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The current political discourse with regards to migrants and the impact that this has on social work

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Abstract

Social workers are finding it hard to work in an environment where politics influence the work they do especially with Migrants. Recent electoral research demonstrating that recent general elections in most European countries have been decided based on which party's voters expect to deliver the highest standards of restrictive immigration policy. The aim of the study was to contribute to research on analysing and understanding the impact that the current political discourse with regards to migrants has on social work practice with this population group. The following research questions were devised in order to explore the impact that the current political discourse has on social work practice with migrants: 1. What is the current political discourse with regards to migrants?; 2. What influence does the current political discourse on migrants have on social work practice?; 3. When working with migrants, are social workers able to work in line with the values and ethics of the profession under the current political discourse?

The study adopted case study research design and purposive sampling was used to identify social workers from various agencies in Aalborg City. The study used primary data to gather the required information from respondents using a semi-structured interview guide, the data was analysed using thematic method. The study found out that there is a negative political discourse regarding migrants in Denmark; creates the notion of 'us versus them', erosion of Danish culture, waste of resources, media

domination. The study concludes that that social workers should address specific needs of minorities such as migrants, researchers need to rethink the foundation of welfare state from the perspective of migration and diversity as cultural diversity, Integration of migrants can only succeed if discrimination and devaluation of what Danes consider non-European is addressed through multicultural policies on a National level. The study recommends that Social workers need to start challenging the existing unjust policies being implemented by government when it comes to social assistance given to migrants. Going forward, focus needs to be on improving best practices when working with migrants and other marginalized groups

Keywords: political discourse, migrants, social work, Denmark, refugees, Europe.

1. Description of the problem

1.1. European migration overview

Migration has been labelled a crisis by the European Union. A report by European Union Parliament in 2017 indicated that more than 2.5 million people applied for asylum in the European Union in 2015 and 2016, this being the highest number since World War II (European Parliament 2017). Illegal crossings have been made by 2.3 million of these asylum seekers, exposing shortcomings in the European migration system (European Parliament 2017). In order to combat this, the European Union Parliament reformed the European Union asylum rules, such as the distribution of asylum seekers among European Union countries, as well as strengthening European Union border controls (European Parliament 2017).

There is a tendency for the majority of European Union states to view the current phenomenon of migration as a threat to the sovereignty of their national and regional borders,

their economies and their societies (Metcalf-Hough 2015), particularly within the anti-migration political discourse of the right-wing (Erlanger 2015). Since the more recently defined crisis, there has been an increase in member states reacting with a tightening of controls on irregular access to their territories and in some cases restriction has been seen with legal channels (Metcalf-Hough 2015). Coupled with this, migration has been placed high on the political agenda owing to the importance assigned to it by voters. It has therefore become a pressing issue for political parties in European countries, and in response new radical right-wing parties who oppose migration have emerged (Metcalf-Hough 2015). The influx of labour migrants, as well as the pressure to accept refugees and asylum seekers continues to gain prominence across Europe owing to the increase in numbers of this population group. In 2015, the registered number of first-time asylum applications on European Union soil reached 1,255,640, more than double the 562,680 who applied in 2014 (Eurostat, cited in Metcalf-Hough 2015). According to UNHCR, in 2015 more than 80% of people arriving in Europe by sea were from the world's ten top refugee-producing countries. This is the result of countries in conflict or crisis, with over 50% from Syria, 15% from Afghanistan, 6% from Eritrea and 4% from Iraq (EASO 2015). 2017 saw a decrease in asylum seekers, with 645,050 applications (UNHCR 2018). However, migration continues to be labelled a crisis and a prevalent political discourse. Discrimination, racism attacks, Islamophobia, labour exploitation in the job market through structural barriers and xenophobia continues to increase across Europe (ENAR 2016; Dahlste-

dt 2016). The European Network Against Racism (ENAR) argues that politicians and far-right movements continue to use this topic to gain popularity through their stand of considering migrants a threat to Europe, and that they should therefore be stopped from entering at all costs (ENAR 2016). Access to social services and benefits in receiving countries is also key on the agenda, fueling the continued emergence of populist and anti-European Union parties in many Member States, thus affecting the stability of the European Union (Hassel and Wagner 2016). This was reflected during the United Nations high-level summit for refugees and migrants and the Leaders' Summit on refugees convened by the United States Obama administration, both in September 2016 (Human Rights Watch 2016). Only 18 out of the 28 European Union member states participated in this important summit, which required European Union commitment to specific target goals to increase humanitarian aid to countries hosting large numbers of refugees and to step up resettlement out of those countries (Human Rights Watch 2016). Although not yet released, it has been suggested that most European Union countries took part based on previous commitments, without any new pledges with regards to resettlement. On the eve of the summits, Denmark announced it was suspending its national resettlement program (Human Rights Watch 2016).

The influx of migrants from the Middle East and Africa to Europe is having multiple effects on different levels, including human and social capital, economic growth, poverty reduction efforts, and environmental sustainability and societal fragility (Zetter and Fiddian-Qasmiyeh 2011). It is

argued that the European Union is in crisis and that the growing number of anti-migrant political parties is transforming historically welcoming European countries into hostile societies where migrants are not welcome (Dahlstedt and Neergaard 2016). Denmark has not escaped the recent wave of racism and xenophobia that has swept over Europe (Wren 2001). A fundamental shift in attitude has been observed since the early 1980s, which could arguably see Denmark emerge as one of the most racist countries in Western Europe (Wren 2001).

1.2. Overview of migration in Denmark

The Nordic region has, for a long time, been a preferred destination for migrants owing to its welfare state which is characterized by universal access, generous benefits, a high degree of public involvement and comparatively high levels of redistribution (Brochmann and Hagelund 2011). Denmark saw a moderate influx of migrants before the 1960s from other Nordic regions and western countries. This increased with new waves of migrants from the former Yugoslavia, Turkey and Pakistan and was further exacerbated with the recent migration crisis with migrants from Middle East and African countries (Brochmann and Hagelund 2011). The Danish government attempted to implement measures to hinder migration from non-Western countries into Denmark in the 1970s. However, this proved futile, largely owing to family reunification and asylum seekers (Brochmann and Hagelund 2011).

In 1980, only 1.7% of the total Danish population was of foreign background. By 2000, this number had increased

to 7.1%, and 12.3% by 2016 (Denmark Statistic 2017). As a result of this, Denmark decided to restrict migration policies over the past ten years (Bendixen 2016). The Danish Government announced in November 2015 34 tightening's to make Denmark less attractive for asylum seekers, with the aim of stopping the influx of migrants (Bendixen 2016). Only one week later the first 13 were already passed with only 23 hours for public comments. 67 anti-immigrant regulations have been passed since 2015 (Mohdin 2018). Among them being the controversial law that forces refugees entering the country to hand over their valuables as compensation for seeking asylum in the country. The law gives police officers the right to search refugees' possessions and seize cash and individual items exceeding 10,000 Danish kroner (Mohdin 2018). These measures put in place by government have contributed to the drastic drop in the number of people granted asylum in Denmark from 85% in 2015 to 36% in 2017 (Refugees.dk 2018).

These restrictive regulations also seek to protect Danish culture from being eroded by ethnic minorities (Andersens et al. 2007). A European Union survey of 12 countries (1988) ranked Denmark as having "the most negative attitude towards its ethnic minorities" (Wren 2001: 148). Discrimination against ethnic minorities is permitted when it is perceived to be in their own interests. By 2001, no law against labour market discrimination or acts of discrimination by government departments and public authorities had been implemented (Wren 2001). The perception of ethnic minorities as a 'problem' now represents the dominant way of thinking among the Danish authorities (Wren 2001). Although laws

have subsequently been passed opposing labour market discrimination (Klingsten 2018), as a result of a strong political stance, xenophobic attitudes continue to gain prominence amongst Danes who feel that the current situation involves something for 'them' paid for by 'us' (Brochmann and Hagelund 2011). This is further exacerbated by politicians continuing to spread Islamophobia through their utterances (Brun and Hersh 2008). There has been growing support of political parties that use xenophobic or racist ideas and policies, with electoral research demonstrating that recent general elections have been decided on the basis of which party's voters expect to deliver the highest standards of restrictive immigration policy (ENAR 2016). Therefore, political parties across the spectrum have adopted cultural racism as an integral part of their political stance, to the extent that it is no longer necessary to have extreme right-wing parties promoting anti-immigration views (Wren 2001).

However, in spite of this seemingly negative political discourse, the contradictions between a liberal immigration policy and the continued existence of the welfare state¹ cannot be ignored. The objective of the welfare state has been to create respectable living conditions for all inhabitants within a national society (Juul 2013). This is done through the promotion of social, health and educational policies, and each citizen being afforded a number of civic, political and social rights (Juul 2013). In a recent analysis from the Danish Ministry of Finance, it was shown that immigration from third

1. A concept of government in which either the state, or a well-established network of social institutions, plays a key role in the protection and promotion of the economic and social well-being of citizens (Encyclopaedia Britannica 2015).

world countries costs the Danish exchequer more than DKK 30 billion (€4bn) a year. This is arguably a loss of public funds which could have otherwise been spent on the welfare state's core activities such as health, education and economic growth (Nedergaard 2017).

The distribution of migrants across Danish municipalities differs, with 20.1% residing in Copenhagen, 7.5% in Aarhus, 4.3% in Odense and 3.1% in Aalborg (Ministry of Immigration and Integration 2016). While some municipalities experienced increases in the share of migrants in the population of well over ten percentage points, others experienced essentially no change at all (Bengtsson et al. 2010). There is evidence of a high-level of political autonomy of Danish municipalities, which makes the Danish setting well-suited for examining the ethnic diversity effects of immigration on political outcomes (Bengtsson et al. 2010). For the purpose of this study, this allows for the exploration of the impact that the political discourse with regards to migrants has on social work practice in Aalborg municipality.

1.3. Significance and aim of the study

The study aims to contribute to research on analysing and understanding the impact that the current political discourse with regards to migrants has on social work practice with this population group. We would like to identify the challenges that social workers face when working with migrants, in order to allow social workers the opportunity to critically reflect on the current political discourse, and the resultant power relations on a macro, meso and micro level, as well as the potential impact that it has on daily social work practice.

Social work with migrants is an emerging field of practice which focuses on helping and guiding them to navigate and cope with the difficulties faced as they settle in a new country. However, sometimes the role of the social worker is characterized by control, rather than an attempt to empower or help (Ylvisaker 2013). Thus, social workers are seen to be helping migrants as well as hindering them in coping with life (Ylvisaker 2013). In Denmark, social welfare is provided by the state, therefore social workers possess power in terms of managing different resources, as well as power to accept or reject service users definitions of their own needs and wishes. Danish social workers serve under government policies set by the ruling party (Juhila et al. 2010), therefore the aim of our study is to see whether this impacts on the work they do and whether they can work in line with the ethics and values of the profession. Social workers have been disciplined by political regimes, budgetary cutbacks, market demands and media stereotyping. Social workers are, in more respects than not, members of the established and privileged strata of society (Juhila et al. 2010). It follows that they therefore can be implicated in different forms of injustice and violations of others. Hence, there is a continuous need to reflexively engage with one's own position in relation to structures and dynamics of injustice of which one may not be aware of (Hölscher and Bozalek 2012). We believe the findings of the study will help social workers to better understand the migration phenomena in order to be more prepared to work with this population in accordance with the professional values and ethics. An understanding of this subject will help professionals in developing better competences to better execute their mandate

with this population group with an understanding of the nation's political values and priorities.

1.4. Research Questions

The following research questions were devised in order to explore the impact that the current political discourse has on social work practice with migrants:

1. What is the current political discourse with regards to migrants?;
2. What influence does the current political discourse on migrants have on social work practice?;
3. When working with migrants, are social workers able to work in line with the values and ethics of the profession under the current political discourse?

1.5. Clarification of Terms

Migrant: The term migrant describes the wide range of people on the move; it is intended as an inclusive rather than an exclusive term. A migrant may also be an asylum seeker or refugee. An asylum seeker is someone who has or intends to apply for international protection in a country other than her own. A refugee is a person who has a well-founded fear of persecution in her country of origin. A migrant who has crossed international borders without a need for international protection may, following a fair procedure in which their individual circumstances have been assessed and their rights have been guaranteed, be returned involuntarily to their country of origin if this return can be done in a safe and dignified manner. All persons, regardless of status, have inalienable human rights (Human Rights Watch 2016).

According to UNESCO 2017, “any person who lives temporarily or permanently in a country where he or she was not born and has acquired some significant social ties to this country”. For the purpose of our study this will include second and third generation migrants.

Political Discourse: “Political discourse is about the text and talk of professional politicians or political institutions, such as presidents and prime ministers and other members of government, parliament or political parties, both at the local, national and international levels” (Van Dijk 1997: 12). For the purpose of this study, the political discourse refers to the current political statement by political institutions and professional politicians, legislations and policies and therefore what is being communicated to Danish citizens by politicians about migrants.

Social Work: “Social work is a practice-based profession and an academic discipline that promotes social change and development, social cohesion, and the empowerment and liberation of people. Principles of social justice, human rights, collective responsibility and respect for diversities are central to social work” (IFSW 2014).

Ethics: Specify the rules of conduct to which members must adhere to remain in good standing within a professional organization. According to Foucault, ethics refers to how people behave in relation to ‘moral’ norms - understood as the sets of rules, prohibitions and codes of a society. It also refers to and presumes a necessary continuity between and across a set of discourses, narratives and practices (Schirato et al. 2012).

Values: Strong beliefs about how the world should be and how people should normally behave and about preferences

over conditions of life. All professions have value preferences that give purpose and direction. Professional values, however, are not separate from societal values. Social work values include social justice, dignity and worth of the individual, importance of human relationships, integrity and the provision competent services (Dinneka 2015).

2. Methodology

2.1. Sample

The notion behind sampling theory is that by making use of a small set of observations, one is able to get an idea of what to expect from the total population of the proposed study (De Vos et al. 2011). For qualitative research, sample size depends on what the researcher wants to know, and what can be accomplished in the allocated time that will be credible and useful (De Vos et al. 2011).

By adopting a purposive sampling technique, we made use of eleven professionals from different entities of Aalborg Kommune where the specific analysing processes of their practice with migrants and the impact that the current political discourse has on this could take place, which is the chosen interest of this study. We selected the professionals as mentioned based on their relevant work experience with migrants which could contribute to our study. This form of sampling is often used in qualitative research and it is the responsibility of the researcher to ensure that the respondents selected will inform an understanding of the research problem of the study (De Vos et al. 2011). Our first point of contact was with six social workers with whom we interacted during our field visit in March. A letter of permission (Appendix A) was

sent by us to the selected key informants. Some declined to participate as they felt that they could not contribute owing to the fact that they did not work with migrants. However, they did refer us to other professional social workers with vast experience of working with this population group and from other institutions within Aalborg Kommune. Our research interviews ended with seven individual interviews and one focus group with four professionals. These were from the Center for Interdisciplinary Prevention, which included various youth centers and outreach work, a representative from the Danish Social Work Association and two representatives from the Aalborg Job Center. The informants were both male and female, from different age categories and with varied years of work experience ranging from one to thirty-two years.

2.2. Gatekeepers and problems in getting access to the field

When designing the initial proposal of our study, we planned to interview individuals from the migrant community in Aalborg in order to ascertain their views on the current political discourse, as well as how they are treated by social workers and representatives of the state. Access to the migrant population, which we attempted to obtain through the social workers we interviewed as well as a refugee camp, was denied. Upon reflection, this was beneficial as we realised that trying to focus on both the social work profession as well as the perspective from migrants was too big a focus for our study. This was further confirmed by a meeting with the course co-ordinator and our colleagues who had the same feedback. In order to capture the position from the side of politics, we requested an interview with a senior politician

in Aalborg. However, it was deemed irrelevant owing to the feedback from our colleagues and further clarification of the focus of our study. Although we had met with him during our field visit, we did not receive a response to our interview request and decided not to pursue this further.

In order to conduct the focus group, the manager of the center was contacted who informed the organisation's staff of the study, and once the information had been received they volunteered their services.

2.3. Reliability and Validity

Reliability refers to the “consistency, stability and repeatability of results” (Twycross and Shields 2004: 36). Therefore, if consistent results are obtained in different circumstances, the research is considered reliable (Twycross and Shields 2004). Our results were obtained from centers where professionals were working in different settings with varied categories of migrants and common results were achieved with regards to the focus of the research.

Validity is the “extent to which any measuring instrument measures what it is intended to measure” (Thatcher 2010: 125), therefore impacting the credibility of the study. In order to ensure the validity of our study we informed the social workers about the topic, and they were asked the same core questions, with some extra questions depending on the profile of the key informant. Given that the first language of the informants was not English, the design of the research questions were kept simple in order to facilitate understanding. The key terms of our research are political discourse, migrants and social work practice. Therefore, we provided

an explanation of these terms to our informants for common understanding, when asking a question related to the term (See Appendix B).

Analytical generalisation compares the results of a case study to a previously developed theory (Yin 2013). It involves making projections about the likely transferability of findings from a study, based on a theoretical analysis of outcomes and context. Case studies can be generalized to a theoretical proposition, instead of populations, therefore the goal is to expand and generalize theories (Yin 2013). By using analytical generalisation in our study, we followed the two-step process proposed by Yin (2013). The first step was that we show how our case study findings (see Findings) with regards to the impact that the political discourse about migrants has on social work practice bear upon Foucault's theory about governmentality and disciplinary power. The second step in our analytical generalization will be reflected in our conclusion and perspective part of this report. Here we will discuss how Foucault's selected theory can be applied to other situations in which similar circumstances may arise concerning the effect the political discourse with regards to migrants has on social work practice.

2.4. Limitations

Limitations are influences that the researcher cannot control. They are the shortcomings or conditions that influence the interpretation of the findings from the research (Price and Murnan 2013). Limitations place restrictions on the methodology and conclusions (Simon 2011) and include constraints on generalizability, application to practice and the value of the findings (Price and Murnan 2013).

De Vos et al. (2011) describe a limitation of one-on-one interviews to be the respondent being unwilling to share information openly and not always understanding the questions. In order to prevent this from occurring, we attempted to ensure that all informants felt comfortable. This was done by informing all about confidentiality, the option to disclose information or not, and time to ask questions before, after and during the interview. The intention of the usage of the information received from them was disclosed.

2.5. Data Collection Methods

When collecting data, it is the responsibility of the researcher to determine the most effective method in terms of the purpose of their research (De Vos et al. 2011). Interviewing is the predominant method used for data collection for qualitative research (De Vos et al. 2011). For the purpose of this study, face-to-face and Skype semi-structured interviews (Appendix B) were used to gather the information, as well as one focus group discussion. We made use of a Skype interview owing to the availability of the informant. The semi-structured interviews used were deemed the most appropriate for exploration of the topic because of the complexity of our key terms and therefore the risk of straying from the original focus, as well as the difficulty that could arise from commenting on this topic as a professional. The semi-structured interviews were designed based on our three research questions.

Direct interchange occurred not only through verbal communication, but also through observation of the body language of our informants. Through this we were able to confirm the consistency of their responses both verbally and non-verbal-

ly, through nodding and eye contact. In some other cases we noted a difference between their answers and their tense behaviour expressed by non-verbal communication such as facial expressions and hand gestures. When noting this, it was important for us to be impartial and trying to ensure that the informant felt comfortable. Most of the informants appeared to be conversant with the subject and gave detailed explanations on each question which informed our findings. In order to collect our data, we made use of a recorder, a phone and a laptop. We asked each informant for permission to record the interview before we started the process, and in all cases the answer was positive. Using these tools helped us to analyse our data as we were able to follow all the points from our interviews. If a misunderstanding occurred between the members of the research group we could go back for future reference and clarification in order to make a common decision.

2.6. Ethics

Research ethics has well established rules and guidelines that defines their conduct. Research ethics requires that researchers should protect the dignity of their subjects and endeavour to present reliable and valid findings (Fouka and Mantzourou 2011). Ethical issues are inevitable and intricate as it needs to be ensured that data is not gathered at the expense of the respondent (De Vos et al. 2011). Therefore, for the protection of the informant, it is important that the researcher takes all aspects of the research into consideration.

Voluntary participation is an important ethical consideration as participation by the informants should always be voluntary and no one should be forced to participate in the

research (De Vos et al. 2011). The focus of the study was made clear when each individual's participation was requested, consent was obtained from each informant, and none were coerced into participating in the study.

Confidentiality with regards to the handling of the information received from the respondents is imperative (De Vos et al. 2011). When conducting the interviews for this study, confidentiality was agreed upon between us and the informants as to who will have access to the information. All informants will remain anonymous as their names will not be linked to the information that is presented. All interviews were recorded solely for the purpose of ensuring accuracy of the transcription of their responses, which was communicated at the start of each interview.

When we conducted our qualitative research, we were directly involved in interacting with the informants in their own setting, such as the youth centers where they work. Reflexivity requires us to be aware of our own biases and feelings prior to entering the research field and understanding how this may influence or impact on the research process (De Vos et al. 2011). This needed to be considered in order to strive for objectivity in the study by avoiding our own bias with regards to the current political discourse about migrants.

3. Theory

Foucault gave a number of different definitions of power throughout his writings and has been critiqued by a number of academics for his lack of coherence and consistency in his work. However, for the relevance of our study, we have made use of Foucault's understandings of disciplinary power

and governmentality, which will be defined throughout this report. For Foucault power is not possessed by individuals or groups, nor is it a concrete thing, power is everywhere and comes from everywhere (Foucault 1998). Power is constructed by a complex flow and relations between various groups and areas of society as all social relations are relations of power, and these change with both circumstance and time. When discussing power relations, the subject is the human and the power surrounding each individual (Foucault 1982). Foucault believes that power is not solely negative in terms of attempting to repress or control people, but rather that it can be productive. Power produces what we are and what we can do, and influences or determines how we see ourselves and the world. (Schirato et al. 2012). The way in which one relates to oneself is determined by the relationship between the subject's interaction with itself and with others (Sorensen 2014). Power is a productive force that makes it possible to understand and relate to ourselves, others and the world around us (Sorensen 2014), it is an active force which shapes the possibilities of our lives (Thanasilangkul 2015). Any relation of power can be resisted, if only because it necessarily constitutes and reproduces, in that relationship, oppositional categories, dispositions and forces (Schirato et al. 2012). The working of power can be looked at through the notion of disciplinary power relations, which will be adopted for the focus of this study. Disciplinary power relations make use of normalisation through the standard (Sorensen 2014). Foucault argues that people are guided and acted upon to become specific human beings, termed subjectification (Foucault 1982). As subjects, humans are guided by broadly defined

ideas of how humans should behave, the ‘truths’ of society (Foucault 1982). Foucault believes that power occurs within all social interaction and relations, that as soon as two or more people come into contact, a power relation exists and power is at play. Therefore, power can be found in everyday interactions. As soon as a social interaction occurs, there is a framework or a system of behaviour designed to prescribe what should be done (de Lagasnerie 2015). Therefore, power is about encouraging people to accept certain normative ideas about themselves. These truths are accepted at a given point in time because there is a deficit of opposition to this truth (Foucault 1982). Through this understanding of power, a positive ideal of existence is created which rewards all conformers, but in turn punishes those who do not conform, those who are not understood in the given social context (Sorensen 2014). The result of this is often the creation of an environment of ‘us versus them’, those who are able to conform to the norm of society and those who are not.

Foucault emphasizes that power does not completely do away with the freedom of the subject. Rather, that “where there is power, there is resistance” (Sorensen 2014). All individuals are involved in the framework defined by society and try to resist and carve out some freedom for themselves (de Lagasnerie 2015). Humans are not wholly passive bodies over which power is exercised, but rather humans react and take imperative and transform it in more or less conforming ways (Sorensen 2014). The technologies of power and government have shifted and intensified since Foucault’s understanding of power emerged, but so have the tactics to resist (Bagelman 2015). Freedom, which lies in the resistance to

power relations is a necessary condition which results in the individual speaking in the name of power, reproducing and strengthening the norm, making the individual both the target and vehicle of power (Sorensen 2014). Therefore, power re-emerges socially when individual subjects act in order to 'normalise' themselves within the structures of power (Bilgic 2013). Consequently, individuals make use of their freedom in certain way, which in turn makes it easier for those who wish to govern them. The adoption of disciplinary power allows for governmentality; the governing of people's conduct through positive means, in which the willing participation of the governed occurs (Huff 2018), as power exists by enabling free individuals to act in a certain way (Bilgic 2013).

Governmentality, as outlined by Foucault, describes a particular way of managing populations and resources in modern society in connection with the mentality of the population which is dictated through societal norms and culture. The emphasis is on the ability of the state to manage its resources efficiently and economically to increase state intervention with regards to the lives of citizens. A result of this is citizens being regulated by the State, its institutions and discourses, as well as educated in order to be able to control their own behaviour, in order to allow a process of self-governing (Schirato et al. 2012).

When analysing power relations from a disciplinary perspective, analysis needs to start at the point of application, considering how social norms and subsequent ways of punishment have shaped society (Sorensen 2014). Instead of focusing on political and rational agency, one is to look into the settings that made present power relations possible, that

in order to apply the notion of governmentality, a horizontal approach to governing needs to be adopted to gain an understanding of underlying relationships (Huff 2018). Therefore, one needs to look at the origin in the complex set of relationships which often comes from below, circulating amongst individuals without juridical or institutional power. Rather, what seems to be the case is that the people with power, utilise the appeared normalisation practices (Sorensen 2014), with its ultimate concern being how we govern others and ourselves, and a subtler concern being how to influence the direction of the conduct of the governed (Huff 2018), to best make use of the freedom of the individual. A result of this is that humans, their time and energy become an area of extraction and exploitation (Sorensen 2014).

4. Findings and Analysis

In this chapter we are going to discuss and represent the findings from our study on the impact of the political discourse with migrants on social work practice. After collecting our research data and taking into consideration Foucault's concept of governmentality and disciplinary power, we organised our findings into four main themes, namely: othering, culture, resources, and media. Within these four themes we will answer the three research questions outlined, this will be done by organising our themes with the following structure: the definition of the theme with regards to the current political discourse will be described with an explanation of related concepts, this will be connected to selected Foucault's theory and supported by quotes from our interviews. The impact that the current political discourse has on social work practi-

ce will be discussed, including the ability of social workers to work in line with the values of the profession.

4.1. Us versus them - Othering

Foucault describes governmentality as the notion that government can make individuals behave and think in certain ways, that the Government can shape the way people think (Nielsen 2018). As described in the quotations below, what was evident in our findings is that the current political discourse in Denmark creates the notion of ‘the other’,² and therefore the idea of ‘us versus them’ is emphasized (Schirato et al. 2012).

Every election, migrants are one of the big topics. Last election, they were fighting about new policies to make it harder and harder for migrants “not doing good”. It’s been like this for the last 10-12 years. There is always a picture of immigrants, the ‘wrong ones’/the few who are difficult, politicians take these individual cases and generalise it to all immigrants, they then construct new policies around this. (Informant 3)

Foucault’s ‘otherness’ is central to social work since it helps to analyse how the majority and minority identities are constructed in a given society because the representation of different groups is controlled by groups that have greater political

2. Othering is a process that goes beyond ‘mere’ scapegoating and denigration – it denies the Other those defining characteristics of the ‘Same’, reason, dignity, love, pride, heroism, nobility, and ultimately any entitlement to human rights. Whether the Other is a racial or a religious group, a gender group, a sexual minority or a nation, it is made rife for exploitation, oppression and indeed genocide by denying its essential humanity, because, as the philosopher Richard Rorty put it, “everything turns on who counts as a fellow human being, as a rational agent in the only relevant sense – the sense in which rational agency is synonymous with membership of our moral community” (Rorty 1993: 124).

power (Zuleyka 2011). Foucault describes how power in turn creates the 'Other' and establishes a divide between what is a part of society and what is not. The building of this divide can be done physically, mentally or disciplinarily, and entails creating the divide through the shaping of people's mindset (de Lagasnerie 2015). According to the operation of power by Foucault and looking at the migrant situation in Denmark, we can see this division mentioned above. Even if migrants are physically integrated within the city center of Aalborg, instead of isolated within their own neighbourhoods, the dominant norm of the 'Other' has already been established through the current political discourse. Thus, creating a divide and exclusion based on the difference between "us" and "them". To understand this further, we will show from our interviews the ways in which the identities of Danish population is reflected and related to the national values. In contrast with this construction of Danish identity, from our interviews, the perception among the Danish society about migrants could be interpreted through the othering process proposed by Foucault. Politicians continue to promote the notion of 'us' vs 'them' thus reinforcing the power relations between the two groups.

They (politicians) talk about what we should be afraid of, they focus on what is different about migrants from Danish values, therefore we need to make laws to ensure that their values aren't imposed on us. It's very "us and them" from some political parties. (Focus group)

This preferential treatment is also visible amongst different groups of migrants in Denmark such as those from Europe.

EU citizens are mainly treated as Danish citizens. If you're not from the EU or a refugee, then you don't really get anything. There are some exceptions, such as spouses of refugees are entitled to some funds. It's more the residency permit that is a problem. If you can get

a residency permit, you can have economic funds. People here on a green card aren't entitled to anything really, just a very small family allowance which doesn't go very far. (Informant 2)

The othering process has implications for social work practice because the social workers we interviewed indicated that they find themselves in a dilemma as they discharge their duties with migrants. This frustration was evident as can be seen from one social worker who finds herself at a crossroads while working with migrants as she mentions that the social work value of inclusion is contradictory to the expectations of politicians to exclude migrants as well as the ongoing labelling process promoted by the media.

Our mindset is inclusion, this is a very big value and is important for personal development, to feel a part of something and included. You have to feel that you belong somewhere and that you are a part of it. This conflicts with the political view which works with 'us' and 'them', in the media as well, they say 'a migrant has been doing this and this.' I don't care if it's a migrant, that's creates them and us, making it very difficult to work with inclusion. If you feel you belong somewhere, you feel like you want to make this a good place, where you get this feeling, you use your energy to look at how to make this better. If you feel the opposite, that you're not really a part of this place, you don't get this feeling. (Informant 1)

It was also found that in spite of the 'othering' process facilitated by the current political discourse which in turn creates boundaries between Danes and migrants, social workers do their best to uphold the values of equality and deservingness, as well as meeting the needs of diverse service users. There is a belief amongst the social workers interviewed that within the guidelines framed by government, they are able to provide opportunities for migrants.

For us, social work is for everyone. We don't separate migrants from Danish children, the only thing we look at is that some children need more help than others. For me, you have to treat all people equally. This does not mean that you are going to do the same for everybody, everyone has different issues and special needs. Immigrants have special needs. (Informant 3)

We have a lot of freedom to do what we know as social workers – what will support a young child or person most. We have our frameworks from government, but within this we have so many opportunities to support these young people. (Informant 4)

4.2. Culture

Culture is typically used in reference to communal activities and ways people think, talk and carry a collective identity, thus systems of meaning exist within a society (Craith 2004). Humans are guided by broadly defined ideas of how humans should behave, the 'truths' of society (Foucault 1982). In cultural identity discussions, the assumption is that each has its own unique identity and formation, their own normative ideas. These features are not perceived to be dynamic and interactive ongoing processes that engage other cultures involves challenges at different times (Weiguo 2013). The dilution of culture and subsequent cultural normative ideas has been of great concern for the Danish society, considering that they are a small country with a population of only 5 million. As evident in our findings, Denmark fears that their culture, including its norms and values will be eroded with the growing number of migrants, especially considering that each country is the embodiment of its own culture and society.

Denmark is a very small country, we can therefore make changes quickly, but it makes you scared as well. Our culture is limited to 5 million people, so we are scared of being run over, of having our

culture destroyed. As the amount of refugees have increased, the attitude towards them has been increasingly negative. (Informant 2)

As the European Union strategy on integration continues to shape a common culture and have control over the institutions (workplace, religious, schools and language rights) of cultural reproduction further entrenching the divide between European and non-Europeans. It is argued that the same can be observed in the Danish society, where the threat towards “we” identity and societal security is reflected in political decisions made today (Buzan et al. 1998). With reference to the ‘othering’ process proposed by Foucault, there is a fear observed amongst the Danish society with regards to the impact of adopting a new culture into the Danish culture. There is a feeling that the Danish society are being forced to adopt the culture and values of migrants from other countries as they live together, as opposed to earlier days where migrants were living in exclusion.

I can remember a while ago there were a lot of workers from especially Turkey, they were foreigners and they lived by themselves. Today we are expected to contain all people in Denmark with different values and different ways to live. In the 70s, compared to now I can see a difference. Nowadays, we have to accept all, back in the 60s/70s, they were just known as the foreigners who came here and helped with some jobs, we didn't mix with them, they were just on their own in a ‘ghetto’, nowadays, I think I have to make a compromise with my values. From the political side, it is expected that I compromise my own values, the migrants come here with their ways to live, their opinions and so on. I can be here, but they have to be here. They put their values onto me, I'm Danish and always will be, but in society they expect me to have their values too. In Denmark, mostly protestants, but people with Muslim background, there are more and more of them, and my fear is that in a few years, there will be more Muslims than protestants. (Focus Group)

Language is an essential part of any culture, it also plays a vital role in the social construction of power as prohibition can be manifested through language. The way that we talk defines our possible and possibly desired actions (Sorensen 2014). In order for migrants to fit into Danish society and the workforce the language needs to be learnt. Coming from a different cultural background and being unable to speak Danish can make integration difficult, particularly integration into the labour market.

They are trying to get migrants into work and education, but if you are not able or wanting to learn the language, there are not many places that will give you a job if you can't communicate in Danish. (Informant 7)

Cultural issues, if you come from other cultures where employment market is different then you might have trouble with that. The way that you look at woman is also an issue here, we think both men and women should work, a lot of the refugees don't think the same. It's a total different mindset - you have to put your children into day care and go find a job. Some mothers don't relate to this, they come from a country where it is so different. (Informant 2)

For social workers working with migrants, cultural competency practice is key and must be accommodated and celebrated. A lack of appreciation for cultural diversity will likely have a negative impact on practice with groups such as migrants who have different cultural values and beliefs. In order to address the cultural diversity challenge there is a move to ensure cultural understanding between migrants and Danish citizens, and this is seen within the education system. Social workers have to apply consideration in their personal practice with this population as there is no single method that guides resolution of specific challenges faced.

I think now, the education we take is more mindful of integration, when I went to school, we had a subject called cultural understanding which was about understanding our own cultural values but we were taught to be curious of other cultures and given ways to help others express their culture. We are taught to be curious of and accept other cultures, to show them our values but not impose them on them. (Focus Group)

In spite of the discussed predicament, social workers are doing their best to work within the values of the profession in order to facilitate the integration of migrants to encourage inclusion across different cultures.

Social workers work closely with and to support the refugees settle and integrate, that is the main core of social workers. (Informant 6)

In our profession, there isn't room to think that refugees aren't welcome. You can't be a social worker if you don't think that all are created equal and deserve the same chances. (Informant 4)

4.3. Resources

Denmark has experienced a marked economic change, where the focus of government has moved to see all citizens participate in the market economy (Møller 2015). This was largely the result of neoliberal restructuring which began to be introduced in Denmark in the 1990s. This was a response to globalization in order to prepare the country for new international competition. In 2001, the Social Democrats lost power, however, this accelerated the neoliberal trend which was masked in the rhetoric of valuable restructuring of the welfare state (Steensen 2008).

The main aim of neoliberal governmentality is the tactical production of social conditions favourable to the constitution of human capital, this is a specific form of subjectivity with historical roots in Denmark's market-based society (Ha-

mann 2009). Therefore, individuals are compelled to assume market-based values in all their judgements and practices in order for mass quantities of human capital to be accumulated. Foucault (2008) discusses the 'economic person', where every human being is viewed as an entrepreneur. There is a general feeling that every migrant should bring in skills and that they should be in a position to help themselves in these difficult economic times.

The thing in Denmark is that we will help you if you are willing to help yourself. I think that's a global thing. So the problem comes in when people aren't willing to help themselves. Something for something, it doesn't have to be the same but you have to give something. (Informant 7)

All migrants are constructed and ascribed identities based on their level of usefulness. From our interviews, it seems as though this feeling is being shared amongst Danish citizens who feel that they don't have enough capacity to support the high growing numbers of migrants coming into the country. Instead, migrants are viewed as a financial and economic burden, thus implicating neoliberal assessments of individual economic worth.

Across Europe political awareness was very different in the 80s, refugees were seen as people who, we had capacity to help, today political environment and public question whether they are in need and whether they have capacity to help them. Today they are viewed as people who are here to take our jobs, money and compete with us in the country. (Informant 5)

This concept of human capital is useful for understanding the financial and economic bases for discrimination against migrants. From the perspective of the neoliberal state, people are used as 'machines'. This human machine is an ensemble

of things - first and foremost a commodity, but also an entrepreneur and a producer with regard to the self as commodity (Schirato et al. 2012). This furthers the continuation and preservation of racialization as this is done in particular through the assignment of lower economic values to individuals from the global south (Jantzi 2014). This financial and economic discrimination against migrants was clear in the interviews conducted.

Last 2 years, from the refugees group, working with Syrian (because of the Syrian crisis) refugees and from Eritrea. A new thing now is I'm working with Syrian refugees but all the time have been working with both Arabic and African background. (Informant 6)

In order to stop refugees from coming to Denmark, the allowances have been cut back. (Informant 2)

We give them money, of course that's a burden, that money could go elsewhere. (Informant 7)

Things always change when you need money. The economic crisis has resulted in questions being asked as to who is getting money and why. New laws are then created around this. Global changes have an impact on domestic policies which of course has an impact on how we do things, or on our economical resources. (Informant 3)

The change towards a neoliberal state has had subsequent economic impacts which in turn has impacted on the way in which social work is practiced. This can be largely attributed to a limited amount of resources. This shift in social work has gone from a 'nursing practice' where all was provided and migrants had a passive role, to the adoption of the objective of 'pushing people' in order to make use of their own human capital and be active participants in Danish society. With regards to social work values, the shift in the profession, although no longer a nursing one, does allow migrants to play a more active role

in decisions regarding themselves. Involving migrants in the labour market can facilitate autonomy of individuals as social workers seek to enhance their capacity to address their own needs. Further, it was described that being able to participate in the labour market has a positive effect on self-esteem.

Looking back, social work as a social worker has changed. I don't know if this is a bad thing. Back in the day you were a much more nursing kind of social worker, we had a lot more money to give people. We were very open and didn't demand anything of people and the allowances were high. Nowadays it's a different kind of job being a social worker, you have to push people a lot harder – activities and jobs, etc, and you have to try and apply some fairness into the allowances that they get. There's a lot more saying no now compared to 20 years ago. Again, not necessarily a bad thing. 15-20 years ago, most refugees were Arabs, a lot of them sat at home doing nothing. We lost a lot of refugees simply because we didn't demand anything, I think we failed them back then. We were nursing them, but it didn't have any good long-term effect on them. I'm not saying that what we are doing now is correct, children suffer due to not enough money, but I do think a certain amount of firmness, such as being employed, is a good thing. (Informant 2)

It's important for self-esteem to be able to participate, have a job, be able to do something for yourself and your family. (Informant 2)

These differences have occurred as a result of neoliberal and economic changes, but the limitation of resources and subsequent provision to migrants has an impact on the effectiveness of their work, as well as an emotional impact on social workers. Social workers are faced with a situation where they do not have the capacity to effectively support integration and provide sufficient financial support to the migrants to obtain enough food for the month, let alone have the same standard of living as their Danish counterparts.

I can tell you how it is right now, we are in a time where the politicians are deciding who gets the money and who will get less so we have to use what we have. We are told that we have to use less money. The politicians decide who gets what amount. If we have too many (migrants) it's not possible to make an efficient integration. Too many people and not so much money. We want to give good life to the people who are coming into Denmark. When the war is over they can return in their home countries. It's very important to help people in the countries they are one from. I think is also very important. (Informant 6)

Social workers are placed in a position of turmoil due to decisions made by politicians regarding resource allocation. Therefore, social workers are in a situation where on the one hand they want to provide efficient service to migrants but on the other hand resources at their disposal are limited. It can therefore be difficult to ensure values of dignity and worth of migrants in their daily work due to limited resources restricting their intervention.

As a social worker, you have to put people in a situation where there isn't much money. A lot of social workers are emotionally troubled by this, because it's hard to sit across from someone in need and tell them that in Denmark we don't have the finances to help them. It's hard to see the situation the people are in is tough and you can't do anything about it. They (social workers) can see that at the end of the month this family won't have any money, but they can't change this due to the cutbacks. (Informant 2)

4.4. Media

The evolution of media such as newspapers and magazines in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries saw an increase in the interest in public opinion. As a result of the surge in public opinion, government needed to place more importance on this opinion and reflect this in the decisions made on a

local and national level (Schirato et al. 2012). The position that the media plays in current politics is progressively acknowledged, playing an important if not decisive role (Vintges 2012). The relationship between the media and politics is mutually beneficial, with media increasing public opinion which influences governments, and politics making use of the media to reinforce their discourse, using the media as a site for disciplinary power to take place through surveillance and self-surveillance as described by Foucault (Schirato et al. 2012). Over time, the political discourse has changed and this is reflected in the media.

In more recent times, the topic of migrants has dominated both mainstream and social media in Denmark with politicians using it to campaign and gain popularity. It is evident that migrants are being portrayed negatively by the media.

Although I don't know if it has ever been very positive. When I turn on my tv or read the newspaper, refugees are always mentioned. 10 years ago this maybe happened once a week, now it's 10 times a day, it's a large subject in the media. (Informant 2)

We have a lot of people who are silent in the public debate about refugees, the media is very quick to speak up anti-refugees. (Informant 4)

The media continues to perpetuate and reinforce negative stereotypes about migrants that already exist in Denmark. Stories that portray migrants as a 'problem' incur a large readership, especially amongst the older generation. Although many of this generation do not know migrants personally, they seem to believe what the media reports, as it represents itself as a central source of knowledge and experience, thus informing the negative perception of this population group.

The media also plays a big role in the discourse around migrants, they make headlines so that they will get the most readers. When government problematizes it, people want to read about it, and so it's a circle. A lot of old people are afraid of migrants because they don't know a lot of migrants, all they know is what they hear in the media or see on the television. When people get a relation with a migrant, a lot of the time this changes their perception. (Informant 1)

Social media is an interesting part of this discussion, what we see in the news affects what we think. A lot of news stories are very negative about migrants and Muslims. We only see the bad things, we don't see the good things, which makes people very narrow-minded, if you only see bad you only believe in the bad. (Focus Group)

Now you read things about immigrants, for example that they rape you, these stories have a big impact on politics and people's understanding of immigrants which has resulted in problems. (Informant 3)

One of the major findings from our study was the use of the media in conveying the political discourse around migrants in Denmark. Media and politics operate mutually in order to construct symbolic boundaries between racially constituted categories, this typically binary system of representation marks and attempts to fix the difference between belongingness and otherness (Hall 1992). Migrants may internalise what is said about them and how Danish citizens feel about them, which furthers the divide between Danish citizens and migrants, a cyclical relationship is created. This impacts on the work that Danish social workers are trying to achieve.

Personally, I do not check the news as much as I did before because I get the hopeless feeling when I read all the negativity, it's making the divide bigger and bigger, and I would like to shake them and think something new, do something different, instead of bigger punishment. (Informant 1)

If they feel that the political discourse and media is negative, they think everyone feels this way about them, then meeting us as a social

worker they think we feel the same. But if we can get in touch with them, it can be really good. (Informant 1)

But the reverse happens too, there is this picture demonstrated of Danish people not liking migrants, which reinforces the migrants' behaviour. (Informant 3)

As reflected in our findings, the media creates more problems for the professionals trying to work with migrants on a daily basis. The media makes it difficult to uphold the social work value of the importance and centrality of human relationships. This is due to the fact that social workers represent the government and media conveys politicians who fuel anti-foreigner and anti-migrant sentiments, contributing to this cycle of fear and mistrust (Daley 2001). Therefore, making contact with migrants is made more difficult owing to the entrenchment of the negative stereotype of migrants, which furthers the divide between those who belong and those who do not, resulting in a lack of trust in the system and social work representatives.

Social workers are challenged when it comes to playing double roles (representing the state) and (their ethics) some social workers do not work, others work from inside and others work because they need to put food on the table. (Informant 5)

In our work, because its voluntarily, that's the wall we meet, we have to, to be able to help, we have to be able to gain their trust. There is a reflection of how the political discourse is giving them a view on how the system sees them, if they feel we are a part of that system, which we are, they won't trust us. We don't have the same values or ideas, we disagree with the values of the politicians, but how do the migrants know that? (Informant 1)

5. Conclusion

There has been an increase in the anti-migration political discourse of the right-wing in many countries in Europe (Er-

langer 2015). This is largely the result of the more recent migrant crisis which has resulted in an increase in member states reacting with a tightening of controls on irregular access to their territories as well as some legal channels (Metcalf-Hough 2015). Coupled with this, migration has been placed high on the political agenda owing to the importance assigned to it by voters. It has therefore become a pressing issue for some political parties in European countries, and in response new radical right-wing parties who oppose migration have emerged (Metcalf-Hough 2015). Coupled with this, discrimination, racism attacks, Islamophobia, labour exploitation in the job market through structural barriers and xenophobia continues to increase across Europe (ENAR 2016; Dahlstedt 2016). Access to social services and benefits in receiving countries is also key on the agenda, fuelling the continued emergence of populist and anti-European Union parties in many Member States, thus affecting the stability of the European Union (Hassel and Wagner 2016).

It is argued that the European Union is in crisis and that the growing number of anti-migrant political parties is transforming historically welcoming European countries into hostile societies where migrants are not welcome (Dahlstedt and Neergaard 2016). Denmark has not escaped the recent wave of racism and xenophobia that has swept over Europe (Wren 2001). This is evident in the number of restrictive migration policies put in place in Denmark over the past ten years arguably to make Denmark less attractive for asylum seekers, with the aim of stopping the influx of migrants (Bendixen 2016) and to protect Danish culture from being eroded by ethnic minorities (Andersens et al. 2007).

Based on this background, this study aims to contribute to research on analysing and understanding the impact that the current political discourse with regards to migrants has on social work practice with this population group. The following research questions were devised: what is the current political discourse with regards to migrants; what influence does the current political discourse on migrants have on social work practice?; and when working with migrants, are social workers able to work in line with the values and ethics of the profession under the current political discourse?

The study adopted a purposive sampling technique and we made use of 11 professionals from different entities of Aalborg Kommune where the specific analysing processes of their practice with migrants and the impact that the current political discourse has on this could take place. This was conducted in semi-structured individual interviews and one focus group. In order to analyse our data, we made use of Foucault's understandings of disciplinary power and governmentality. For Foucault power is not possessed by individuals or groups, nor is it a concrete thing, power is everywhere and comes from everywhere (Foucault 1998). Disciplinary power relations make use of normalisation through the standard (Sorensen 2014). Foucault argues that people are guided and acted upon to become specific human beings, termed subjectification (Foucault 1982). As subjects, humans are guided by broadly defined ideas of how humans should behave, the 'truths' of society (Foucault 1982). Power is about encouraging people to accept certain normative ideas about themselves. These truths are accepted at a given point in time because there is a deficit of opposition to this truth (Foucault 1982).

From our study it is evident that there is a negative political discourse regarding migrants in Denmark. According to our findings the current political discourse in Denmark creates the notion of 'the other', and therefore the idea of 'us versus them' is emphasized, thus reinforcing the power relations between the two groups. The dilution of culture and subsequent cultural normative ideas is of great concern for the Danish society. There is a general feeling that every migrant should bring in skills and that they should be in a position to help themselves in these difficult economic times. All migrants are constructed and ascribed identities based on their level of usefulness. Migrants are viewed as a financial and economic burden. The topic of migrants has dominated both mainstream and social media in Denmark with politicians using it to campaign and gain popularity. It is evident that the media conveys this political discourse, with migrants being portrayed negatively by the media.

It was found that migrants internalise what is said about them and how Danish citizens feel about them, which furthers the divide between Danish citizens and migrants, a cyclical relationship is created. This impacts on the profession as social workers are seen to represent the State as demonstrated in the media, making it difficult for them to earn the trust of migrants in order to work with them. Social workers have to apply cultural competency consideration in their personal practice with this population as there is no single method that guides resolution of specific challenges faced and promote the value of inclusion. The difficulty of integration is further exacerbated by the political discourse and notion of 'us versus them'. The limitation of resources has impacted

social work practice with a harder stance being adopted in order to emphasize migrants use of their own human capital and to be active participants in Danish society. However, social workers are also placed in a position where they do not have the capacity to effectively support integration and provide sufficient financial support.

It was found that social workers do their best to uphold the values of equality and deservingness, as well as meeting the needs of diverse service users. The social work value of inclusion is therefore contradictory to the expectations of politicians to exclude migrants as well as the ongoing labelling process promoted by the media. The limitation of resources can make it difficult to ensure values of dignity and worth of migrants. The media makes it difficult to uphold the social work value of the importance and centrality of human relationships. However, in spite of the challenges created by the current political discourse, social workers continue to strive to meet the values of their profession, as was evident in our findings.

6. Perspectives and Recommendations

There is a call for social workers to address specific needs of minorities such as migrants, in order to reduce the growing inequality that exists between migrants and native Danes. Arguably researchers need to rethink the foundation of welfare state from the perspective of migration and diversity as cultural diversity is still a major challenge due to existing Eurocentric beliefs. Integration of migrants can only succeed if discrimination and devaluation of what Danes consider non-European is addressed through multicultural policies on

a National level. This will reduce various forms of stereotypes against non-European, harassment, exclusion and denial of legal rights thus Eurocentrism should not be institutionalized in the state and economy.

On a micro and meso level, it is our recommendation that social workers need to play a larger role in helping to resolve conflicts between service users interest, for the purpose of this report service users being migrants, and the broader society's interests in a socially responsible manner consistent with the values and ethics of the profession. In this sense, social workers can help bridge the divide between migrants and Danish citizens seen on a daily basis, helping them to learn about each other's culture and integrate without boundaries by forming relationships.

Social workers need to start challenging the existing unjust policies being implemented by government when it comes to social assistance given to migrants. These policies use positive selection which is discriminating the ethnic minority in all spheres. Going forward, focus needs to be on improving best practices when working with migrants and other marginalised groups. Coupled with this, a challenge faced by social workers is the limited resources they are working with which can hinder best value grounded practice. Resource allocation in Denmark is controlled by politicians in power, but from the study it was clear that social workers can influence the allocation of funds through demonstrating the impact that their services have on service users. It is therefore important for social workers to take an active role in contributing to decision making in budgeting which is key for service delivery.

It became apparent through our research that Aalborg municipality is a particularly welcoming and accepting municipality within Denmark with regards to migrants, with it having a softer discourse than the rest of the country. The Social Democrat party is in power in Aalborg and the particular politicians running the municipality are deemed supportive and positive, allowing for this difference in local discourse compared to the national discourse which was demonstrated through our findings. It is therefore our recommendation that a comparative study is completed in different municipalities to determine whether the impact that the political discourse with regards to migrants has on social work practice is different.

In our report we intentionally did not include the voice of migrants as we chose to focus on social work practitioners. We decided to explore their experience of working with service users who have a migrant background and the impact that the political discourse has on doing this work. It is our recommendation that further research should be done which includes the voice of migrants. This needs to be done in order to understand how they perceive the effects that the political discourse has on social work practice when interacting with them. This could bring a wider view on the complex issue of the effects of migration on Danish society.

The starting point of our research project was a reflection of our field visit. During our field visit we observed a number of the themes present in our report. However, in our study we ignored the generational difference between the practitioners and differences in public opinion based on age. We decided not to include this in our analysis owing to it not being di-

rectly connected to the aim of our study. However, from our interviews it seemed as though there was a generational difference amongst social workers in terms of resistance to the dominant truths that have risen from the current political discourse on migrants. We do believe that this would be an important area to conduct further research on.

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