
RESEARCH

Committed to Integration: Local Media Representations of Refugee Integration Work in Northern Sweden

Ulrika Schmauch¹ and Katarina Giritli Nygren²

¹ Department of Sociology, Umeå University, Umeå, SE

² Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, Mid Sweden University, Sundsvall, SE

Corresponding author: Ulrika Schmauch (ulrika.schmauch@umu.se)

The overall aim of this article is to explore the ways in which refugee reception and integration work is storied in the local newspapers of two rural municipalities in northern Sweden. Our results show that the strong emphasis on integration through employment present in national policy regimes is not readily visible in local media portrayals of integration. Instead, integration work is framed as a matter of commitment of individual refugees, volunteers and government administrative staff and, thus, as work with a high level of social support. We argue that the frame of commitment itself needs to be viewed in relation to the growing public support for limiting the resources available for this kind of work, as well as for the limitations for refugees to enter Sweden in the first place.

Keywords: Refugee reception; Integration work; Media analysis; Rural; Sweden

Introduction

The overall aim of this article is to explore the ways in which refugee reception and integration work is storied in the local newspapers of two rural municipalities in northern Sweden. Studies of media representations of immigration issues have mostly concerned either images of refugees or the framing of immigration in relation to politics (see, for example, Chouliriakai & Zabrowski 2017; d'Haenens & de Lange 2001; Vliegenthart & Roggeband 2007). The ways in which the reception and integration of refugees is portrayed are not among the more commonly investigated topics. Furthermore, most analyses include primarily national and urban media outlets, where the debate is frequently abstracted from specific practices and people. Looking at local media outlets in rural municipalities allows us not only to study how refugee reception and integration work is storied, it also gives us the opportunity to gain deeper knowledge about the people presented as those who are performing such work and the specific practices connected to it. The production of emotions, not only how they are assigned to different narratives but also how the reader is interpellated to feel in relation to different types of integration work, is also central to our analysis.

During the autumn of 2015, a larger than usual number of refugees arrived in Sweden, requiring municipalities to provide an often unprecedented level of accommodations and services, such as health care, language training, schooling for children, leisure activities and work training/experience. Initial public engagement and support was soon followed by demands for limitations on the number of refugees granted asylum and shelter. Refugee reception and the placement of intake centres became heated issues (Andersson 2016), and several arson attacks, fuelled by racist rhetoric, were reported by refugee shelters (Peterson et al. 2017). As in other European countries, the organisation and content of reception and integration work were discussed as problems to be managed: How many refugees could Sweden afford to accommodate? Where would it be possible to give such a large number of people decent accommodations? How could an expected rise in the crime rate be prevented? Where would refugee children go to school? How should municipalities safeguard the physical health and well-being of both the refugees and other inhabitants?

The notion that people who seek refuge in Sweden should be received in a humanistic and professional manner has been a long-held ideal of refugee reception and integration work, and receiving refugees and assisting with their integration into society has been a function of the Swedish welfare state since the seventies (Eastmond 2010). Parallel to the debate surrounding the organisation of refugee reception and integration, the professionalization of integration work has been growing in both public institutions and civil society organisations. The media has played a vital role in reporting both the failures and successes of reception and integration work while taking part in the framing of integration as a professional field. Positions such as refugee or integration officer are available today in several Swedish municipalities. New titles and occupations are being developed alongside more distinguished fields of expertise, drawing boundaries between what should be considered professional versus lay knowledge. At the same time, public debates about integration are centred on the obligations of refugees and migrants to integrate themselves into society, living by Swedish values and norms, mastering the language and adjusting to the Swedish way of life, thus conflating integration with the concepts of acculturation and assimilation. This differs in many ways from official documents and policies in which integration is regarded as the solution to the social exclusion faced by migrants, refugees and their children (Ålund & Schierup 1991; Schmauch 2011). The media has a significant effect on this process as it (re)creates meanings and frames that contribute to the social production of emotion and meaning and to shaping public opinion through hegemonic discourses; that is, media narratives make available frames and information for creating subjective understandings of the world around us (Hall 1997). To analyse media narratives is to explore how the social and political worlds are storied, which can help us gain insights into both their continuities and evolutions.

Research Background

In 1998, integration became a separate policy area in Sweden. Along with this came the narrowed definition of integration as predominantly a labour-market issue and an increase in professional positions focused on integration work (Dahlstedt 2009). Legislative changes concerning refugee settlement increased the pressure on Swedish municipalities to develop strategies for refugee reception and integration. Until recently, each municipality has had the autonomy to decide for itself whether it would receive refugees (Lidén & Nyhlén 2015) through a voluntary agreement with the county administrative board (i.e., the local extension of the national government) regarding the number of refugees it would accept. Under this arrangement, local municipalities were able to base decisions on their individual circumstances, including the availability of housing, the potential for financial gain, the presence of values of humanism and refugee solidarity, as well as the level of support for the extreme right-wing political party, the Sweden Democrats (Bolin et al. 2014; Lidén & Nyhlén 2014).

However, a new 2016 act (SFS 2016:38) regarding the reception of newly arrived immigrants for settlement changed this situation. Under this act, the government sets yearly refugee quotas, and municipalities are required to accept the refugees assigned to them. The aim is to ensure that refugees are accepted for settlement and can commence their integration into the labour market and the local community as quickly as possible (Prop. 2015/16:54).

Changes to both legislation and public opinion introduced a new scenario to the development of strategies for refugee reception and integration into Swedish municipalities. Although most refugees were, and are still, received in larger cities located in southern Sweden, some refugees are necessarily received into the smaller towns and communities of the north, where the conditions for their reception and integration are constrained by the more limited availability of employment and housing opportunities (Lidén & Nyhlén 2014). Furthermore, sparsely populated, rural municipalities frequently accept higher numbers of refugees per capita than more urban ones (Johansson 2011). At the same time, attitudes towards refugees have been shown to be more negative, and racist and/or xenophobic political parties have generally found more support, in rural areas (Wennström & Öner 2015). However, views differ between and within each municipality, and in the North of the country, they have not gained as much support as in the most southern part. While some local leaders and inhabitants, mainly in the scarcely populated areas in northern part of the country, see the acceptance of refugees both as a humanitarian responsibility and, not least, as a strategy for municipal survival (Riksrevisionen 2014), others are strongly opposed to it. This raises questions concerning the importance of the local context, the contradictions within it and the consequences it might have for refugee reception and integration, both at a policy level as well as at the level of individual workers. In this article, we argue that although national discourses surrounding refugee reception and integration can have a strong influence on local policy making and implementation, local discourses reveal how refugee reception and integration work is portrayed in relation to actual people and practices, as well as how these portrayals are emotionally charged.

In a review of previous studies, Dekker and Sholten (2017) identified four general master frames through which immigration is portrayed in relation to the receiving society; these are the economic, the managerialist, the threat and the human-interest frame (Dekker & Scholten 2017). Within the economic frame, refugees were positioned either as costs or gains in relation to the receiving society. The managerialist frame approaches immigration as a kind of depoliticized governance, a story most often told on behalf of governmental actors. The threat frame positions immigrants as a threat to receiving countries, while the human-interest frame are often mobilised around individual cases that bring an individual's story or an emotional angle, often producing an image of an idealized refugee who requires compassion or help (see also d'Haenens & de Lange 2001). Chouliaraki and Zabrowski (2017) show, in their study of news coverage during the 2015 refugee crisis, how the two frames of victimhood and threat can also work as intertwined components in which the voices of refugees themselves are silenced, collectivised and decontextualized. In this article we are not primarily interested in immigration or refugees *per se* but rather on the practices described in terms of efforts to achieve integration, thus framing the way integration is understood as being achieved and thus what kind of practices should be encouraged.

Following this line of thought means that we depart from an approach that views journalism as a performative practice that inscribes refugee reception and integration into certain relationships in which we are invited to feel, think and act towards refugees in particular ways. In both local and national Swedish news media, these topics have been highly debated for decades, including what should be considered refugee integration, who is responsible for its achievement and how integration work should be organised (Abiri 2000; Valenta & Bunar 2010). In this sense, media representations contribute to the definition of integration, and we

believe that an analysis thereof can offer insights into the ways in which refugee integration, and integration work, are understood and shaped. This means that we are interested in what Chouliraki and Zabrowski (2017) call *voice as narrative*, focusing on the portrayals of refugee reception and integration from the questions of who speaks, in which authority and in which circumstances.

To analyse the ways in which media portrayals produce emotion and meaning, we follow Ahmed's (2004) understanding of emotions as performative acts. She argues that emotions not only take place in the meeting between two subjects (e.g., a person working in refugee reception and integration and another accepting or resisting that work) but also in the actions or events preceding this encounter, such as the discursive context in which the encounter takes place. Thus, the systems of belief and value that produce the representations of refugee reception and integration both reveal and constitute the discursive context that regulates everyday work practice and shapes the material forms and substances of representational constructs. Our focus is not on which emotions are at stake, but rather on how emotions function in relation to the specific tasks of refugee reception and integration portrayed in the different articles (e.g., those portraying refugees, the local population, public servants, employers, etc). Consequently, we focus on how narratives about this work and its workers are told, how the subjects of reception and integration are identified, how they are positioned in relation to each other and emotionally charged (Ahmed 2004; Ahmed 2012).

Material

In this article we focus on the regional and local media outlets of two rural municipalities in Northern Sweden, Ånge and Kramfors, that have received a relatively large number of refugees since 2015. Located in the scarcely populated north of the country, both municipalities have relatively small labour markets, which makes entry, and thereby integration, difficult for refugees. It can therefore be assumed that the professional situation of those seeking ways to offer housing, education and jobs to refugees is also challenging (dos Santos Silva et al. 2018). Support levels for racist and/or xenophobic political parties (e.g., the Sweden Democrats) is close to the national average, although somewhat higher in Ånge municipality. The material our analysis is based on consists of first-hand analysis of more than 200 newspaper articles from the 3 newspapers that, besides international, national and regional news, also have coverage in the two municipalities: *Sundsvalls Tidning*, *Tidningen Ångermanland* and *Örnsköldsviks Allehanda*. Data was collected in September 2017 via an online search for articles published from 1 January 2015 through 30 June 2017. The search was conducted through Mediearkivet ('Retriever'), Scandinavia's largest digital archive for both print and online media, which allows full-text searches. The keywords used were '[the name of the municipality]*' and 'refugees*'. Our first search resulted in 428 articles. After eliminating reprints and articles that focused on other topics but mentioned the word 'refugee' in some form (e.g., politicians travelling to political events, military training within the city), the number was reduced to around 200 articles. The articles include news articles, personal portraits and opinion pieces and vary between centrefold articles with images and smaller notations of a couple of sentences. As Kramfors' population is twice that of Ånge, it is not surprising that most articles focused on Kramfors.

The data was analysed through thematic analysis to gain a broad understanding of the ways in which refugee reception and integration work was portrayed. The analysis followed the steps outlined by Braun and Clark (2012). We first read through the articles and made sure we had an overall understanding of the material as a whole. While considering the articles as stories about integration work, we identified different themes related to the kinds of practices associated with integration and people portrayed as practising them. As a second step we assigned initial codes departing from *narrative as voice* asking who speaks, in which

authority and in which circumstances and started to search for and review themes in the material. Following this line of thought, we regard media narratives as sets of interpretative packages that give meaning to refugee reception and integration, offering several different symbols that indicate the core of its definition, the work practice itself, as well as the subject and object of this work.

Through our analysis, three main themes were identified: refugees who spoke with the authority of personal refugee experience, volunteers who spoke with the authority of being non-governmental actors taking on civil responsibility and local governmental actors who spoke with the authority of public administration. Of these three themes, articles referring to the administration and management of integration represented the largest share, accounting for almost 50% of the total number of articles. Reports on volunteer work and community engagement accounted for approximately 25% of the total and included reports about both single individuals and their passionate engagement as well as different charity organisations and group activities. In addition to these two obvious themes, there was a considerable number of personal portraits of refugees and migrants (about 13%) and their struggles to become integrated into Swedish society, often as a result of their individual empowerment efforts. Articles not encompassed in the three themes consisted of general and national figures regarding refugees and integration. After defining these themes, we performed an analysis that focused on the emotional content the articles of each theme conveyed and in what way they were related to wider discourses of refugee reception and integration work as presented in previous studies (Riessman 2005). In this way the narratives *taking responsibility for one's integration*, *integrating others through care* and *benevolent governance* were identified.

Narratives of Reception and Integration Work

Taking responsibility for one's integration

The first, and smallest, set of narratives consists of personal portraits of those targeted by refugee reception and integration work—refugees themselves. Here we can read stories of family separation, war, violence and of finally reaching the safety in the municipalities in titles such as 'His family is still in Syria' (Tidningen Ångermanland 2016a), 'Peymans long travel from war and worry' (Tidningen Ångermanland 2016b), 'Karen – a boost for Byström's business' (Örnsköldsviks Allehanda 2015a) and 'After three years the family meets again' (Örnsköldsviks Allehanda 2016a). Within this set of narratives, we also find several stories about refugees that have managed to overcome their traumatic experiences and have gotten a daily life going:

After eleven days of nightmarish travel of the Mediterranean 23 year old Mahmood Al Hameed from Syria has learned to speak Swedish very well. And also has a found permanent employment. He recently started working as a treatment assistant at Solgläntan in Väja. A job the manager and co-owner Jenni Edman says he gained for his large flexibility, enthusiasm, humility and nice manners to other people. – On top of that he also speaks both Swedish and Arabic, which is a skill we can use as we have Arabic residents, she says. Jenni Edman says that he also shows other migrants [*nysvenskar*] that commitment and strong will pay off. (–) To just socialize with people from your own country means that you do not get into Swedish society, she says. Through his Swedish friends, he managed to find his own apartment. (Fled from Syria – Found employment after a year) (Örnsköldsviks Allehanda 2015b)

Ebrahim Alshammat, 29, came to Sweden from Syria in February of this year. He already speaks and writes Swedish well and has gotten a certificate as a study leader at ABF. (...). But Ebrahim does not waste time in order to build a future in Sweden. – I want to live a decent life here and I see a good future here together with my family. If

I learn the language we will have a new life, he says and tells about his Swedish studies. – I have studied Swedish here at the library since March, he says nodding his head at Ingrid Wallin, who teaches Swedish to immigrants on a volunteer basis three days a week. (From Syria to Kramfors) (Tidningen Ångermanland 2015a)

Apart from being portrayed as the victims of war and plight, these refugees are also portrayed as role model refugees who have done everything that can be expected of them: learned the language, have (taken the steps towards) employment and have built social networks that include Swedish friendships. This narrative can be understood as a counter narrative to dominant narratives of lazy refugees coming to Sweden to take advantage of social welfare institutions without making an effort on their own. This relates to the economic frame analysed by Dekker and Shoulten (2017) portraying refugees as an economic burden to their new home society. As they also show, the very effort of making sure their skills are valued can also be understood as a way of framing refugees as assets to the local community, not least in their position as potential labour. In this sense, the narrative can be understood as a way of encouraging other refugees to work hard to integrate (Schmauch 2011). The narrative is, however, not primarily oriented towards other refugees but rather to the majority population. While several articles highlight the comparable peace and quiet that refugees experience after arriving in Sweden, some of them are more explicit in constructing Sweden as something to be cherished.

I also want to show that Sweden is a different country than those states that the refugees have left behind. Here, there is freedom and justice. Sweden is the land of opportunity, and it is important to make use of that, says Lufti Elnour. (Makes theatre about dangerous flight) (Tidningen Ångermanland 2015b)

The narrative of reception and integration works here becomes one of integration being possible and even plausible. The emotionality of the work of individual refugees is one of emotional control and not allowing oneself to be crippled by hard circumstances. In this way the emotional context of refugee reception in general, and the emotional response expected of refugees, becomes one where adversities, injustice and exclusion can be understood as a matter of personal failure to work hard enough and being ungrateful in relation to the blessing that is Sweden.

Integrating others through care

The second narrative was identified from stories of volunteer integration work facilitated by NGOs and charitable organizations. The work described entails everything from language cafés and cultural events to the collection of diapers to give to refugee parents under titles such as ‘Students in school collect clothes for refugees’ (Tidningen Ångermanland 2015c), ‘One of the biggest challenges’ (Örnsköldsviks Allehanda 2015c) and ‘Refugees take note in the Babel Choir’ (Tidningen Ångermanland 2015d). As in the previous set of narratives, human interest stories are not uncommon, but instead of focusing on overcome tragedies, focus is on the lifelong commitment and the work conducted.

Her heart also beats for the asylum seekers at Frånö. Each Monday she teaches them Swedish and through Barbro they also get the opportunity to take part in the cultural life of Kramfors. – Although they don’t understand the language I believe they learn a lot by listening to music and watch theatre. (Babelsberg is my second home) (Tidningen Ångermanland 2015e).

- I go to work everyday with a smile on my face. I enjoy helping people, especially refugees, they have so much baggage [*mycket med sig i bagaget*]. It is important to teach them about our society and that they learn the language. And also, they give so much back. (I found my place on earth) (Tidningen Ångermanland 2015f)

Within this set of stories, the role of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) is to exhibit positive values, such as humanity, warmth, commitment and care. Volunteer integration work is described within the frame of close encounters, charity and/or caring for others. Several of the articles also stress the rewards of volunteering, not least the amount of fun. In comparison to the narrative presented above, the personal commitment described here is one of altruism rather than self-interest. While individual goal orientation is often described as a goal in itself in western societies, the leisure volunteering described here is surrounded by an air of selflessness that is seen as morally superior. While the morality of the frame is, as d'Haenens and Lange (2001) argue, left implicit in most articles, it is still clear that the work conducted by civil society is framed as being a desirable code of behaviour. Furthermore, the emotionality of the work is explicit.

The meeting starts with a Swedish lesson until the coffee break. After that, some work with textile crafts, while others continue to practice their skills in the Swedish language. [...] The atmosphere is high, and the joy is noticeable among the participants who talk, gesture and laugh. (Women helping women in TorpsHAMMAR) (Sundsvalls Tidning 2016a)

In this set of narratives, integration is achieved as a result of well-meaning (men and) women who selflessly give to those in need. This has two main implications. On the one hand those who are given refuge in Sweden owe their (possibility of) integration to the selflessness of those volunteers and can, as a consequence, be expected to show gratitude. Viewing this in the context of discourses about how costly immigration is to the Swedish welfare state, which gained momentum after 2015, makes this point even clearer. On the other hand, government institutions cannot be expected to make these services available, as they are based on the individual commitment of volunteers. As mentioned earlier, the integration of refugees and immigrants has since the late nineties been a separate policy field, thus indicating that the provision of welfare services to these groups can be negotiated.

Benevolent governance

Professional reception and integration workers are mainly portrayed as representatives of the state and/or municipality, holding positions such as asylum and/or integration coordinators, managers with the Migration Board and placement case workers (e.g., those who deal with cases of unaccompanied minors). The work is described in articles with titles such as 'Kramfors is the best at reception' (Tidningen Ångermanland 2017), 'Five new refugee accommodations on the way' (Tidningen Ångermanland 2015g), 'Refugees are moved – accommodations close' (Sundsvalls Tidning 2016b), 'The pressure of asylum creates lines in dental care' (Örnsköldsviks Allehanda 2016b) and 'The municipality contributes to integration' (Sundsvalls Tidning 2017). The articles change over the time studied. While early articles focus on finding accommodation, the later ones concern the closing down of services, such as accommodation, Swedish classes and child care services.

Local integration work and policies are described in terms of everyday administrative processes, more so than political decisions or general policy. A striking finding is the absence of narratives that describe the everyday encounters between professional reception and

integration workers and the refugees/migrants themselves. Instead the work is described as being conducted by professionals from different levels in/of government organizations.

The Asylum seeker teams have as their job to have health talks at asylum accommodations that are located far from health services. As a District Nurse for many years she has a lot of routine and, above all, a lot of heart for the work. – I know the job of asylum nurse and my job is to allocate regional resources where they are most needed. The first of March the recruitment process will start – we will advertise for health staff. I am currently not sure how many we will need, says Anna Öhman (takes the job as the regions new Asylum seekers coordinator) (Sundsvalls Tidning 2016c)

Overall, different levels of government, as well as the welfare state as such, are described in positive terms. Its professionals are considered civil servants who act professionally, not only because it is their job to do so but also because they feel the work is important in itself. In several articles, public officials describe their work as limited by external circumstances over which they have little control.

There have been a lot of emotions, both children and parents have connected to the staff, and the families have developed their Swedish language skills enormously. We feel that we have made a large, and well needed, contribution. We are proud of that. It is with a heavy heart that we close down, but there is no other option, says Kicki Johansson, manager for the eastern district (Open pre-schools close their facilities) (Sundsvalls Tidning 2016d)

While discourses of the benefits of refugee reception in economic terms is not uncommon in national media, the articles in our sample show how professionals put significant effort into making it possible for refugees to stay within the municipality and fulfil its need for employable staff and taxpayers (see also Stenbacka 2013). Despite the small size of the local labour market, strategic efforts for employing refugees by offering specialised language training or teaching skills for working in elderly care are mentioned.

Framing integration as a local need that municipality officials work hard to achieve further enhances the narrative of how much commitment the local population put into the integration of refugees into their communities. Furthermore, it shows that the work is conducted in a systematic and rational manner and that the results in relation to issues, such as accommodation and social services, is the best to be achieved. As the support for policies that further limit the possibilities for immigration and the resources spent on integration grows, this finding is maybe not surprising.

Conclusions

The overall aim of this article is to explore the narratives describing refugee reception and integration work in the local newspapers of two rural municipalities in Sweden. In the first narrative, integration work is described as being conducted by individual refugees in order to achieve integration for themselves and/or their families. Here integration is something that is achievable through commitment and dedication. In the narrative around volunteer work, integration work is described as morally desirable, fun and conducted by (Swedish) people who are personally and selflessly committed to the happiness and possibilities of refugees. The narrative of governance work is, in a similar way, described as conducted by committed people who have the interest of refugees and the local community at heart.

The storylines behind the two latter narratives positions the emotional work of commitment and care between individuals as a part of the voluntary work, in contrast to the

detached administrative work of municipal officials that has turned integration into a bureaucratic practice without clear actors. These two narratives also stand in contrast to the idea that integration is achieved through a single role-model migrant, which is strong in the narratives of the heroism of individual refugees. Comparing our result with the master-frames identified by previous studies, it seems that local media outlets in rural municipalities conform to the managerialist and human-interest frames with their focuses on benevolent governance and integration through care (cf. Dekker & Scholten 2017), while the threat frame is rather absent. This should be viewed in relation to the fact that the municipalities studied are small and often desperate to find new inhabitants in order to survive financially.

At the national level, media representations of integration work rarely portray everyday encounters between workers and refugees; rather, the media raises issues regarding the humanistic values, or lack thereof, in Swedish refugee policies and debates the perceived traditionalistic and undemocratic cultural value systems of refugees and the cost versus benefits of immigration often in a de-personalized way. In local media narratives, the Swedes involved in integration work, either professionally or as volunteers, do so because they are committed to doing a good job because they genuinely care about refugees and their integration. Such narratives describe actual individuals engaging in everyday activities, such as singing in a choir or working at a daycare centre. Similar to d'Haenens and de Lange (2001), analysis of refugee coverage in regional Dutch newspapers found the human interest frame to be the frame most commonly used we see, if we understand both *taking responsibility for one's integration* and *integrating others through care* as narratives of integration produced by a human interest frame.

The answer to the question raised by Chouliaraki and Zabrowski (2017) about how refugees speak in the news is that they do so to a much smaller extent than the officials and volunteers. Our results are similar to the results of their study in terms of refugees being silenced, collectivised and decontextualized, and it highlights the additional problem that issues of integration are being narrated in the local media by very specific, most often non-refugee, voices. Rather, refugees themselves function as a backdrop for the narrative; though they occupy the centre of the work described, they are relegated to the margins of the stories. This might also have implications for the type of integration work conducted, intertwining narratives with practices.

What the narratives identified here have in common is the thread of commitment that drives through them all—either for personal gain, for that of others or for the good of the community (and refugees themselves). This implies, as indicated above, that integration work is portrayed as work with a high level of social support, that several instances put effort, time and heart into. While we, of course, are not implying that those involved in the work lack commitment, we argue that the frame of commitment itself needs to be viewed in relation to the growing public support for limiting the resources available for this kind of work, as well as for the limitations for refugees to enter Sweden in the first place.

Competing Interests

The authors have no competing interests to declare.

References

- Abiri, E.** 2000. The changing praxis of “generosity”: Swedish refugee policy during the 1990s. *Journal of Refugee Studies*, 13(1): 11–28. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1093/jrs/13.1.11>
- Ahmed, S.** 2004. *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*. New York, NY: EUP.
- Ahmed, S.** 2012. *On being included: Racism and diversity in institutional life*. Durham, NC: DUP. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1215/9780822395324>

- Ålund, A** and **Schierup, C.** 1991. *Paradoxes of Multiculturalism: Essays on Swedish society.* Aldershot: Avebury.
- Andersson, R.** 2016. Flyktingmottagandets geografi. In: Andersson, R et al. (eds.), *Mångfaldens dilemman.* Malmö: Gleerups. pp. 39–73.
- Bolin, N, Lidén, G** and **Nyhlén, J.** 2014. Do Anti-immigration Parties Matter? The Case of the Sweden Democrats & Local Refugee Policy. *Scandinavian Political Studies*, 37(3): 323–343. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9477.12031>
- Braun, V** and **Clarke, V.** 2012. Thematic analysis. In: Cooper, H et al. (eds.), *APA handbooks in psychology. APA handbook of research methods in psychology, Vol. 2. Research designs: Quantitative, qualitative, neuropsychological, and biological.* pp. 57–71. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1037/13620-004>
- Chouliaraki, L** and **Zabrowski, RR.** 2017. Voice and community in the 2015 refugee crisis: A content analysis of news coverage in eight European countries. *The International Communication Gazette*, 79(6–7): 613–635. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1177/1748048517727173>
- d’Haenens, L** and **de Lange, M.** 2001. Framing asylum seekers in Dutch Regional Newspapers. *Media, Culture and Society*, 23: 847–60. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1177/016344301023006009>
- Dahlstedt, M.** 2009. *Aktiveringens politik: Demokrati och medborgarskap för ett nytt millennium.* Malmö: Liber.
- Dekker, R** and **Scholten, P.** 2017. Framing the Immigration Policy Agenda: A qualitative Comparative Analysis of Media effects on Dutch Immigration Policies. *The International Journal of Press/Politics*, 22(2): 202–222. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1177/1940161216688323>
- Eastmond, M.** 2010. Egalitarian Ambitions, Constructions of Difference: The Paradoxes of Refugee Integration in Sweden. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 37(2): 277–295. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369183X.2010.521323>
- Hall, S.** 1997. *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices.* London: SAGE.
- Johansson, L.** 2011. Glesbygden – första stopp för flyktingar. *Välfärd*, 2011(4): 18–19.
- Lidén, G** and **Nyhlén, J.** 2014. Reception of Refugees in Swedish Municipalities: Evidences from Comparative Case. *Migration and Development*, 4(1): 55–71. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/21632324.2014.894178>
- Lidén, G, Nyhlén, J** and **Nyhlén, S.** 2015. Forced cooperation from above: The case of Sweden’s Establishment reform. *Policy Studies*, 36(5): 468–486. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/01442872.2015.1089983>
- Peterson, A, Thörn, H** and **Wahlström, M.** 2017. Sweden 1950–2015: Contentious Politics and Social Movements between Confrontation and Conditioned Cooperation. In: Mikkelsen, F et al. (eds.), *Popular Struggle and Democracy in Scandinavia: 1700–Present.* London: Palgrave Macmillan UK. pp. 377–432. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1057/978-1-137-57855-6_13
- Prop. 2015/16:54.** 2015. *Ett gemensamt ansvar för mottagande av nyanlända.* Stockholm: Riksdagens Tryckeri.
- Riessman, CK.** 2005. Narrative Analysis. In: Kelly, N et al. (eds.), *Narrative, Memory & Everyday Life.* Huddersfield, UK: University of Huddersfield. p. 17.
- Riksrevisionen.** 2014. *Nyanländ i Sverige – Effektiva insatser för ett snabbt mottagande.* Stockholm: Riksrevisionen.
- Schmauch, U.** 2011. Working hard to integrate – the role of gender in integration discourse. In: Fahlgren, S et al. (eds.), *Normalization and ‘Outsiderhood’.* Bentham’s eBooks. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.2174/978160805279011101010049>
- SFS.** 2016:38. 2016. *Lag om mottagande av vissa nyanlända invandrare för bosättning.*

- Stenbacka, S.** 2013. International Migration and Resilience – rural introductory spaces and refugee immigration as a resource. In: Tamásy, C et al. (eds.), *Regional Resilience, Economy and Society: Globalising Rural Places*. London: Routledge.
- Valenta, M and Bunar, N.** 2010. State Assisted Integration: Refugee Integration Policies in Scandinavian Welfare States: The Swedish and Norwegian Experience. *Journal of Refugee Studies*, 23(4): 463–483. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1093/jrs/feq028>
- Vliegthart, R and Roggeband, C.** 2007. Framing Immigration and Integration Relationships between Press and Parliament in the Netherlands. *International Communication Gazette*, 69(3): 259–319. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1177/1748048507076582>
- Wennström, J and Öner, O.** 2015. Den geografiska spridningen av kommunplacerade flyktingar i Sverige. *Ekonomisk Debatt*, 43(4): 52–68.

News articles

- Örnsköldsviks Allehanda.** 2015a. Karen- lyftet för Byströms företag. *Örnsköldsviks Allehanda*, October 7.
- Örnsköldsviks Allehanda.** 2015b. Flydde från Syrien – fick jobb efter ett år. *Örnsköldsviks Allehanda*, October 6.
- Örnsköldsviks Allehanda.** 2015c. En av de största utmaningarna. *Örnsköldsviks Allehanda*, April 24.
- Örnsköldsviks Allehanda.** 2016a. Efter tre år har familjen mötts igen. *Örnsköldsviks Allehanda*, March 26.
- Örnsköldsviks Allehanda.** 2016b. Asyltrycket skapar köer i tandvården. *Örnsköldsviks Allehanda*, April 18.
- Sundsvalls Tidning.** 2016a. Kvinnor hjälper kvinnor i Torpshammar. *Sundsvalls Tidning*, 12 December.
- Sundsvalls Tidning.** 2016b. Flyktingar flyttas-boenden stängs. *Sundsvalls Tidning*, 20 December.
- Sundsvalls Tidning.** 2016c. Tar jobb som länets nya asylsambordnare. *Sundsvalls Tidning*, 25 February.
- Sundsvalls Tidning.** 2016d. Öppna förskolorna stänger sina lokaler. *Sundsvalls Tidning*, 5 December.
- Sundsvalls Tidning.** 2017. Kommunen bidrar till integration. *Sundsvalls Tidning*, March 31.
- Tidningen Ångermanland.** 2015a. Från Syrien till Kramfors. *Ångermanland*, September 11.
- Tidningen Ångermanland.** 2015b. Spelar teater om farlig flykt. *Ångermanland*, May 21.
- Tidningen Ångermanland.** 2015c. Skolelever samlar in kläder till flyktingar. *Ångermanland*, October 17.
- Tidningen Ångermanland.** 2015d. Flyktingar tar ton i Babelskören. *Ångermanland*, October 16.
- Tidningen Ångermanland.** 2015e. Babelsberg är mitt andra hem. *Ångermanland*, February 27.
- Tidningen Ångermanland.** 2015f. Jag har hittat min plats på jorden. *Ångermanland*, March 9.
- Tidningen Ångermanland.** 2015g. Fem nya flyktingboenden på gång. *Ångermanland*, October 19.
- Tidningen Ångermanland.** 2016a. Hans familj är kvar i Syrien. *Ångermanland*, July 11.
- Tidningen Ångermanland.** 2016b. Peymans långa resa från krig och oro. *Ångermanland*, January 22.
- Tidningen Ångermanland.** 2017. Kramfors är bäst på mottagande. *Ångermanland*, July 12.

How to cite this article: Schmauch, U and Nygren, KG. 2020. Committed to Integration: Local Media Representations of Refugee Integration Work in Northern Sweden. *Nordic Journal of Migration Research*, 10(3), pp. 15–26. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.33134/njmr.326>

Submitted: 21 April 2020 **Accepted:** 21 April 2020 **Published:** 27 August 2020

Copyright: © 2020 The Author(s). This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC-BY 4.0), which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author and source are credited. See <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>.