

'We are that in-between nation'

Discourses of deservingness of Hungarian migrants working in institutions of refugee accommodation in Germany

Abstract

The article elaborates on the role of deservingness discourses in regulating membership of non-citizen groups in Germany. Specifically, it focuses on Hungarians working or volunteering in institutions of refugee accommodation in Germany. It asks how personal migration experience and migrant statuses and identities of Hungarian workers are mobilised when recreating discourses of refugee-deservingness. Performance expectations on refugees related to education and employment evoked references to similarities of migration experience, strengthening an empathetic perspective towards refugee clients and students. Deservingness frameworks related to culture were more ambiguous. A 'mission civilisatrice', that is educating Muslim Others to European, non-Muslim ways of behaving and thinking, often tied to gender relations, was paralleled by a continuous attempt to challenge and dismantle such discourses of difference and disciplining. These ambivalences of empathetic identification and disciplinary racialisation draw the contours of a characteristic place of (Hungarian) migrant workers in the governance of refugee accommodation in Germany.

Keywords: deservingness, Hungary, Germany, intra-European Union migration, immigrant workers, refugees, immigrant and refugee services, differential inclusion, disciplining, identification

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Introduction

Membership and inclusion of refugees and asylum-seekers arriving from Africa and the Middle East to Western societies constitutes an important stake in present-day politics. In this paper we aim to investigate related phenomena through its relationship with specific current forms of intra-European Union mobility.

Critical migration and citizenship scholars have recently unravelled that population governance and regulation in Western nation-states are built upon a ‘differential inclusion’ system. From this perspective, membership in a nation-state unfolds as constructed through a multiplicity of positions, rights and statuses that allow not only for exclusion or inclusion of specific groups and categories, but also for various forms of membership, with specific social dynamics between these positions. Consequently, mechanisms of governance, as well as subjectivities and perceptions of these regulated groups may be better understood by studying such multiplicity of positions in a unitary perspective (Anderson, 2013; Chauvin and Garcés-Mascareñas, 2014; Genova et al, 2014).

Our paper aims to contribute to this by specifically inquiring into the relationship of intra-European Union migration of Hungarian citizens to Germany with “refugees” arriving from Africa and the Middle East. Moreover, encounters of these migrant groups were analysed, in a specific setting that is in institutions in the frontline of migration governance. The politics marked by Merkel’s famous statement ‘wir schaffen das’ (‘we make it’) and the acceptance of hundred thousands of asylum seekers was followed by a change in asylum policies in Germany, which foregrounded, for those aiming to remain, integration into the German labour market (Schammann, 2017; Holzberg et al, 2018). Policy changes also resulted in the proliferation of a multitude of institutional actors that were established to implement these policies. Besides old humanitarian organizations, new civic initiatives and unpaid activities of hundreds of thousands of volunteers played a major role in the support of refugees and immigrants arriving to Europe and especially to Germany in 2015 and after (Feischmidt et al 2019; Verschraegen and Vandervoort, 2019). Educational and social welfare institutions, organisations and projects have been created with the aim of assisting refugees and asylum-seekers to acquire proper German language skills, education and employment. The creation of such institutions, while having the mandate to channel newly arriving workforce towards already existing and supposedly empty positions on the labour market, also created further needs for labour. Teachers, trainers, social workers, social pedagogues, as well as a great number of volunteers

were needed in these newly born and quickly expanding institutions and organisations. According to some research (Nowicka et al, 2017; Feischmidt and Zakariás, 2020) large numbers of various migrants from Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) have been attracted to these positions since 2015.

In our paper we aim to describe the relationship between members of various migrant groups in such civic initiatives, educational and welfare institutions. How do personal migration experience and identities of workers in these institutions, in specific migrant positions shape discourses about other migrants, and their accommodation in the host society? How do migration and asylum policies and politics translate into institutional and individual discourses of acceptance or rejection, when institutions responsible for their implementation are animated by persons who are themselves transnationally mobile?

The institutional context of civic initiatives, educational and welfare institutions may at first sight imply the automatic embrace of solidary frames, discourses and narratives, and an empathetic perspective, as the support and care offered to refugees and other immigrants constitute a central institutional role for such employees and volunteers. Previous research, however, has shown how social support institutions may also incubate images of the undeserving, morally and culturally inferior Other, and thus may even become major sites of the production of non-responsibility (Pries, 2018) and rejection (Casati, 2017; Vrăbiescu and Kalir, 2018). Moreover, earlier research has also pointed out how narratives and identities of previous generations of migrants' may interfere with dealing with refugee and asylum seeker clients and students in various European contexts (Schiff and Clavé-Mercier, 2019; Casati, 2017).

Our study follows these perspectives. We aim to show that experience of transnational mobility of Hungarians working or volunteering in institutions of refugee accommodation in Germany, and related migrant identities of these workers play a central role in relating to asylum seeker and refugee clients and studentsⁱ. Moreover the perspectives built upon evoking migrant similarities heavily depend on specific value frameworks offered by public discourses.

The analytical structure of the paper thus consists of public and policy discourses, the institutional context and individual migrant biographies of specific actors in the field as layered upon each other. The first section briefly outlines the significance of deservingness discourses in the organisation of membership in Western states as highlighted by critical migration and citizenship studies, with a specific focus on such public discourses unfolding in Germany. The

second section is dedicated to situating CEE and in particular Hungarian migrants in the field, by sketching the demographic context, as well as summarising existing research on the phenomena of (CEE) migrants working and volunteering in refugee accommodation and integration in Germany. The short presentation of methods and data is followed by three analytical sections. First, a section describes the discursive figure of the hard-working and ambitious refugee, evoking empathy by emphasizing similarities to own migration experiences of the Hungarian speakers. Second, the framework of culture and identity evokes ambivalent perspectives: discourses of difference and disciplinary racialization is parallelly produced to challenging and dismantling such disciplinary regards, as described in the next section. These ambivalences draw the contours of a characteristic place of the Hungarian workers and volunteers in the context of refugee accommodation in Germany, which is described in the last empirical section, and concluded in the discussion.

Deservingness discourses about refugees and CEE migrants in Germany

Migration and citizenship scholars have recently formulated the claim that membership and inclusion of various groups and categories of people in Western nation-states are deeply connected to value judgements about the moral worth and moral performance of these groups and categories. Often referred to as ‘deservingness’ such assumed moral qualities heavily influence the distribution of material and symbolic resources among residents of a state – also legal statuses and rights, among others (Anderson, 2013; Anderson and Hughes, 2015; Chauvin et al, 2013; Ambrosini, 2016; Genova et al, 2014) Moral worth of groups and categories of persons may be defined along various value-domains, such as employment, identity and culture, or victimhood and vulnerability. Rather than a simple binary of inclusion and exclusion defined by citizenship, then, these value-domains may provide building blocks for complex constellations and gradations of membership. Struggles for better positions along these value-domains, that is for becoming more deserving, are part of individual and collective strategies of avoiding exclusion and acquiring resources and more stable membership. The multiplication of and struggles for membership positions, then, are perceived by critical scholars as tools in the hands of the nation-state to govern and regulate the population, and especially its marginalised segments.

Regarding deservingness frameworks operating in Germany vis-à-vis various categories of non-citizens, several scholarly works emphasize the increasing importance of employment and education, as well as of identity and culture. In case of refugees and asylum-seekers arriving

from Africa and the Middle East, Schammann (2017) talks about a ‘meritocratic’ framework: starting from 2015 performance on the German labour market and related individual achievements such as speaking German, acquiring proper education and training and securing one’s job and livelihood have become structural underlining principles of asylum legislation in Germany. While legal access to labour – severely restricted for asylum-seekers before 2015 - has broadened, residence and social benefits were getting more and more conditional upon enrolling into and acquiring education (language courses, integration courses and educational trainings), and upon acquiring employment; at the same time other frameworks, such as family reunification principles, or causes related to health were weakened in asylum legislation.ⁱⁱ Moralising discourses focused on employment and education of refugees and asylum-seekers is also produced by the German media, as found by Holzberg et al. (2018), who emphasize that positive images of refugees and asylum seekers have lately become closely tied to - and conditional upon - working or studying. The value domain of identity and culture is equally emphatic in producing (un)deservingness of refugees and asylum-seekers. Despite frequent claims by public figures (and also by some social scientists) about German nationhood recently transformed from ethnic into a civic nationhood built upon civic virtues and universalist political and moral principles, and the parallel discourse on “multicultural Germany”, many critical scholars show that refugees and asylum-seekers are still perceived through an essentialising, orientalising, civilising gaze. (Mouritsen et al, 2019; Holzberg et al, 2018; Braun, 2017) Deservingness along culture and identity are also reflected in legislation prescribing language exams as well as integration courses as conditions for the employment of refugees. (Chauvin et al, 2013; Holzberg et al, 2018; Mattes, 2017)

Employment-related deservingness is also relevant in relation to intra-EU and Central and Eastern European migrants (Lafleur and Mescoli, 2018). Political discourses of “welfare migration” and “benefit tourism” referring to undeserving CEE migrants are also reflected on the levels of policy and legislation (Riedner, 2017; Bouali, 2018). While immigration legislation and authorities may not effectuate conditionality related to employment for EU citizens, these authors have shown that welfare provision authorities have become a policing body responsible for linking residence of EU citizens in Germany with work and employment - just as it happened in other Western European countries, such as the UK (Anderson, 2013). At the same time migration scholars have also pointed to work-related difficulties of CEE migrants in Western Europe, and also in Germany, in the form of downward mobility and dequalification, leading to difficulties of employment and often precarious positions on the

segmented labour market (Favell and Nebe, 2009; Favell, 2018; Glorius et al, 2013) These two processes may have resulted in an intense pressure on CEE migrants to assure their membership in the national community by their worth acquired through employment.

Regarding deservingness discourses on the ‘identity’ and ‘culture’ of CEE immigrants an ambivalent picture unfolds. While boundary construction along religious-cultural-geographical lines may offer a higher position of moral worth for CEE migrants compared to non-European Others (Elrick and Winter, 2017) it is also found how Southern European and CEE migrants - and especially certain segments of them, like the Roma - are deemed as different and less civilised, sometimes racialized similarly to Non-European Others (Mouritsen et al, 2019; Riedner, 2017; Elrick and Winter, 2017; Fox et al, 2015)

Deservingness frameworks are deployed not only by political and policy discourses and the media, but also by institutions and organisations, and in everyday interactions and practices in these institutions. For our present research, institutions and organisations mandated to assist refugees and asylum seekers in Germany offered the opportunity to unearth the construction of these various migrant positions (that of refugees and CEE migrants). It offered a setting where deservingness frameworks and discourses are not only evoked in an abstract way, but are deployed and materialised in actual personal relationships, in practical encounters and interactions between persons in various institutional and discursive positions.

Refugees and migrants in institutions responsible for refugee accommodation

Policies and political discourses prescribing the civic performance of refugees and asylum-seekers, related to employability and ‘culture’, are implemented by a wide array of institutions that translate such political measures into institutional discourses and field-activities (Chauvin and Garcés-Masareñas, 2014; Ambrosini, 2016; Vertovec et al, 2017). Reception facilities, accommodation and community centers have been built, welfare offices, and schools and language schools were created in this vein in Germany, where social workers and teachers are expected to provide assistance in accommodation, in acquiring welfare support, employment and education for their refugee and asylum-seeker clients and students.

Recent ethnographic and sociological calls have urged scholars to conceive of reception contexts as conjunctures of heterogeneous actors that include not only refugees and the ‘host society’ but affect various groups and population segments with experiences related to

transnational migration who are embedded in transnational networks in diverse ways (Çağlar and Glick Schiller, 2018; Fiddian-Quasmieh, 2016; Bauder and Jayaraman, 2014). Such heterogeneous conjunctures may arise in the form of complex interconnections of processes on various scales. Concerning our specific research context—that is, Hungarians involved in refugee support and welfare services in Germany—statistics reveal the salience of such a perspective. Over the last decades Germany has increasingly become a major target for intra-European mobilities and migrations, leading to a sharp increase in the number of western and Central and Eastern European EU citizens (Ausländische Bevölkerung, 2018, p14.). After 2011, with the liberalization of the German labour market towards CEE countries, Hungarians also started heading for Germany (Blaskó and Gödri, 2016). As of 2018, more than 200,000 Hungarian citizens were registered as having been resident in Germany for more than three months (Ausländische Bevölkerung, 2018, p15).

Earlier research has already revealed a great need of cheap labour in the field of services delivered to migrants and refugees in Germany (Bauder and Jayaraman, 2014), which need was even more increased following the arrival of large number of refugees and asylum-seekers (Grote, 2018, p. 36.) The elevated importance of immigrant organisations and employees and volunteers with a migration background in carrying out such services has also been pointed out (Bauder and Jayaraman, 2014; Nowicka et al, 2017). The incorporation of migrants as providers of all sorts of refugee support has been promoted by state administration at various levels, and by NGOs in Germany.ⁱⁱⁱ As Bauder and Jayaraman (2014) state, migrant background has recently functioned as symbolic capital in finding employment in these contexts^{iv}. Hungarians, many of them with related volunteering experience, became absorbed by the growing segment of the labour market created by refugee reception, accommodation and integration institutions. The higher wages (and corresponding increase in living standards) such positions offer compared to jobs in the education, social and health sector in Hungary has been an important factor, among others, in attracting CEE and Hungarian migrants to these jobs and activities (Feischmidt and Zakariás, 2020).^v Although exact data about the migrant backgrounds of individuals working or volunteering in these institutions in Germany, and data about CEE and Hungarian citizens is hard to obtain, some scholarly findings point to the large number of individuals of various migrant backgrounds in these positions.^{vi}

In order to understand how deservingness discourses are deployed in such institutional contexts involving actors from diverse positions, we must take into account specific professional discourses, related to the fields of education and social work that are mobilised by the

institutions in focus. Numerous works on refugee accommodation reveal the duality of care and control in these institutions and organisations (Vertovec et al, 2017; Filsinger, 2017; Kubisch, 2017). Governance in these institutions, and specifically social work often imply interest in providing care for those assisted, that is scrutinize individual cases, understand personal needs and provide help for refugees, such responsibility being reinforced by human rights discourses (Scherr, 2017). Simultaneously, institutions are expected to act as agents of the state, effectuating measures also tied to selective categorisations and exclusionary mechanisms. These tensions result in various social worker perspectives set on their refugee clients: empathy, critique of the institutional system, disciplinary perspectives aimed at educating and socialising clients, as well as bureaucratic pragmatism and indifference towards clients might thus unfold in asylum-related social work in Germany. (Kubisch, 2017) Studies focusing on the educational context, and specifically integration courses for refugees and immigrants in Germany have emphasized the normalising disciplinary aspects of teacher-student relations (Brown, 2017; Heinemann, 2017; Williams, 2018), along frameworks of deservingness related to education and employment and to culture.

Recent theories of policy implementation and the everyday functioning of welfare institutions highlight that encounters between frontline workers and their clients, and more specifically, the perceptions and perspectives of the former are shaped by multiple factors. Policy expectations and related public discourses interact with the specific institutional roles and positions occupied by these workers; moreover, frontline workers' perspectives are also affected and modified by their own social statuses, personal biographies, identities, life trajectories. (Dubois, 2010; Zacka, 2017) In our analytic model, as outlined above, we apply such multi-layered perspectives. We focus on legislative and political frameworks of deservingness translating into teacher-student and social worker-client relations through an institutional discursive repertoire of care and control.

Specifically, we scrutinize the constructions of deservingness in the accounts of Hungarian migrants working and volunteering in the institutions helping refugees in Germany. First, we ask how refugee-deservingness based on education and employment, as well as deservingness based on culture are constructed in individual accounts of Hungarian employees and volunteers working in institutions responsible for refugee accommodation in Germany. Second, we aim to decipher how such frames relate to the personal migrant experiences and identities and statuses of helpers: how sameness or difference vis-à-vis the recipients of such help is

constructed, and how this evokes perspectives of empathy, disciplining or indifference towards refugees and asylum seekers.

Formulating similar questions is not unprecedented in scholarly research of refugee accommodation in Western Europe. Casati (2017) in a Sicilian reception center shows how disciplining and indifference may prevail on the part of social workers, partly built upon a moralising contrast between own past migration and their clients'. Focusing on a refugee integration program in France, Schiff and Clavé-Mercier (2019) have shown how empathy as well as disciplinary regards may be born out of migrant identities of employees and volunteers of the program.

Methodology and data

The paper aims to contribute to understanding how intra-EU migrants, employed or volunteering in these organisations, rely and mobilise various frameworks of deservingness while relating to their refugee clients and students. Despite these wider stakes, we narrowed our empirical focus on workers of Hungarian background as a direct continuation of previous research conducted in Hungary on pro-refugee civic initiatives (Zakariás and Feischmidt 2020; Feischmidt and Zakariás 2019).

In the paper we focus not on practices of volunteers or employees but on their discourses and narratives. We aim to reveal the figures of refugees and asylum-seekers as appearing in the accounts of individuals working or volunteering in refugee accommodation and integration, in order to understand frameworks of deservingness surrounding refugees and asylum seekers in these intermediary institutions. Last, but not least, we also want to comprehend the interaction of lived and imagined migrant experiences between the East European migrant workers and the refugees arriving from outside Europe.

In line with these goals, the methodology of our qualitative inquiry was semi-structured interviews^{vii}. We asked our interviewees about their pre-migration life and motivations for migration, as well as about their experiences in Germany - including those obtained through refugee-supporting activities. Fifteen interviews were carried out with sixteen persons in the summer and autumn of 2017 with people who identified themselves as involved in helping refugees in Berlin and Munich. We found them through a random snowball sampling which had four starting points, partly related to a previous research among charity and solidarity

activists in Hungary, partly to personal relations to institutions and active members of the Hungarian diaspora in the two cities, and finally through facebook communities of the Hungarians living in Germany. Interviews were transcribed, and coded with Atlas.ti software. Coding was carried out according to the value frameworks mentioned (employment, culture), workers' perspectives on clients and students (empathy, disciplining, bureaucratic pragmatism and indifference), and reference to own migrant experience and identities.

Most of our interviewees were well educated (15 out of 16 with a university degree) and there were more women (13) than men (3). Members of the oldest cohort of interviewees (5 people) had arrived in Germany in the 1980s or 1990s, mentioning family-migration (2 respondents), work migration (2 respondents) and asylum-seeking (1 respondent) among the causes of their movement. At the time of the research they had a stable income and social status and felt well-integrated into the German society. These individuals had volunteered to help refugees or worked for an organization in this field, in two cases even lead and founded by them. Members of the younger generation had typically arrived in Germany within the last ten years with good German or English language competences. They mentioned political and economic reasons for leaving Hungary, and typically became teachers at language schools for refugees (5 people) or started in jobs assisting refugees in social welfare institutions, either in reception centres, *Erstaufnahmeeinrichtungen* ('initial reception facilities') or in special programs offered by local governments (6 people). In line with findings by Bauder and Jayaraman (2014), these paid employees mostly occupy lower positions in the institutional structure involving frontline work with refugees and asylum-seekers.

Creating deservingness through education and employment

Concerning the figure of the refugee clients and students, the most dominant framing in our interviews is the figure of the hard-working and ambitious refugee who is keen to make progress with the accommodation process and, more specifically, to find education and employment in Germany.

'Any person knows that refugees, since they are here in greater and greater numbers, everywhere, they work, they are active, they are willing. I have never experienced people learn German as fast as they do—as I see it these people learn the language really fast. (woman in her 40s, social worker, Berlin)

In this framework, the speaker notes the willingness of their clients to comply with formal procedures: to adhere to the rules of reception facilities and institutions, to attend to bureaucratic procedures, and are also willing to participate in the education-, employment- and leisure-related programs that are organized for them. While stating and continuously emphasizing the ambitions and willingness of their clients, a large amount of talk is also dedicated to describing the problems involved in achieving these desired goals. Difficulties vary from a temporary lack of work or education and difficulty or failure keeping up with bureaucratic obligations and deadlines to low levels of attendance in leisure programs and training organized by the helpers.

'I know someone like that, he's a lawyer, but the problem is, he is still living there [in Germany] without status and until then [until he receives the status of refugee] he can take part neither in formal education nor employment, only those internships and such... He was learning German, and I don't know what, he was always translating. He was always called on if there was some need for some professional translation, for 0.8 cents, at the refugee[s' place of] accommodation. Because they could give him no other work, but he was happy that he could at least use his brain, and practice his German...' (Woman in her 30s, social worker, Berlin)

Such difficulties of realizing 'performance' are, however, depicted with an empathetic tone. The speaker follows the perspective of his/her student or client, and identifies with it. From this perspective, such difficulties arise in everyday struggles of their clients against external obstacles. These are understood either as caused by the disfunctionalities of the reception system in Germany, or with equal prevalence to victimhood (i.e. to trauma experienced before, during, or after the migration journey). Withdrawing responsibilities of their clients and students for any lack of success and performance concerning education or employment allows the reproduction of the figure of the morally competent, deserving refugee.

Our respondents' duties relate to assisting asylum seekers and refugees, and in some cases other groups of immigrants living in Germany. Their focus is teaching-related activities - most often German-language courses and integration courses subsidized by the German state -, or social work that is community building as well as case-work related to education, employment, compliance with regularisation procedures, carried out in social or educational institutions or NGOs. As described in Kubisch et al. (2017), such occupation positions in the field of asylum in Germany often imply an institutionally produced empathetic perspective that focuses on

personal existential concerns of asylum seeking or refugee clients. However, the dominance of such an empathetic framework, and the lack of a perspective indifferent towards exclusions effectuated by asylum bureaucracy requires further explanation.

This empathetic framework constructed around education and employment often include allusions to similarities between own migration stories and experience in Germany and those of their clients. These narratives predominantly underline the problems and difficulties the speaker encountered while learning the language or searching for jobs —just like their clients and students.

‘And then I thought, I’ll move to London. [It was] the shittiest decision of my life. I didn’t really speak English, and there I was, in total ignorance—and this is why I can terribly [sic] understand these people—because I did the same, that oh, yeah, I’m going to work in some place, and learn English in the meantime. And of course, nothing worked out like that.’ (Woman in her 20s, social worker, Berlin)

In the following extract we find that the difficulties of the Syrian lawyer in securing legal status and employment, as cited above, is strongly associated with one of the helper’s own struggles for the nostrification of a Hungarian university diploma on the German labour market.

‘(...) Because they could give him [the Syrian lawyer] no other work, but still he was happy, that he could at least use his brain, and practice his German. He was a lawyer though, and I know nothing about the accreditation of Syrian law degrees. But even Hungarians are scolded annoyingly. [I have been told] that I should accredit my degree. Which is, in my view... I come from an EU country, and I’m not a lawyer or a doctor, but a sociologist. So Max Weber is Max Weber here as well, I guess. So I would have found it a bit excessive if they refused to accept my degree, even within the EU. I have to add that I was not called in for an interview until I received this job, although I applied for several.’ (Woman in her 30s, social worker, Berlin)

The recollection of own difficulties as related to their clients’ are aimed to validate claims of the externality of causes behind these struggles. These imply both a critical perspective, pointing to the insufficiencies and ineffectiveness of the institutions of refugee and migrant accommodation, and are also aimed to justify the deservingness of clients and students. At the same time these narratives position helpers as immigrants in German society whose compliance with expectations related to education or employment is also expressed. Such narratives involve thus processes of identification that create deservingness by blurring the boundaries

between refugees/asylum-seekers and other immigrants, among them the Hungarians living in Germany. By expressing similarities of struggles for language skills, education, or employment create the moral competence of migrant helpers and recipients of help in parallel to each other.

As we saw in Kubisch et al (2017), the institutional context of refugee reception and migrant integration also sets in motion, beyond empathetic identification and system-critical perspectives, other relations towards recipients of help. Among our respondents, both disciplinary perspectives aiming to alter subjectivities of recipients to obtain employment or education, and pragmatic indifference towards their respective failings are extremely weak, emerge only occasionally. In these few cases, however, our interviewees may evoke similarities of migrant positions between themselves and their clients in a way that disciplinary perspectives are created.

Hence, the perception of similarities and sameness as migrants, layered upon such institutional expectations of producing deserving recipients may also become a disciplinary tool, as described in Schiff and Clavé-Mercier (2019). An experience of struggles and hardship may be channeled into an educating disposition that aims to shape and form the other into an actor of a specific type: one who performs according to the expectations of the reception system. In this disciplining framework the success of the speaker is evoked with the aim of responsabilizing the client in relation to taking action, by pressuring the latter to make more effort to comply with the system as it is; while also hindering the formulation of critique of the larger system. The following extract illustrates such a disciplining perspective built upon common migration experience:

‘Yes, I’ve compared their story with mine from the beginning. (...) I don’t know how the others do it, but, as I said, this always comes to mind, how I would react and behave. And this is why I can formulate a critique of many people, by saying that if I could make it, then please don’t come to me with all these little complaints.’ (Woman in her 20s, social worker, Berlin)

The framework of culture and gender: the parallel existence of disciplinary and counter-disciplinary discourses

Policy addressing cultural performance of refugees and migrants most explicitly unfolds in regard of integration courses being primarily aimed at teaching and improving German

language skills, but also as part of 'orientierungskurs' ('orientation course') they focus on sharing knowledge on the German society and its 'cultural norms' (Heinemann, 2017). Such policies on culture and identities, expecting performance and adjustment on the part of refugees arrived into a welfare services and education context that has long been characterised by looking at refugees (and at migrants at large) from a civilising perspective. Various research on social work discourses in Germany (Attia, 2013; Olivier-Mensah et al, 2017), on discourses and practices of integration courses (Brown, 2016; Heinemann, 2017; Williams, 2018) and on volunteering for refugees (Braun, 2017) have described how, in the context of education and social welfare services 'culture' and 'identity' become embedded into disciplining discourses of civilisation, orientalism and racism. The mobilisation of such discourses imply Othering regards on the part of social workers, teachers and volunteers. They claim the collective inferiority of students' and clients', explicitly, or implicitly, based on ethnic, national, geographical, religious and racial categorisations. Through such hierarchisation, these perspectives also legitimate altering and transforming subjectivities of those Othered. The above cited research all describe how educating newcomers - making them change their attitudes, values, identities and alter their behaviour - to overcome such differences becomes both an institutional expectation and an everyday practice in these educational and social services contexts.

In line with the above findings, cultural difference was substantially discussed in our interviews. Difference was anchored in various domains: threatening appearance, traditional clothing, (lack of) politeness, knowledge on bodily hygiene and health, proper child rearing, as well as gender relations could form a ground for such Othering regards. These references all became places for suspending the otherwise solid construction of the deserving refugee. A civilizing mission unfolds in this perspective, which places socialization processes at the center, effectuated by competent helpers who turn culturally different - ignorant - persons into complying subjects. *'They [refugee students] really needed full explanations, like, from healthy lifestyle to biology, as they came from so many places, some of them wasn't even aware of how digestion works, and so.'* (volunteer woman in her 60s, Munich)

The positive self-identities of helpers are reinforced here, as built upon cultural superiority vis-à-vis their clients and upon emphasizing their own capacity to reshape and transform cultural difference into respectable qualities of cultural performance. Three major factors contribute to the unfolding of such perspectives. First, civilisational discourses along religion, culture and Europeanness are prevalent in public spaces, in policy talk and in the media in Germany, as

well as in institutional contexts of refugee assistance, as cited above. Our respondents embedded into these contexts of various scales mirror these discourses that surround them. Second, these disciplinary perspectives also reflect civilizational discourses unfolding in Hungarian public spaces related to nationhood. Various cultural studies scholars revealed the operation of such discourses of cultural hierarchies along civilisation and modernisation in Central and Eastern Europe, also in Hungary. (Melegh, 2006) Third, the discursive context of civilizational talk, and indeed, being hired to teaching and doing social work in these institutions, places the speaker in the position of a deserving subject along the value framework of culture and identity.

In line with Braun's (2017) analysis on middle class women volunteering for refugees in Germany, such civilising mission often reveals, in our interviewees' accounts, an intersectionality of race, religion, gender and class. The trope of female Muslim clients or students being controlled by male family members, and hindered in their participation in education and employment by subordinated gender roles, or the trope of less literate male pupils or clients behaving inappropriately with educated female teachers or social workers all reflect such intersectional relations in operation. In this perspective educated middle class women, European and Christian, civilise less educated Middle Eastern and African Muslim men, and in parallel, emancipate women and girls from their violence and subordination. The next extract also shows how emancipation becomes not only intertwined with religion and gender, but is also imagined as the appropriation of middle-class ways of life:

'We aimed to show them [the refugees] these role models, we invited women who had achieved something. To show how they [these exemplars] live, so that they [the refugees] see, not that they should become like that, but rather that look, it may work out that way, because we live like that. Because they are not so diverse, all with 5-6 children, cooking, washing clothes, shopping, they are not so diverse. What we tried is to show different ways, that it is possible to have no children, or to have three children, and still have a career, and that the husband takes part in it, and that it is possible to be divorced, or to be lesbian, and whatever, there is space for everything. (...) And we would like them to see this, and to adapt to this.' (woman in her 30s, language teacher, Berlin)

In parallel to such disciplinary talk on cultural difference, however, our interviewees also made great efforts to challenge and overwrite such difference and hierarchies. A continuous self-

censoring of cultural stereotyping as well as of the normalisation of cultural hierarchies and disciplinary relations unfold in our interviews, the traces of which may also be found in the previous extract (“not that they should become like that”).

Such counter-attempts to eliminate disciplining and difference build upon various sources. Wider societal discourses of anti-racism, emphatic in the German public, as well as personification of clients and students are all mobilised by our interviewees to deconstruct their own culturalising and essentialising perspectives. Moreover, and most importantly for our present paper, recurrence to sameness based on migrant identification, related to difficulties of language learning, of acquiring a sense of belonging and of integration also provide powerful means to challenge such Othering perspectives. In the following extract initial criminalizing and Orientalizing are channelled away by considering, with regards to “integration”, rights to own culture, both for refugees and for Hungarians in Germany.

If you go here downtown, around the Railway Station, than it is like the ghetto in New York, and you have to handle that properly. Anyway, at least you don't have to go to Morrocco, to a bazaar, because you also have it here (laughing). However, I think, even if they [the refugees] do not integrate the way Germans imagine integration, it will rather be a multitude of living styles, living next to each other, not becoming identical. Me, for example, I have worked a lot as a volunteer within the Catholic Church, I represented the Hungarian Catholic Mission in various committees. And we worked for years, to make the German understand that integration is not assimilation. (volunteer woman, in her 60s, Munich)

A mediating position in the governance of migration

In the last two sections we described how frameworks of performance unfolded in the domains of (1) education and employment and (2) culture and identity. We found, in both frameworks, the dominance of empathetic and disciplining perspectives, interwoven with an overall commitment to helping, and an almost total absence of indifference and exclusionary perspectives. Such dominance of solidary attitudes and perspectives might partly be implied by the political positioning of our respondents vis-à-vis the Hungarian government, and its xenophobic anti-refugee and anti-immigration propaganda (on the latter see Bocskor, 2018). For some recently migrated respondents, their own movement to Germany, political critique of the Hungarian regime, and pro-refugee orientation become intimately intertwined (Feischmidt and Zakariás, 2020). While the role of such attitudes and relations towards Hungarian politics

would deserve further analysis, in this paper we deepen our understandings on the mobilisation of migrant categories and migrant identifications, in relation to political and policy discourses of deservingness in Germany.

Our respondents revealed an inconsistent mobilisation of migrant categories, and differing levels of identification with clients and students along the two frameworks. Struggles for deservingness related to education and employment, experienced both by Hungarian migrant workers and their students and clients evoked references to similarities, and implied an empathetic perspective towards the latter. In the meantime, the framework of culture and identity evoked more diverse perspectives. A disciplinary gaze unfolded, based on a 'mission civilisatrice', targeted at altering inferior behaviour, values and culture of non-European, Muslim clients and students. At the same time, difference and disciplining was continually challenged and countered by evoking antiracist, anti-stereotyping, anti-disciplinary discourses prevalent in the German public and in specific institutions of refugee accommodation; by personification of clients and students; and by recurrence to sameness and identification related to being a migrant.

These ambivalences draw the contours of a characteristic place of Hungarian volunteers and workers in the governance of migration in Germany, in the specific institutional context of refugee accommodation. Such position mediates between policies and politics regulating the membership of refugees and asylum-seekers in Germany on one hand, and institutional care-control discourses of refugee accommodation and integration on the other. The component of migrant background of volunteers, paid social workers and teachers, most typically related to struggles for employment and for employment-based deservingness implies elevated levels of empathy towards clients and students, which in turn strengthens professional dedication and willingness to help.

Disciplinary perspectives, primarily along the value frameworks of culture and identity, are also reproduced, by institutional roles (of teachers and social workers) and deservingness discourses (on CEE migrants in Germany) becoming layered upon each-other. The latter position Hungarian workers as white, Christian and European which delegates them as legitimate actors in these institutions operating racializing discourses of civilisation. For these workers, on the other hand, such culturalising disciplinary perspectives may reassure positions and identities as deserving, morally competent subjects, otherwise challenged to some extent in the larger political and media publicity in Germany, as pointed out by our literature review.

This mediation, involving an amalgam of empathetic commitment through personal interactions and a disciplinary perspective may become interpreted by some of our respondents as an ‘in-betweenness’, as a positioning of migrants of specific national backgrounds between refugees and the German nation. This position may even become a core element of professional identification. Accordingly, the duality of migrant-non-migrant, citizen-non-citizen divide may become replaced by a tripartite scale, positioning Hungarian and Central and Eastern European migrant workers between refugees and German nationals. As the following extract demonstrates:

So, practically this means immersing them [the refugees] into the German culture or the entire European culture. This is my major duty, to make them do their first steps. This is a beautiful duty, I consider it a noble duty, if one takes this seriously. (...) Because we do not only teach them the language, but all the other things as well. (...) And it is so interesting that Germans, they do not mingle. They do not mingle, in reality. Here, we are that in-between nation, the Hungarians, but not all teachers are Hungarian, there are Bosnians, and a lot other, I have a Georgian colleague, for example. We are the first, we offer the first levels of communication to these people. Because, I, for example, I invite them for a coffee and a talk.’ (woman in her 50s, language teacher, Munich)

Discussion and conclusion

Based on interviews conducted with 16 individuals who had migrated from Hungary to Germany and who were working in 2017 either as paid employees or as volunteers in the institutional system of refugee accommodation, we have attempted to elaborate on the role of intra-EU Hungarian migrants in the governance of refugee accommodation in Germany. We asked how policies and politics regulating the membership of refugees and asylum-seekers translate into perspectives of care and control in intermediary institutions, when these are operated by persons who are themselves transnationally mobile. How do personal migration experience, migrant identities and statuses shape discourses about other migrants’ accommodation in the host society? In formulating these questions we joined arms with critical migration studies and citizenship scholars, who have recently highlighted the importance of moralising discourses of deservingness in the redistribution of resources in a nation-state, and more broadly in the governance and regulation of migrant (and non-migrant) segments of their population. In these models multiple positionalities of moral worth, and individual and

collective struggles for becoming more deserving, define social relations among marginal groups and categories. Tensions within and between positions may follow, which, using the terms of Anderson, turn some into guardians of moral values and “of good citizenship”, disciplining themselves as well as others (Anderson, 2013 p.6.).

This paper, in this vein, aims to elaborate on actual deployment and mechanisms of such disciplining, in specific institutions (of intermediary institutions refugee accommodation in Germany) and among specific non-citizen positions and relations (between intra-EU Hungarian migrants and refugees and asylum-seekers from the Middle-East and Africa). We show that these relations unfold as governance through deservingness discourses about refugees and CEE migrants, and governance through professional discourses of education and social work become layered upon each other, interact and merge in these teacher-student and social worker-client relations.

According to our findings, in the value framework of culture and identity ambiguous perspectives are born. A ‘mission civilisatrice’ of educating non-European, first of all Muslim others to European, non-Muslim ways of behaving and thinking, often tied to the domain of gender relations, was paralleled by a continuous attempt to deconstruct and dismantle such discourses of difference and disciplining. The emergence of such disciplining perspectives were found at the intersections of race, religion, gender and class. Earlier research on social work and education in institutions of refugee accommodation already explored such discourses – our paper shows how migrant workers also may become its producers. In their systematic review Erel et al (2016) emphasize that since 2015 and the arrival of African and Middle Eastern refugees and asylum seekers to Western Europe, such racialisations have become increasingly produced also from social positions that are themselves racialised and denigrated. Our paper contributes to exploring this under-researched area: we reveal how such disciplinary racializing discourses are reproduced while at the same time contested, through empathetic perspectives based on identification as migrants.

We revealed that empathetic perspectives towards refugees, more prevalent in the framework of employment- and education-based deservingness, but also appearing in the domain of culture and identity, stem from various sources. First, besides institutional expectations of care, they may partly originate in the political position of respondents, critical with the Hungarian government in general, and with its heavy anti-immigration and anti-refugee discourses in particular. The intricate relationship of these factors would require further research. Second,

the perspective of empathy was also shown to be related to helpers identifying with their students and clients on the basis of their migrant background. Discourses of deservingness, challenging the moral worth of migrants in both positions (of refugee clients and students as well as intra-EU migrant Hungarian workers) thus, besides translating into hierarchies and disciplinary perspectives, also evoked empathetic regards and identification, based on common experience as migrants in Germany.

It is important to emphasize, at this point, the processual character and situatedness of such migrant biographies and identities, in order to avoid rigidly contrasting persons as holders of various citizenships, and thus echoing assumptions of methodological nationalism. First, institutions often mobilise themselves specific migrant categorisations and related frames of deservingness. They may search for recruitment among various migrant groups attributed with specific social, cultural, or human capital applicable in frontline work with refugees and asylum-seekers; or they may turn to more vulnerable labour supplies, and among them non-citizens, as these institutions - and front-line positions in particular - have been shifted towards the secondary segments of the labour market in Germany, characterised by project-based operation and more precarious employment (Bauder and Jayaraman, 2014, Feischmidt and Zakariás 2020).

Second, categorisation and deservingness concepts related to migration may also be interrelated, on a wider scale, with recent attempts of reinterpreting ‘citizenship’, ‘nationhood’ and the national past in the German political and media publicity. Karakayali (2019) has already shown that public discourses in Germany are shifting towards self-perceptions of being a ‘migration society’, and discovering, emphasizing, recreating (national) identities as closely related to historical memories of migration. These phenomena, that is the mobilisation of historical memories on migration in the larger public, and its implications on the mobilisation of migrant categories and related deservingness frameworks on an institutional level in refugee accommodation institutions should be further studied.

The theoretical framework set up in this paper allowed us to describe everyday discourses of deservingness and performance in a multi-layered perspective: as resulting from specific configurations of political and policy discourses, the institutional context and finally, the individual migrant identities of actors in the field. In this way we succeeded in uniting in a coherent manner the perspectives of earlier research that focused on more restricted aspects of the analysed phenomena. Accordingly, this paper contributes to three interrelated scholarly

fields. First, from the perspective of migration studies, while there is a considerable focus on manual workers (Ostaijen et al, 2017), on domestic care and on health professionals from Central and Eastern European countries migrating to Western Europe, the migration of professionals in social services are less explored. Second, from the perspective of studies on social policy and welfare institutions, the paper contributes to explore how deservingness frameworks translate into care-control discourses in social services targeting refugees and asylum seekers in Germany. With this focus, the paper complements previous extensive knowledge of civic solidarities with a deeper understanding of state funded refugee integration institutions in Germany.

Third, related to refugee and citizenship studies, the paper aimed to challenge classical analytical oppositions between citizens and non-citizens, migrants and non-migrants or migrants and refugees; and resolve how multiple forms and gradations of membership are reconfigured in reception contexts involving various migrant groups and categories. We accomplished this task by revealing the ambivalent constellation of disciplinary racialisation and empathetic identification of Hungarian employees and volunteers. A deeper investigation on membership and inclusion as formed and shaped in these institutions would require broadening our research to unearth perspectives and meaning making in other positions, such as among refugee clients and students, institutional stakeholders and employees of various social backgrounds. In this article we have made initial steps towards this direction: we revealed how migrant positions of Hungarian workers in these institutions may become assets not only as social and human capital, but in a different sense as well - through an amalgam of a disciplinary gaze and empathetic commitments how it may become an emotional resource in the governance of migration.

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ⁱ The paper uses the term ‘institutions of refugee accommodation’ in a broad sense: besides housing, it refers to institutions providing financial, healthcare, legal and educational services for refugees and asylum-seekers.

ⁱⁱ Schammann adds that such individual performance requirements, he calls “meritocratic elements” are still sided by humanitarian frameworks, as vulnerability-related requirements also remained definitive in obtaining refugee status in Germany.

ⁱⁱⁱ We thank Ludger Pries for this information.

^{iv} On the concept of migrant capital see also Erel and Ryan (2019).

^v Regarding the dispersion of migrant and CEE workers among various types of such institutions and jobs would require further research.

^{vi} In a quantitative study that analysed solidarity activities and practices towards refugees in Germany in recent years, Kiess et al. (2018) found that a migrant background was strongly related to increased participation in pro-refugee activities. A representative survey carried out in July 2016 among Polish migrants in Germany revealed that 18% of the latter had volunteered or donated to refugees since 2015 (Nowicka et al., 2017).

^{vii} These interviews are part of a larger project started with an online survey on Hungarians living in Germany, their experiences and perceptions related to migration. Respondents opinions on solidarity and security policies as well as their experiences in volunteering or paid work in refugee accommodation’ system was also scrutinized and was introduced in another paper (Feischmidt and Zakariás, 2020). Later the project went on by doing interviews with Hungarians not involved in solidarity actions with refugees. The 26 interviews completed in this phase are currently under data analysis.

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