

## Introduction

The (Un)deserving Migrant? Street-level Bordering Practices and Deservingness in Access to Social Services

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This themed section explores the role of ideas about deservingness in shaping migrants' access to social services from a European comparative perspective. The collection of articles qualitatively uncovers the sorts of criteria and ideas that are mobilised to enable or restrict access to basic social services, contributing to migrants' ability to participate meaningfully in society. To that end, we connect two fields of enquiry, namely migration control and social policy. Contributing to the literature on the 'migration control-social policy nexus' (Ataç and Rosenberger, 2018), the novelty of this collection lies in the comparative analysis of notions of deservingness within internal bordering practices. Seven articles by political scientists, sociologists, anthropologists and scholars of law scrutinise the manifestations of ideas about deservingness from street-level interactions to judicial proceedings, in three key social service sectors, namely healthcare, housing, and labour market integration in France, Germany, Greece, Italy and the Netherlands. Uneven access to public services or to the local labour market function as internal border control (Bommes and Geddes, 2000; Van Der Leun, 2006), engendering differential inclusion of migrants (Mezzadra and Neilson, 2013), who are incorporated into certain areas of society but denied admission into others. As Hall (2017) contended in his more theoretical considerations, migrants are subject to complex bureaucratic procedures which regulate not only who is coming in, but who can afford to stay.

Through our approach, we question how different social administrators, whose traditional mandate is the allocation of welfare services and resources, come to exert migration control. In this context, social services can be seen as a site where claims to social citizenship are made, negotiated, and contested locally. By bringing together a focus on internal bordering (see Yuval-Davis and colleagues (2018, 2019), we show how local practices of social administrators can (dis)enable migrant groups, differently situated on the documented-undocumented continuum, to avail themselves of essential social services. In other words, we strive to advance our understanding of how and at what level of policy-making and implementation ideas of deservingness matter in the rationing of public social services for non-citizens.

Our collection of articles makes original contributions to three distinct, yet at times overlapping, strands of literature: a) studies of social policy implementation at the street-level, which have examined access to welfare benefits but less often access to social services, b) studies of the welfare state and immigration nexus, and how it functions in practice, and c) the emerging field of enquiry within critical migration studies around internal bordering. At these crossroads, we contend that the notion of deservingness is key in determining migrants' access to social services, acknowledging the need to go beyond the binary of the deserving/undeserving migrant yet not discarding the notion altogether (Carmel and Sojka, 2020). We see our collective contribution as advancing our understanding of what specific criteria underpin judgements of deservingness. This includes uncovering the moral hierarchies that social agents construct around claimant groups and through which they entrench internal bordering processes.

In more detail, this themed section on migrants' access to social services illuminates how judgements of deservingness, although acted upon within street-level interactions, are not ad hoc moral constructions detached from moral economies that characterise institutions and society at large. At the same time, street-level agents develop locally produced and experience-based understandings of deservingness, which may contradict dominant policy frames. The articles collectively uncover the similarities in the use of deservingness criteria

towards migrants across bureaucratic levels (from judges to social administrators) and different national contexts. In addition, the progressive rolling back of the welfare state and the multiplication of intermediaries in the context of the New Public Management contribute to the growing importance of judgements of deservingness within the design and delivery of social services, revealing a continuum of ideas about whose access to welfare resources is legitimate within a given country context.

For this purpose, the 'state-of-the art' review by Ratzmann and Sahraoui on the role of deservingness in governing migrants' substantive access to social services situates our contribution to the literature, at the intersection of street-level bureaucracy studies and practices of internal bordering through social service delivery. Next, as the first empirical case study, the piece by Novak uncovers the uneven geographies of accommodation standards available to asylum-seekers in the Italian province of Macerata. The rich ethnographic material offers insights into how performance-based criteria of deservingness structure access to quality housing for those asylum-seekers who comply with the set-out behavioural conditionalities. Equally focussing on access to accommodation for refugees, Glyniadaki's work draws attention to the role of non-state contractors in providing social services. She shows how such intermediaries between the state and migrant clients allocate access to housing dependent on their own ideas of deservingness, centred around the notion of vulnerability and in relation to age and gender.

The following two articles discuss access to French healthcare services. The study of the French overseas territory of Mayotte by Sahraoui explores how undocumented pregnant women become othered as undeserving guests in local hospitals, uncovering the impact of anti-immigration narratives on ideas of undeservingness to receive maternity care. Geeraert, on the other hand, examines service delivery in hospitals in mainland France for sick and vulnerable migrants in the context of budgetary restrictions. His findings show how perceptions of health-related un/deservingness become linked to the costs of healthcare: the higher the costs, the lower the perception of the patients as deserving of treatment.

Access to the labour market and supporting services is the theme of the articles by Schultz and Ratzmann on the German case. The first of the two contributions investigates the role of deservingness conceptions in local immigration officials' decisions on work permits. The qualitative interviews unveil how municipal staff rely on behavioural norms that go beyond legal requirements to grant third-country nationals access to the German labour market. The second study focusses on local job centre officials' discretionary decisions on granting access to labour market integration services and associated unemployment benefits. The findings point to cultural performance-based logics of deservingness and nationality-based stereotypes to explain local practices of inclusion and exclusion. Finally, the article by Slingenberg analyses the legal reasoning adopted by Dutch courts in granting undocumented migrant women and their children access to shelter, drawing on ideas of deservingness based on behavioural compliance and their ability to be in control of their situation while putting less emphasis on judicial precedents.

Overall, our collection of articles highlights the multiplication of local bordering practices and actors involved across different fields of social policy. Such a multiplication appears indirectly and informally to widen spaces of discretionary power at street-level. The seven contributions demonstrate the reliance on extra-legal, moral criteria of deservingness when local social administrators make decisions about granting access to essential social services. What emerges across different country contexts, mainly in the German, Dutch and Italian cases, is the reliance on performance-based criteria of deservingness, whereby access in practice is made dependent on clients' behaviour. Ideas about being in control of one's economic situation and neediness, and associated welfare dependency, are equally present across cases, namely in the Dutch, French, Greek, and German studies. Such findings could be situated in the broader context of current neoliberal, labour-market activation focussed welfare policies, within which social citizenship has to be 'earned' (see Dean, 2015; Dwyer, 2010). Instead of access to state-financed welfare being a genuine right, entitlements increasingly have become conditional and discretionary, imposing moral ideals of self-

sufficiency. In the words of Anderson (2013), host societies expect incoming non-citizens to be disciplined migrant workers.

Furthermore, the contributions on France and Germany illustrate the links between macro-level policy rhetoric on conditionalities of access and ideas about deservingness advanced by implementing street-level administrators on the ground. Policy frames of migrants' (un)deservingness to receive social services appear to become replicated in local officials' reasoning, which may substantiate Dwyer *et al.*'s (2019) claim of 'institutionalised welfare chauvinism'. As postulated by Ruhs and Palme (2018), formal welfare institutions shape informal welfare preferences.

Finally, the substantiation of legal entitlements in practice, as argued by Hemker and Rink (2017), and illustrated in Novak's, Sahraoui's and Geerart's contributions, not only shapes access to scarce public resources but also their quality. The Italian and French cases show how ideas about undeservingness become a strategic tool in rationing access to limited healthcare services and housing in a context of budgetary pressures and austerity politics.

What the contributions by Glyniakdaki and Novak furthermore hint at is the growing role of intermediaries in social service delivery and the emergence of a new kind of 'bureaucrats' composed of NGO employees and civil society volunteers. Intermediaries, such as civil society welfare advisors or contractors of social service delivery, intervene in such spaces and may change the resource equation by advising on legal rights or the technicalities of welfare claims, or provide more diffuse cultural knowledge about the host society. They thus contribute to policy interpretation and implementation by mediating between migrants and state agents. The idea of 'cultural brokerage' (Ratzmann, 2019) in substantiating welfare rights of migrant clients could be developed by future studies in greater depth empirically and theoretically and further advance our analysis of street-level provision of public services. Our dissection of the role of deservingness criteria as applied to migrants represents a step in this direction.

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