

FRIPRO TOPPFORSK PROJECT: THE IMMIGRATION ISSUE IN SCANDINAVIAN PUBLIC SPHERES 1970-2015 (SCANPUB)

1. Aspects relating to the research project

Immigration is currently a controversial political issue in many parts of the world, since migratory movements are a global phenomenon and at higher volumes than ever before in human history. Scandinavia has had the issue on the public agenda for decades. SCANPUB is a project designed to chart, describe, analyse, evaluate and compare public discourse on immigration in the three Scandinavian countries 1970-2015 and to explain observed differences, also with respect to the relations between public discourse and, on the one hand, immigration policies, and, on the other, the public's attitudes and opinions. It starts from the general impression that the three Scandinavian countries – Denmark, Norway and Sweden – in spite of all of their similarities and close ties - have had strikingly different public discourses on the issue of immigration, and have developed quite different political regimes in relevant policy areas. A systematic, longitudinal comparative study of public discourse on immigration in the three countries is, however, lacking, as is systematic normative evaluations of it. Furthermore, few if any systematic attempts at explaining similarities and differences have been made.

SCANPUB aims to take on these tasks, and to do so in a particularly ambitious way: Starting from general theories on the public sphere in liberal democracies and an understanding of the contemporary public sphere as largely constituted by communication media, it seeks to analyse public discourse in different media and on different levels by combining a variety of theories and quantitative and qualitative methodologies in a series of well-defined and yet closely related subprojects. The thematic proximity of these subprojects will enable (a) a nuanced, comprehensive description of developments, similarities and differences, and thus provide a basis for (b) a normative evaluation and (c) an attempt at a set of explanations for the features observed. The issue is complex, involving moral, cultural, social and economic

considerations, and engages the public more broadly than many other areas of political debate. Consequently, it is an issue well suited for a study of how liberal democracy handles important, complex issues. SCANPUB is therefore also designed to (d) improve public sphere theory in areas concerning the forms and role of deliberation in actually existing democracies, including the role of culture, morality and affect in public political discourse, and the continued role of the nation-state in times of extensive internationalisation and globalization. As a whole, SCANPUB aims to improve our understanding not only of mediated public discourse in Scandinavia but also of the relations between the mediated public sphere and political decision-making on the one hand and the general public on the other.

There is a very large international research literature on migration, immigration policies and issues related to integration, cultural identities, multicultural societies etc. The literature on public discourse on immigration is, however, relatively sparse, with the exception of studies of media representations of immigrants and their communities. In particular, there are quite few comparative studies of immigration discourse, over time as well as between countries. A notable contribution here is Rodney Benson's *Shaping Immigration News: A French-American Comparison* (2014), which on the basis of Bourdieu's field theory analyses differences and similarities between France and the U.S. media's news coverage of immigration in four periods between 1973 and 2006. Another valuable exception to the rule is a special issue of the journal *American Behavioral Scientist* (no.7, vol. 59, June 2015) edited by Kjersti Thorbjørnsrud and reporting on the findings of the Mediation of Migration project based at the University of Oslo concerning their comparative study of reporting on immigration in France, the US and Norway. (Cf also Strabac et al. 2012) However, neither this nor Benson's work have public sphere theory as a part of their theoretical framework. Furthermore, there are currently no systematic comparative studies of public discourse over time on immigration in all of Scandinavia, only some studies limited to one country (e.g. Hagelund 2004) or, at the most, two (very few, e.g. Green-Pedersen and Krogstrup 2008). SCANPUB

thus aims to contribute in a field that is quite scantily covered internationally and practically not covered at all with respect to Scandinavia.

2. The project plan, project management, organisation and cooperation

2.1. Immigration in Scandinavia: Similarities and differences

The differences between the Scandinavian countries with respect to immigration discourse and policies are interesting since the three countries in question are so similar in many respects. (Iceland and Finland are included in the term “Nordic countries”, while “Scandinavia” here refers to the three countries situated on the Scandinavian peninsula and immediately to the south of it, where languages are perceivable as dialects with a common root in Old Norse.) In fact, as put by Pettersen and Østby (2013:76): “With so many political and social similarities between the Scandinavian countries, we are as close to an experimental situation as is possible in social sciences.” In other words, the comparative work to be conducted is one between very similar systems where the estimation of relations between independent and dependent variables is facilitated (cf. below).

Similarities: The three countries have been closely related and intertwined in a variety of ways since Viking times, politically so through various unions since the 14th century. Liberal democracy was gradually introduced in all three countries throughout the 19th century and the early 20th century. In the 1950s, they formed a passport union and established a common labour market. They are all constitutional monarchies and have quite (but not completely) similar political systems. Their media systems resemble each other not least since the TV channels of public service broadcasters, one financed by a license fee, one by advertising in each country, play a central role. They all have had strong, broadly popular social movements (especially social-democratic labour movements) and very closely connected literatures and other arts. These are all parts of the background for a key similarity of particular

importance to their mediated public discourses on immigration: All three have developed welfare states commonly regarded as quite similar and representative of a social- democratic politico-cultural foundation they share. Ignoring a voluminous debate on various relevant differences between and on what the notion of a welfare state comprises, it should be sufficient here to refer to the shared basic principles of the Scandinavian welfare state, as summarised by Brochmann and Hagelund (2012:7) (1) "everyone must be entitled to benefits (universalism)"; (2) "payments must not be random or smack of charity (the principle of justice)"; (3) "there must be a connection between rights and obligations (the contribution ethics)"; (4) "the strongest backs must bear the heaviest burdens (the distribution ethic when it comes to financing, along with a progressive taxation system)"; (5) "the system is based on the principle that all who are able are in employment (the work ethic)". These principles reflect strong egalitarian values but also a high degree of social trust, including trust in the State, that historically may be seen as tied to relatively homogenous populations in cultural terms. The consensus underlying the welfare state may thus be perceived as challenged by the influx of high numbers of residents with very different cultural backgrounds, including different perceptions of the State. International empirical research on this issue has reached somewhat mixed conclusions, but seems not to provide strong support for the so-called "anti- solidarity thesis". (Cf. e.g. Brady and Finnigan 2014; Ervasti and Hjerm 2012 vs. Eger 2010)

Differences: It is an undisputed fact that the three countries have chosen quite different paths in terms of policy: Sweden has by far the most generous immigration policies, Denmark the most restrictive – while Norway is located somewhere between the two. (Cf. Brochmann and Hagelund, *ibid.*:4) SCANPUB aims to identify key reasons for this state of affairs by studying on an historical background the mediated public discourse on immigration in the three countries and its relations both to decision-making and to the public at large.

There are several significant differences between the three countries, historically as well as contemporarily. Sweden, independent since the

16th century, has roughly twice as many inhabitants as the other two (currently 9,8 million, vs. 5,7 in Denmark and 5,2 in Norway). Denmark, also independent since the 16th century, ruled over Norway until 1814. Norway was then in a union with Sweden until 1905. Sweden remained neutral during the 2nd World War while Denmark and Norway were occupied by Nazi Germany. There are thus historical reasons why patriotism/nationalism seems to play different roles in the three countries. Denmark and Sweden are EU members; Norway is (formally) not, having only joined the EU internal market as two referendums have turned down full membership. The spectrum of political parties and social movements are different in some respects, and media systems differ in terms of newspaper reading: Norwegians and Swedes are more avid readers than Danes - and while all three countries have had two leading national tabloids for decades, the Danish tabloids are more like UK tabloids in terms of contents and style than their “schizophrenic” (i.e. semi “quality”) Norwegian and Swedish counterparts. This may be a feature of the media system with considerable impact on public discourse.

Another key difference in our context is that between the three countries’ immigration histories since WWII. As many have pointed out (e.g. Pettersen and Østby 2013), immigration to Sweden started earlier and has been considerably larger. Labour immigrants were actively recruited to Sweden from Finland, Greece, Yugoslavia, Hungary and Italy while such immigration to the other two countries still remained negligible. This is the reason why Sweden already had a foreign-born population of 500 000 in 1970. Today immigrants and their children make up 668 704 in Denmark (Statistics Denmark), 804 963 in Norway, (Statistics Norway). Such a figure is difficult to find on Statistics Sweden’s webpages, but Gudbrandsen (2012:14f) says, referring to Statistics Sweden, that the number was 1 750 000 in 2012 and it is thus presumably around 2 million in 2015. Even considering the different sizes of their populations, these figures evidently reflect differences in the three countries’ immigration policies over time. The numbers include all sorts of immigrants; labour immigration (also from the Nordic

countries), refugees, asylum-seekers etc from all parts of the world. But while immigration ratios are not so different over the last few years, due not least to increasing labour immigration from Eastern Europe post 2004, “asylum related immigration makes up a larger share of the total number of annual immigrants [in] Sweden than in Denmark and Norway” (Gudbrandsen, *ibid.*). In all three countries, non-western immigration has increased relative to immigration from western countries.

A key shift here is thus that from predominantly labour immigration to immigration where refugees and asylum seekers with family reunification rights dominate. It took place around 1980 in all three countries. The shift also included a change in immigrants’ countries of origin. Whereas labour immigration largely came from Nordic, European and other Western countries, refugees and asylum seekers predominantly have come from Asia and Africa (with refugees from war-torn Bosnia as one notable exception to this rule). With the arrival of significant numbers of people from faraway lands, the debates on immigration issues intensified – at least in Denmark (already from the 1970s on) and Norway (from the 1980s on). The focus in mediated public discourse is still largely on non-European asylum seekers and refugees, but the arrival of tens of thousands of East European workers after the expansion of the EU labour market in 2004 has also received considerable attention, at least in Denmark and Norway.

People’s attitudes to immigration have long been studied internationally and comparatively (e.g. Fetzer 2000), and also in a large number of surveys in all three Scandinavian countries at least since the early 1980s (Sweden). Such surveys have in part been conducted by each country’s official bureau of statistics (Statistics Denmark/Norway/Sweden), partly by other public survey organisations like the SOM (Society Opinion Media) Institute at Gothenburg University, partly by a variety of commercial polling companies. Useful overviews for each country exists, e.g. Blom 2014 (Norway), Demker 2013 (Sweden). Blom (2010) has a short but useful comparison of data on attitudes from the European Social Survey (ESS) 2008-09: Sweden is consistently the most

“benevolent” of all 32 countries in the survey. The table showing the share that in 2008 was “willing to allow many or some immigrants from poor countries outside Europe to come and live in the country” has Sweden far above all others, Norway as number 3 (after Poland) and Denmark as number 15 (Blom *ibid.* p 154). Various studies, however, indicate that there seems to have been a growing acceptance of refugees and asylum-seekers Norway over time (Blom 2014). Data from the European Values Study conducted 1981, 1990, 1999 and 2008 indicate that Danish attitudes have become gradually more tolerant over a 30-year period (Gundelach 2011), while Sandberg and Demker (2013) reports a growing resistance to the high number of refugees accepted in Sweden. A key question is then how relations are between these registered attitudes and the mediated public discourse on immigration. To which extent has mediated public discourse reflected the public’s attitudes and to which extent have voices opposing dominant views in the mediated discourse been excluded or silenced? Discrepancies between the importance awarded to the immigration issue in opinion polls on the one hand and in party strategies reflected in media coverage on the other, and, in addition, between widespread attitudes and views dominating public discourse, may well occur. A recent survey indicates such discrepancies in Denmark, where immigration is reported to be the most important political issue only for 17 per cent of Danes while it has top priority with several parties. The survey also reports that 44 per cent of Danes sometimes are “ashamed” of the public debate on immigration in their country. (*MandagMorgen* 2014).

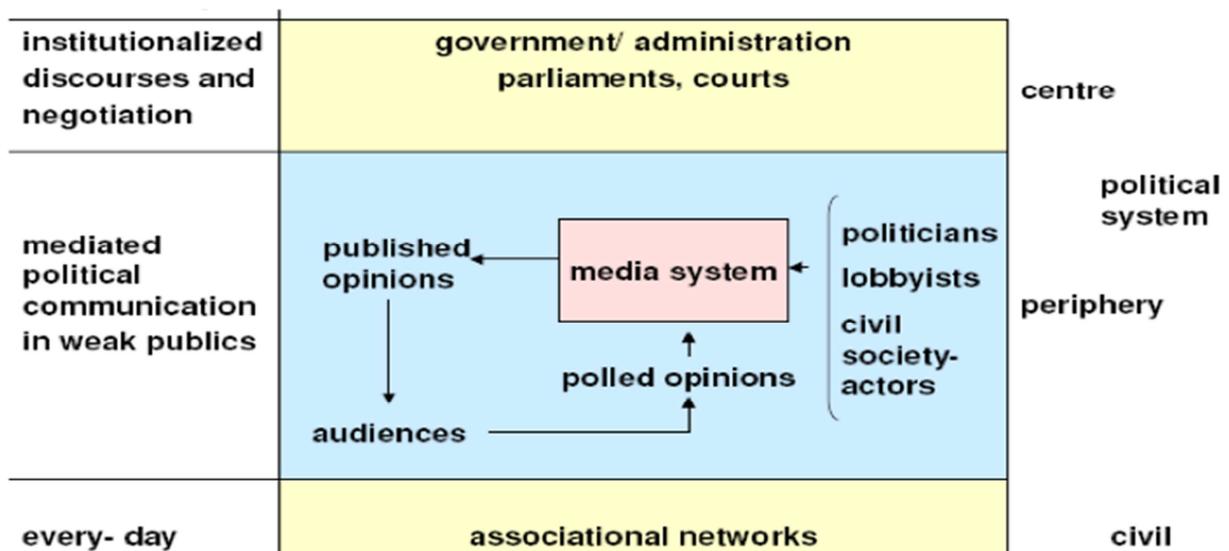
SCANPUB sets out to systematically study these debates, from the 1970s on, and to suggest reasons for major differences between the three countries in terms of the course they have taken, the spectrum of voices heard, the nature of arguments and tone, and their outcomes (consensus or reasoned dissent, policy-decisions, etc.). Such a comparative study has hitherto, to our knowledge, not been conducted. Also, the scope of our investigation is broader than most studies of debates in a single country, since it will include both a variety of contributions from/in the cultural field as well as instances of everyday talk among ordinary citizens. The

theoretical basis for such a comprehensive strategy is found in theories of the public sphere. By regarding public discourse on immigration through the lens of public sphere theory, the media and the interplay between citizens, the media and the government take on a particular significance in the study of how opinions and decisions are made in this area. Such work will also stand a chance of contributing to public sphere theory itself, and hence to a better understanding of contemporary western democracy.

2.2. Framework and normative perspectives: Public sphere theory

The notion of a “public sphere” goes back to ancient Greece and has been theorized by a considerable number of scholars with widely different disciplinary backgrounds, scholarly interests and views. A seminal contribution to this tradition was evidently Jürgen Habermas’ *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit* (1962), which, very briefly put, traces the history of the public sphere in West-European countries since the 18th century. A notorious problem in the understanding of Habermas’ book is its combination of the descriptive and the normative. For instance, according to Habermas, the core idea of the public sphere is that it consists of private citizens coming together as a public confronting the state and demanding (a) the public’s insight into the processes of government and (b) that the state pays attention to public opinion, the result of public deliberation on issues of common interest. The public sphere thus becomes a key element in the model of democracy that gradually took form in the Western world between, roughly, 1750 and the early 20th century: The liberal, representative democracy of independent (nation-)states. Between elections, the public sphere is where citizens may try to influence the decisions of parliamentary assemblies and elected governments. It functions as a “sounding board” for demands, grievances, problems and other issues that need political attention – such as immigration and a variety of issues related to it. Ideally, issues are to be deliberated on in an open way, with sustained arguments and mutual respect between participants so that the better argument reigns.

There are clearly historical facts that support these claims to some extent. On the other hand, they are also formulations of normative ideals that beg the question of to which extent the public sphere actually functions as normatively prescribed. And that is precisely the question asked by SCANPUB: Does the public sphere empirically function in accordance with its normative ideals with respect to the issue of immigration? This exemplifies how public sphere theory has had a question-generating function in the conception of the project. SCANPUB will, however, also build on the general descriptive model of the public sphere presented by Habermas at the International Communication Association's conference in Dresden in 2006 (a talk later published: Habermas 2006).



If read from the bottom up, this model suggests that everyday talk between ordinary people and the widely different sorts of discourse (cultural, political, social etc) that are situated in civil society will be fed into the media system along with inputs from professional actors. The media system is at the core of the democratic system: It sorts and processes these inputs in a variety of genres and forms, through which it communicates both to audiences in their everyday lives and as actors in civil society, and to the political system, i.e. institutions with decision-making power, or, “strong” publics” as opposed to “weak” publics without such power. This is what gives the media their crucial power. As put by Habermas (2006:419): “Those who work in the politically relevant sectors of the media system (i.e., reporters, columnists, editors,

directors, producers, and publishers) cannot but exert power, because they select and process politically relevant content and thus intervene in both the formation of public opinions and the distribution of influential interests. The use of media power manifests itself in the choice of information and format, in the shape and style of programs, and in the effects of its diffusion—in agenda setting, or the priming and framing of issues [...].” If this is correct, public discourse on immigration must accordingly be fundamentally marked by the power of the media, i.e. by choices made there.

The public sphere was never a unitary space, a single arena, but rather a complex web of public spheres in a variety of socio-cultural locations that ultimately related to a shared, general forum confronting and communicating with the government. Complexity has increased tremendously as both societies and media and communication technologies have gone through a series of radical changes. Today’s public spheres are, as underlined in the 1990s also by Habermas (1996), highly differentiated and hierarchically structured social spaces where relations between occasional and more permanent, local/regional and national, cultural and political sub-spheres are “porous” – as are relations between national and international public spheres. The digitalization of media and the Internet have greatly increased the number and types of sub-spheres. Public discourse on immigration has over the last 10-15 years very clearly been marked by the existence of various online communities, blogs, social media, and reader response columns in online newspaper editions. SCANPUB will therefore also include research on the role of these online media.

From the viewpoint of public sphere theory, then, the public discourse on immigration may be studied as an example of how the public sphere now operates empirically. And SCANPUB originates in a milieu that has done a lot of work on public sphere theory (cf Gripsrud et al. 2010, 2011) but now has turned to confronting theory with empirical realities. Firstly, SCANPUB will investigate various dimensions and qualities of public discourse – to which extent different views are represented and with which rhetorical means the issue is presented and discussed – in an

attempt to decide whether public discourse deserves to be called open public deliberation and not just biased verbal struggling. Secondly, SCANPUB will seek to substantiate hypotheses on how public discourse relates to political decision-making on the one hand and opinions among the public at large on the other. Thirdly, SCANPUB will contribute to discussions on the relations between the public sphere and the nation-state (cf e.g. Fraser 2011) by describing, analysing and attempting to explain key differences and similarities between the public spheres of closely related countries.

2.3. RESEARCH □

Work package 1: Mediated public discourse: Charting, describing, analysing

This WP is the basis for work in other WPs. It will chart, describe and analyse public discourse on immigration in Scandinavia since 1970 in the following two main ways:

Quantitative content analysis: In line with the procedure of Benson (2014) peak years of debate will be identified for each decade - starting in 1970 - individually for each country via searches in available news databases and indexes. As a rule, peak years for two countries should never be more than four years apart. Every relevant news item will be sampled these years from each country's (a) two leading 'quality' newspapers (one national, one regional) and two leading tabloids; (b) two key television channels, i.e. one financed by license fee and one by advertising. These will together make up our "core sample" in each country. In addition, a selection of 1-2 smaller newspapers (in terms of circulation) - our "extended sample" - will be included. The aim here is to be able to chart developments in the day-to-day discourse on immigration. The main focus is on genres of debate. This means sampling relevant (a) coverage of parliamentary debates, (b) editorials, (c) op-ed articles or "essays", and (d) letters to the editor in newspapers. Since they are important backgrounds for debate, we will also sample relevant e) reportages and f) feature journalism. For television, we will

sample relevant (a) coverage of parliamentary debates in the main newscasts, (b) debates, (c) talk shows and (d) documentaries. Coding will be conducted with a view to the demands of the evaluative part of this work package, cf. below. Throughout, the phenomenon that set off the debate and/or to which it refers will also be coded: A news item, some cultural event reported in the media, a book, a television programme, a film etc. These texts will be objects of qualitative analyses (cf. below). Similarly, every reference to social media and other online source in debates will be coded, the intention being to register the ways in which these media increasingly influence the general public debate. Such references will be further analysed in WP3. All of this is a very laborious enterprise where trained assistants are necessary in addition to researchers and this is reflected in the budget. A postdoc with experience from related research will work here, along with Jan Fredrik Hovden, supported by Anniken Hagelund, Toril Aalberg and Stig Hjarvard.

Qualitative content/textual analysis: SCANPUB will conduct a reasoned strategic sampling of key debates related to particular political or other incidents, specific journalistic material, fictional literature/film/television, online contributions, musical performances, talkshows or satirical/comedy material. Selected objects of debates – films, TV-series, novels etc – will also be analysed as contributions to public discourse in their own particular, aesthetic way. The aim is here a detailed description and analysis of topoi, frames, forms of argumentation etc in debates that may be hypothesised as being of particular importance for developments in policy-making or public opinion. One PhD student (film/tv and reception), Jostein Gripsrud (news items, political debates, debates on literature and music), Kristina Riegert (reportages/feature journalism), Tone Kolbjørnsen (tv), and Jens Kjeldsen (news items, political debates) will work here.

Work package 2: Evaluation

To which extent does mediated public discourse as charted, described and analysed in WP1 live up to the ideals formulated in normative public sphere theory, referred to above? There are several models for such an

evaluation, from the criteria formulated in much writing on deliberative democracy to more formalized versions such as the Discourse Quality Index developed by Steiner, Bächtiger, Spörndli, & Steenbergen (2004) in their analysis of parliamentary debates. Our choice is to apply the three-part model for such evaluation proposed by Wessler and Schultz (2009: 16ff), which to a high degree reflects the norms of deliberative democratic theory, in line with the model employed by Ferree et al (2002) on which we also draw. The results of our quantitative and qualitative content analyses will thus serve as material for an evaluation of three dimensions of public discourse and its developments over time:

“Open access for issues and ideas: the input dimension”: Wessler and Schultz follows Peters (2002:14) in suggesting that “openness or equal opportunity for topics, perspectives, interpretations, ideas and arguments” is an appropriate criterion. To which extent is this ideal realized in the three countries? We will also follow Ferree et al (ibid.) and ask who speaks, i.e. identify categories such as politicians, government representatives, experts, civil society representatives etc. However, SCANPUB will also pay attention to the question of to which extent there is a difference between the spectre of opinion among the public, as expressed in opinion polls as well as the project’s own qualitative research (cf below) and the spectre represented in the media. This will allow for raising the question of how well the media function as a “sounding board” for popular sentiments and points of view and whether the phenomenon once dubbed “the spiral of silence” can be said to occur (Noëlle-Neumann 1984).

“Justification and civility: the throughput dimension”: All claims made in any deliberation are open to problematization and discussion. For such discussion to be meaningful, all claims should be justified by referring to reasons, whether principles, facts or other types of reasons. For a reasoned exchange of arguments to take place, there must also be “a climate of mutual respect and civility” (Wessler and Schultz, ibid.:17) It is, however, an important feature of public

deliberation that it is not necessarily about convincing an opponent participating in the discussion, it may (also) well be about persuading the audience: Public deliberation has a dialogical structure (Jorgensen 1998). Referring to Jorgensen (1998) and Schultz (2006), Wessler and Schultz argues that “[a]n argument put forward with strategic intentions [rather than communicative] may be just as cogent and valuable to members of the audience as one advanced with the intention to foster understanding”. As for the often emotionally charged contributions of highly engaged actors and movements in favour of certain groups or causes, they may not adhere to desirable standards of civility but still be useful by fulfilling the “sounding board” function. Still, once an issue or demand is on the public agenda, deliberation should adhere to the principles of justified claims and a civil climate. SCANPUB will evaluate the quality of Scandinavian public discourse on immigration in relation to these principles.

Innovation and reasoned dissent: the output dimension: Not least the dialogical structure of larger public debates makes consensus an unlikely outcome. But public deliberation may e.g. lead to the discrediting of certain arguments and a clarification of the grounds for disagreement, i.e. a (more) “reasoned dissent”. Over time, deliberative processes may thus lead to shifts in the spectrum of opinion, and what tends to be taken for granted may change. Wessler and Schultz regard this as a possibility for “societal learning processes”. They argue such long-term processes cannot be studied “by applying methods of media content analysis alone”. SCANPUB will, however, due to the long-term perspective of the proposed research and its multi-method approach, be able to take on this question: Can one point to the existence of such societal learning processes over time in Scandinavian public discourse on immigration? Furthermore: Is political decision-making an outcome of public discourse, and if so, how? (Cf below) Jostein Gripsrud, Anniken Hagelund, Jens Kjeldsen, Stig Hjarvard, Kristina Riegert and Toril Aalberg will work here.

WP 3: The mediated public sphere and its public(s)

The ideal of public sphere theory is that the media provide relevant and trustworthy information to the public and form an arena where the views, interests and perspectives of the public are represented and negotiated through informed debates. On the other hand, as Habermas' statement on media power quoted above indicates, the proponents of the theory are well aware that the media exert independent power in its relations to the public in a variety of ways through filtering and shaping information. SCANPUB will thus ask three questions: What were and are the public's attitudes to immigration in the Scandinavian countries in the time period studied, to which extent can they be said to be shaped by communication media, and: what can be said about online media's contribution to the shaping of the public's attitudes and public discourse in general? We will answer in four ways:

(a) Having reviewed scholarly literature on the subject, the answer to the first question is to be searched for, firstly, in a compilation and review of available surveys of public opinion on immigration that should reveal any developments over time. Such surveys are very numerous, ranging from the comparative European Social Survey's "migration module" and the relevant parts of the European Values Survey, to a large number of surveys conducted within each country. There are a variety of methodological and other issues concerning these surveys but it still seems likely that a reasonably reliable overview of developments and any notable shifts in public opinion over time is possible, even if it has to be admitted that surveys dating back to the 1970s are few. In addition the project will do a specific reanalysis of all available data related to this debate in the European Social Survey data from 2002-2015. Central aims will here be to provide a detailed description of relevant attitudes in each country and link these to social and political conditions in each country throughout the period under scrutiny. This is to provide a part of the answer to the question about societal learning processes through public discourse. Jan Fredrik Hovden, Jostein Gripsrud, Anniken Hagelund, Toril Aalberg and Stig Hjarvard will be responsible for this work.

(b) Concerning the current situation, SCANPUB will conduct interviews and an ambitious focus group study in each of the three countries of how audiences and media users relate to selected items from recent media discourse on the issue of immigration, i.e. newspaper and television news items, op-ed articles, clips from debates, documentaries, satirical/comedy shows and fictional series etc. The resulting transcripts will be analysed with the tools of discourse analysis and classical rhetoric with a view to frames of understanding, topoi, argumentation, stereotypes, factual knowledge and patterns of identity construction, national and otherwise. The question is to which extent and in which ways it may be said that the three countries appear different in these terms. 1 experienced researcher will be hired for this work, cooperating with Jens Kjeldsen and Kristina Riegert.

(c) As for media influence on public opinion, there is a huge literature especially after McCombs and Shaw (1972) introduced the theory of the agenda-setting function of the mass media. A large and rapidly growing number of studies more specifically show how media discourse on immigration influences both politicians' and the public's perceptions of an issue's importance as well as public attitudes to it. A relevant and solid current example is the special issue of the journal *American Behavioral Science* (vol 59, no.7, June 2015), "Framing Irregular Immigration in Western Media", other examples include e.g. Boomgarden and Vliegthart 2007 and 2009, Strabac et al. 2012, and Schemer 2012. These often methodologically sophisticated studies fill what appeared as a lacuna in political science studies of attitudes to immigration only 10-15 years ago, when scientists tended to understand such attitudes only with reference to factors such as education, the labour market and certain cultural variables. As late as 2011, it was claimed that research on the media's influence here "dates from only a couple [of] years ago" (Fetzer 2011:4). Already in 1995, however, Danish researchers Gaasholt and Togeby argued that "the population's attitudes seem to reflect the public debate" and Aggergaard Larsen (1998) argued that attitudes to immigration should not primarily be explained by reference to individuals' psychology or socio-structural conditions but

rather the impact of shifting media discourse. SCANPUB will have available longitudinal data on both media content and attitude surveys and thus at least be able to determine the degree of correlation between these two time series for each country. Jostein Gripsrud, Anniken Hagelund, Stig Hjarvard and Toril Aalberg will work here.

d) SCANPUB wishes to estimate how online media have left their mark on the general discourse on immigration and the extent to which they have provided a space for a greater variety of views on the issue of immigration than the traditional media still constitutive of the general, overarching public sphere. This is to be done by strategic sampling based on the findings of WP1. The samples will include articles, comments and other forms of written or visual expressions published on the websites around the period they make an appearance in the mainstream public sphere. The aim will be to qualitatively assess these arenas for public debate, both in terms of who speaks, what they say and how they say it. Methodologically, researching archived web material has its challenges, but these are expected to be manageable through cooperation with the institutions responsible for web archiving. Current online activities will be studied directly in the second half of 2016, employing up-to-date research methodologies specifically developed for the study of online communication and social media (Twitter, Facebook), in order to determine how people active in social media, blogs and various online publications and communities respond to media coverage and other aspects of public discourse on immigration. Do they differ from the general picture in terms of attitudes? Is online public debate different from that in traditional media? Hallvard Moe and 1 PhD student will be responsible for this work.

WP4: The mediated public sphere and political decision-making

According to the theories of the public sphere and deliberative democracy public discourse should inform political decision-making.

This issue has lately received increasing theoretical and empirical attention (cf e.g. Schmidt and Radaelli 2004). The question to be asked in this WP is to which extent public discourse has influenced immigration policies. There is a voluminous literature on immigration policies internationally and in each of the three countries that the project will need to consider. But the key contribution in SCANPUB's context is Brochmann and Hagelund's comparative *Immigration Policy and the Scandinavian Welfare State 1945-2010* (2012). A follow-up study regarding developments since 2010 will be needed, however, and SCANPUB will conduct such a study in a relevant form.

Based on the identification of peak years of debate (cf WP1), a strategic sample of parliamentary debates on immigration policies will be selected and analysed with a view to direct references to the mediated discourse and indirect relations in terms of shared terms for the debates. An updated chronological overview of policy developments will then be related to the historical charting of public discourse established through the quantitative and qualitative content analyses. The key question is to which extent public opinion – or, publicly formulated opinions – inform(s) the directions of public policy over time, and in which ways, in each country. Is policy related to a degree of consensus, and if so, what characterizes such a consensus? To which extent are decisions informed by the arguments of organized minority groups, think tanks, and scientific experts? How about e.g. expertise that has not been communicating in public but rather directly to the government? The methodology here will be historically informed interpretations of detected patterns, ending in an argumentatively sustained hypothesis about the extent to which public discourse influences political decision-making. There is empirical evidence for an impact of deliberation on decision-making processes in national legislatures (Steiner, Bächtiger, Spörndli, & Steenbergen, 2004; see also Habermas, 2005, p. 389). SCANPUB's idea is that the analysis and interpretation of relevant parliamentary debates, the historical developments of policy on the one hand and mediated public discourse on the other may yield insights as to the question of how, under which conditions, what goes on in the

mediated public sphere might impact on decision-making in the area of immigration policy.

WP5: Explanatory factors and consequences for public sphere theory

The possibly most demanding task SCANPUB has set for itself is to account for explanatory factors for the patterns observed in the above studies of public discourse on immigration. Causal explanations are notoriously difficult, some would say impossible, to establish in the social sciences. SCANPUB assumes that complex social phenomena are likely to be determined by a plurality of factors with different origins. We will attempt to answer the crucial question of “why” by synthesizing and performing an informed interpretation of all of the above studies. SCANPUB thus wishes to investigate to which degree the following assumptions about reasons for differences identified between the Danish, Norwegian and Swedish public discourses on immigration may be regarded as reasonable.

Differences in media systems: As noted above, there are differences in the media systems of the three countries especially in terms of newspaper readership and types of press: Danes are somewhat less avid newspaper readers, and the two dominating tabloids in Denmark are more like aggressive UK tabloids than the two dominating tabloids of the other two countries. Furthermore, advertising based “free papers” have a much larger share of the total newspaper readership in Denmark than elsewhere in Scandinavia. These factors imply a more class-differentiated newspaper market in Denmark than in Norway and Sweden. This influences the media system as a whole and provides a different playing field for populist movements in need of media coverage. Typically, tabloid newspapers carry less substantial information and rely on sensationalism and a more or less crass language. Hypothesis 1: A relative weakness of ‘quality’ press leads to a stronger representation of anti-immigration attitudes and a weaker representation of positive attitudes to immigration. Hypothesis 2: A relatively strong position of typical tabloid press makes crass language and less emphasis on

sustained argumentation in public discourse more likely.

Differences in immigration histories: The fact that the three countries have had varying experiences with immigration, both in terms of labour immigration vs asylum/refugee immigration and in terms of the composition of immigration in terms of countries of origin accounts for differences in terms of the perception of immigration in general and in terms of widespread support for specific political measures. Hypothesis: A longer history and thus longer experience with high numbers of immigrants tends to lead to a stronger representation of positive attitudes in public discourse and a weaker representation of negative attitudes to immigration.

Differences in the history and shape of each country's political field: For a variety of social and cultural reasons, the three countries have had quite different histories in terms of major political parties, outside of the fact that all three have had multi party systems and a large and periodically dominating social-democratic labour party. Most interesting in SCANPUB's context, however, is that Denmark was first of the three to experience a major weakening of the social democrats and, especially, the emergence of a right wing populist party, the Progress Party, which already in the 1970s voiced an aggressively negative attitude to immigration from non-Western countries. Moreover: "Party political attention to this issue in the 1990s has been considerably stronger in Denmark than in Sweden. This can be explained by the different strategic situation of the mainstream right-wing parties in the two countries. Focusing on the immigrant issue easily leads to a conflict with the centre-right, especially social liberal parties. In Sweden, such a conflict would undermine mainstream right-wing attempts at winning government power. In Denmark, the Social Liberals governed with the Social Democrats in the 1990s, which made it attractive for the mainstream right-wing parties to focus on the issue in order to win government power based on the support of radical right-wing parties." (Green-Pedersen and Krogstrup 2008). Hypothesis: The

longer the existence of a party represented in Parliament with strong anti-immigration views, the stronger is the representation of anti-immigration attitudes, and the weaker is the representation of positive attitudes to immigration.

Different positions of nationalism ('banal' (cf Billig 1995) as well as official): As noted above, the three countries have quite different histories in terms of national independence. Danish and especially Norwegian patriotism is integrated in everyday culture and officially condoned. Sweden is special in what appears as a striking contrast between the manifestation of strong popular patriotism at e.g. sporting events and an élite and official denial of national sentiment and nationalism, cf. e.g. the 2000 refusal by the parliament's constitutional committee of proposals to make the national day 6 June a holiday and to give the national anthem juridical status. Hypothesis: Official and élite resistance to patriotism and nationalist sentiment leads to weaker representation of anti-immigration views in public discourse and stronger representation of positive views.

Differences in terms of the history of economic growth and labour markets. Sweden was industrialised earlier than its Scandinavian neighbours, its economy grew quickly and remained active during WWII. It thus got a head start in the post-war years that may explain the need for organised labour immigration already in the 1950s and 60s. Labour immigration is evidently different from asylum/refugee immigration in that the former immigrants immediately are enrolled in the labour force and hence do not appear as a burden on the welfare state. A particular factor concerns the different EU membership status and history of the Scandinavian countries and thus their different experiences and public debates about a common European labour market and conflicts over different wages and work conditions within the EU. The history of the economy and the labour market in particular thus influences the kind and scope of immigration to a considerable extent, and thus influences widespread perceptions of immigration and immigrants in the

direction of more positive attitudes. Hypothesis: Labour immigration is conducive to widespread positive perceptions of immigration and stronger representation of positive views in public discourse and asylum/refugee-immigration is less so.

Different foreign and defence policies over time. Sweden has remained neutral post WWII, while Denmark and Norway joined NATO from the beginning, decisions clearly related to WW II experiences but with recent consequences: Both Denmark and Norway have participated in Operation Enduring Freedom military activities in Afghanistan, Sweden has not participated in OEF, only in NATO's International Security Assistance Force (ISAF). According to Wikipedia, Norway has lost at least 8 soldiers in fighting and bomb attacks, while Denmark has lost at least 43. Sweden has had 3-5 casualties. Norway played a major role in the NATO bombardment of Gaddafi's Libya in 2011, Sweden had surveillance aircrafts involved. Denmark participated in the Iraq war 2003- 07 and lost 7 soldiers. Hypothesis: More active participation with more casualties in Western-dominated wars in Muslim countries and/or against Muslim extremists makes widespread resistance to immigration from Muslim countries more likely and thus strengthens the representation of anti-immigration views in public discourse.

It should be underlined here that hypotheses not directly tied to the media system are still tied to how the factors in question are covered by the media: immigration history, party politics, national symbols and values, economic developments, foreign and defence policies are all presented to the public through the media system.

SCANPUB's contribution to public sphere theory will consist in a theorization of the results in all of the above parts of the project: The content-analytical studies and the charting of historical developments of public discourse on immigration, the qualitative evaluation of public discourse on immigration, the study of relations between public discourse and policy- decisions, the explanatory efforts – all of this will provide rich material for theoretical reflection. SCANPUB generally

aims to improve our understanding of the relations between the mediated public sphere and political decision-making on the one hand and the general public and civil society on the other. It is also designed to improve public sphere theory in areas concerning the forms and role of deliberation in actually existing democracies, including the role of culture and morality in public political discourse. It will also elucidate the continued role of the nation-state in times of extensive internationalisation and globalization.

Jostein Gripsrud, Anniken Hagelund, Stig Hjarvard, Jens Kjeldsen, Kristina Riegert, and Toril Aalberg will work on this.

3. ORGANISATION AND DISSEMINATION

The goal of the “Toppforsk” program is to develop internationally leading research milieus in Norway. SCANPUB aims to build on the potential of the existing research milieu at the Department of Information Science and Media Studies at the University of Bergen while supplying it with expert inputs from other Norwegian research milieus as well as Scandinavian partners and an international Scientific Advisory Board consisting of internationally acclaimed colleagues.

Leadership:

The director of SCANPUB will be Jostein Gripsrud. Cf. his CV for scholarly competence and leadership experience.

A Steering Committee will consist of the director and deputy directors Anniken Hagelund (UiO), Stig Hjarvard (Copenhagen U), Kristina Riegert (Stockholm U), Jens Kjeldsen (UiB) and Toril Aalberg (NTNU). Cf. their CVs for information on their diverse and excellent scholarly backgrounds, ranging from sociology and political communication via media studies to rhetoric. The director and each deputy director will have research tasks as specified above.

A Scientific Advisory Board will consist of Rodney Benson (NYU),

Marie Gillespie (Open U), Paolo Mancini (U Perugia), Dominique Pasquier (ParisTech), Hakan Sicakkan (UiB), , Hans-Jörg Trenz (Copenhagen U), Hartmut Wessler (U Mannheim)). These are all internationally leading scholars. Benson is a sociologist specializing in journalism studies who has done seminal comparative work on immigration discourse. Marie Gillespie is a sociologist and anthropologist specialising in qualitative comparative research on diaspora and national media cultures as well as audiences and publics with a view to issues of citizenship. Paolo Mancini is a specialist in relations between the political system and the media system and in international comparative studies of media systems. Hakan Sicakkan is a political scientist specialising in empirical comparative studies of the public sphere in transnational contexts, specifically the EU. Dominique Pasquier is a sociologist with a background in empirical and international comparative studies of audiences, publics and users both in the cultural sector, in relation to mass media and in relation to the Internet. Hans-Jörg Trenz is a sociologist specialising in public sphere theory and empirical work especially on the European public sphere. Hartmut Wessler is a journalism and mass communication scholar specialising in public sphere theory and international comparative studies of public deliberation.

Other participating researchers:

As for Hallvard Moe and Jan Fredrik Hovden, cf. their CVs for information on their solid scholarly track records. Tone Kolbjørnsen and Erlend Lavik are media scholars specialising in film- and television studies.

1 experienced researcher, 1 postdoc and 2 PhD students are to be hired. Positions will be advertised internationally. A scientific assistant to the Steering Committee will be hired in a 50% position throughout the project period. The PhD students will receive supervision from members of the Steering Committee and be enrolled in the UiB's doctoral program.

Dissemination

SCANPUB will, in line with its research topic, emphasise communication of its research and findings to a wider interested public. This will be done through its own website and Facebook page, through op-ed articles in newspapers of all three countries involved and, finally and most ambitiously through a three-part television series to be financed largely from other sources (Public broadcasters, the Fritt Ord Foundation, the UiB and more). The project leader produced and hosted a six-part TV-series aired in prime time by two NRK channels in 2003.

4. Budget

See the proposal form

5. General considerations

Environmental impact: Air travels will be kept at a minimum by extensive use of electronic/digital forms of communication. Printing will be controlled. Ethical perspectives: The main challenges are related first to the general sensitivity of the issue under study, as studying the debates on immigration involves the study of political opinions closely related to views of race, warrants for citizenship and welfare services and others which might be controversial and subject to social sanctions. Work package 3 appears as the most ethically complex, involving a multiplicity of methods and individual data. A key institution in the planning, application and implementation of all aspects of the research project will be the Norwegian Social Science Data Services (NSD), located at the University of Bergen. NSD has long experience in handling complex ethical and legal issues on a European scale through a variety of projects. With regard WP1, the quantitative analysis of debates in newspapers and television channels all deal with previously published material and will in most cases not require any particular ethical considerations. WP3 involves three main types of studies/data that need to be considered separately. As for WP3a the main part of this work will be secondary studies of aggregated data as they appear in published analyses. The project does, however, plan to analyse two datasets

directly: The European Social Survey in 2002 and 2015, using a selection of variables from the core modules and the special modules on immigration for the countries under study. While it is very unlikely that such secondary use of data will compromise the nature of the consent given by the participants for general research, we will keep potential ethical issues in mind. Besides formal application for access to the ESS data, NSD and their ESS team will be actively consulted for both ethical and analytical questions that arise. Personal data will be collected, analysed and stored both for the studies of audiences and media users' relation to the media discourse on immigration and in the study of how people active in social media, blogs and various online publications and communities respond to public discourse on immigration. Careful planning will in both cases be necessary to ensure valid and specific consent for participation, as the participants will need - at each occasion – relevant and understandable information to form an informed judgement. In the studies of online media, particular ethical challenges are present in the contextual nature of consent, privacy and confidentiality in such settings.

Gender balance and the recruitment of women: The total gender balance in the project is fairly good. We aim to particularly encourage female potential applicants for the positions advertised. Senior lecturer Tone Kolbjørnsen will be able to approach a full professor status through her participation in the project.

Gender perspectives in the research: Due attention will be paid to gender as a key variable in all research. Gender is furthermore a key subject in important parts of the public discourse on immigration.

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