



## INTRODUCTION

# Educating Newcomers for the Modern Welfare State: Danish Frontline Organisations as Educational Sites and Drivers of Knowledge from the Late 1960s to the Late 1990s

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**Abstract** • Welfare-state education politics concerning migrants have mainly been studied inside the formal education system in historical and social science research. The special theme that this article introduces takes a broader view on “education” by directing attention to what we term “educational integration policies and practices” in the context of the Danish welfare state. Thereby we also suggest a broader scope for the history of education beyond the formal education system. The overall term *Welfare state* refers to a variety of welfare-state arrangements which have served an important role in educating newcomers *about* the welfare state, namely asylum centres, language teaching of adult newcomers, and social housing. The special theme directs attention to organisational frontline practices of these welfare-state arrangements, focusing on how educational integration practices were formed and shaped and became knowledge drivers for broader policy making in the formative years of Danish integration policy, beginning with the guest worker era in the late 1960s and continuing in the following decades. This introduction article presents the analytical and methodological background of the articles.

**Keywords** • educationalization, knowledge circulation and arenas, immigrants, frontline organisations, welfare states

### **Introduction: purpose of the special theme**

Education politics of the welfare states have mainly been studied inside the formal education system in historical and social science research. This special theme takes a broader view on “education” by directing attention to what we will term “*educational integration policies and practices*” in the context of the Danish welfare state, referring to a variety of welfare-state arrangements outside the formal education system which all, in a variety of ways, serve an important role in the everyday lives of newcomers, namely asylum centres, language teaching of adult newcomers, and social housing. These arrangements can be considered as societal sites where newcomers not only access benefits and services, but also draw their first experiences of and, whether intentionally or not, learn about how to live within the welfare state.

The interconnected articles in the special theme will all, albeit in different ways, direct attention to the organisational frontline practices in relation to these arrangements. The articles examine how educational integration practices were formed, shaped, and delivered and were transformed into knowledge that may have influenced policy making during the formative years of what, from the 1990s onward, became known as integration politics. Thereby, the articles focus on the period from the late

1960s, the beginning of the guest worker era, to the late 1990s when the first Integration Act was passed in the Danish parliament.

In the late 1960s, the Danish welfare state was at its peak and still expanding. At the same time, the economy was booming, and industries faced a shortage of labour. This was a challenge addressed by recruiting so-called guest workers, many from Yugoslavia, Turkey and Pakistan. They arrived in a country where the Social Democratic Party had long been the dominant governing force. Whether in office or not Social Democrat politics – along with the labor movement and the cooperative movement – played a decisive role in shaping the organisational arrangements that greeted these newly arrived workers. In her research on the history of what she terms the integration politics of the Danish Social Democratic Party from the 1960s to the 2000s, Heidi Vad Jønsson proposes the following periodization: 1967–1973 by “guest worker politics,” 1973–1983 by “immigrant politics” [*Indvanderpolitik*], a period during which it was increasingly recognised that the guest workers were going to stay and thus were immigrants, and 1983–1989 by the formation of a specific refugee politics. Finally, the period 1989–2001 can be said to be the period when a definite integration policy was formed nationally.<sup>1</sup> According to Jønsson, the early 1980s marked the moment when debates on redirecting attention towards “integration” began at a national level, with the suburban municipalities west of Copenhagen, and especially Ishøj, among the first movers.<sup>2</sup>

Building on Jønsson’s observations, we consider the era of guestworker politics as potentially formative for subsequent policy approaches. Accordingly, we delimit *the formative period* of “integration policy” in the Danish welfare state as spanning from the onset of the guest worker era in the late 1960s – when larger groups of Eastern European refugees also arrived – up to the passage of the so-called Integration Act in 1998. Thus, the articles in this special theme examine the gradual emergence of what would later be known as integration politics. Focusing on the formative period for policies that were later stipulated on the national level allows us to bring in new local insights and nuances to the, sometime, rather simplistic depiction of the political context and dynamics around reception and integration of newcomers in Denmark. However, such a focus does not mean that we embrace and utilize the concept of integration. What we explore is the history behind the stipulation of “integration” as policy and politics.

The articles in the special theme draw on source material and conceptual work developed in the collaborative research project “Educating newcomers to the welfare state. Organizational responses to migration 1960s–2010s and their influence on Danish central policy” (EduState).<sup>3</sup> This research project combines, as do the articles in this special theme, approaches from history of education, welfare-state history, and political science.

A key focus of the articles is to detect how knowledge generated through educational integration practices in frontline organisations of the Danish welfare state evolved into

1 Heidi Vad Jønsson, *I velfærdsstatens randområde. Socialdemokratiets integrationspolitik 1960’erne til 2000’erne* (Odense: University of Southern Denmark, 2013), 40. See also Heidi Vad Jønsson, *Fra lige muligheder til ret og pligt. Socialdemokratiets integrationspolitik i den moderne velfærdsstats tidsalder* (Odense: Syddansk Universitet, 2018), e.g., 16–17.

2 Jønsson (2018), 66ff.

3 Funded by Independent Research Fund Denmark <https://www.en.culture.aau.dk/research/research-groups/cfu/educating-newcomers-to-the-welfare-state, 2022–2026>.

what we define as *drivers* for policy making at the central political and administrative level. This notion is inspired by Niklas A. Andersen and Karen N. Breidahl's work on role of ideas as important drivers of policy making, where ideas are broadly defined as policy paradigms, problem perceptions, and various forms of social and organisational knowledge.<sup>4</sup> By introducing the concept of *knowledge drivers*, we aim to grasp when frontline organisations and practices – in this case the educational integration practices developed around the newcomers – are transformed into knowledge that shapes how and why certain ideas are inscribed into policies, and thereby how and when knowledge may have the ability to influence policymaking processes and changes of policies more broadly. The articles of this special theme thereby contribute with novel insights into the processes and practices of knowledge production that emerged when the frontline of the Danish welfare state encountered newcomers, and simultaneously initiated learning processes within the state apparatus.<sup>5</sup> This introductory article frames the special theme and elaborates on the central concepts and notions underpinning it. Furthermore, it presents and discusses the analytical and methodological foundations of the articles.

### History of education as the lens to reveal integration politics in the context of the Danish welfare state

Post WWII, Europe and the new states that were created on the borders of Europe experienced frequent and ongoing migration waves. During the 1940s, the majority of refugees to the Nordic states were from Germany and, from the 1950s onwards, from the Eastern European communist dictatorships following political turmoil and persecution.<sup>6</sup> Denmark, compared to Sweden, was rather late in terms of recognising the importance of formulating specific policies directed at migrants.<sup>7</sup> As noted, it was not until the late 1960s that policy makers began to acknowledge the need for specific policies on how to address and manage newcomers<sup>8</sup>. This period also marked the culmination of the expansion phase of the Danish welfare model.

One of the central features of the Nordic welfare-state model is the provision of universal social rights provided by the state, alongside the preservation of a market-based private sector. A central welfare arrangement in this regard was the establishment of an education model, free of charge, from elementary school to university level,

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4 Niklas A. Andersen and Karen N. Breidahl. "The Power of Ideas in Policymaking Processes: The role of Institutionalised Knowledge Production in State Bureaucracies," *Social Policy and Administration* 55, no.5 (2021), 848–62.

5 Concerning arguments about the capacity of the state to facilitate learning processes, see Karen N. Breidahl, *Når staten lærer: En historisk og komparativ analyse af statslig policy læring og betydningen heraf for udviklingen i den arbejdsmarkedsrettede del af indvandrerpolitikken i Sverige, Norge og Danmark fra 1970 til 2011*. Aalborg: Aalborg University, 2012.

6 Mats Wickström, "The Difference White Ethnicities Made. The Multiculturalist Turn of Sweden in Comparison to the Cases of Canada and Denmark," In *Migration and Welfare States: Policies, Discourses and Institutions*, ed. Heidi Vad Jonsson, Elizabeth Onasch, Saara Pellander and Mats Wickström (Helsinki: Nordic Centre of Excellence NordWel, 2013), 25–58; Leo Lucassen, *The Immigrant Threat. The Integration of Old and New Migrants in Western Europe since 1850* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2005).

7 Breidahl (2012).

8 Jønsson (2013, 2018); Grete Brochmann and Anniken Hagelund (ed.), *Immigration Policy and the Scandinavian Welfare State 1945–2010* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012).

allegedly for the whole population. This model encouraged social mobility while also aiming at educating the population into what Kettunen and Petersen have conceptualised as “welfare state mentalities”;<sup>9</sup> educating the population into embracing values such as equity and equal opportunities and duties.<sup>10</sup>

Although the Nordic states share many core welfare features, they also differ in significant ways. As famously noted by the welfare-state historian Mary Hilson, “the Nordic model” can be considered as a model with at least five exceptions, each of the Nordic states being an exception.<sup>11</sup> While it makes sense, despite internal variations, to describe a certain Nordic model with regard to the formal education system, immigrant and integration policies have developed in markedly different directions.<sup>12</sup> Mats Wickström has for instance pointed to the difference between the multicultural model of Sweden and its opposite; the more restrictive and particularist Danish welfare-state politics.<sup>13</sup> In the same vein, a considerable amount of research has documented how unequal treatment and culturalist racisms are perpetrated towards people with a migration history within the formal education system of the Danish welfare state. Much research have focused on the influence of the background of the immigrants, whether seeking explanations for unsuccessful integration or revealing their life-world perspectives.<sup>14</sup> Less attention has been devoted to how reception and integration policies have been executed in everyday organisational frontline practices in a historical perspective and thereby how welfare-state arrangements have encountered the people who arrived and became targets of political integration intentions. Moreover, previous research has only to a limited extent examined “the organizations in the middle – between the state and individuals”<sup>15</sup> – those that directly engaged with newcomers and developed practices, often ahead of stipulated policies, in response to their arrival.

In this special theme we examine the various educational integration practices that took place within these frontline organisations; efforts aimed, on the one hand, at meeting and comply with the needs of newcomers – such as language skills and housing

9 Pauli Kettunen and Klaus Petersen, “Introduction: Rethinking Welfare State Models,” in *Beyond Welfare State Models: Transnational Historical Perspectives on Social Policy*, ed. Pauli Kettunen and Klaus Petersen (Cheltenham, UK/Northampton, US: Edward Elgar, 2011), 1–15.

10 Alfred Ofte dal Telhaug, Odd Asbjørn Mediås and Petter Aasen, “The Nordic Model in Education: Education as Part of the Political System in the Last 50 Years,” *Scandinavian Journal of Education* 50, no. 3 (2006), 248–50; Mette Buchardt, Pirjo Markkola and Heli Valtonen, “Education and the Making of the Nordic Welfare States,” in *Education, State and Citizenship*, ed. Mette Buchardt, Pirjo Markkola and Heli Valtonen, NordWel Studies in Historical Welfare State Research 4 (Helsinki: Nordic Centre of Excellence NordWel, 2013), 7–30; Christian Ydesen and Mette Buchardt, “Citizen Ideals and Education in Nordic Welfare State School Reforms,” in *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Education* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020).

11 Mary Hilson, *The Nordic Model: Scandinavia Since 1945* (London: Reaktion Books, 2008).

12 Brochmann and Hagelund (2012).

13 Wickström (2013).

14 E.g. Mette Buchardt, “The ‘Culture’ of the Migrant Pupils. A Nation- and Welfare State Historical Perspective on the European Refugee Crisis,” *European Education* 50, no. 1 (2018), 58–73; Iram Khawaja and Reva Jaffe-Walter, “‘The Tipping Point’ – Interrogating Racialized Nationalist Affects in Danish High Schools,” *Race Ethnicity and Education* 28, no.6 (2024), 1002–21; Trine Øland et al. (ed.), *Statecrafting on the Fringes: Studies of Welfare Work Addressing the Other* (Copenhagen: Museum Tusulanum, 2019).

15 Karen N. Breidahl and Evelyn Z. Brodtkin, “Managing Asylum: Street-Level Organizations and Refugee Crises,” *Journal of Comparative Policy Analysis* 26, no. 1 (2024), 42–63.

– and, on the other hand, at more implicitly introducing and educating them to live in the welfare state. With a note to Philip Jackson’s iconic conceptualisation,<sup>16</sup> the aim of the articles is to dig down to the mid-level of the Danish welfare-state integration arrangements in a period where the welfare state was in its making and shed light on *the practised and hidden curriculum* that newcomers could learn from as they encountered the welfare-state arrangements outside the formal education system.

This aim takes its point of departure in the underlying assumption that education is a significant feature of the welfare state also beyond the formal education system, as elucidated by historians of education such as Buchardt and Westberg.<sup>17</sup> Thus, since the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and the onset of social- and welfare-state ideas,<sup>18</sup> political and social problems have increasingly been *educationalized*; sought solved through educating the population, as pointed out and conceptualised by historians of education, prominently Marc Depaepe, Paul Smeyers, and Daniel Tröhler.<sup>19</sup> This has not only taken place through the formal education system but also through broader social policy developments.

In the research presented in this special theme the conceptual diagnosis of educationalization contributes to operationalise what we define as *the educational character of the welfare state*.<sup>20</sup> This means that a broader range of policy areas within welfare state politics can be understood and studied as having an educational and pedagogical message, besides other means. Thus, policies aiming at integrating new citizens hence can be understood as de facto educational. Also, economic and social policies can entail educating elements – more or less explicit – as part of the solutions to economic and social challenges. In continuation, the articles of the special theme explore what we

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16 Philip W. Jackson, *Life in Classrooms* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1968); Mette Buchardt, “Suburban City Planning and the Hidden Curriculum of the Educational Welfare State in Denmark mid-1960s to the late 1970s” (public lecture held at Institut für Erziehungswissenschaft, Universität Wien, September 2, 2023. Manuscript under publication).

17 Mette Buchardt, “The Nordic Model and the Educational Welfare State in a European Light: Social Problem Solving and Secular-Religious Ambitions when Modernizing Sweden and France,” in *The Nordic Education Model in Context: Historical Developments and Current Renegotiations*, ed. Daniel Tröhler, Bernadette Hörmann, Sverre Tveit and Inga Bostad (New York: Routledge, 2023), 107–24; Johannes Westberg: “The 19th Century Educational State: The Case of Sweden” (paper presented at European Social Science History Conference, Leiden, March 23–26, 2025); Johannes Westberg, “Multiplying the Origins of Mass Schooling: An Analysis of the Preconditions Common to Schooling and the School Building Process in Sweden, 1840–1900,” *History of Education* 44, no. 4 (2015), 415–36.

18 Nils Edling, “The Concept of ‘Welfare State’ in Danish Public and Political Debates,” in *The Changing Meanings of the Welfare State: Histories of a Key Concept in the Nordic Countries*, ed. Nils Edling (New York: Berghahn Books, 2019), 137–78; Pauli Kettunen, “The Transnational Construction of National Challenges: The Ambiguous Nordic model of Welfare and Competitiveness,” in *Beyond Welfare State Models: Transnational Historical Perspectives on Social Policy*, ed. Pauli Kettunen and Klaus Petersen (Cheltenham, UK/Northampton, US: Edward Elgar, 2011), 16–40.

19 Marc Depaepe and Paul Smeyers, “Educationalization as an Ongoing Modernization Process,” *Educational Theory* 58, no. 4 (2008), 379–89; David F. Labaree, “The Winning Ways of a Losing Strategy: Educationalizing Social Problems in the United States,” *Educational Theory* 58, no. 4 (2008), 447–60; Daniel Tröhler, *Pestalozzi and the Educationalization of the World* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013); Daniel Tröhler, “Educationalization of Social Problems and the Educationalization of the Modern World,” in *Encyclopedia of Educational Philosophy and Theory*, ed. Michael A. Peters (Singapore: Springer, 2016), 698–703.

20 Drawing on Buchardt (2023).

define as “educational integration policies and practices” that developed outside the formal education system in the formative years of Danish integration politics from the late 1960s and up until the 1990s. How did different welfare-state arrangements educate the newcomers, and how have the early practices and the knowledge produced in this context created future policy paths? The articles in this special theme are hence using history of education conceptualisations as an overarching lens for exploring and providing new understandings of the Danish welfare state and its intersections between education and integration politics. By doing so the aim of the special theme is also to contribute to the development of history of education by means of broadening the scope of the discipline empirically and theoretically.

### Frontline organisations as de facto producers of educational integration policies

Most welfare policies, also those targeting newcomers, are de facto delivered to people through so-called frontline organisations (also referred to as street-level organisations (SLOs)). Consequently, these organisations play a critical role in people’s lives in accessing services, benefits, and rights provided by the state and can therefore be regarded as “de facto policy makers”.<sup>21</sup> In this special theme we depart from classical insights from research on frontline organisations by pointing to how these organisations not only are crucial for “delivering policies to the people”: They can also serve a broader role in terms of inventing practices, defining problems, and creating knowledge that can possibly influence broader policy making. Even though these organisations do not decide “policy’s explicit content,” they can be understood as “de facto policymakers in the sense that they informally construct (and reconstruct) policy in the course of everyday organizational life”.<sup>22</sup>

Focusing on these frontline dynamics from the perspective of history of education-ization allows us to reveal how asylum centres, language instruction, social housing, etc., have served as sites for educating the newcomers to the welfare states as well as sites for creating knowledge about how to create and categorise different segments of the population.

Studying frontline organisations, with more or less close ties to the state authorities, has been the empirical focus and entrance to studying educational integration practices and the path to establishing policy in the research project in question. The contributions explore and reveal the history of the frontline organisations of the welfare state that received and educated the newcomers and, moreover, how they have contributed to the development of present-day welfare-state policies and politics of Denmark.

Common to the three organisations in focus of the articles – Danish Refugee Council, DRC (*Dansk Flygtningehjælp*), Workers’ Housing Cooperative (AAB), and Red Cross Asylum, RCA (*Dansk Røde Kors*) – is the fact that they all have served an important role as operators of the state within central areas of Danish integration policy and,

21 Evelyn Z. Brodtkin, “Reflections on Street-Level Bureaucracy: Past, Present, and Future,” *Public Administration Review* 72, no. 6 (2012), 940–49.

22 Evelyn Z. Brodtkin, “Policy work: Street-Level Organizations under New Managerialism,” *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* 21 (2011), 253.

as has been the case across the Nordic welfare states, performed state tasks, partly state-subsidised and governed by state policies.<sup>23</sup>

Since the late 1960s, Danish Refugee Council, DRC had organised various introduction activities for newcomers, notably language schools. From 1971, it became a priority to provide language education to guest workers, manifested in the so-called Elkær-Hansen commission, the first commission regarding the guest worker situation in Denmark. However, already since 1968, when Polish refugees started to arrive, DRC had been the provider of Danish language instruction for refugees.<sup>24</sup> In Sophy Bergenheim's article "Educating refugees to the welfare state: Educational social integration and language education in the Danish Refugee Council from the late 1960s to the 1980s," it is accentuated how the practices in DRC's language schools contributed to the development of a new professional area within the Danish welfare state, not least by means of working up a body of knowledge to operate and legitimise the activities.

The question of housing was another key area of the Elkær-Hansen commission. During the 1970s, migrants were increasingly housed in newly built social housing areas on the outskirts of the bigger cities, and the cooperative association connected to the labour movement, Workers' Housing Cooperative, AAB (*Boligforeningen AAB*), became one of the key operators.<sup>25</sup> Mette Buchardt's article "Educating immigrants – Educating about immigrants. Suburban social housing as knowledge hub for Danish welfare state integration politics 1970s–1980s" folds out how the new suburban municipality Ishøj south of Copenhagen, the social housing project "The Ishøj Plan," operated by AAB, and not least the municipal "immigrant counseling office" in the Ishøj Plan not only became formative for policies, but also became arenas for knowledge production in a public political sense, namely as the gateway for journalists, scholars, and students wanting to study "the immigrants," and thus becoming an arena for forming content for "the public curriculum".

The legal status of asylum seekers (at that time also referred to as spontaneous refugees) saw considerable changes with the enactment of the Danish Aliens Act in 1983. Among others, it was ratified that asylum seekers were allowed to await their asylum determination *within* the borders of the Danish state. This created a demand for build-

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23 Peter Bundesen, Lars Skov Henriksen and Anja Jørgensen, *Filantropi, selvhjælp og interesseorganisering. Frivillige organisationer i dansk socialpolitik 1849-1990erne* (Odense: Odense Universitetsforlag, 2001); Jørn Henrik Petersen, Klaus Petersen and Søren Kolstrup, "Autonomy, Cooperation or Colonization? Christian Philanthropy and State Welfare in Denmark," *Journal of Church and State* 56, no. 4 (2014), 1–24.

24 *Betænkning nr. 589. Betænkning om udenlandske arbejderes forhold i Danmark. Afgivet af det arbejdsministeriet den 17. juni 1969 nedsatte udvalg* (the Elkær-Hansen commission) (Copenhagen: Ministry of Labour, 1971); Bente Andersen and Susanne Rosenfeldt Nielsen, *Det pædagogiske arbejde på Dansk Flygtningehjælps sprogskoler* (Odense: Dansk Flygtningehjælp, Sprogcenter Odense, 2000); Ole Stig Andersen and Madjid Allaoua, *Nye traditioner. Festskrift til Indvandrerens Aftenskole* (Copenhagen: FLM reklameservice, 2001); Lars Holm, *Hvilken vej ind i hvilken skriftlighed? Et studie af undervisning i skriftlighed i dansk som andetsprog for voksne* (Copenhagen: Danmarks Pædagogiske Universitets Forlag, 2004).

25 Jonathan M. Schwartz, "Reluctant Hosts: Denmark's Reception of Guest Workers," *Kultursociologiske Skrifter* no. 21 (Copenhagen: Akademisk Forlag, 1985); Jørgen Larsen, *På vejen til bedre boliger. Arbejdernes Andels-Boligforening 1912–1987* (Copenhagen: AAB, 1987); Heidi Vad Jønsen, "Immigrant Policy Developing in Copenhagen and Ishøj in the 1970s," *Scandinavian Journal of History* 38, no. 5 (2013), 590–610; Mette Buchardt, *Kulturforklaring: Uddannelseshistorier om muslimskhed* (Copenhagen: Tiderne Skifter, 2016).

ing up capacity to organise asylum seekers' waiting time; providing reception and accommodation facilities. This demand was significantly strained by the sudden and substantial influx of refugees from the Middle East and other countries in 1984–1985. In 1984, Red Cross Asylum was depicted by the state authorities as key operator for organising asylum reception and accommodation.<sup>26</sup> Karen N. Bredahl and Siv Holm Hjortlund unfold the crucial and manifold role of RCA in the article “Frontline Organisations as Sites for Political Learning: Managing Asylum Waiting time in the formative years (1983–1988) of the Danish Asylum System”. It reveals how RCA as a frontline organisation, manifested in local asylum centres spread out all over the country, not only served a crucial role in dealing with the legal, humanitarian, and economic needs of the asylum seekers while waiting but also served as sites for learning in their own right; as inventors or producers of so-called “tacit knowledge downwards” through their everyday frontline practices. Moreover, Bredahl and Hjortlund accentuate how frontline organisations, under sudden conditions, may also serve a role “upwards” as influencers on learning within the state bureaucracy and thereby as contributors to central policymaking processes.<sup>27</sup>

Drawing, in varying ways and to different degrees, on historically grounded political theory, history of education-based theory, theory about frontline organisations, and recent theoretical development in the history of knowledge, the articles in this special theme address the following overarching questions:

a) How have frontline actors over time developed knowledge on migrants that washed back on political decision-making b) how have the organisational responses to policy and to migrants influenced and possibly changed the welfare states and c) How we can understand this policy and knowledge production in the development of educational efforts to foster welfare-state populations?

Summing up, the articles study the organisations that were in the frontline of educating newcomers to the welfare state, beginning with the guest worker era in the late 1960s to the 1990s. In continuation hereof, the articles explore how organisational responses aiming at educating the immigrants to the Danish society have influenced the welfare state, and which frontline knowledge produced on the ground that ended up influencing these processes. Thus, the articles aim to contribute empirical and theoretical insights by means of 1) developing novel methodology and new empirical insights in Nordic-model welfare-state practices and 2) using the history-of-education lenses beyond studies of the formal education system and thereby contributing to develop the scope and impact of history of education as discipline and field.

### **The theoretical frameworks and contributions**

Although the articles rely on different theoretical perspectives (combined in different ways) some core analytical features are prevalent across the articles:

Firstly, all three articles takes their point of departure in the study of frontline organisations whereby they emphasis the role of these organisations as pivotal players and mediators of policy and politics and as the central sites through which people, in this

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<sup>26</sup> Bredahl and Brodtkin (2024).

<sup>27</sup> Bredahl (2012).

case newcomers, encounter welfare-state arrangements.<sup>28</sup> Thus, all the articles direct attention to how policies are produced on the ground through organisational practices rather than focusing on formal policies and law. Moreover, the perspectives on frontline organisations in this special theme depart from more conventional notions in street-level theory by not only focusing on their “downward influence” but also on how they sometimes can influence central policy making “upwards”. In Breidahl and Hjortlund’s article, focusing on the practices and de facto policies of “waiting time”, the authors not only examine how Red Cross Asylum has influenced the waiting time for asylum seekers through their daily practices in the asylum centres, among other things through educational activities. It also reveals how RCA attempted to influence the conditions and resources available for shaping the waiting time. As de facto policy makers, RCA not only contributed to the creation of formative policies; they also tried to influence the conditions they were subject to. Bergenheim’s article examines the strategic latitude of Danish Refugee Council, a frontline organisation in the niche field of refugee integration that was not yet governed by its own specialised legislation; for instance, the regulation of the language schools was unclear, as well as the curriculum made by the teachers. Bucharth’s article focuses on a complex field of municipal organisations and cooperative housing associations with “the immigrant counseling office”, located in the social housing project in question, in focus. Where the municipality sought to influence central immigration and integration policy with regard to managing housing of immigrants and municipal economy, there are strong indications that the existence of the immigration counseling office had a symbolic and discursive influence on the public understanding of “immigrants”.

Secondly, the articles address “how knowledge moves and how it is continuously molded in the process” based on insights from the disciplinary areas of history, sociology, and organisational theory of knowledge.<sup>29</sup> The sites that knowledge moves between are analysed as *arenas of knowledge*, where *knowledge actors* – primarily (but not limited to) the immigrant office’s employees, Red Cross employees at asylum centres, or social workers and language educators – contribute as *producers* and *circulators of knowledge*. According to Johan Östling, an arena of knowledge can be conceptualised as “a place or a platform in its given framework offering the opportunity and setting the limits for certain forms of circulation of knowledge. It serves as a site for interactions between knowledge actors and their audiences”. In addition, an arena of knowledge can be seen as an element in a society’s larger infrastructure for knowledge.<sup>30</sup>

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28 Michael Lipsky, *Street-Level Bureaucracy: Dilemmas of the Individual in Public Service* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1980); Brodtkin (2012).

29 Björn Lundberg, “Exploring Histories of Knowledge and Education: An Introduction,” *Nordic Journal of Educational History* 9, no. 2 (2022), 1–11; Johan Östling et al., “The History of Knowledge and the Circulation of Knowledge: An Introduction,” in *Circulation of Knowledge: Explorations in the History of Knowledge*, ed. Johan Östling et al. (Lund: Nordic Academic Press, 2018), 9–33; Nanna Ramsing Enemark and Mette Bucharth, “Educational knowledge and Politics of Receiving Migrant Pupils: A Contribution to Danish Welfare State History During the late Twentieth Century,” *Paedagogica Historica: International Journal of the History of Education* 60, no. 6 (2024), 1027–46; Johan Östling et al., “Introduction: Histories of Knowledge in Postwar Scandinavia,” in *Histories of Knowledge in Postwar Scandinavia: Arenas, Actors and Aspirations*, ed. Johan Östling, Niklas Olsen and David Larsson Heidenblad (London: Routledge, 2020), 7–8.

30 Östling (2020), 7.

The notion of an arena is in Bergenheim's article structured around educational integration knowledge, where knowledge actors of a budding field of knowledge circulate, transform, and implement ideas and experiences. The knowledge arena is thus seen as a flexible platform for knowledge circulation, at times spanning multiple fields, sectors, and organisations. In addition, knowledge actors also form more specialised sub-arenas for circulating and developing their specific flavour of educational integration knowledge, thus simultaneously also deepening the knowledge in the "master arena". In the same vein, Buchardt's articles draw on and retool the concept of knowledge arenas to analyse the role played by "The immigrant office" as a hub for knowledge production about "immigrants" and circulation of such knowledge.

Drawing on the concept of "tacit knowledge" as understood by Michael Polanyi and Amartya Sen,<sup>31</sup> Bredahl and Hjortlund analyse how knowledge is produced along the way, as frontline staff are confronted with complex problems and attempt to manage these problems. The article emphasises how Red Cross Asylum served as a site for political learning while producing knowledge "downwards" through their everyday frontline practices and contributed as influencers of tacit knowledge "upwards" to central policy making and to learning processes within the state bureaucracy.

Thirdly, the articles engage with political science theories on welfare-state dynamics in policy making and knowledge and ideas as drivers hereof.<sup>32</sup> Particularly, the articles are inspired by Paul Pierson's theoretical insights concerning "Politics in time", stressing how the formative moments at one historical point in time when institutional arrangements are settled affect policy paths at subsequent points in time.<sup>33</sup> Bredahl and Hjortlund's article is in particular concerned with learning processes within the state bureaucracy, more specifically how ideas about managing temporality in the early years of the asylum system influenced the trajectory of asylum policy over time: despite the fact that asylum seekers ended up staying in the centres for prolonged periods of time (and much longer than the goal set up by the immigration authorities), notions of temporariness have influenced the logics in the asylum system up until the present. Bergenheim's article discusses a formative period in Danish refugee integration politics and features several contingent events and critical junctures that directly affect the trajectory of DRC. The same is the case regarding the social housing area, the Ishøj Plan, and the municipality of Ishøj which created practices and sought to influence policy in the period when immigrant and integration politics were only gradually in the making. However, the frontline practices in Ishøj and the municipal interventions on national politics seem to have influenced the national political decision making in a longer perspective, especially from the 2010 onwards.

Finally, all three articles emphasize processes of educationalization, that is, accentuating political problem-solving through educational efforts, as a feature in the develop-

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31 Michael Polanyi and Amartya Sen, *The Tacit Dimension* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009).

32 Peter A. Hall, "Policy Paradigms, Social Learning, and the State: The Case of Economic Policy-making in Britain," *Comparative Politics* 25, (1993), 275–96; Daniel Béland, "Ideas, Institutions, and Policy Change," *Journal of European Public Policy* 16, (2009), 701–18; Andersen and Bredahl (2021).

33 Paul Pierson, *Politics in Time: History, Institutions, and Social Analysis* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004).

ment of the modern state.<sup>34</sup> Besides understanding educationalization as a trait across welfare-state policy areas particularly equipped for and partly overlapping with integration purposes, the perspectives deriving from the diagnosis of educationalization is also used in more concrete ways in the three articles. As Breidahl and Hjortlund's article illustrates in the case of Red Cross Asylum, this became evident when, in the late 1980s, parliament enacted legislation granting asylum seekers the right to participate in educational activities. This "right" also served the function of alleviating social problems at the centres and thereby promoting social peace. Thus, attempts to educate asylum seekers mainly served a social purpose, and to a lesser extent a qualification purpose. Bergenheim's article showcases how education and learning constituted an underlying core theme that permeated refugee integration and its various power imbalances. This took shape both with regard to the way refugees were made targets of educational intervention, and as self-educational professionalisation of integration professionals. Moreover, the overlap between (re-)educational integration policy and social policy, as well as the centrality of language education in refugee integration that the article demonstrates, further illustrates the educational character of refugee integration. Buchardt's article folds out the history of how the "immigration counseling office" in the Ishøj Plan was tasked with instructing and supervising the immigrant tenants about their welfare-state duties, and as such concretely educating them to fulfil the expectation of the municipality, the local frontline of the welfare state. In addition, the office served as a gateway to knowledge about "immigrants" for students and scholars, seeking knowledge about "immigrants". The frontline of Ishøj hence contributed to on the one hand developing practices where immigrants were subject to education, while also contributing to making immigrants an object to educational knowledge and research.

### **The research contributions: The history of educationalization and the learning welfare state**

Despite variations in the theoretical frameworks and their applications, a common feature across all three articles is that they combine insights from frontline theory with the conceptual diagnosis of educationalization. This combination enables the articles to study how areas such as language schools, social housing, and asylum centres can be understood as informal educational organisations that in various ways have served as productive sites in shaping societal understandings of problems and solutions to these perceived problems. Also, in more general terms, these organisations have served as producers of knowledge and influenced broader policy making. Thus, the articles – as the research project they form part of – follow the paths from the establishment of the organisations as operators in various areas of the welfare state in order to investigate how *educational integration practices* were formed in these frontline organisations.

Two main contributions to the research field of history of education should in continuation hereof be highlighted. First, the articles highlight frontline micro-practices, showing newcomers both as subjects of education and knowledge transmission and, at the same time, as objects of professional knowledge production. The micro practices of educationalization thus also constituted a form of knowledge production

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34 Depaepe and Smeyers (2008); Tröhler (2016).

that spread and influenced both the state and society. Secondly, the articles demonstrate how state policy to some extent – and under some circumstances – was receptive to this knowledge production. Therefore, from a history of education perspective, the state and its policy stipulation practices can also be understood and examined as a form of historical organisational learning.

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