

The Making of Educationally Manageable Immigrant Schoolchildren in Denmark, 1970-2013: A Critical Prism for Studying the Fabrication of a Danish Welfare Nation State

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Ever since children of non-Western labour immigrants appeared in Danish public schools in the early 1970s, immigrant schoolchildren have attracted considerable attention from politicians, administrators, teachers, experts, and researchers. This attention has often been voiced as a concern for immigrant children's individual welfare, but also for the collective welfare of Danish society. With the objective of unravelling this educational attention, the thesis asks how were immigrant schoolchildren made educationally manageable in Danish public schools between 1970 and 2013, and how have these practices of educationalised governing fed into fabricating a post-1970 Danish welfare nation state.

The study is based on more than 800 documents derived from archive studies of administrative texts, professional journals, and a variety of didactical and pedagogical guidelines. Focussing on administrative knowledge production, teacher professionalisation and didactical development responding to the presence of immigrant schoolchildren, the thesis identifies the emerging problem-solving complexes as profound practices of educationalising the social question of integration. Qua an analytics of governing, educational practices vis-à-vis immigrant schoolchildren are constructed as a critical prism for studying the fabrication of a Danish welfare nation state.

The thesis shows how educationalised welfare work addressing non-Western immigrant children and their families functioned not only as a deeply rooted national(ist) project, but also equally as a racialising, civilising, modernising project of governing the social and doing good. The thesis demonstrates how revisiting the social question in a post-1970 context of educating immigrant schoolchildren disturbs the optimistic salvation project of public education and integration. The thesis shows how a post-1970 Danish welfare nation state can be understood as the effect of an inherently modernistic project of brutal care, subtly racialised professionalisation, and a civilising pedagogy placing immigrant schoolchildren on the threshold of a thesis of modern Danish life.