



Article

Refusing the Gift of Welfare: Syrians' Encounters with the Danish State

Malene H. Jacobsen

The School of Geography, Politics and Sociology, Newcastle University, Newcastle upon Tyne NE1 7RU, UK; malene.jacobsen@newcastle.ac.uk

Abstract: This paper traces the colonial logics embedded within Western states' welfare and workfare programs. The imperial and capitalist underpinnings of Western welfare states have been well elaborated. Less research has focused on the colonial logics and strategies at work in their administration of welfare and 'integration' programs targeting newly arrived refugees. Drawing on ethnographic work with Syrian refugees living in Denmark, I examine Syrians' encounters with the Danish welfare state and the five-year mandatory 'integration' program. Through Syrians' accounts, I argue that we can begin to re-narrate the nature and meaning of contemporary welfare states and the colonial and racialized policing logics that structure and sustain them. More specifically, Syrians' accounts draw attention to the often-overlooked roles that welfare regimes perform in maintaining colonial, racialized hierarchies of humanity as well as extractive and dispositive processes typically understood as economic aid and sustenance. Moreover, Syrians' experiences of the Danish welfare state help to unpack the centrality in un- and under-paid forms of labor that refugee communities are required to perform, thereby enabling capital to materially benefit from stigmatized Others living in Denmark. Thus, by centering racial capitalism, this article contributes to scholars' emerging attention to the coloniality of 'integration' and how this imperative manifests in practice.

Keywords: racial capitalism; coloniality; refugee protection; asylum



Citation: Jacobsen, Malene H.. 2023. Refusing the Gift of Welfare: Syrians' Encounters with the Danish State. *Social Sciences* 12: 351. <https://doi.org/10.3390/socsci12060351>

Academic Editors: Olga Jubany, Lucy Mayblin, Nigel Parton and Tina G. Patel

Received: 2 December 2022

Revised: 6 June 2023

Accepted: 7 June 2023

Published: 13 June 2023



Copyright: © 2023 by the author. Licensee MDPI, Basel, Switzerland. This article is an open access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).

1. Introduction

During a focus group discussion about the lived experiences of refugee protection in Denmark, Salma, a 55-year-old Syrian woman, made the following statement about the program of refugee 'integration'¹ in which she and other participants were enrolled:

We don't want their aid or assistance. This is not protection. Until now, we live under their injustice. If you are absent, your money (allowance) is cut (. . .). There are many things like this. That is why we want to work in order to feel like we are real human beings.

Like many other Syrians who I have worked with over the years, Salma found the Danish 'integration' program incoherent, unhelpful, and unjust. Salma had worked most of her adult life as a schoolteacher in the coastal city of Tartus. Yet, at the time of our conversation, Salma had not been able to find paid employment in Denmark and she was still enrolled in the five-year mandatory 'integration' program. Thus, Salma was subject to the many rules and obligations of the 'integration' program and financially dependent on the welfare allowance that she received from the municipality where she had been mandated to reside. Welfare programs such as refugee 'integration' are often represented by mainstream media and politicians as a noble act of care given by the state to assist a vulnerable population—in this case recognized refugees (Regeringen 2016). However, Salma's account challenges this self-implied benevolence of welfare programs. Her account of having her allowance cut and her desire to work to feel like a "real human being" shows how Salma as well as other Syrians experience welfare as unjust and dehumanizing.

In this article, I examine Syrians' accounts of the Danish welfare state, specifically focusing on refugee 'integration'. Since the 1990s, 'integration' has become part and parcel of welfare projects. Countries across Europe have introduced new legislation, policies, and programs that aim to facilitate the 'integration' of newly arrived immigrants and refugees into the nation-state (Favell 2022). In Denmark, the 'integration' of immigrants and refugees became a growing public and political concern from the late 1980s (Olwig 2011; Rytter 2019). In media and public debates, immigrants were often portrayed as a threat to Danish society, which many Danish residents imagined to be an ethnically and culturally homogeneous national community (Schmidt 2011). In response, politicians and others demanded that immigrants and refugees should 'integrate' "by subjecting themselves to Danish norms and standards, which were seldom defined" (Rytter 2019, p. 6). On 26 June 1998, these demands were manifested in legislation as the Danish parliament passed bill L60, introducing Denmark's first law on integration: the Danish Integration Act (*Lov om integration af udlændinge i Danmark (Integrationslov)*). Specifically targeting immigrants and refugees, this Act enabled the Danish government to create a range of new welfare programs, policies, and measures, many of which remain in place today.

'Integration' programs and measures have received a great deal of attention across the social sciences. Critical scholars have demonstrated the ways in which 'integration' programs are gendered and intervene in the private lives of immigrants and refugees; are built on racialized assumption and cast immigrants and refugees as inferior; exclude immigrants and refugees from the social imaginary of the nation-state; and contribute to the rise of nationalism and xenophobia and exclusion of immigrants across a range of contexts (Hadj Abdou 2019; Favell 2022; Kofman 2023), including in Denmark (Larsen 2011a, 2011b; Olwig 2011; Rytter 2019). In doing so, this body of work provides an important critique of the concept and normativity of 'integration'.

Alongside these discussions, scholars have begun to link the idea and practice of 'integration' with colonial histories and forms of reasoning (Farris 2016; Padovan-Özdemir and Øland 2022). While Adrian Favell (2022) has begun to theorize the 'integration' paradigm as an ongoing form of internal colonialism, Willem Schinkel (2018) has offered a critique not merely of 'integration' policy and practices but more broadly of the ways that social science research is implicated in reproducing its neocolonial underpinnings. As Schinkel argues, measuring immigrant integration "comes out of a history in which the encounter with the other first emerged, and emerged by way of a raced work of cultural classification and in the context of dominance" (Schinkel 2018, p. 12). Contributing to this emerging body of work, this article situates 'integration' within the long and ongoing histories of coloniality that have given rise to and nurtured European welfare states (Bhambra 2022).

Colonialism is central to the historical formation of modern western states and their infrastructure, including welfare regimes, healthcare systems, transportation systems, cultural and educational institutions, etc. Indeed, welfare states were made possible by the resources obtained through colonial conquest and extraction of raw materials, labor, and taxation (Bhambra 2022; El-Enany 2021). The Danish welfare state is no exception. Despite its often overlooked and forgotten imperial and colonial history, Denmark carried out its own colonial projects and was an active participant in broader European colonialism. More specifically, Denmark benefited directly from the land, people, and resources it stole as it established colonies on the east coast of India (*Tranquebar*) and the coast of contemporary Ghana (*The Gold Coast*); colonized the US Virgin Islands (*Danish West Indies*), Iceland, Kalaallit Nunaat (*Greenland*), and Føroyar (*the Faroe Islands*); and participated in the transatlantic slave trade (Hall 1992; Jensen 2018). Through human exhibitions held across major Danish cities between 1878 and 1909, people from Danish colonies and elsewhere were put on display for consumption by the public and visited by thousands of ordinary Danish citizens (Andreassen 2020). In Kalaallit Nunaat, the Danish state instituted a racially based system to administer the Inuit population, which laid the foundations for segregation practices and ongoing systemic discrimination (Pettersen 2012). These are just

some examples of the reproduction of colonial domination and racial hierarchies across space and time, notably inferring Europeans as racial superior beings.

These forms of exploitation, dispossession, and domination have continued throughout the twentieth century and into the present through the Danish Commonwealth², the ‘modernization’ program in Greenland in the 1950s and 1960s, and Danish development aid programs across the non-European world, as well as other forms of contemporary international military interventions (Afghanistan, Iraq, Mali, Libya, and Syria), reproducing global wealth disparity and inequality (Jensen 2018). Furthermore, similar to other colonial powers, such as the United Kingdom, France, and the Netherlands, the Danish state has long sought to exclude racialized people from accessing what Nadine El-Enany (2021, p. 74) calls “the spoils of colonialism”, i.e., the stolen colonial wealth and resources relocated to Denmark. It has done so through an ever-growing border regime, restrictive immigration laws, and deterrence policies, as well as by restricting migrants’ and refugees’ access to welfare benefits once they are within Danish territory.

Building on scholars’ recent efforts to address the coloniality of asylum, refugee protection, and bordering (Davies and Isakjee 2019; El-Enany 2021; Mayblin 2017; Mayblin and Turner 2021; Mayblin et al. 2019), I conceptualize the imperative of refugee ‘integration’ and its associated practices as one animated by what Aníbal Quijano (Quijano 2000b, 2000a) calls “the coloniality of power”. This concept represents a key aspect of decolonial thought and its critiques of modernity (Mignolo 2002; Mignolo and Walsh 2018). Emerging during the era of *colonialism*³, the coloniality of power refers to “the interrelation among modern forms of exploitation and domination” (Maldonado-Torres 2007, p. 242). More specifically, “the social category of ‘race’” became “the key element of the social classification of colonized and colonizers” (Quijano 2007, p. 171). As Quijano writes “Unlike in any other previous experience of colonialism, the old ideas of superiority of the dominant, and the inferiority of dominated under European colonialism were mutated in a relationship of biologically and structurally superior and inferior” (Quijano 2007, p. 171, emphasis added).

Importantly, the coloniality of power has endured into the present and remains a cornerstone of the Euro-centered capitalist colonial/modern world system (Quijano 2007). Coloniality, as Maldonado-Torres (2007) states, survived colonialism. “It is maintained alive in books, in the criteria for academic performance, in cultural patterns, in common sense, in the self-image of peoples, in aspirations of self, and so many other aspects of our modern experience” (Maldonado-Torres 2007, p. 243). Indeed, Mayblin and Turner (2021) call for the need to better understand contemporary policing and treatment of migrants that are shaped by colonial histories and forms of coloniality. Thus, while the coloniality of power is historically tied to colonialism, in this article, my theoretical and empirical focus is not on colonialism per se but instead on the ways that coloniality is at play in Danish logics and practices of ‘welfare’ and ‘integration’. Indeed, as I will show below, we see how the coloniality of power is at work in state classifications of refugees in hierarchical ways and enrolls them into relations of domination and exploitation.

While there are multiple dimensions of the coloniality of ‘integration’ (see Farris 2016), here I focus primarily on the ‘integration’ imperative as a civilizing mission and its relation to racial capitalism (Bhattacharyya 2018; Kelley 2017; Robinson 2000; Virdee 2019). Quijano’s formulation of the coloniality of power as a structure has, from the outset, centered its relation to capital formation, thereby sharing key overlaps with Cedric J. Robinson’s parallel notion of “racial capitalism” (Robinson 2000).⁴ As Robinson defines it, racial capitalism concerns the ways in which the organization and expansion of capitalist social relations emerged with and continue to work through what he terms “racialism”, namely “the legitimation and corroboration of social organization as natural by reference to the “racial” components of its elements” (Robinson 2000, p. 2). Racial capitalism refers to this dynamic and the consolidation of this “structure as a historical agency” (Robinson 2000, p. 2). Crucially, racialism has taken hold and endures *not* as some leftover of a previous era but through ongoing processes of civilization (Robinson 2000, p. 28). It works through differentiation (rather than homogenization), forcing some people “to participate

in economic arrangements that cast them to the social margins” and renders them as “the edge-subjects of capitalism” (Bhattacharyya 2018, p. ix).

Considering the reinvigoration of the far right in the 1990s in Denmark and elsewhere, which championed the political project of ‘integration’ (Fekete 2009), it is important to note how racialism is connected to nationalism. Robinson’s theorization of racial capitalism was deliberately envisaged to displace the *nation* as the central unit of analysis for theorizing the history of Europe. As Robinson argued, “the nation is not the unit of analysis for the social history of Europe. The state is a bureaucratic structure, the nation for which it administers is more a convenient construct than the historical, racial, cultural, and linguistic entity that the term “nation” signifies. The truer character of European history resides beneath the phenomenology of the nation and state” (Robinson 2000, p. 24). Yet, this does not mean that nationalism is somehow tangential to racial capitalism nor some other category unto itself. Rather, as Robinson (2019, p. 47) stressed elsewhere, “nation-states are intoxicated with nationalism, and nationalism is almost without exception a cult of one dominant group since there are rarely nation-states which are not multi-ethnic”. In other words, while the *analytic* of racial capitalism helpfully displaces the nation as the unit of analysis, it approaches nationalisms (particularly in Europe) as irreducibly tied to the emergence of racialism, and there is every reason to expect that the two continue to work in conjunction, as much recent scholarship has repeatedly shown (Danewid 2021; Bhambra 2017). Drawing on these insights, I argue that nationalist calls for an ‘integration’ imperative enables the Danish state to classify and differentially manage refugees as economic subjects, who can be dominated and exploited by capital.

This article is organized as follows. I begin by describing my research with Syrians living in Denmark and the methods of data collection used. Then, I provide a brief overview of refugee ‘integration’ in Denmark, including some of the measures it entails, and discuss how these measures insert the refugee into a racial hierarchy and reproduce a (colonial) subject in need of civilization. Following this, I proceed to analyze Syrians’ experiences of being subject to the project of ‘integration’, focusing specifically on the conditional nature of welfare allowance and the unpaid internship program. By centering racial capitalism in my analysis, this article contributes to scholars’ emerging attention to the coloniality of ‘integration’ and how this imperative manifests in practice.

2. Methodology

This article is based on my ongoing ethnographic research with Syrians living in Denmark. More specifically, I draw on findings from two research projects carried out between October 2015 and November 2022. During my multiple research trips to Denmark, I have spent extensive periods of time in multiple Danish cities and towns located across the country where I have conducted a total of 55 in-depth interviews and seven focus group discussions with Syrians. I have also undertaken ethnographic research at three community centers where I volunteered. I carried out the research in Arabic, Danish, and/or English depending on participants’ preferences and language skills. I recorded the interviews and focus group discussions when participants gave their informed and ongoing consent, otherwise I took detailed notes. To preserve participants’ anonymity, I have changed or removed any identifying details, including the names of the participants, their municipal caseworkers, their employers, the municipalities where they live, and the towns and cities where I conducted this research. At the time of my research, all participants had been granted refugee protection, received their residence permit, and were in the process of building their lives in Denmark. While some participants had obtained either part- or full-time employment, others still depended on a welfare allowance. All participants had undertaken comprehensive civic and Danish language courses, been subject to one or multiple job-training programs, and had regular contact with their municipal caseworkers, job consultants, and/or mentors, an issue I will return to below.

Building on insights from feminist refugee epistemology (Espiritu and Duong 2018), I approach the question of refugee ‘integration’ from the knowledge point of Syrians. Syrians

are social actors who can make visible both “hidden and overt injuries but also the joy and survival practices that play out in the domain of the everyday” (Espiritu and Duong 2018, p. 588). With their lived experiences and intimate knowledges of fleeing war and seeking refuge in a foreign country, Syrians need to be understood as a site of social and political critique, rather than as an object of rescue and investigation (Espiritu 2014). As a researcher, I approached my long-term engagement with Syrians as one of feminist collaboration (Jacobsen 2021) and solidarity in the face of state oppression. Thus, I approach the question of my own positionality not merely in terms of my own identity as some fixed category but rather a matter of relationality (Rose 1997). Alongside interviews and focus groups, during my fieldwork I also consistently engaged in providing social and legal support to Syrians and other refugees. Though these engagements, my goal from the outset has been to foster relations of reciprocity and accountability, which in turn enabled me to think with my informants about the nature of their everyday lives alongside their struggles for justice and dignity.

Indeed, my research with Syrians has revealed that refuge in Denmark did not live up to the haven that it so often was represented to be in the wider world (Jacobsen 2022b). For Syrians and many other refugees, Denmark was hardly a ‘hygge’ capital or the ‘happiest country in the world’. Syrians highlighted their continued struggles to make a somewhat durable and meaningful life in Denmark, often mentioning the difficulties of obtaining paid employment, the many (useless) activities that they were forced to participate in, and/or their regular interactions with municipal caseworkers, mentors, and teachers, which often made them feel degraded and humiliated. Drawing on Syrians’ accounts of their lives in Denmark, the remainder of this article illuminates the colonial dynamics and logics at play within refugee ‘integration’.

3. Results

3.1. *The Coloniality of Refugee ‘Integration’*

Once a person has obtained refugee protection status in Denmark, they are soon folded in the welfare state as they are categorized as ‘newly arrived refugees under the Integration Act’ (*nyankommen flygtning under integrationsloven*). More specifically, the Danish Integration Act stipulates that ‘newly arrived refugees’ are required to reside in a specific municipality assigned to them by the state. As a form of spatial biopolitical management, this policy means that refugees are dispersed to municipalities throughout the country and often live in towns or neighborhoods with predominantly white populations. Thus, refugees have no choice in where to live in relation to relatives, friends, social networks, shopping facilities, public transportation, schools, and daycare institutions (Larsen 2011a)⁵. Furthermore, ‘newly arrived refugees’ are obligated to sign a declaration pledging their commitment to ‘integration’ and active citizenship. Within the first month of residency, they must enter into and sign an integration contract, which stipulates their participation in a mandatory integration program, consisting of comprehensive civic and Danish language training courses and job-training activities. Finally, ‘newly arrived refugees’ are entitled to receive certain financial benefits, including child benefits, housing subsidies, and a welfare allowance.

Though longstanding, the Integration Act has been and remains subject to ongoing amendments, which go beyond the scope of my discussion here. Yet, a few changes were instituted around the time when I began my research in 2015, which bear directly on the present article. First, the duration of the mandatory integration program, including the legally mandated residence location, was extended from three to five years. Second, the economic dimensions of refugees vis-a-vis Denmark gained heightened significance. Danish politicians and state officials redoubled their long-standing claim that refugees were placing undue ‘burden’ on Danish society and economy, which could only be ameliorated through targeted measures to more successfully ‘integrate’ refugees into the country’s social fabric and economic landscape. As the government explained in a 2016 press release:

The high number of refugees, who in recent years have arrived in Denmark, poses a historical challenge that makes high demands on how we improve the integration of refugees and their families into the [Danish] labor market. Only approximately three out of ten refugees are employed after three years. This is not good enough. We must help the refugees in order to help ourselves. Because, if we must spend many extra billions on, among other things, supporting the new refugees, it will put pressure on our economy and there will be less room to invest in our common welfare. When many people arrive here from entirely different cultures, it also challenges our [Danish] values and our cohesion. Therefore, we must integrate the new refugees better than has happened in the past (Regeringen 2016, translation by author).

Following from this reasoning, the Danish government renamed refugees' welfare allowances to 'integration allowances' (*integrationsydelse*)⁶ and reduced them by approximately 50%. This meant that Salma—a single woman without children—who used to receive DKK 10,000 per month (EUR 1341), only received approximately DKK 6000 per month (EUR 805) after July 2015. The rate for an unemployed Danish resident remained unchanged at DKK 10,000 per month (EUR 1342). It is important to mention that within a Danish context where the cost of living is high, DKK 6000 (EUR 805) does not go very far. Indeed, many of the Syrians who I engaged with found it nearly impossible to sustain their basic needs on DKK 6000 per month. This is not incidental. Indeed, the reduction in the welfare provision was rationalized by the government dually as economic deterrence to prevent displaced people from seeking refuge in Denmark and as an economic incentive for those who did arrive to become employed. As a result, refugees would not only become self-sustaining but also contribute to the economic wellbeing of Danish society. Thus, through this politics we see how Syrians and other refugees were allocated to a "differential status in the economy" (Bhattacharyya 2018, p. 36), i.e., less deserving than others and in need of specific (punitive) incentives to police their behavior.

Operating through the coloniality of power (Quijano 2000a, 2000b), the Integration Act and its many measures reproduce racial hierarchies. The socio-political status 'newly arrived refugees', which is instituted by law and reinforced daily in the work of local municipalities, ensures that refugees are 'included' into the Danish welfare state albeit in ways that enable the state to differentially govern this population by dictates that do not apply to any other social group residing in the country. The state "casts out" Syrians and other refugees as an unwanted *Other* (Razack 2008), marking them as an alien population with a radically different culture; a 'burden' that needs to be distributed across the country; a group *unfit* to directly enter Danish society (labor market, educational institutions, etc.); a challenge to Danish values and cohesion; and less deserving. Indeed, as El-Enany has argued, "processes of categorization, and in particular legal categorization, thus enable colonial control over vast numbers of people and resources" (El-Enany 2021, p. 19). Thus, the Integration Act reproduces a familiar (colonial) subject in need of civilization (Robinson 2000), which in this case comes in the form of so-called 'integration'. That is, spatial dispersal, education and discipline, punitive measures, and financial incentives in order to turn refugees into 'useful' subjects. This desire to 'integrate' and 'improve' the Other must be placed in long and ongoing histories of imperial domination and their logics, motifs, and governing regimes (Jensen 2018; Andreassen 2020). In what follows, I focus specifically on the ways in which the 'integration' imperative operates in conjunction with the broader structure of racial capitalism. I do so by focusing on two central pillars of the 'integration' program, namely the conditionality of the integration allowance and unpaid internships.

3.2. Integration Allowance: Policing and Domination

The integration allowance, which refugees are entitled to receive during the integration program or until they obtain paid employment, is conditional. This means that refugees only receive the full amount if they comply with the rules and obligations stipulated in their integration contract, including actively participating in comprehensive civic and Danish language courses and job-training activities as well as collaborating with their

municipal caseworkers and mentors. As Salma emphasized: “If you are absent, your money (allowance) is cut (. . .)”. Moreover, as my informants repeatedly explained, if they failed to show up to a language class or missed a meeting with their caseworkers without a so-called ‘legitimate’ excuse, then the municipality could reduce their allowance the following month.⁷ As I show in this section, the conditionality of the integration allowance and the forms of policing that come along with it (re)produce a particular form of domination “through which the colonial other is granted a position as inferior in a brutal economic relationship” (Jensen 2018, p. 65).

The surveillance and economic insecurity brought about by this conditionality left Syrians anxious, stressed, and worried. For instance, Nidal, a 52-year-old man who used to work as an Arabic language instructor in Damascus, insisted that I wrote down the words “psychological worry” and “anxiety”, as he began to narrate his experience of the integration allowance. Nidal’s anxiety, he claimed, was a direct outgrowth of the conditional nature of this allowance. Likewise, Maya, a 20-year-old woman from Homs, stated: “When I have a meeting, I get stressed. [I feel] fear and horror”. Maya continued to explain that she was actually more worried about missing a meeting with one of her caseworkers at the municipality than about what took place during the meeting itself, because missing a meeting could result in a reduction in her allowance. Maya therefore found it extremely stressful to receive mail from the municipality and she got anxious every time she had to take public transportation to a meeting. Maya explained how this conditionality influenced her daily life, stating:

We worry and fear about that, if we make a mistake, will we get marked absent (. . .)? This is a thing that really affected me mentally. I cannot understand that I stay afraid and worried. Even if I take the right train I continue to be worried and afraid.

Maya’s and Nidal’s experiences illustrate how the state governs the livelihoods of Syrians in violently intimate ways, which manifest in the texture of their everyday lives. For Maya, Nidal, and other Syrians, who depend on the integration allowance as their only income, the violence of this conditional allowance system was materialized in intimate ways through the fear of missing a meeting, worries about catching the right train, and anxiety about understanding official letters—all related to the risk of having one’s integration allowance reduced. Many of my informants explained how the threat of having their allowance reduced and the discretionary enforcement of such a reduction (Coleman 2016; Coleman and Kocher 2019) hung over them and constrained their hopes of improving their lives in refuge. Others recounted how their allowance had been punitively reduced multiple times—sometimes by mistake or for no good reason—which impacted their wellbeing in significant ways. Thus, Syrians’ accounts help us to better understand how the conditional nature of the integration allowance functions in practice as a tool of intimate policing and everyday domination, serving to enforce their place at the bottom of Denmark’s racialized social order.

Syrians also mentioned how the discretionary and conditional nature of the integration allowance made them feel distrusted, particularly in relation to the challenge of justifying the legitimacy of their absences. For example, in a focus group discussion, Sara, who was in her early 30s, called attention to the fact that in order for her and other refugees to be marked absent without having their allowances reduced, they not only had to have a ‘legitimate’ reason but also had to document such reason, for example, with an official doctor’s note. As a mother of three small children who were sick now and then as small children often are, Sara had become rather frustrated with this rule because as she explained:

for example, if you have a baby and he gets sick, you see that he is ill but you don’t need to take him to the doctor. But he is sick. [Then] They [the municipality] say “bring me a report that he is sick”. How can you bring a report that he is sick when you did not take him to a doctor. This is difficult to understand!

Sara further elaborated that when she tried to tell the caseworker that there was no need to take her child to the doctor because he was not sick enough or that by the time

that she was able to get an appointment with the doctor the child was well again, the caseworker said just responded: “NO, you should bring a report!”.

Salma, Maya, and Muna contributed to the conversation by stating that they felt routinely distrusted by their caseworkers:

Salma: They don't believe us.

Sara: [They say]: “have you gone to the doctor? When will he give you the report?” Your absence is noted in your record and you cannot do anything! This is the struggle.

Muna: They don't trust you, they discredit you.

Maya: They do not believe us.

Example after example had shown the four women that those in power—municipal officials—were able to withhold their allowance at will. This illustrates how the integration program manifests suspicion, skepticism, and mistrust directed towards racialized Others (Affolter 2022; El-Enany 2021; Fassin 2013; Khosravi 2010) within everyday governing regimes of the Danish welfare state. Not only did this unwarranted skepticism make Sara, Salma, Muna, and Maya feel degraded, frustrated, and upset, but it also illustrates how this policing regime works to diminish and discredit them as sources of professional and personal knowledge, even in regard to their own lives, children, and health and well-being. Thus, while the integration allowance worked to discipline the refugee, it also (re)produced a system through which the refugee subject was deprived of the ability to advocate for themselves even in the most basic of senses, such as ‘explaining’ their absences. In other words, working in familiar colonial modality of governing, it sought to render the refugee subject as quintessentially untrustworthy and suspicious but also dependent and incapable of governing themselves (Fanon 2001). In spite of the state’s attempt to foment refugee docility, Syrians did not abide by the subjectivity and hierarchies assigned to them (Jacobsen 2022b). Indeed, many sought to break free from being dependent on the integration allowance by seeking employment opportunities, which I turn to next.

3.3. Unpaid Internships: Labor and Exploitation

Syrians routinely expressed their desire to free themselves from the clutches of the conditional integration allowance system by obtaining regular paid employment and becoming financially independent. Many were therefore very happy when they were able to share with me that the municipality had declared them “jobparat” (job ready) and found them a three-month internship placement. Importantly, Syrians’ status as ‘newly arrived refugees’ often rendered any of their actual professional training, credentials, skills, and work experience acquired prior to having arrived in Denmark invisible and worthless. This meant that many of the internships, which the municipality offered them, were menial service jobs, such as cleaning public facilities and working at restaurants or supermarkets. In many cases, such jobs were wildly incommensurate with their professional skills and prior work experience. For instance, Mohammad who was trained as a pharmacist and used to own several pharmacies in Homs, recounted how he was discouraged from continuing his profession in Denmark and instead forced to take an internship cleaning a public school.

The internship program was framed by politicians and municipal caseworkers as a way to become part of the general workforce and enhance people’s work and Danish language skills. An internship placement normally included 8 h of work two to three days a week and was unpaid, meaning that Syrians would continue to receive the integration allowance, but would not be further compensated for their labor in the internship itself. In the beginning, this lack of compensation did not seem to bother Syrians, as they saw internships as the first step towards financial independence. Many told me that their caseworkers and employer had told them that if they did well, they would maybe be able to obtain full-time employment at the end of the internship period. In other words, caseworkers and employers insinuated to Syrians that their current dependency on the integration allowance was only a temporary situation and that participating in an unpaid internship was just a stop along the way, a means to something better: paid employment.

Over time, however, Syrians came to recognize that unpaid labor was the general condition of work rather than some temporary phase. As the three-month unpaid internship came to an end, many Syrians expressed frustration over the fact that they did not get hired thereafter. Instead, they were told that either the company was no longer looking to hire more employees or that they did not quite possess the Danish language proficiency or skills required for the job. As Rami, who was in his mid-50s and eager to get a job so he could provide for himself and his eight children, explained: “they said: ‘you still need a bit more training’”, recounting the numerous times employers and caseworkers had told him that he would not get hired. In a similar vein, Omar, who had worked for the postal service in Syria, explained that at first, he had been very optimistic about the prospect of obtaining a job through the internship program. He had not said no to a single internship placement, working hard at discount stores and cleaning hospitals and schools. Omar felt that he had made several sacrifices, including working night shifts, spending long working days on his feet, working in cold storage rooms, and performing heavy lifting duties even though he was suffering from back pain and a chronic heart condition. As he emphasized to me, despite these challenges, he had always done his best to be a “good employee”. While Omar felt pressured to accept internship placements in undesirable jobs, he did not complain about the nature of the work itself. Indeed, early on in these roles he believed in the promise that such internships would lead to a stable job. As such, Omar was disciplined into performing the role of a ‘good refugee’ (Nguyen 2012), requiring him to be thankful for any internship placement and the potential opportunity to be offered a job.

Yet, after having participated in several internships that never materialized into a paid job, Omar’s prior optimism, hope, and trust in this system had vanished. When I asked Omar how these experiences made him feel, he said:

I need to go and work for free! The refugee tolerates all of these pressures but nobody understands his situation. It is as if I hit you and after I hit you, I smile at you. Is this smile an honest smile or is it fake? I sometimes ask myself [this].

Omar felt that he as well as other refugees were being taken advantage of by providing “free labor” to these companies without getting anything in return other than the integration allowance, which they struggled to survive on. Through his remark (“I hit you and after I hit you, I smile at you”), Omar additionally underscored the pain, humiliation, and sense of duplicity that came with providing free labor to Danish companies. In questioning whether this smile was genuine or fake, Omar expressed his hunch that the companies where he had been an intern likely *never* had any intention of hiring him in the first place. They just wanted his ‘free labor’, which came at virtually no wage costs to the companies participating in these internship programs. Thus, while Omar played the role of the ‘good refugee’ and tried to maintain his “optimism” for a better future (Berlant 2011) as best he could, his experience of the internship program as a form of exploitation led him to question whether or not performing this subject position would ultimately chart a path forward.

Almost all my informants recounted strikingly similar experiences of participating in several unpaid internships at different companies. As they finished one, they were almost immediately assigned to the next, only then to be deemed ‘not quite ready’ for a full-time position but *more than ready* for another unpaid internship! With the completion of each of these unpaid internships, the municipality recurrently ‘failed’ to place Syrians and other refugees in jobs with any real prospect for paid employment and merely re-located them to the next position of free labor. Syrians explicitly charged that this was a form of racism against them, particularly in light of observing Danes being hired into paid jobs at the very companies that had denied them employment. Rather than improving their chances of obtaining paid employment by gaining new skills, Syrians increasingly felt that these internships merely kept them in the captivity of the Danish welfare state and most lost faith in the internship program altogether.

Many of the Syrians whom I engaged with refused to accept this treatment. After having participated in several unpaid internships without seeing any prospect of full-time employment, Rami was determined to call out the duplicity and injustice of this system:

I said this to the job center: “you are sending slaves to companies without monitoring, you are just sitting at your offices”. I said to him [the job center representative]: “why are you making the [Danish] language an excuse?” There are people who slit their own throats working [dedicating themselves fully to the internship], it is true that they do not know the language very well but they are killing themselves with work, and they are working, and in the end you make the language your excuse!

Rami stepped out of the role of the ‘good refugee’ who is supposed to be passive, permissive, and grateful, as he contested the idea that the internship program was a benevolent act of assistance provided by the state to help him and others join the Danish labor force. Rami explicitly called out how refugees’ language barriers were being weaponized against them as a convenient “excuse” to continue exploiting their labor for free and without *ever* granting them employment.

In this sense, Rami reflected on the widely referenced “double-bind” of the Danish integration program: ““You are not ready to become integrated until you are like us, and you will not prove that you are like us until you are integrated”” (Sjørsløv 2011, p. 83; also see Rytter 2019). Indeed, like others, Rami had slowly become aware that the promise of getting a job through the internship program was a false promise. It was abundantly clear to him that he would never obtain a paid job through this program no matter how hard he worked, because the companies never had any intentions of hiring him and other refugees. As his account illustrates, Rami had seen example after example of how he and other Syrians had worked very hard, done everything they could to be good employees, or as Rami put it: “there are people who slit their own throats working”, only to be told once again that they are not quite ready or qualified for paid employment. Explicitly referencing this as a form of contemporary slavery, Rami indicated how he felt that this system was stealing and profiting from his and other refugees’ labor. Rami was not wrong. As he came to recognize all too clearly, within the Danish integration system and the labor regime it imposed, a paid salary was not a right but “a privilege of ‘Whiteness’” (Quijano 2000a, p. 218).

Syrians’ accounts of the unpaid internships vividly illuminate the violent workings of racial capitalism within the Danish welfare state. Upon obtaining refugee protection, Syrians and other refugees were quickly folded into the welfare state, where they became differentiated, devalued, and transformed into an expendable surplus population (Bhattacharyya 2018). This devaluation took place through their demonization as ‘burdens’ on the welfare state and racialization as unwanted Others (Omi and Winant 2014). Indeed, as Laura Pulido (2016, p. 7) writes “racial difference (. . .) creates a variegated landscape that culture and capital can exploit to create enhanced power and profit” (also see Bhattacharyya 2018). To speak of Syrians as a surplus population is not to suggest that their labor was no longer valuable to capital. Rather, through the unpaid internship scheme, their (unpaid) labor was rendered accessible to capital, yet never recognized or materially compensated. Similar to other workfare schemes, the internship program as a form of workfare allowed employers to exploit Syrians’ labor in new ways. Workfare, as Burnett and Whyte (2017, p. 63) explain, “contains within it the seeds of an abuse of power—the power to force people to work harder”. In this specific case, the employers, aided by case workers, were able to exploit Syrians’ fear of having the integration allowance sanctioned if they did not uphold their obligations under the integration program. Additionally, crucially, the program enabled employers to exploit Syrians’ hopes of obtaining paid employment after the internship ended. Thus, Syrians experienced the internship program not as a form of aid or professional training but instead as forms of humiliation, devaluation, and exploitation that folded them into the labor force yet prevented them from gaining access to paid employment.

These experiences led Salma, Nidal, Maya, Rami, Omar, and many other Syrians to reject the state's assistance and care, they rejected the *gift of welfare* (cf. [Nguyen 2012](#)). As long as they were subject to the rules and degradation of this system, Salma and other participants insisted they were not "real human beings", to use Salma's words. Some Syrians found paid employment through other means than what the job center could offer. For example, several of the Syrians living in the more rural areas of Denmark sought to free themselves from this welfare regime by opening their own businesses, such as food trucks and grocery stores, while others living in major cities such as Copenhagen, Århus, and Odense used informal networks to obtain paid employment.

Through pursuing their own ways to gain paid jobs, some of the Syrians I engaged with were able to evade certain elements of the integration program and the grip of the Danish welfare state. However, unsurprisingly, they were unable to break free from the broader structure of racial capitalism. Eager to find paid employment, Syrians often ended up in precarious jobs with insecure contracts. Many were paid by the hour (rather than salaried), had unreliable hours, and did not receive any of the more standard benefits, such as paid vacation, sick leave, etc. In other words, they moved from being free labor to cheap labor. The precarity of their newfound employment also came with additional costs. For instance, without a permanent contract (with a minimum of a 30 h work week), many Syrians found it difficult to obtain permanent residency⁸. Moreover, holding a temporary residence permit means that Syrians and others are vulnerable to the Danish state's new practice of revoking the protection statutes of refugees who it deems to no longer need protection ([Jacobsen 2022a](#)). Thus, Syrians' experiences of refuge in Denmark fell in sharp contrast to Denmark's globally celebrated status as a highly egalitarian society with unparalleled levels of protection and social care.

4. Conclusions

In this article, I have situated the welfare state and more specifically refugee 'integration' within discussions about the coloniality of power and racial capitalism. I have shown how the Danish Integration Act enables the state to classify and differentiate refugees from other social groups. This in turn facilitates the governing of refugees' lives in violently intimate ways. Rather than a benevolent act of care, 'integration' and its welfare provisions (allowance, education, training, mentorship, etc.) represent forms of domination and policing, rationalized in the name of maintaining a cohesive, efficient, and 'civilized' (white) nation. Furthermore, the welfare state works in conjunction with racial capitalism as it produces and reproduces the refugees as less-than-deserving economic subjects, enabling capital to exploit their labor through the internship program and precarious contracts. Echoing [El-Enany's \(2021\)](#) crucial insights into the centrality of law in reproducing colonial violence and maintaining a global racial order, this article illustrates how the racialization of refugees as subjects in need of 'integration' (i.e., civilization) is enshrined in law and augmented through its administration by the welfare state (see also [Bhattacharyya 2018](#)).

Throughout this article, I have drawn attention to how refugee 'integration' works as a form of domination in conjunction within the structure of racial capitalism, whilst foregrounding Syrians' refusals to be subsumed by the integration imperative's remit. Indeed, Mohammad, the former pharmacist, recounted how he sometimes walks into Danish pharmacies to take in the unique and comforting smell of a pharmacy. These visits, he explained, are important as they remind him of what he once *had* and what he used to *be*. Moreover, the memories from his life in Syria help him sustain the hardship in Denmark. Thus, I want to stress that the question of refusal cannot be some afterthought in terms of understanding the aims of the welfare state or its practices and achievements. Rather, I argue that we cannot fully comprehend the 'integration' imperative and its relations to racial capitalism without seriously considering Syrians' and other refugees' efforts to make sense of, negotiate, and contest the violence it imposes on their lives.

Finally, situating the 'integration' imperative within the framework of racial capitalism and Europe's long and ongoing histories of civilization offers important opportunities to

rethink the connections between migration and Europe itself. One of the most valuable insights of Robinson's work is a vocabulary to de-exceptionalize the recent moral panics around so-called migration and refugee "crises" (Danewid 2021) and refuse to abide by the prevailing methodological nationalism that continues to characterize studies of migration and asylum. As I noted in the Introduction, Robinson crucially insists that the nation should not be taken as the unit of analysis for Europe. Robinson further argues that the genealogy of the figure of the barbarian Other lies not in the conquest of Europe (as mainstream history would have it), but rather in histories of migration for work (Robinson 2000, p. 11). Indeed, Robinson argues that there has scarcely been an instance in the modern history of Europe in which "migratory and/or immigrant labor was not a significant aspect of European economies", a fact that remains widely overlooked and conveniently neglected (Robinson 2000, p. 23). Thus, the Danish state's fixation on economic and social justifications for refugee 'integration' is neither new nor exceptional. Instead, it represents a resuscitation of this longstanding genealogy in ways that disavow Europe's historic reliance on migrant labor as a key source of wealth.

Funding: This work was supported by the US National Science Foundation (BCS-1558400), the Social Science Research Council (2016 Mellon International Dissertation Research Fellowship), and the Irish Research Council (Grant GOIPD/2019/773). Any opinions, findings, and conclusions expressed in this material are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of any of the funders.

Institutional Review Board Statement: This article is based on findings from two research projects: 'Transnational Topographies: Syrian Forced Migrants Encountering the Refugee Regime' was approved by the Institutional Review Board of the University of Kentucky (Protocol No. 15-0872-X4B, 17 December 2015). 'Precarious Protection: Syrian and Somali Struggles for Refuge in Denmark' was approved by Maynooth University Research Ethics Committee (Reference Number SRESC-2019-2374226, 20 November 2019).

Informed Consent Statement: Informed consent was obtained from all the people who participated in this study.

Data Availability Statement: Supporting data is not available for reasons of confidentiality and anonymity of research participants.

Acknowledgments: I wish to thank the journal's editors, the guest editors of this Special Issue, and the reviewers for their helpful comments and engagement with this article. An earlier version of this article appears in my PhD dissertation 'Unsettling Refuge: Syrian Refugees' Account of Life in Denmark', University of Kentucky. Thanks to the many Syrians who have generously shared their experiences and insights with me.

Conflicts of Interest: The author declares no conflict of interest.

Notes

- ¹ In this article, I place 'integration' in single quotation marks to emphasize its problematic character and use in practice (see Rytter 2019; Favell 2022).
- ² Kalaallit Nunaat (*Greenland*) and Føroyar (*the Faroe Islands*) have gained home rule and self-government, yet neither are independent nations. They continue to be part of the Danish Commonwealth (*Rigsfællesskabet*).
- ³ In this article, colonialism "refers strictly to a structure of domination/exploitation in which the control of political authority, productive resources, and labor of a population is held by someone of a different identity, and whose center of government, moreover, lies in another territorial jurisdiction" (Quijano 2000b, p. 1).
- ⁴ The coloniality of power and racial capitalism draw on different, albeit overlapping, genealogies of race-making and have important points of dissonance, which I will not elaborate on here.
- ⁵ A 'newly arrived refugee' can declare to the state where in Denmark they would like to live. Yet, the state is not obligated to take this into consideration. Most often, the decision about where a person is going to live depends on annual quota. Furthermore, a refugee is free to move to a different municipality after the end of the mandatory integration program. If they wish to move prior to this, they are likely to lose their right to welfare benefits and welfare support provided by the municipality.
- ⁶ In the last 20 years, the specific welfare allowance which 'newly arrived refugees' are entitled to has been subject to several changes, including cuts. The allowance has also had different names, including 'introduction allowance' (*introduktionsydelse*) (1998–2001), 'start aid' (*starthjælp*) (2002–2012), 'integration allowance' (*integrationsydelse*) (2015–2019), and, most recently, 'self-supporting and

repatriation allowance' (*selvforsørgelses-og hjemsendelseydelse*) (2020–present). In this article, I use the term 'integration allowance' as it was the term that the majority of my informants used.

7 There are no specific rules for the reduction in integration allowance; it is up to the individual municipality to decide how they reduce the refugee's integration allowance ([Integrationsloven 2017](#)).

8 To qualify for permanent residency, a person must demonstrate an unbroken record of paid employment (30 h per week) for 3½ years, among other requirements.

References

- Affolter, Laura. 2022. Trained to Disbelieve: The Normalisation of Suspicion in a Swiss Asylum Administration Office. *Geopolitics* 27: 1069–92. [[CrossRef](#)]
- Andreassen, Rikke. 2020. *Human Exhibitions: Race, Gender and Sexuality in Ethnic Displays*. Abingdon: Routledge.
- Berlant, Lauren. 2011. *Cruel Optimism*. Durham: Duke University Press Books.
- Bhambra, Gurminder K. 2017. The Current Crisis of Europe: Refugees, Colonialism, and the Limits of Cosmopolitanism. *European Law Journal* 23: 395–405. [[CrossRef](#)]
- Bhambra, Gurminder K. 2022. Relations of Extraction, Relations of Redistribution: Empire, Nation, and the Construction of the British Welfare State. *The British Journal of Sociology* 73: 4–15. [[CrossRef](#)]
- Bhattacharyya, Gargi. 2018. *Rethinking Racial Capitalism: Questions of Reproduction and Survival*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield International.
- Burnett, Jon, and David Whyte. 2017. Violence of Workfare. In *Violence of Austerity*. London: Pluto Press, pp. 59–66.
- Coleman, Mat, and Austin Kocher. 2019. Rethinking the 'Gold Standard' of Racial Profiling: §287(g), Secure Communities and Racially Discrepant Police Power. *American Behavioral Scientist* 63: 1185–220. [[CrossRef](#)]
- Coleman, Mat. 2016. State Power in Blue. *Political Geography* 51: 76–86. [[CrossRef](#)]
- Danewid, Ida. 2021. Policing the (Migrant) Crisis: Stuart Hall and the Defence of Whiteness. *Security Dialogue* 53: 21–37. [[CrossRef](#)]
- Davies, Thom, and Arshad Isakjee. 2019. Ruins of Empire: Refugees, Race and the Postcolonial Geographies of European Migrant Camps. *Geoforum* 102: 214–17. [[CrossRef](#)]
- El-Enany, Nadine. 2021. *Bordering Britain: Law, Race and Empire*, 1st ed. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Espiritu, Yên Lê, and Lan Duong. 2018. Feminist Refugee Epistemology: Reading Displacement in Vietnamese and Syrian Refugee Art. *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 43: 587–615. [[CrossRef](#)]
- Espiritu, Yên Lê. 2014. *Body Counts: The Vietnam War and Militarized Refugees*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Fanon, Frantz. 2001. *The Wretched of the Earth*, 33rd ed. Translated by Constance Farrington. London and New York: Penguin Classics.
- Farris, Sara. 2016. Dispossessing the Private Sphere? Civic Integration Policies and Colonial Legacies. *Darkmatter*, 14. Available online: <https://research.gold.ac.uk/id/eprint/18370/> (accessed on 15 September 2022).
- Fassin, Didier. 2013. The Precarious Truth of Asylum. *Public Culture* 25: 39–63. [[CrossRef](#)]
- Favell, Adrian. 2022. *The Integration Nation: Immigration and Colonial Power in Liberal Democracies*. Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons.
- Fekete, Liz. 2009. *A Suitable Enemy: Racism, Migration and Islamophobia in Europe*. London: Pluto Press.
- Hadj Abdou, Leila. 2019. Immigrant Integration: The Governance of Ethno-Cultural Differences. *Comparative Migration Studies* 7: 15. [[CrossRef](#)]
- Hall, Neville A. T. 1992. *Slave Society in the Danish West Indies: St. Thomas, St. John and St. Croix*. Mona: University of the West Indies Press.
- Integrationsloven. 2017. Bekendtgørelse af lov om integration af udlændinge i Danmark. LBK nr 1127, November 10. Available online: <https://www.retsinformation.dk/forms/R0710.aspx?id=193999> (accessed on 15 September 2022).
- Jacobsen, Malene H. 2021. Practical Engagements in Legal Geography: Collaborative Feminist Approaches to Immigration Advocacy in Denmark. *AREA* 51: 595–602. [[CrossRef](#)]
- Jacobsen, Malene H. 2022a. Precarious (Dis)Placement: Temporality and the Legal Rewriting of Refugee Protection in Denmark. *Annals of the American Association of Geographers* 112: 819–27. [[CrossRef](#)]
- Jacobsen, Malene H. 2022b. Wars in Refuge: Locating Syrians' intimate knowledges of violence across time and space. *Political Geography* 92: 102488. [[CrossRef](#)]
- Jensen, Lars. 2018. *Postcolonial Denmark: Nation Narration in a Crisis Ridden Europe*, 1st ed. London and New York: Routledge.
- Kelley, Robin D. G. 2017. What Did Cedric Robinson Mean by Racial Capitalism? *Boston Review* 12: 2017. Available online: <https://www.bostonreview.net/articles/robin-d-g-kelley-introduction-race-capitalism-justice/> (accessed on 1 October 2022).
- Khosravi, Shahram. 2010. *"Illegal" Traveller: An Auto-Ethnography of Borders*. Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Kofman, Eleonore. 2023. Integration Discourses, the Purification of Gender and Interventions in Family Migrations. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*. [[CrossRef](#)]
- Larsen, Birgitte Romme. 2011a. Becoming Part of Welfare Scandinavia: Integration through the Spatial Dispersal of Newly Arrived Refugees in Denmark. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 37: 333–50. [[CrossRef](#)]
- Larsen, Birgitte Romme. 2011b. Drawing Back the Curtains: The Role of Domestic Space in the Social Inclusion and Exclusion of Refugees in Rural Denmark. *Social Analysis* 55: 142–58. [[CrossRef](#)]
- Maldonado-Torres, Nelson. 2007. On the coloniality of being. *Cultural Studies* 21: 240–70. [[CrossRef](#)]
- Mayblin, Lucy, and Joe Turner. 2021. *Migration Studies and Colonialism*, 1st ed. Cambridge: Polity Press.

- Mayblin, Lucy, Mustafa Wake, and Mohsen Kazemi. 2019. Necropolitics and the Slow Violence of the Everyday: Asylum Seeker Welfare in the Postcolonial Present. *Sociology* 54: 107–23. [CrossRef]
- Mayblin, Lucy. 2017. *Asylum after Empire: Colonial Legacies in the Politics of Asylum Seeking*. London and New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.
- Mignolo, Walter D., and Catherine E. Walsh. 2018. *On Decoloniality: Concepts, Analytics, Praxis*. On Decoloniality. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Mignolo, Walter. 2002. The Geopolitics of Knowledge and the Colonial Difference. *The South Atlantic Quarterly* 101: 57–96. [CrossRef]
- Nguyen, Mimi Thi. 2012. *The Gift of Freedom: War, Debt, and Other Refugee Passages*. Durham: Duke University Press Books.
- Olwig, Karen Fog. 2011. 'Integration': Migrants and Refugees between Scandinavian Welfare Societies and Family Relations. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 37: 179–96. [CrossRef]
- Omi, Michael, and Howard Winant. 2014. *Racial Formation in the United States*, 3rd ed. New York: Routledge.
- Padovan-Özdemir, Marta, and Trine Øland. 2022. Denied, but Effective—Stock Stories in Danish Welfare Work with Refugees. *Race Ethnicity and Education* 25: 212–30. [CrossRef]
- Petterson, Christina. 2012. Colonialism, Racism and Exceptionalism. In *Whiteness and Postcolonialism in the Nordic Region*. Edited by Kristín Loftsdóttir and Lars Jensen. Abingdon: Routledge, pp. 29–41.
- Pulido, Laura. 2016. Flint, Environmental Racism, and Racial Capitalism. *Capitalism Nature Socialism* 27: 1–16. [CrossRef]
- Quijano, Aníbal. 2000a. Coloniality of Power and Eurocentrism in Latin America. *International Sociology* 15: 215–32. [CrossRef]
- Quijano, Aníbal. 2000b. The Coloniality of Power and Social Classification. *Journal of World Systems Research* 6: 342–86. [CrossRef]
- Quijano, Aníbal. 2007. Coloniality and Modernity/Rationality. *Cultural Studies* 21: 168–78. [CrossRef]
- Razack, Sherene. 2008. *Casting Out: The Eviction of Muslims from Western Law and Politics*, 1st ed. Toronto: Scholarly Publishing Division, University of Toronto Press.
- Regeringen. 2016. Arbejdsmarkedet er nøglen til bedre integration. Press Release. Available online: <https://www.regeringen.dk/nyheder/2016/flygtningekrisen/med-gode-kollegaer-foelger-god-integration/> (accessed on 15 July 2018).
- Robinson, Cedric J. 2000. *Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.
- Robinson, Cedric J. 2019. *Cedric J. Robinson: On Racial Capitalism, Black Internationalism, and Cultures of Resistance*. Edited by H. L. T. Quan. London: Pluto Press.
- Rose, Gillian. 1997. Situating knowledges: Positionality, reflexivities and other tactics. *Progress in Human Geography* 21: 305–20. [CrossRef]
- Rytter, Mikkel. 2019. Writing Against Integration: Danish Imaginaries of Culture, Race and Belonging. *Ethnos* 84: 678–97. [CrossRef]
- Schinkel, Willem. 2018. Against 'Immigrant Integration': For an End to Neocolonial Knowledge Production. *Comparative Migration Studies* 6: 31. [CrossRef]
- Schmidt, Garbi. 2011. Law and Identity: Transnational Arranged Marriages and the Boundaries of Danishness. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 37: 257–75. [CrossRef]
- Sjørslev, Inger. 2011. The Paradox of Integration: Excluding While Claiming to Integrate Into Danish Society. In *The Question of Integration: Immigration, Exclusion and the Danish Welfare State*. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, pp. 77–93.
- Virdee, Satnam. 2019. Racialized Capitalism: An Account of Its Contested Origins and Consolidation. *The Sociological Review* 67: 3–27. [CrossRef]

Disclaimer/Publisher's Note: The statements, opinions and data contained in all publications are solely those of the individual author(s) and contributor(s) and not of MDPI and/or the editor(s). MDPI and/or the editor(s) disclaim responsibility for any injury to people or property resulting from any ideas, methods, instructions or products referred to in the content.