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Policy actors' narrative constructions of migrants' integration in Malmö and Bologna.

Governments have policies explicitly directed at the integration of migrants. This article addresses how policy makers and politicians privilege certain constructions of the social relationship between migrants and the majority society (expressed through narratives of 'integration'), while making it seem as if they were presenting facts in their policies. These constructions provide the justifications for adopting a direction in policy-making over other alternatives. This article sets to analyse comparatively how policy actors in two urban contexts construct migrants' integration through policy narratives and how, within this, they evaluate migrants as 'integrated' and 'non-integrated'. Through narrative analysis, the article sheds light on how migrants are positioned by political institutions within the normative order of the society in which they live. Furthermore, it shows that local policy-making is shaped by national citizenship regimes, models of steering, welfare regimes and stories about the nation and its people.

KEYWORDS: Policy narratives; integration policy; narrative policy analysis; local/national; Italy; Sweden.

This article undertakes a comparative analysis of the reasoning and justifications put forward by policy community actors in two urban settings (Malmö in Sweden and Bologna in Italy) to legitimate their respective policies for migrants' integration. Specifically, it addresses two questions. How do policy actors define migrants' integration in the city of settlement? And how, within the identified definitions of

integration, do actors in the policy community evaluate migrants as ‘integrated’ and ‘non-integrated’? These reasoning and perceptions are analysed as narratives¹, understood as ‘diagnostic/prescriptive stories that tell, within a given issue terrain, what needs fixing and how it might be fixed’ (Rein and Schön 1996, p.87).

The analysis aims to add to constructivist debates in policy analysis which advocate the importance of narratives in policy-making (e.g. Kaplan 1986; Roe 1994; Fischer 2003). I aim to show how local integration policies exist in an environment characterised by different and at time competing normative narratives about a political space and its people. Integration policies are a good example to illustrate this. Questions about who is to be ‘integrated’ in the recipient society and about the best ways to do so go to the core of important questions about society and its political system. Policy actors have to relate to these narratives in order to justify and legitimise their policies to the public.

The second contribution of this article concerns the debates about the relation between the local and the national levels of policy-making. The analysis will show how local narratives of integration are intertwined with national ones, thus questioning the literature on migrants’ integration which emphasises the local level as of more decisive importance for migrant integration than the national one (e.g. Garbaye 2005; Pennix et al. (eds.) 2004).

The comparative element of the analysis will reveal a substantial range of possible narratives which are used by policy communities to address the social relationship between migrants and the majority society, expressed through a definition of ‘integration’. Although both traditionally left-wing, the two cities are characterised by different typologies of migration and they are embedded in different national contexts in as far as migration and integration regulations are concerned.

The variations between the cases ensure that I have a relatively broad, albeit not exhaustive, range of narratives that could be used to justify the adoption of specific integration policies. A comparative approach is particularly useful for teasing out the often taken-for-granted assumptions about the criteria used by local state authorities for including or excluding migrants.

In the following, I argue that the study of narratives is important for understanding how policy community actors form integration policy agendas and thereby shape the political space available for migrants to be part of the society of settlement. Second, I introduce the case-study municipalities and outline the article's analytic framework. Then I present how policy community actors in Malmö and Bologna have perceived and constructed migrants' integration between 1997 and 2008. Finally, these narratives are analysed in relation to local developments and national politics.

Narratives and policy communities

People weave perceptions of social situations and observable facts together through narratives in order to make sense of reality and of their position in society. Since the late 1980s, several scholars working in public policy analysis have advocated that narratives are also elements of the policy process (e.g. Kaplan 1986; Roe 1994; Fisher 2003; Boswell et al. 2011). For example, Fischer argues that 'when we examine communication in their everyday realm of politics and policymaking, we find people largely explaining things by telling stories' (2009, p.192).

Policy actors' narratives about a policy problem tell citizens stories about the relations between citizens; between citizens and the state; between states; etc. in politically selective ways that impact back decisively on the set of social relations they describe. Through processes of selective appropriation of a few salient features

and relations of an otherwise complex reality, actors in a policy community describe what is wrong with the present situation in a way that shapes its future transformation. Policy solutions are affected by how actors specify a set of claims about a policy problem that needs addressing; the causes of that problem; and the extent to which the problem should be addressed. In so doing, stories position groups or individuals at the core of such a problem description *vis-à-vis* each other and can depict one part as being responsible for the identified problem, while supporting another (Stone 1989; Schön and Rein 1994). This means that narratives are used, intentionally or not, by policy community actors to legitimise the existence of particular opportunities and define the boundaries of a community, where it begins and ends, who populates it, and which of their concerns are to be included and which are to be excluded.

Stories of integration

This article focuses on narratives about the relation between migrants and the recipient society expressed through stories about ‘integration’ constructed and made public by policy makers and politicians. I analyse how policy actors narratively construct migrants’ integration, duties and rights and what consequences these constructions have for the evaluation of migrants as more or less integrated in society. The space in which migrants operate is shaped by how integration is conceptualised. For instance, if policy actors emphasise the socio-cultural dimension of integration, it is likely that migrants’ claims to cultural group rights will have visibility and resonance in the public domain.

Narratives involve the positive or negative demarcations of the target population (Schneider and Ingram 1993). These constructions often resonate with deeply held perceptions by the public. While it is part of human cognition to value

positively one's group and to attach negative valence to an out-group (Tajfel 1982), governments' attempts to make political capital out of group categorisations has political and democratic consequences. The entitlements provided to those whose electoral support is most needed and who are constructed as deserving of support, need not be distributed equally among the population. In the context of diverse societies, it is important to understand how the 'integrated' and the 'non-integrated' migrants are constructed through narratives because this sheds light on how migrants are placed by political institutions within the normative order of society. It informs groups of people of their status as citizens and of how they are likely to be treated by the government and the local state. This affects their understanding of what it means to be a citizen, i.e. their rights, duties and obligations; it influences their perception of whether their claims and interests are relevant to society; and it shapes how they participate in society.

Malmö, Bologna, and their national contexts

Malmö, a former industrial city, was the destination of labour migration until the 1970s, when a governmental decision ended labour migration. Since then immigration to the city has been characterised by family reunifications and refugees. The financial crisis in the 1990s hit Malmö's non-Swedish population particularly hard. Migrants' unemployment, urban segregation and poor housing conditions in areas densely populated by migrants became major issues for the Council, and are still highly prioritised. Currently, 40% of the total population of 305.033 (as of 2012) is either born abroad or has one parent who is born abroad². Migrants tend to live in rented accommodations in the south-east part of the city. 27.6% of migrants is unemployed, compared to the total unemployment rate of 14.1% for 2012, and the

percentage of school drop-outs is higher for young migrants than for their Swedish counterparts.

Bologna has been a destination of labour migration since the early 1980s. In the past 15 years the migrant population has settled down, demonstrated by an increase in the permits given for family reunification and by the growing number of children born of non-Italian mothers. As of 2011, Bologna had a total population of 382,784, of which 14% are migrants³. The main problems faced by migrants are poor living conditions in the allocated accommodations and the complicated national regulations to obtain a permit of stay. This forces thousands of migrants to live clandestinely for long periods, something they can be prosecuted and repatriated for. Because of this, tension has grown between migrants and the police and social services.

Malmö is embedded in a national context of integration policies which is considered a model of a multicultural welfare society (Castels and Miller 2001). Sweden officially introduced the notion of multiculturalism in its immigrant policies in 1974 (RF 1974:152). Following the principles of equality, freedom of cultural choice and cooperation, Sweden guarantees migrants extensive political and socio-economic rights, including voting rights at local elections and generous regulations for naturalisation. Notwithstanding the emphasis on corporatism, migrants (as a group) have never achieved the same level of influence on the decision-making process as traditional corporatist actors, such as the trade unions, have done. Migrants are not perceived as representing any social class or organisation, and associations that work with immigration and integration have only been able to affect policies through public opinion formation (Spång 2008).

Since the mid-1990s the Swedish model of welfare has undergone significant changes. It now promotes business-friendly policies that mobilize human capital, fosters entrepreneurial spirit, and maximises regional and local comparative advantages (Schierup 2010). These changes have impacted on integration policies which now stress the importance of employability, entrepreneurship and ethnically run small companies, and see migrants as a flexible resource for regional economic growth. The onus of integration has shifted from being the state's responsibility in securing equal outcomes to one where the state provides equal opportunities for individuals to participate in society.

In Italy, the Law 286/1998 regulates both the entry and the integration of migrants. Introduced in 1998, it opens up public education and health provisions to all migrants, regardless of their legal status in the country. It does not guarantee voting rights or ease naturalisation procedures. The Law 189/2002 on immigration and integration, which amends the Law 286/1998, cuts the funding that the regions, responsible for the management of social policies – including integration policies - can benefit from. It therefore restricts migrants' opportunities for integration, particularly in those regions that do not prioritize it as a policy area. Migrants are targets of hostile rhetoric used by prominent public figures which has given legitimacy to anti-immigration sentiments by parts of the Italian population (Ambrosini 2013). The region Emilia Romagna, where Bologna is located, is an exception in the Italian context. It has established regional representative bodies for migrants and it has promoted the formation of similar ones at the municipal level. The region has also advocated the introduction of voting rights and shorter naturalisation procedures.

Method

In order to reconstruct which narratives about integration are adopted by policy actors and how, within this, they construct the ‘integrated’ and the ‘non-integrated’ migrant, I conducted 15 semi-structured interviews in each city with key politicians and policy makers⁴. All the interviewees were important actors in the development and implementation of integration policies in each city between 1997 and 2008, the time-span of this article. In addition, for each municipality I have analysed policy papers issued between 1997 and 2008 concerning migrants’ integration. This comprehensive material allows me to identify a substantial range of possible narratives of integration. The long time-span ensures that the narratives presented are characterised by a significant continuity and that have potentially played an important role in shaping policy measures.

To identify and analyse systematically the narratives in the data, I rely on an interpretative approach, meaning that the present inquiry aims at interpreting intentions and meaning in context (Fisher 2003; 2009). Narratives are forms of discourse with a plot presenting a beginning, middle, and end and which order events chronologically. To structure instances of stories that I have identified in the data, I was inspired by Franzosi’s (1998) idea of ‘semantic grammar’ and Kaplan’s (1993) understanding of narrative structure. I have broken down the structures of narratives into six elements: *agent* (who utters the narrative); *act* (what is narrated); *scene* (when and where is the narrative expressed); *agency* (how is the narrative used in public forums); *purpose* (why – the justification of the narrative); and *object* (for/against whom is the narrative expressed). These elements bestow narratives with an evaluative dimension which enable the speaker to selectively appropriate elements of the socio-political environment to construct a certain narrative. When speaking

about ‘integration’, policy actors (*agents*) will selectively appropriate happenings in society (*act and scene*, e.g. ageing population; need to replenish sectors of the labour market), arrange them in some order (*agency and purpose*, e.g. because of ageing population and labour shortages there is a need for increased migration) and normatively evaluate these arrangements (*purpose and object*, e.g. migrants employed in specific sectors are beneficial to society but, in order to avoid animosities with the majority society, policy makers may depict some migrants as problematic and non-integrated).

The article wants to shed light on norms and relations of power expressed in stories, for instance the inclusion of the concerns of some and the exclusion of others; and the distribution of responsibility, causality, and blame. These are more clearly expressed in narratives which have informed policy interventions. I focus on these stories and I do not include counter-narratives (Andrews 2007) or negative cases (Flick 2002). This does not mean that the narratives presented are static, however. Policy actors contest narratives and emphasise different plots, or aspects, of a narrative. For instance, while policy actors in Malmö narratively construct ‘integration’ as participation in the labour market, they provide different justifications for this narrative. Employment is seen as a way of establishing bridging social capital, as an expression of the Swedish welfare-state regime, or as a necessity to ensure tax revenues. The analysis will highlight the different plots within each narrative to bring forward their dynamic character.

Malmö

Policy actors in the municipality of Malmö adopt mainly two narratives to present the issue of migrants’ integration. One depicts the ‘integrated migrant’ as

participating in the labour market. The second presents migrants as an economic resource and as a comparative advantage for the city's development.

The 'employed migrant' narrative

The documents issued by Malmö Council emphasise that paid employment is a means to foster migrants' integration in society. The 1999 Strategy Paper for Integration states that

People's participation in the labour market is crucial for a successful integration.

(Malmö Stad 1999a, p.20)

Six years later, the strategy paper for increased welfare, *Välfärd för alla*⁵, underlined that the first objective to be met in order to oppose segregation and social exclusion is that 'everyone who is able to work should do so' (Malmö Stad 2004, p.1). Because employment 'has a pivotal significance for migrants' integration' (Malmö Stad 2004, *förord*), participation in the labour market is a key requirement which migrants have to meet if they are to be considered full members of Malmö. Unemployment is depicted as curtailing migrants' opportunities to participate in society and integrate,

There are groups of people who are socio-economically deprived and who are strongly dependent on social benefits to make ends meet. Many are concentrated in particular areas of Malmö. The issue has therefore a clear geographic dimension. It has also a strong ethnic dimension because several migrant groups are particularly affected by this. [...] Through economic independence [...] one obtains freedom, increased self-esteem and the opportunity to become engaged in several different social issues [...] Paid work is a precondition for economic self-sufficiency, housing and safety. (Malmö Stad 2004, pp. 1-2; 6)

The former councillor for Employment and Integration clarifies how employment benefits integration,

The idea is that employment, and the autonomy that follows from it, provides a number of choices – you can choose where to live, which cultural expressions you want to adopt etc. [...] If you give people autonomy, they can choose how to integrate [...] and they are then not pushed around by politicians. [...] A lot of integration politics is traditional class politics, it is about having access to employment, education, material resources, contacts. (interview M2)

Policy actors not only justify this narrative by reference to autonomy and interaction with the Swedish society. Economic reasons are also important,

The low employment rate in Malmö is the main reason why the city has the highest level of benefit dependency. The high costs for this [...] constrain the possibilities for the municipality to make important investments in education and health care. (Malmö Stad 1999b, p.4)

A policy officer reiterates this,

Of course, there are financial reasons [for emphasising employment in integration policies]. We need to do something to reduce the costs that the municipality faces. Employment is part of this. (interview M3)

The ‘employed migrant’ narrative relies on an understanding that employment leads to autonomy, self-sufficiency and well-being. However, full participation in the labour market is not presented only as socially positive. Some actors emphasise a strictly economic evaluative plot of this narrative and refer to unemployment as untenable for the municipality’s finances. This juxtaposes employed and unemployed migrants. The former are constructed as active individuals, who can take care of themselves and their family. Unemployed migrants are described as not contributing to Malmö, at least not in the way a citizen is supposed to contribute to it, and they constitute a financial burden to the

municipality. When migrants fail to enter the labour market, and thus fail to integrate, they are narratively positioned at the periphery of Malmö's society. This is expressed in the Council's perceptions of the problems faced by young migrants,

Today we see that migrants' children are overrepresented among those who drop out of school. Research has shown that these young people could face more difficulties than their parents in entering the labour market. The reason for this is that use many of them do not have parents in employment to act as role models. They have also ended up in-between two cultures, their parents' culture and the Swedish culture, and find it difficult to identify themselves with any of them.
(Malmö Stad 2004, p.3)

Unemployed parents act as a negative role model in both socio-economic and cultural terms, making their children unable to break through the glass ceiling and become full-fledged members of Malmö's society. The opportunities for many young migrants to exit a situation of socioeconomic deprivation are prevented not only by the fact that their parents are unemployed. They are also stuck in-between two cultures and confused by the different values and mores of the Swedish culture and their own.

This narrative has given legitimacy to two types of policies (Scuzzarello 2010). The first tries to increase contact between migrants and Swedes through mentorship programs. The municipality's urban planning strategy also aims to create public areas where migrants and Swedes can interact. The second type of policy relates to the economic aspects of this narrative. Since the end of the 1990s, the municipality has introduced a range of activities to get migrants into employment, at times as part of national regeneration strategies (e.g. the 'Policies for Metropolitan Cities'). These initiatives aim at creating new jobs by supporting the private sector

and by providing educational and training programmes targeting long-term unemployed, in particular migrants.

The 'cosmopolitan entrepreneurial migrant' narrative

The second narrative adopted by policy actors in Malmö presents migrants as an economic resource and as a comparative advantage to the city. Migrants who are in employment, who can easily negotiate between the Swedish culture and their own, and who have a large international network – and are in this sense 'cosmopolitan' - can make Malmö more attractive to investors. The former head of Council's Trade and Industry office exemplifies this,

The big advantage here is that we have a very young city... many migrants came here when they were very young, so we have a labour force in the city which gives us an advantage. The city also has an international competence...people from Malmö know many languages and cultures and this could be something private businesses can benefit from. (interview M4)

The same narrative is used in policy documents,

Migrants are a necessary resource in order to meet the labour shortages created by a strong economic development and in order to foster the creativity and entrepreneurship needed to support such a development. (Malmö Stad 1999b, p.3)

Migrants constitute a significant resource for the city's well-being. In particular, the second generation is considered having the advantage of being multi-lingual and multi-cultural.

45% of pupils in Malmö have their background in other countries [...]. A diverse population is a prerequisite for Malmö's successful development [...]. Children's knowledge and experiences should be valued even if they come from other religions and cultures. (Malmö Stad 1999a, pp.19; 25)

Migrants' international social network, and language and cultural skills position them as the ideal cosmopolitan – a clear asset in the contemporary globalised economy. Notably, in celebrating their diversity as a business resource, policy actors maintain a perception that differences between migrants and Swedes are natural and unchangeable (Scuzzarello 2008).

To implement the 'cosmopolitan migrant' narrative, the Council has funded a number of initiatives to recognize the qualifications and skills gained outside of Sweden. Between 2001 and 2002 it funded a programme (*Akademikerintroduktionen*) to support highly educated, newly arrived migrants. Since 2003, it has also co-funded MINE, a not-for-profit organisation which aims to increase ethnic diversity in Malmö's private businesses.

Bologna

Policy actors in Bologna construct 'integration' mainly according to three narratives. The first presents migrants with a valid permit of stay as economic resources for the city. The second stresses the importance of migrants' political participation on equal terms to Italians. The third positions migrants as potential security threats. As in Malmö, these narratives present different plots which position migrants differently in relation to the recipient society.

'Migrants as economic resources' narrative

In the late 1990s, policy actors depicted migrants as potential resources for the city, although it was not clear how migrants could contribute to Bologna's society.

The Municipality of Bologna believes that differences (individual, social, cultural, ethnic) are great values and resources to society. (Comune di Bologna 1998. In Pero' 2005, p.839)

Ten years later, this narrative gained visibility. The 2008 yearly report from the Intercultural Integration Service states,

The different linguistic, cultural, professional and relational qualifications of migrants and autochthonous are [...] something we should value. (Comune di Bologna 2008a, p.4)

Migrants' cultural diversity is not the only valued aspect. Migrants are necessary for the city's socio-economic well-functioning. A union representative stresses their importance in the care sector,

The municipality provides good elderly care, but it's not enough. That's why [migrant] carers are of fundamental importance. (interview Bo1)

A senior policy officer draws attention to migrants' role in the city's changing demographic and urban profile,

Bologna's demographic development is clear: the autochthonous population is decreasing and the migrant population is rising. So it's clear that even if there is a demographic decline, this is contained by migratory flows. [...] There has been some resistance obviously, but I think that [migration] brings significant advantages. For instance, family-run mini-markets have reappeared in the city centre... they disappeared for many years and the city centre was like a desert... they disappeared because the big supermarkets made them not profitable, which is true, but these economic parameters seem to be good enough for the families who arrive here and re-open these shops. From a service-perspective, this changes a lot for the city because to have a mini-market down the road and which is open till late - something that has never happened in Bologna before - and that can deliver groceries to the many elderly people living in the city centre...this changes the way one can live in the city. (interview Bo2)

Policy actors cast migrants in positive terms and see them as necessary for the demographic and economic development of Bologna. The local and regional authorities support this through initiatives providing for instance training for migrant care workers. The local authorities also collaborate with the agricultural sector to simplify the employment of seasonal migrant workers, and they support migrant entrepreneurs to start their own business.

This narrative does not only evaluate migrants' contributions to society positively. Migrants are generally employed in occupations that Italians do not want anymore. This has led some actors in the private sector, but not only, to argue that migrants have better employment opportunities than Italians. The local representative of the Italian employers' federation, *Confindustria*, illustrates this,

A businessman is in the weakest position. It seems strange but that's how it is because it's only migrants who would do some jobs and you find yourself in a position where the Italians are very disciplined and are kept under pressure by the factory owner and the migrant is given a lot of freedoms according to his necessities. So if he has to leave for two months and a half he can do that because no-one could substitute him and an Italian would never be able to leave for two months and a half. (interview Bo4)

The plot of the 'economic resource' narrative illustrated above shows that this story does not only have positive connotations. Migrants can be seen as taking over labour market sectors at the expenses of Italians. Notwithstanding its connotations, the 'migrants as economic resources' narrative implies juxtaposed group constructions, Italians and migrants. 'Integrated' migrants are constructed as those who are taking on jobs which Italians are not willing to do anymore, such as running mini-markets. They are portrayed as being satisfied with small economic returns. Italians, on the other hand, are described as either disciplined and allegedly unable to claim the same

benefits as migrants, or as beneficiaries of the services provided by migrants, e.g. care or grocery delivery.

The 'participating migrant' narrative

Policy actors in Bologna have long adopted a narrative of integration emphasising the importance of migrants' political and civic participation,

The issue [...] is how to create the conditions which would enable migrants who live in our city to access citizenship rights [...] The way to have a city in which people of different backgrounds and cultures can live together as citizens is to fully engage the migrant community in the institutional processes and in giving them social, civil, and political rights. (Comune di Bologna 1995, p.20)

To this end, the Council supported the establishment of the *Forum Metropolitano* in 1995 to guarantee migrants a degree of political representation in the Council. However, it was hardly ever consulted by the Council. While migrants were formally positioned as important actors in defining integration policies, and their cultural diversity was seen as a resource for Bologna, they were excluded from the Council's decision-making process (Pero' 2002).

As Bologna's foreign population settles down, migrants are increasingly positioned as potential members of the Bolognese society, as illustrated in the 2007 document establishing the neighbourhood-based consultative bodies for migrants,

The concept of 'people' [...] has to include all residents, with or without [Italian] citizenship, including foreigners who are living in the municipality's territory and 'who then have the same right as [Italian] citizens to address to the public institutions their needs related to their life in the territory' (Cons. St., Sez. II, parere 28 luglio 2004, n. 8007/04) (Comune di Bologna 2007, p.2)

The policy documents issued by the centre-left administrations in power between 1995-1999 and 2004-2009 strongly endorsed this narrative. The introduction of consultative bodies for migrants in 2007 can be interpreted as the embodiment of this narrative. As put by a senior policy officer,

The message here is of fundamental importance. If I establish a council for migrants it is not just a technical thing. It is a significant starting point. [...] It suggests a shared horizon, that is to say that the Bolognese society is something we build together instead of saying that you have to enter into an existing context to which you have to adapt [...]. These are two very different messages. The practical actions differ, one's feeling of identification differs and the feeling of being part of a broader process or not differs. (interview Bo5)

However, these bodies have limited power to influence integration policies. They have no independent budget and their initiatives have to be channelled through and approved by the Council. Furthermore, their input to the Council's political and decisional apparatus is limited to particular issues concerning migrants and integration, and their participation in the neighbourhood committees' meetings is conditional to the Council's invitation. Considering these limitations, they are a highly unsatisfactory solution and do not compensate for the lack of voting rights and the exclusion of migrants from mainstream political organisations.

The 'migrants as security threats' narrative

Policy actors who position 'integrated' migrants as potential community members, only include those who have valid permits of stay and who do not engage in criminality. The others are constructed as essentially deviant. The Left- and Right-wing administrations in power between 1997 and 2008 expressed this, as shown by their respective programmes of intent.

The Council must break the perverse links between clandestine migration and criminality. This can be achieved by giving a permit of stay to those who can demonstrate that they are employed and by regulating seasonal employment. (Comune di Bologna 1995, p.17)

Bologna is traditionally a hospitable city [...] but hospitality cannot be confused with blind acceptance of criminality. [...] It is a fact that among the migrant community living in our city there is a high crime-rate. This is mainly due to the state of deprivation in which many migrants live. [Criminality] has to be opposed and fought against in an efficient way. (Comune di Bologna 1999, 8)

The Council must focus on protecting the weakest ones by guaranteeing them full citizenship [...]. At the same time it must be clear that those who behave unlawfully will not be included. (Comune di Bologna 2005, p.1)

This narrative positions migrants who live in Bologna without a permit of stay as lawbreakers and therefore to be excluded from the community. Its continuity reflects national tendencies depicting migrants as security threats (Ambrosini 2013). Left and Right in Bologna emphasise different aspects of this story. The Right-wing coalition in power between 1999 and 2004 linked criminality and migration. The correlated policy solutions aimed at repressing criminality and included the establishment of a Security Office; the installation of CCTV cameras; and the appointment more municipal police officers. The Left-wing administrations in power before and after, tended either to position migrants as potential criminals whose behaviour was explained through essentialist notions of culture and difference (Pero' 2005), or to emphasise issues of legality rather than criminality. The administration in power between 2004-2008, introduced measures for the prevention of criminality among economically deprived people (Scuzzarello 2010).

Analysis – the local and the national

This article highlights the importance of narratives adopted by policy actors in shaping policy-making. Through the study of narratives about integration in Malmö and Bologna, I want to draw attention to the normativity of integration policies, i.e. what is valued in a society and who is considered to be ‘different’. Second, the study aims to show that narratives adopted by a local policy community are shaped by not only a local logic of policy-making, but also by national narratives and practices of integration that are incorporated in the logic of the nation-state.

The local – Malmö as engine of growth and Bologna the hospitable city

During the 1960s, Malmö was considered a model of social democratic government as it brought together a flourishing industrial sector and an extensive welfare state. In the mid-1970s and 1980s, this changed partly because of the global restructuring of the industrial sector, and partly due to local demographic changes, as the middle-class moved to nearby towns and the inflow of refugees increased. In the mid-1980s Malmö found itself in the middle of a financial crisis that peaked ten years later. It created a window of opportunity for policy actors to introduce new visions and ideas about the city and the Council (Dannestam 2009). From having been an industrial city, Malmö was to become the regional engine of growth and the Council was going to be the key-actor promoting it. Economic growth was presented as the pre-condition and generator of welfare.

These new narratives about Malmö shaped the Council’s stories about integration. As expressed in the ‘employed migrant’ narrative, the city can only grow if its residents are employed and secure tax revenues. The fact that parts of the city’s population, i.e. migrants, are overrepresented in unemployment statistics is untenable. It is not only financially unfeasible, as expressed by policy makers who

voice the 'employed migrant' narrative. It is also normatively impossible to maintain as the narrative of financial growth gains legitimacy among the public. The Council's definition of integration in society as participation in the labour market became inseparable from the narrative of financial growth.

Bologna and the region Emilia Romagna are characterised by a high degree of social capital expressed in horizontal social structures and high level of citizen involvement (Putnam 2003). The city is considered to embody the Italian Left, having been run almost uninterruptedly by a left-wing majority since the end of the Second World War. This is expressed by the self-representation of Bologna as hospitable and inclusive which has partly informed the positioning of migrants as having the right to take part in the city's civic life. The traditionally high level of civic involvement through the voluntary sector has also informed the establishment of bodies such as the *Forum* and the neighbourhood consultative bodies. In particular, the left-wing administrations have tried to promote multicultural integration policies which aim to foster the formation of migrants' organisations (Caponio 2005). Despite its legacy of social solidarity and political mobilisation, reflected in the 'participating migrant' narrative, Bologna Council has failed to include migrants in the local decision-making process. This is partly due to the limitations of national laws concerning migrants' political rights. It also suggests a lack of strong political will to translate a narrative of participation into practice. This and the positioning of some migrants as security threats indicate that migrants are generally positioned at the borders of the Bolognese society. They are only included if they can fill particular sectors of the labour market.

These examples show the strong normative component of stories in policy-making. As Stone (1989) argues, on the normative level, narratives position

one group of people as the cause of a policy problem, e.g. lack of integration, financial burden, and criminality. Unemployed migrants in Malmö and the undocumented migrants in Bologna do not fulfil the most important conditions for participation and they are therefore narratively and normatively positioned at the margins of each community.

The national – political changes and national identity

Although the narratives presented here have a particular local dimension, they reflect political changes at the national level. There are variations in migrant integration policies at the local level, which justify their study. However, these aspects cannot be decoupled from the national traditions of policy-making in which they are embedded. National integration policies are not just the result of cumulated local experiences; the two co-exist. The nation state remains the main frame of reference for migrants' claim-making (Koopmans 2004) and the way in which local integration takes place is largely shaped by national repertoires of citizenship, model of steering and welfare regimes.

Following the financial crisis of the early 1990s, the Swedish government introduced structural changes in the organisation and management of the economy and the welfare state. This resulted in the development of a business-friendly policy framework that stimulated entrepreneurship at the regional and local levels (Schierup 2010). Following the restructuring of financial politics, employment is no longer seen as the state's responsibility to guarantee revenues. It is redefined as full employability, and unemployment is framed as primarily tied to the individual's qualifications. In this perspective, individual work ethic and entrepreneurship function as instruments for community integration.

We can understand the support of the ‘employed migrant’ and the ‘cosmopolitan entrepreneurial migrant’ narratives in Malmö in the light of these changes. Full employment is the gateway to build solid relations between the majority society and migrants but it also finds its legitimacy in the eyes of the public in the narratives of economic growth and change from industrialism. Hence, the primary threshold for inclusion that migrants have to overcome to become full-fledged members of Malmö is participation in the labour market.

Political changes in Italy have also affected Bologna. Since the early 1990s, the Left has gone through a gradual ideological change that has brought it closer to centrist stands. This has led the Left to emphasise issues of economic efficiency and rationality and has also implications for how issues of migrants’ integration have been understood. Left-wing parties today tend to stress the economic benefits of migration, particularly in the care sector. The Left in Bologna emphasises entrepreneurship and economic efficiency, as illustrated by the ‘migrants as economic resources’ narrative. In addition, national Left-wing parties have increasingly adopted a rhetoric that links issues of security with immigration. After being criticised for having been ‘soft’ on immigration, they are now framing their approach to immigration as being ‘tough on crime’ and advocating the implementation of preventive measures which position migrants, regardless of their status in the country, as a suspicious group (Pastore 2007).

Local integration policies in Bologna are also shaped by Italy’s model of welfare. The Italian welfare state has a limited scope and it has traditionally relied on assumptions about the family and its gender and intergenerational responsibilities whereby women would care for elderly relatives and children (Saraceno 1994). Historically, the structural demand for care in Italy has been managed through

national rural-urban migration. From the mid-1970s and onwards, the growing number of middle-class women entering the labour market as well as the rising standards in the quality of life, created a demand for carers which was supplied by international migration. In Bologna, located in a wealthy region which provided employment for women, this demand is particularly strong and it is therefore not surprising that the work of migrant carers is highly valued, as shown in this article.

Narratives about 'integration' also reflect national stories about the nation and its people. They create boundaries between the nation's people and migrants and define the thresholds for their inclusion in the institutions of the state (Wimmer 2006). The 'cosmopolitan entrepreneurial migrant' narrative in Malmö reflects stories about the Swedish people as socially progressive, tolerant of diversity and inclusive (Ringmar 1998). This representation of the Swedish people's collective identity depends upon its distinctiveness from other groups along relevant and valued dimensions. Migrants are positioned as bringing with them a cultural diversity that defines the cognitive boundaries of the host society. Their substantially different human-cultural capital can either contribute to their integration, if they embrace national values of democracy, tolerance and equality, or it can be detrimental to their participation in the Swedish mainstream society as they fail to participate in the labour market and end up between two cultures. A similar point can be made for the Italian case. The narrative about security in Bologna echoes narratives about the Italian national community which reject multiculturalism and present cultural differences as incommensurable. As Andall (2002, p.400) argues, "the very notion of the possibility of being both black and Italian remains a marginal concept within the broader framework of the contemporary immigration debate in Italy". The question of national identity in Italy is not straightforward, however. There is a plurality of

Italian self-representations, favouring the local over the national (Pratt 2002). The narratives discussed reflect this provincialism and relate to Bologna's hospital character and strong sense of civic involvement rather than to stories about an Italian imagined community.

Conclusions

This article has shown how policy actors in two urban contexts construct migrants' integration and how, within this, they constructed the 'integrated' and the 'non-integrated' migrant. These understandings have been studied as narratives through which policy actors legitimise policy solutions and define the boundaries of a political community.

Through narratives policy actors understand and express the meanings of the actions that take place within and around the organisation they work in. They provide the justifications and the arguments to implement policies by framing some events as problems to be addressed. These stories also reveal norms that are usually not called into play. Indeed, storytelling is made possible by the fact that people share a wider range of commonly accepted assumptions that seldom have to be questioned. Narratives about integration are particularly useful to identify these understandings because they demarcate the normative thresholds for migrants to become part of the recipient society. So for instance, in Bologna the 'integrated' migrant is expected to participate in the civic life of the city because of an assumption that the Bolognese are traditionally engaged in civic action. This also points to the relational character of narratives. Researchers can only understand the category of 'integrated' migrant' by empirically examining its relations to narratives about 'non-integrated' migrants, as well as stories about the autochthonous local community (Malmö-ers/Bolognese) and the collective national self (Italian/Swede).

By focusing on narratives in policy-making the article shows how the reasoning and justifications used by actors in the policy community are involved with relations of power. Depending on which narrative gains visibility and legitimacy in the public domain and which plot is emphasised, some groups' concerns are addressed while others' are excluded; responsibility for an issue is distributed; praise and blame are attributed. In the context of diverse societies, this has profound democratic implications. Migrants who are positioned as 'non-integrated' are more easily ignored, their needs not listened to or assessed, but rather interpreted by external experts. They are also easily blamed for wider societal problems such as unemployment and criminality and thus further positioned at the margins of society.

The narrative constructions of 'integration' are informed by specific local contexts as well as by national stories and practices about integration, the nation, and its people. Hence, the article contributes to the debates advocating the continued importance of national narratives and political structures while at the same time appreciating the importance of variations in the logic and strategies adopted locally to integrate migrants.

Future research could investigate how migrants and the majority society perceive and are affected by such constructions of integration as well as explore their understandings of integration. A comparison between policy actors' and citizens' narratives of integration would show the extent to which and how the former shape the space in which citizens (migrants and not) live in. It would also tease out the different perceptions between the two groups. This would contribute to a more inclusive understanding of the perceptions and practices of integration.

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¹ I use 'narrative' and 'story' interchangeably.

² This includes naturalised citizens.

³ It is estimated that additionally 10.000 migrants live in Bologna without regular permit of stay.

⁴ The interviews were conducted between 2007 and 2008 in Italian and Swedish by the author.

⁵ 'Welfare for all'.