Between care and control

Interaction between refugees and caseworkers within the Norwegian refugee integration programme

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Abstract

This dissertation is a case study from Norway focusing on social interaction between refugees and caseworkers within the framework of a recent integration programme, the so-called Introductory Programme. The main objective of my analysis is to illustrate how the relation between the refugees and caseworkers is influenced by the policy, and to describe some of the challenges they face. My central argument is that both the refugees and the caseworkers have adopted more complex tasks and roles under the programme, and I discuss what impacts this appears to have on the relation between the two parties.

Introduction

In many western democracies faced by immigration 'integration' has become a catchword. Politicians, bureaucrats, the media and the public are all concerned with how to *integrate* the immigrants into mainstream society in a most satisfactory manner. In the Nordic states immigrant incorporation has been highly regulated through the formation of integrationist policies and welfare schemes. Yet in the 1990s the Nordic welfare states' integration philosophies became subject to fierce criticism, and were accused of being unsuccessful and causing passivity. The aura of criticism has in the course of recent years been diverted by a discourse of activation and a pursuit to place stronger demands on the newcomers.

This paper is a case study of the Norwegian Introductory Programme, a recently implemented policy programme aimed at newly arrived refugees. The two-year long programme is compulsory and consists of full-day education and language training. The study considers the practical aspects of the programme by focusing on the interaction between refugees and caseworkers. Thus, I ask: what are the practical implications of integrationist policies?

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UDI) closed down 45 out of a total 100 reception centres, and in 2005 further closures are being carried out (KRD 26.01.05, KRD 09.06.05). According to UDI this is a consequence of the directorate's 'success in restricting the influx of people without any need of protection' (KRD 26.01.05). Other plausible causes include the fact that there have been fewer conflicts close to Europe, and the realisations of the Dublin Convention and the Eurodac register as part of a general European harmonisation and, arguably, deterrence process. In 2004 the people who seek Norwegian asylum were mainly from Afghanistan, Somalia, Russia, Serbia and Montenegro, and Iraq (*ibid.*).

As for labour migration the Norwegian authorities have in recent years changed their attitude, presently encouraging foreigners to come and work in the country. They preferably call for qualified labour using decreasing population rates as one of the prime arguments (*Aftenposten* 21.09.04). Immigration from Central and Eastern Europe has increased considerably after the European Union enlargement of 2004 through Norway's membership

of the programme are language and social studies classes, and forms of work placement. In return for participating in the programme the refugees receive a monthly introductory allowance that is supposed to replace the previous social benefit. All of the country's municipalities in which newly arrived refugees reside have implemented the programme, having led to extensive re-organisation on the local level. Overall, local authorities attempt to find more 'neutral' arenas for refugee affairs as alternatives to the traditional social security office. Akin to Norwegian policies in general the introductory programme is of top-down character. The central authorities mould the ideological and political contents, whereas the local authorities are to put the policy into practice. UDI serves as an intermediary player issuing a number of guidelines and training manuals coined at local authorities and caseworkers. Despite the relatively detailed documents of UDI, the local authorities are nonetheless left with a high degree of discretion encouraged to be innovative in their practical forming of the programme.

Integration and policy in the welfare state

The concept of integration inhabits a myriad of connotations and applications. There is a wide consensus in most liberal states that newcomers should be *integrated* into mainstream society and *integration* tends to be viewed as a normative opposite to the rather poorly reputed notion of *assimilation*. However, the question of *how* and to *which degree* minorities should be incorporated has remained a contested topic, and in some arenas it has become subject to profound debate.

Within academia some commentators have proclaimed their scepticism towards what they regard a prevailing uncritical approach to the concept (Favell 2003; Brochmann 2003; Joppke & Morawska 2003). Some have questioned the degree of its actual presence in liberal states arguing that if we strip the concept down to its formal and practical conditions, language acquisition and commitment to values is all that is lef.3(]0Sf2(orub6 TD0.000all thac)]TJT*0.0003 Tc 0.2 frne)5.3(d)-10.718s2 0110.02(.)

constitutes 'a policy'? The political anthropologists Shore and Wright (1997) ask this question and discuss how researchers can approach the concept. They refer to a number of manifestations such as language, rhetoric, political speeches, party manifestos, decision-making, and people's experiences with street-level bureaucrats. Subsequently, they suggest that when there is an intention behind these fragmented activities, and when they are organised in order to appear coherent, we may speak of a policy. An important aspect of policy is according to the authors what entails the term 'governance'. That is, the processes by which people's original norms of conduct and their "way of doing things" are influenced by policies, and how people more or less consciously contribute to a government's ideal of social order (1997:5). By highlighting these social aspects they assert that policies are inherently anthropological events.

The policy of concern in this paper, the Norwegian Introductory Programme, is a form of activation policy aimed at allegedly one of the most vulnerable groups of society. According to Djuve et al (2001) the programme has clear normative contents given the central authorities' ambition to manoeuvre the refugees' behaviour in a certain direction. In order to achieve this they employ a combination of motivation and sanctioning. The motivation is economic support, and in order to obtain the support the refugees are to participate in the programme. If they refrain from participating (not attending the daily activities of the programme) they are not entitled to the economic support. Djuve et al regard this motivation/sanction nexus as a substantial instrument of power, although in terms of ethical concerns they argue that it can be defended under the correct circumstances[7].

In the realm of policy-making as well as in the public there are differing stances as to the ideological and practical moulding of the integration agenda. However, Hagelund (Forthcoming) argues that in the case of the introductory programme there appears to be an overall agreement across several fractions concerning the programme's basic objective; to 'activate' and 'make demands' on the immigrants through strong emphasis on learning Norwegian and becoming self-reliant. Moreover, in Hagelund's case study of a local introduction centre she shows how the introductory programme has brought about a new and more animated discourse on the local level characterised by a pursuit to rationalise, institutionalise and professionalize integration. For instance, the focus has shifted from the old and negatively associated notion of *passive reception* to *active qualification* wherein the refugees are referred to as 'participants' rather than 'clients'.

The interaction between the refugee and the caseworker

The relation between caseworkers and immigrants

[7] As long as the instruments of power seek to improve the refugee's life conditions through placing strict demands on the programme's contents, sanctioning can be legitimised (Djuve et al 2001).

Djuve et al's (2001) discussion of the introductory programme they recognise the difficulty to completely avoid some degree of paternalism. Other factors that cause the imbalance of power between the caseworker and the refugee are the refugees' lack of command of the native language and their rather limited economic resources. In addition they have not themselves chosen their location of residence (Djuve et al 2001). With respect to information and knowledge, the caseworker has access to first hand data about the refugee and is familiar with the available organisational opportunities in order to meet the needs of her client (Schierenbeck 2003). Ultimately, the fact that the refugee finds herself in a more or less involuntary situation has a considerable affect on their relation (Schierenbeck 2003, Lipsky 1980).

In order to gain a better insight in the two parties, I will look more closely at what marks each of their situations:

The caseworker as a frontline bureaucrat

The position of the caseworker as a frontline bureaucrat is marked by the notion of being in a 'double role' (Lipsky 1980, Schierenbeck 2003). The caseworker is situated in between the demands of both the client and the bureaucratic organisation. Lipsky characterises this double role as an intrinsic contradiction that the frontline bureaucrat is bound to grapple with.

> 'On the one hand, service is delivered by people to people, invoking a model of human interaction, caring and responsibility. On the other hand, service is delivered through a bureaucracy, invoking a model of detachment and equal treatment under conditions of resource limitations and constraints, making care and responsibility conditional'
>
> (Lipsky 1980:71).

That is to say, the caseworker is to allow for the client's desires and needs, whereas the organisation requires her to categorise the individual clients into cases and matters. She also has to bring about the organisation's objectives of efficiency and cost effectiveness.

Schierenbeck (2003) examines the double role of frontline bureaucrats by constructing a typology based on two stereotypical roles, namely the 'fellow-being' and the 'authority person'. The 'fellow being' is characterised by mainly orienting herself towards the client, finding the double role problematic. On the contrary, the 'authority person' identifies herself with the organisation, viewing the double role as a natural part of her work position. In her study of Swedish and Israeli caseworkers she concludes that in the Swedish context the 'fellow-being' is most prevalent, whereas in Israel the 'authority person' is most dominant.

The frontline bureaucrat enjoys considerable discretion in determining the nature, amount and quality of the services she provides, distinguished by administering benefits, sanctions, and policy instructions. As a consequence, the services and the overall policy the frontline bureaucrat carries out are often influenced by her personal

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providers, as well as neighbours, local communities and fellow refugees:

> 'Given the background of mistrust, the confusion and disorientation of most new arrivals are magnified when they enter official systems that use alien language, concepts and rules. Even asking for help and support is fraught with complications of how to judge the relative value of the advice and information received'
>
> (Cambridge and Williams 2004:99)

Besides, as a client of the bureaucratic system the refugee has a lot to gain in finding out how he can best present himself towards the caseworker. The manner he presents himself and his needs can determine others' perceptions of him and the kind of help he receives (Ylvisaker 2004). In a case study of refugees' encounters with the social security office Ørvig (1999) shows how her informants express a feeling of not being seen as individual persons with individual backgrounds. Likewise, when examining refugees' communication with caseworkers, Ørvig refers to the common reaction among people who lack skills in a foreign language; namely to pretend that you understand. In other situations people may remain passive and silent for fear of not finding the right words in the foreign language (Ørvig 2000).

Theory of social roles: challenges of role behaviour in multiplex relationships

In social theory a lot of attention has been drawn to the concept of social roles. Goffman (1959) demonstrated how each individual occupies various roles in their everyday lives. Further, he pointed to the different expectations that are tied to each of the roles and to the several efforts that characterise the performance of them. Since Goffman's studies a number of role theorists have developed and elaborated on these ideas making it a rich theoretical framework. I have found that role theory makes up a meaningful device to better comprehend the interaction between refugees and caseworkers. Therefore, I will present the central concepts that I later use in my analysis.

A *role* consists of the typical behaviours that characterise a person in a specific social or organisational context (Kahn et al. 1964). In my study the organisational context is the introductory programme and other places where the caseworkers and refugees interact with each other inhabiting roles as 'caseworkers' and 'refugees'. The refugee is likely to have different expectations of how a 'caseworker' will behave. Similarly, the caseworker has his assumptions as to the conduct of a 'refugee'. The interaction between the two groups can be referred to as a *role*

behaviour in each of the domains. Accordingly, the caseworkers seek to perform distinct roles in the various domains. For instance, when working with the refugees' individual qualification plans the caseworkers may appear as 'advisors', whereas in instances when they arrange housing they appear as 'providers'. When a person goes from one role to another like this, it is referred in the role theory as *role transitions*, and more specifically *micro-role transitions* (Schumate & Fulk 2004, Valcour 2002).

By the same token, we may say that the roles implicitly presented in the training manuals and programme guidelines are based on *ideal standards*. According to Goffman (1959), when an individual bases his role on ideal standards he tends to incorporate and demonstrate 'the officially accredited values of the society' (1959:31). I think this statement fits well into my analytic context as I consider the introductory programme to manifest some of the Norwegian society's 'accredited values'. However, Goffman points out that divergence between appearance and actual activity often occurs. In my analysis I am particularly concerned with this divergence, and I refer to some of the challenges refugees and caseworkers face in terms of role performance.

Firstly, an individual may lack information about the roles she is expected to perform or does not have the knowledge or resources to fulfil those roles.

Design and methods

The starting point of my study was a desire to learn how refugees perceived the introductory programme. I deliberately chose to start out with a general and open research question, wanting to have the opportunity to discover new elements in the field (Silvermann 1997). In order to explore my elected topic I chose to do a case study based on an ethnographic fieldwork and a smaller set of policy publications. There are still a rather limited number of studies on this particular topic, arguably as a natural consequence of the introductory programme's relatively short duration in Norway. The studies and reports conducted so far have either tended to focus solely on the caseworkers (Hagelund Forthcoming) or have been policy-oriented using mainly quantitative methods (Djuve et al. 2001; Lund 2003; Kavli 2004).

I decided to carry out a case study because my research question was of a "how" character and I

Consequently, I spent a lot of time explaining to people the purpose of me being there -representing myself as a 'student' that was going to write a paper about the introductory programme.

What is more, my mingling with both the caseworkers and the refugees certainly involved some challenges, probably causing some confusion as to "where I actually belonged". I attempted to balance my involvement with the two groups by spending most time with the caseworkers during the refugees' daily classes, and socialising with the refugees before and after classes, and in their lunch breaks. As a result, I sometimes had an unusual feeling of being a 'social butterfly' trying to be everyone's 'friend'. At the same time, I may have been perceived as a somewhat curious element, primarily among the refugees, in the sense that that I was a young woman apparently having lots of time, and being more than willing to talk to people. I believe my relatively young age and my perceived student role may have made me less "threatening" and arguably made it easier to get in contact with people. However, the fact that I was in a cross-cultural context further challenged my social interaction with the informants. Accordingly, I tried to sometimes reserve and adjust my role as a 'friend', being sensitive to how individuals could perceive it. These efforts describe some of my attempts to maintain 'the marginal position of simultaneous insider-outsider' that an ethnographic researcher should pursue (Hammersley & Atkinson 1983).

In order to retain confidentiality of my informants I use fictitious names for the place and the persons. Besides, in some cases I have changed the informant's sex and certain attributes such as work placement, profession, and education.

Ultimately, it is necessary to underscore the exploratory aspect of my study. An ethnographic fieldwork of four weeks constitutes just a "shallow dive" into the complex reality. My data are therefore limited and not as rich as they could have been if there was more time available. Consequently, my study comprises tentative observations and sketches and no extravagant conclusions.

The analytical context

Skogdal Introduction Centre

The institution where I conducted my fieldwork is situated in a town of approximately 10,000 inhabitants in a rural region of the Western part of Norway. Henceforth I will call the institution 'Skogdal Introduction Centre' and the town and municipality 'Skogdal'.

Skogdal Introduction Centre serves as a Norwegian language-training centre for adult immigrants living in Skogdal as well as the neighbouring municipalities. Two years ago the local authorities implemented the introductory programme, and Skogdal Introduction Centre became the natural location for the programme. Hence, the centre is in charge of all refugee affairs in the municipality of Skogdal. Currently there are approximately seventy students attending the centre whereby one third s

referred to a guinea-pig feeling saying they did not know exactly what the object of the programme is. Hence, they express a need for more information. Besides, some of them worried about what will happen to them after the two years of the programme are over. The caseworkers time and again face challenges as to the framing of the programme, and on my first day at the centre a caseworker pointed out to me that they were still in the formative stages. 'You have not come to the right place if you expect everything to be perfectly organised' he said apologetically.

Interaction in a new context

Both the personnel and the users of the centre seem to primarily conceive of the centre as a 'school'. The caseworkers and the teachers spoke of the immigrants as 'students' and similarly to a regular Norwegian school they would occasionally arrange excursions, ski days and similar social events. The school identity is not indeed surprising as this used to be the original and sole function of the institution. However, the caseworkers attempt, in compliance with the programme guidelines, to create a new and expanded institution identity vis-

> will become your introductory programme' (UDI 2004)

The programme guidelines together with the social and organisational character of Skogdal Introduction Centre provide the refugees with a cluster of roles. These can predominantly be said to be 'student', 'worker', and 'future planner'. Together they form the overall role as an 'active participant':

The expectations attached to the roles can be organised into two categories, namely direct and indirect expectations:

responsible actors[12] the contact person is to coordinate their collaboration and to 'ensure the progression and quality in the refugee's programme' (UDI 2003a).

In relation to the refugee the UDI guidelines specify among others the following tasks:

- 'Act as an advisor for the individual participant (...)
- Be a support on the participant's path into the Norwegian society
- Give information about rights, duties, and opportunities in the local community
- Map the individual's background and competence
- Assist in the drawing up of an individual plan
- Follow up the individual refugee and his/her family
- Motivate the participant to take part in leisure activities
- Prevent and if possible assist in conflicts
- Be accessible and open for guiding conversations'

(UDI 2003a)

The caseworkers' interpretations of the above guidelines and the suggested programme activities constitute the premises for their work. However, in order to get a more complete understanding of the caseworkers' roles, the above described premises should be seen in light of the caseworkers' interaction with the refugees as well as the participants' perceptions of their actions. If we do this, we can summarise their roles as follows:

'The advisor'

The caseworkers are in accordance with the UDI guidelines concerned with the agreed need to act as an 'advisor' in their encounters with the refugees. This involves teaching the refugees how to sort things out themselves.

'The helper'

Among the caseworkers and in the UDI guidelines the role as a 'helper' is largely considered as an opposite of the advisor role and it is associated with the 'bad old days' of the past. A helper is understood to do things for the refugees, thus allegedly the refugee risks becoming passive.

'The provider'

The caseworkers provide the refugees with monthly payments, housing and other housing-related goods (basic furniture, equipment, etc). Yet, as will be shown, 'the provider is also apparent in other contexts than this specific area of responsibility.

'The career counsellor'

Given the programme's strong focus on qualification and job acquirement together with the employees' endeavours to identify their institution as a 'job and qualification centre', they hold a role that resembles a career counsellor.

'The authority person'

As a representative of the state the caseworker is expected to carry out the central directive rules and balance the motivation/sanction intersection inherent in the programme. This leads to situations in which the caseworkers exert control vis-à-vis the refugees.

'The fellow-being'

At times the caseworker is more focused on the personal situation of the individual refugee (of with

[12] The teachers, the local job centre [*Aetat*], and municipal health personnel.

The roles portrayed in the policy guidelines make up the formal premises for the daily social intercourse between the refugees and the caseworkers. In Goffman's terms they delineate an idealised view of the interaction as they set some ideal standards for the individuals to achieve. Yet at a closer look we see that the roles hold different and sometimes contrasting interests. Hence, the task of fulfilling and combining the multiple roles may not be as straightforward as the guidelines paint it. Below I will further examine some of the implications of the multiplex relationships that characterise the role set of the refugee and the caseworker.

Managing the roles in an uneven scenario

The refugee as 'the active participant'

The refugees are portrayed as 'students' in terms of attending daily language and social studies classes. The majority of the refugees I interviewed seemed relatively comfortable with this role. When they were asked to reflect on the programme they tended to immediately focus on the language training, seeming to be proud of what they had achieved. Radjab describes his relation to learning Norwegian as follows:

> 'I think it's good. Short time ago I couldn't speak. It's good for the programme. In order to live in Norway one has to speak Norwegian (...). I like coming to school. I'm in Norway now, so I have to learn Norwegian.'
>
> (Interview 13.06.05)

Another informant, Ismael, explains how he has learned about Norway:

> 'I have learned many things, for example about typical Norwegian culture. Or about Norwegian history like Norway being under Denmark or Sweden, for example 1814 and 1905, and also some periods when Norway was in war. That was very amusing for me because I needed a lot of information about Norway. And I'm going to continue living in Norway, so I need a lot of *information about Norway.'*
>
> (Interview 27.05.05)

In addition to the student role the refugees are partly considered as 'workers', in the manner the programme emphasises its reference with working life mainly through the arrangement of work placements. Some of the informants had not had any work placement yet, so they were rather unfamiliar with this role. Among the informants who did have such practice there were varying opinions about the activities they performed and to which degree it had any positive effect. Some did not find their job relevant enough to their aimed profession, while others appreciated the opportunity the practice gave to get in contact with Norwegians. Yet most of these informants seemed to value the opportunity of doing something significant apart from the somewhat the .54012thoothin3(s)2.8.3(, 1 in the)

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> Hoda's contact person says he finds it difficult to collaborate with her in the working out of her individual qualification plan, seeming to have the impression that Hoda avoids the whole issue
>
> (Interview and field diary 08.06.05)

Since Sayed has clear ideas regarding what he wants to do in the future, he can actively take part in the development of his individual qualification plan by applying for schools and doing other necessary preparations. With that, he appears as a 'future planner' and consequently also an 'active participant'. His contact person, attempting to comply with the programme guidelines, is ready to assist him as she wants Sayed to succeed in his career plans. Hoda, however, who finds it difficult to stake out her future instead being focused on the many obstacles, does not pay much attention to the work of her individual qualification plan. Her contact person, who suspects her not to be interested in job-related matters, is resigned since Hoda's attitude complicates the execution of the programme instructions. Hence, in this case, Hoda does not have the exact premises of fulfilling the projected roles of the programme.

The majority of the refugee informants said they found it somewhat difficult to plan their future. This applied to both the ones who had pronounced goals and those who were more hesitant. The main reason seems to be an expressed scepticism towards what they regard as limited job opportunities. Similarly to Hoda, several referred to their poor chances of getting a desirable job because they were 'foreigners', and some pointed to how even Norwegians face difficulties on the current labour market. Other spoke with resignation of the long process it would take to complete possible re-training and higher education. In summary, the refugees appear to have an ambiguous relation to the future planner role, and the reason seems to be rooted in factors outside the scope of the introductory programme. As a result, the vagueness of the future planner role is likely to curb the overall role as 'the active participant'.

The caseworker: grappling with the boundaries between 'the advisor', 'the helper' and 'the provider'

If we examine the advisor role, there is a tendency among the caseworkers to accentuate the importance of pursuing this particular role. In a conversation I had with the caseworker Hilde she described it like this:

> 'I don't want to help them too much. You see there is a difference between helping and supervising someone. I'm not interested in smothering them. For example if they don't have enough money to pay the electricity bill or the TV license I tell them they have to call the company themselves and ask them to rather split the bill. I don't do this for them. At least this is the way **I** do it.'
>
> (Conversation with caseworker 23.05.05)

Here we see that Hilde, similar to the programme guidelines, makes a clear distinction between helping and supervising a person, underlining that she does not aim to 'help' the refugees. By so

we don't need it that much anymore. We're not so dependent anymore.'

(Interview 06.06.05)

When Sarah speaks of her contact person and the other caseworkers she immediately refers to the notion of help, and in her view the help is far-reaching. Accordingly, she does not seem to experience or take considerable notice of the advisor role Hilde and other colleagues (indeed to varying extent) seek to uphold.

In the interviews with other participants there was the same tendency to emphasise the help-aspect when they talked about the caseworkers. However, some of the informants were more concerned with talking about the alleged *lack* of help, complaining about the caseworkers for not helping them enough. Nassir portrays his experience like this:

'I don't talk that often to my contact person. It was more often in the beginning. It's a bit... There are some problems in between. The contact person... it's not clear enough when someone is talking to you. But first time I came there were a lot of problems. A lot of letters... So many misunderstandings... They just send you the letters - and a few problems and misunderstandings. I'm sure if the contact person was clearer and could tell us more about the introductory programme it could have been better. For example when we arrived we had only one table, two chairs and a sofa. They were bad furniture. I find this a bit difficult, because we cannot understand or we don't get any information about what we can do and about the rights and so on. Later I learned that in one of the letters it said that I had the right to complain within the first month. If they could have known... If I had the right to complain I would have done that. "Why don't you buy me a better sofa?" And the contact person says "go to that person". It seems like no one is ready to help you. (...). A friend of mine she's alone and she lives in another municipality. In her flat there is different furniture... I think it depends on the municipality, but there are also differences inside the municipality, it depends on the contact person.'

(Interview 08.06.05)

Nassir's description reveals a frustration towards the caseworkers comprising various aspects. He speaks of communication problems resulting in perceived absence of information concerning the programme as well as rights. Interestingly, however, if we consider the examples he refers to, they are stripped to chiefly concern material goods. By saying his contact person should have provided him with more and better furniture, he implies that he should have been offered more help than he actually has. In this sense, Nassir apparently believes the caseworkers key roles to be 'providers' and 'helpers' and complains about the fulfilment of their tasks.

If we compare Nassir's and Sarah's utterances they seem to speak of two different forms of help. While Sarah refers to help in terms of caseworkers doing services (more specifically related to education and job acquisition), Nassir is more concerned with help as provision of material goods. We may call these two forms of help *service help* and *material help*. Which one of the two types the refugees were mostly focused on when talking about their relation to the caseworkers seemed indeed to vary according to each individual. Nevertheless, it is interesting to notice how some of the misunderstandings arising from the interaction between the refugees and the caseworkers appear to be grounded on confusion around these two notions of help. In a conversation I had with the caseworker Peter this issue implicitly came up:

Peter tells me that one day a participant he is contact person for approached him. "He showed me a driver's licence bill and expected me to pay it for him. He claimed that some (...) [nationality] friends of him in (...) [a neighbouring town] havederstanf446xhver, if we

expecting Ahmed to understand this is his own responsibility. Ahmed, on the other hand, who is convinced he is not in a position to pay the bill himself, assumes Peter will be able to help him out. The example of Ahmed and Peter indicates that a refugee may view the caseworker as ‘the provider’ in contexts exceeding the domain of housing

> At a meeting the caseworkers are talking about Quadir who they find problematic because he has had unjustified absence for a longer period.
>
> *Hilde*: "Quadir he worries me…"
>
> *David* (Quadir's contact person): "Yes… He still hasn't returned his income tax form, it's just lying there. He's a sluggard. He doesn't even check his post"
>
> David is telling the others about everything Quadir could have accomplished given his significant talent in drawing. "I told him 'on Friday the shops are night open, so now you have the opportunity to earn a bit of money'. But no… (…). I've done what I can do now. How can we withdraw him? We can't withdraw for all his absence, you know, because then he simply has to pay…!"
>
> David and his colleagues are discussing how to sort this out and they decide to give him a minimum amount per day in addition to money for his house rent. They also agree on suggesting that he arranges a drawing class for the other participants as part of the summer activities.
>
> (Staff meeting 14.06.05)

The conversation between the caseworkers illustrates their efforts to balance the two principles of motivation and sanction. David has made several attempts of encouraging Quadir to participate in the programme, feeling he has done whatever he could. His colleagues and he re interested in Quadir's involvement and talent in drawing knowing it means a lot to him. Therefore they employ this as a motivation factor for participation by suggesting he can make use of his qualifications in the programme activities. Such an appreciation of personal qualifications is also something that is encouraged in the UDI training manuals. Notwithstanding, since Quadir has not shown any sign of compliance, the caseworkers face the necessity to sanction him by withholding his introduction allowance. They avoid, however, completely cutting off the economic support, seeming to find this option rather drastic. At the same time as they are aggravated by Quadir's resistance, they worry about Quadir's situation. Accordingly, they try to find a middle way. The unease apparent in their efforts of finding achievable solutions seems to be rooted in a 'kind-ist' desire, haunting from earlier days, to want the best for the refugee.

In other words, the authority role they seek to uphold as a result of the sanctioning principle appears to be diverted by the 'fellow being'. From this we see another example of role diversion, this time provoked by the caseworkers' fated 'double role'.

From the refugee's stance, Quadir, by not complying with the rules of the programme, rejects the role of 'the active participant' and remains in a kind of rebel role:

> Quadir is at the centre today and I run into him in the lounge. We have met once before, so he knows I am here to write 'a paper about the introductory programme'. "I don't like the introductory programme" he says. "I don't have the time. Besides I don't learn any Norwegian by hanging out here where there are only foreigners who speak Somali and Arabic. I learn Norwegian when I talk to you and other Norwegians". Quadir hands me a fancy folder which he says is his CV, and with enthusiasm he tells me about his interest in drawing. He says he has recently made some contacts in a magazine, and he hopes this can help him finding a job soon.
>
> (Field diary 14.06.05)

Quadir's attitude to the programme constitutes a slight paradox. He says he does not approve of the programme because he 'doesn't have time' and that he would rather spend time looking for job contacts and mingle with Norwegians. The very aims of the introductory programme are, as pointed out earlier, precisely to make the participants self-reliant through job acquirement. Still, despite the assumption that these aims should correspond with Quadir's agenda, he rebels against the ground rules of the programme thus becoming an outsider.

Furthermore, in the caseworkers' pursuit of balancing the motivation/sanction intersection situations occur when they assess the need to interfere in the refugees' private sphere.

> After discussions in the recent personnel meetings the caseworkers have agreed that Shirvani and Elina should enrol their children in kindergarten from August. Shirvani already participates in the introductory programme, and allegedly the family was accepted into the municipality on the condition that Elina began the programme when their two children were o(e 008egian)6.(e)-1headox. He talk

> Grete and Shirvani are sitting in Grete's office. Grete clearly and gently presents the issue for Shirvani. When Shirvani understands what Grete's aim is he responds: "But they're still too young. They can't make it on their own". Grete, who soon realises this will be a difficult task, calls on Peter who speaks the native language of Shirvani to help her with some translating. She goes on trying to mention the positive sides of sending their children to kindergarten emphasising Elina's apparent interest in learning Norwegian.
>
> "To begin with it's only a visit, just to see how it is" she tries. After some discussion to and fro Shirvani seems more lenient. "I just have to talk to Elina first" he assures. "Talk to Elina, sure..." Grete says resigned. The conversation ends and Shirvani leaves the centre. After about an hour Peter approaches Grete: "Elina just called me. And she was not going to send her children to any kindergarten. That was for sure!"
>
> (Field diary 14.06.05)

The described situation shows how Grete attempts to motivate Shirvani to sign up his and Elina's children for kindergarten so that Elina can start the programme. As a consequence Grete has stepped into the refugees' family sphere seeking to exert influence on their behaviour pattern. Given the couple's reluctance to obey Grete's proposal, it is arguable that Shirvani and Elina regard the contents of the proposal as unfamiliar and perhaps conflicting with their established norms on the matter. In this sense the dispute may be a 'shallow' culture conflict. What is more, there is also an economic dimension to the issue. If Shirvani and Elina register their children in the kindergarten they will lose their monthly 'Cash Benefit' [*kontantstøtta*][14], thus risking ending up in a less favourable economic situation than they are currently in[15]. Consequently, this dimension further challenges the caseworkers' efforts to achieve the set objectives.

In this example Grete seeks to perform the authority role vis-à-forcpa(s)10.oai.dhiTe6i.000rahc0.304 Tw[i[(c0.7001 3 Tw[(seC0s0ciperf iteppe4 -1.201vNcon ⁵49)6(

Hilde attempts here to eagerly motivate Dalmar to think through his desires and plans for the future, and by so doing she enters into a career counselling role. Apparently, Dalmar is not exactly sure of his future plans and responds to Hilde's questions in a somewhat insecure manner, resorting to wittiness. The above examples show how the caseworkers cope with the motivation/sanction intersection and the programme's control aspect. There is a tendency to emphasise the motivation principle, although even motivation risks involving a touch of more or less unintended control.

Conclusion

language training school and to a certain extent a 'job and qualification centre'. The current identity of the centre possibly harbours a more informal atmosphere than what prevailed in the social security office. In previous studies that have examined the encounter of caseworkers and immigrants the social security office has been referred to as the obvious setting (i.e. Ørvig 2000, Ylvisaker 2004). Likewise, Scandinavian researchers in social work have found that immigrants describe their meeting with the social security office as painful and derogatory (Ylvisaker 2004:36).

These findings do not, however, concur with my depiction of Skogdal Introduction Centre. My refugee informants did not express any feeling of being degraded in their meeting with the centre. On the contrary, they tended to speak positively about the centre. These utterances indicate that the refugees have a more balanced relation to the introduction centre than what has been the trend with the social security office.

In regard to the caseworkers I believe the new setting of Skogdal Introduction Centre in combination with the programme components made better premises to obtain more differentiated impression of the refugees than what has been described in the literature on the social security office (i.e. Ørvig 2000, Nilsen & Quereshi 1991). Put differently, we may say that the new framework has created a better basis to see the individual behind the refugee label and to obtain a more contextual image of the client.

Notwithstanding, my arguments require two reservations. Firstly, I base my arguments solely on my data from one municipality, that of Skogdal. And since the local authorities in the country's many municipalities are assured a fairly high degree of autonomy as for the programme's framing, there are differing organisational outcomes. The introductory programme's setting in other locations may have developed other identities and other environments than that of my case study. Secondly, caseworkers' views of the refugees are highly contingent on individual attitudes. Therefore, the caseworkers are likely to have diverse and at times contrasting images of the refugees within one single setting.

Moreover, in this paper I have examined the interaction between the refugee and the caseworker by focusing on role behaviour. In my analysis I consider them to constitute a single role set of multiplex relationships. My assessment of the programme guidelines and training manuals assumes that both the caseworker and the refugee have adopted new, and arguably more demanding, tasks and roles compared with previously. In the guidelines the refugee is portrayed as an active participant and future planner, while the caseworker is described as a coordinator, career counsellor, and advisor. However, my analysis shows how the two parties face some challenges in fulfilling these formal and ideal roles. As a consequence, more informal roles emerge. In this regard I have concentrated on the caseworkers and how both themselves and the refugees perceive their work. My analysis assumes that the refugees see the 'the helper' and 'the provider' when the caseworkers on the other hand try to perform their ideal roles. As a result of the two parties' different expectations, the ideal roles become diverted by other less desirable roles. These unwitting transitions across role boundaries manifest that the boundaries are prone to be porous. As for the refugees, the extent to which they are familiar and comfortable with the ideal roles, vary according to the roles. Consequently, among those who lack the required familiarity and comfort with the roles, there is a tendency of role ambiguity. Likewise, the participants do not seem to be in a good position to distinguish the several domains which each involve different degree and form of assistance carried out by the caseworkers. With that, the interaction between the refugee and the caseworker remains a continual and more or less implicit negotiating process of role boundaries, entailing some gaps and overlaps.

What is more, I have reflected on the unavoidable asymmetry that characterises the relation between refugees and caseworkers in terms of power, information and knowledge. As newcomers the refugees are legally required to participate in the introductory programme, and it makes up the only way of achieving economic support. The caseworkers have on their side the know-how about rules and demands the refugees are to abide by in order to obtain the monthly allowances. In view of this, my analysis considers the double role of the caseworkers; the reality that they must take into account the needs and desires of the refugee as a client at the same time as they are to be true to the policy of the organisation. At Skogdal Introduction Centre the caseworkers continually assessed, more or less explicitly, how to balance their in-between role. In their meetings they often talked about the difficulty they felt in wanting to treat the refugee as a unique individual person whilst simultaneously adhering to the programme directives and the central demand of efficiency and cost-effectiveness. With respect to discretion my case suggests that

the caseworkers are left with considerable autonomy as to the interpretation of the programme directives as well as the manner of tackling the participants' queries, needs and desires. This was also something that came to the fore in their meetings. For instance, when they discussed a participant's situation they tended to have differing perspectives on the degree to which they should assist a participant.

Finally, my study demonstrates how the motivation/sanction intersection of the introductory programme involves an element of control. Arguably, the caseworkers exert control vis-à-vis the refugees as a means of following the programme principles. In different ways they seek to motivate the participants to attend the programme activities whilst simultaneously attempting to emphasise the consequences of absenting the activities. In cases in which the participant does not comply with the rules the caseworkers discuss the necessity of resorting to sanctioning. However, they seem to resist taking the full step to sanction, choosing instead to spend time and energy on motivating the participant. In terms of role behaviour the caseworkers apparently perform the authority role when they seek to exert control.

Yet, the authority role tends to be diverted by the 'fellow-being' as they seem to have some empathy for the participant and his personal situation. As earlier shown, Schierenbeck's (2003) employs the same two roles - the authority role and fellow-being - in her analysis of Swedish and Israeli frontline bureaucrats. Even so, I find her analysis somewhat rigid in the way she attempts to distinguish the two roles. On the basis of my own research I prefer a more flexible notion of the role pair as my examples indicate that the caseworkers are continually

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