recognition found within the internal social structures of Somali immigration communities are fuelled by the different experiences of individual Somalis in their home country prior to immigration, and then subsequently their various opinions as to their status within Danish society. It will become clear that the numerous social positions created within these Somali communities are not only inclusive, but also exclusive, with alienation as a potential risk and consequence. The lives of the men selected for study are thus to a considerable degree characterised by the lack of recognition concerning important social relations and the absence of opportunities for a realisation of any of that social potentiality the individual commonly finds within itself. The path to homelessness and the absence of any inclusion in the general immigration communities must in this light not only be seen as conditional upon the individual's relation to his or her country of origin, but also upon those internal in- and exclusive processes having taken place within the social matrices of the particular immigration community in question.

## **Cultural Policy and Cultural Diversity: Challenges and Solutions in Scandinavia**

By Leena Marsio

This article is about cultural diversity policies in cultural policies of Scandinavia. It discusses integration in relation to cultural policy. The main focus is at Scandinavian countries, which all have had a long-term programme of cultural diversity policies, namely Mosaikk in Norway, Forum för Världskultur in Sweden and Cultural Ministry's Development Fund KUF in Denmark.

In this article I have focused on ethnical and cultural marked differences. There have been international shifts in political approaches towards groups, relating to ethnic minorities, multiculturalism and cultural diversity. These concepts form the background for the politics on cultural diversity.

The results of my research show that there are certain topics arising from time to time again as being the crucial points in promoting cultural diversity in the arts scene. I have come

to the conclusion that institutions, networking, collaboration and education are they keys in changing cultural politics and arts scene to be more inclusive and open to cultural diversity. Institutions form the core of cultural life of the Nordic countries and they receive most of the public subsidies, therefore they are in a key role. Networking forms a crucial dynamics for the promotion of cultural diversity. Networks act as intermediates between governmental institutions and the grass-roots cultural field, between different art forms, professions and levels of cultural life. Decentralisation calls for awareness and actions in all levels of the society. In addition to the strong role of institutions, decentralisation has been a significant process in the cultural politics of the Nordic countries. Education form the basis for established art professionals and therefore also diversity need to be taken into account.

The programmes and projects presented give evidence of a larger potential of invention and development. In order to succeed in creating a more systematic, long-term policy, both specific initiatives and administrative methods must be considered. The fact is that we live in societies that are culturally diverse. As democratic welfare societies the Nordic countries are obliged to count in their new and old members with different ethnic or cultural background and to see that they have the possibility to equally take part in the life of their societies. Culture and arts form and reflect the soul of people and therefore actions can not be only in the level of education, housing or social service, however important these are. I urge for actions for cultural diversity in cultural politics and in the arts.

### **Integration and the Cultural Politics of Difference. A Theoretical Critique of a Vague Conception.**

By Roger Landauro Gutiérrez

This article is a subaltern critique of the idea of 'integration' and deals with some of the inconsistencies of the concept. It suggests that 'integration' is the cause and effect of 'differentiation'. It argues that this idea is related to the intertwined notions of 'race' and 'ethnicity'. With regard to this, the article stresses the commitment to 'ancestry' of these concepts and the function they perform as epistemologically 'objective'. The article also contends that the process of 'integration' cannot be understood without these preconceived notions. Thus, the metaphysical theoretical pitfall created by the nature of the concepts defining this process cannot be avoided.

In addition, the article presents differentiation as the art of representation. It indicates how this practice has taken place since the Renaissance and it is practised today in Western liberal democracies with culture as the dominant variable.

Ultimately, the article contends that 'integration' cannot be carried out because it presupposes and creates the antithetical axis of similarity/difference. It is therefore that it ends up as 'segmented integration'.

Finally, this article also raises theoretical issues such as: the relation between frames of understanding the nature of concepts and processes, the relevance of historical knowledge, the trap of Western liberal 'cultural relativism', and the actor/structure relation that integration raises when viewed from conflict and functionalist theories.