Author(s): Horsti, Karina; Pellander, Saara

Title: Conditions of cultural citizenship: intersections of gender, race and age in public debates on family migration

Year: 2015

Version:

Conditions of cultural citizenship:

Intersections of gender, race and age in public debates on family migration

Karina Horsti & Saara Pellander

Accepted manuscript, Citizenship Studies (forthcoming in 2015)

Abstract:

This article analyses problem framings in public debates on family migration in Finland. The study focuses on the less examined category of age and how it intersects with gender, race and religion. We examine the discursive context within which parliamentarians and the media negotiate questions of migration policies, belonging and citizenship. Our analysis identifies problem framings by combining frame analysis with the 'What is the problem represented to be?' (WPR) approach, which understands policies as problematizations.

We found that the debates held up the rather common notion of vulnerable women and children as groups that tighter family migration policies protect. The debates excluded certain racialized migrant families from cultural citizenship. Simultaneously, however, the public debate 'whitewashed' other families to make them suitable for inclusion. Here, the right to care for elderly family members played a central part in negotiations over cultural citizenship.

The names of the authors appear in alphabetical order to indicate equal contribution to the article.

Introduction

Family-related migration has, for the past two decades, been the most common reason for immigration to the European Union and has started to draw the attention of academics and policy makers alike. Policy makers see family migration often as unwanted migration (Joppke 1998), and thus this type of migration has started to become subject to increased restrictions. Family migrants tend to feature in political debates as a group that is difficult to integrate into the job market (Kofman et al. 2013). Furthermore, political discussions in the media on tightening family migration legislation often tend to frame the topic as a challenge for gender equality (Hagelund 2008; Razack 2004). Similarly, gender equality debates in general have become 'ethnicized' (Roggeband & Verloo 2007, 280). Muslim families in particular have been in the focus of these debates, and many right wing politicians and other proponents of restrictive family reunification policies juxtapose the perceived 'traditional patriarchy' of Muslim families with the perceived modernity and equality of the West (Hegde 2010; Keskinen 2009). In the Nordic countries, this neo-colonial position emerges in the context of welfare ideology and gender equality. Nordic societies position themselves outside of the colonial legacy and therefore as the purest form of equality and tolerance. Nevertheless, the ideologies of the colonial project are part of Nordic identity building (e.g. Keskinen et al. 2009; Loftsdóttir & Jensen 2012). We understand the public debates on migrant families in Finland as connected to these transnational discourses that portray the (often Muslim) 'Other' against national ideologies of gender equality and acceptable forms of family life.

While recent scholarship has explored the connections between family migration and gender (e.g. Bonjour and de Hart 2013; Eggebø 2010; Kofman et al. 2013) and citizenship and gender (e.g. Lister 2003; Lister et al. 2007; Hellsten et al. 2006), we

know less about the category of age in connection to family migration and citizenship. Furthermore, in Finland, only few scholars have thus far addressed how family migration is regulated (Helén & Tapaninen 2013) and publically debated (Lippert & Pyykkönen 2012).

Our contribution examines public debates on family migration by focusing on intersections of gender, age, race, and religion. Our analysis of how children or the elderly from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds feature as family migrants in public debates reveal the varieties of conditions for cultural citizenship and belonging. In particular, we demonstrate how humanitarian discourses of care are crucial in the construction of cultural citizenship. Certain figures are constructed as culturally and morally incapable of citizenship in a Nordic welfare state, while others are included as worthy of belonging. The potential vulnerability and suitability of certain young and elderly migrants particularly strengthens the political claims for or against their inclusion. We address the discursive context within which policy makers, the media and the public negotiate questions of migration policies and citizenship. Thus, we examine how debates on family migration construct and condition citizenship and belonging.

We examine public debates in the media and parliament on family and migration in the context of a northernmost European country, Finland. These powerful discursive spaces define the conditions and registers of citizenship. During the selected research period (1999–2010) Finland changed its immigration policies several times, making immigration easier for some nationalities and migrant categories but more difficult for others. Like elsewhere in Europe, about 30% of positive residence permit decisions are granted on the basis of family ties.

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We believe that policies need to be critically examined, following Carol Bacchi's (2009) 'What is the problem represented to be?' (WPR) approach, as definitions and social understandings of problems rather than as solutions to them. Our analysis shows how discourses on family migration condition citizenship and belonging within a complex intersection of gender, age, race, and religion. Certain racialized and gendered figures qualify as worthy of belonging to the Nordic welfare states. However, these belongings are fragile, as the conditions of inclusion for these specific figures can change.

Intersections: Citizenship and family migration

Citizenship is a crucial concept for the study of family migration, not only in its traditional meaning, which refers to the relationship between the individual and the state (Marshall 1992), but also in a broader sense that includes intimate and cultural dimensions. The reunification of families certainly involves negotiation between the migrant and authorities at different levels, such as local, national and transnational (Erel 2011: 695). Nevertheless, broader social and cultural discourses and practices create the conditions within which a more narrow entitlement to political rights emerges. This broader understanding of citizenship recognizes not only legal documentation and access to social services but also the sense of belonging and the right to practice one's culture (see e.g. Erel 2011; Kofman 2004). In this article we stress the importance of cultural citizenship (e.g. Rosaldo 1999), a term that directs attention to the cultural conditions within which some families and family members become visible and heard, while in the case of others, these rights of belonging are

denied.

The cultural and critical analysis of citizenship involves the analysis of whose cultural practices can form obstacles for belonging. In the case of public debates on family migration, we need to ask what kinds of families are worthy of inclusion and what kinds of family members are allowed to belong to 'our' society. Here we enter into the negotiations of intimate citizenship (Plummer 2003) – moral struggles over what kinds of intimate lives are acceptable. We position intimate citizenship within cultural citizenship. Practices of caring are very intimate; nevertheless, they are culturally, socially and politically conditioned. Public discourses condition the boundaries of definitions of 'family' and the ways in which people are expected to care for their family members. As Turner (2001) points out, cultural citizenship as a political issue is about entitlement to cultural rights. Public constructions of cultural difference provide a space where societies negotiate and define moralities such as the right to care in reflection to the Other. European states direct increasing interest to migrant intimacies among those families who live in Europe either as citizens or non-citizens. Furthermore, states develop indicators for 'suitable' migrants through citizenship tests and other migrant screening methods, methods of so-called integration at the border.

In this article we have adopted this broader and critical understanding of citizenship (Erel 2011; Kofman 2006; Yuval-Davis 2011), and we operationalize the concept of cultural citizenship in studying how public debates condition belonging and construct social worthiness, which again is crucial for political and social belonging. In this endeavour we follow a gender-pluralist approach to citizenship that sees gender as inter-relational with other categories such as race, ethnicity, age, religion and

nationality – an approach also termed as intersectionality (Lister 2001; see also Meier & Lombardo 2008; Yuval-Davis 2011). Our contribution applies the concepts of cultural and intimate citizenship to explore how they are conditioned within intersectional interlocking systems of exclusion (see e.g. Hancock 2007, 65). The empirical question that this article then asks is how these exclusions operate in political and public debates on family migration.

The migration context in Finland

Until the early 1990s, post-war migration in Finland was an issue of emigration, mainly to neighbouring Sweden. Immigration emerged visibly on the public agenda in the early 1990s when the first Somali asylum seekers arrived in Finland through the Soviet Union (Martikainen et al. 2013). In the following two decades, immigration has increased. Today, the largest groups of non-Finnish citizens living in Finland are Russians, Estonians, Swedes and Somalis (Statistics Finland, Statistical Database 2011). Among these groups, Estonians and Swedes as citizens of EU/EEA member states do not need residence permits to enter Finland; thus their family migration patterns are not regulated by the Finnish Aliens Act.

Finland tends to closely follow policy changes in other Nordic countries, particularly those of Sweden. A comparison of family migration policies finds that Finnish and Swedish policies follow similar logics, differing clearly from the stricter regulations in Norway and Denmark (Sisäasianministeriön Maahanmuutto-osasto 2012). Finland's family reunification policies rank among the most liberal in Europe (Migrant Integration Policy Index 2011). The Aliens Act regards the following

relatives as eligible family members of a Finnish or foreign resident: 1) people who are either related through marriage, a registered partnership or a minimum of two years of cohabitation; 2) children under the age of 18; and 3) the primary caretaker of an unaccompanied minor. For elderly migrants who have family members in Finland, it is very difficult to get a residence permit. The current Aliens Act only allows (elderly) parents of adult Finnish residents into the country, if the parent can be proven to be fully dependent on the family member living in Finland. As we see in our further analysis, the assessment of this dependency can be very controversial.

In 2010, a peak in residence applications on family grounds (Finnish Immigration Service 2010)[i] prompted the broad government coalition under the conservative National Coalition Party formed in 2011 to tighten the requirements for family migration. One of the restrictions implemented has profoundly influenced the number of applications: residence permit applications must be submitted personally by the family member wishing to migrate at the nearest Finnish embassy, which might be found in a neighbouring country. As travelling to another country requires a set of financial and personal assets, this change caused a significant drop in family reunification applications in 2012.

Media coverage and parliamentary debates on immigration in the 1990s mainly focused on asylum seekers, who only comprised a small percentage of incoming migrants. It was not until after the turn of the new millennium that political and media debates on migration began to include more varied topics, such as labour migration, family reunification and integration. Around 2005, along with the diversification of the debate, the nationalist–populist movement and its anti-immigration agenda began to gain significant support on online debate sites. This culminated in the electoral victory of The Finns party, first in the municipal elections of 2008 and subsequently

in the parliamentary elections of 2011. We can draw a parallel between these developments in the Finnish discursive and political landscape with that of the other Nordic countries, where nationalist populism has risen significantly.

Data and methods: The problem-framing approach to public debate in the Finnish context

Our empirical analysis focuses on two comparably prestigious forums of public discussion in Finland: the parliament and the largest nationwide daily quality newspaper *Helsingin Sanomat* (*HS*). The research material consists of the minutes of the Finnish parliamentary debates and editorials in *HS* that deal with family and migration between 1999 and 2010. Both forums are conventional and institutionalized genres of the national public sphere in which certain stakeholders select which issues should be raised in the public debate. These 'privileged discursive sites' (Kantola 2006: 44) provide reasoned and explicit views on current affairs with a high agenda-setting value, thus making them comparable arenas for analysis. While this data does not cover the full spectrum of public and political debates on the issue, it allows us to analyse debates that powerfully suggest frames for how family migration is thought and talked about.

The first part of our data, parliamentary plenary debates, function as a way to publicly display a party's or politician's stand on a certain matter, while the actual policy-making processes take place behind the closed doors of committees. The second part of our data, the *HS* editorials, have a strong agenda-setting value. Unsigned editorials are official expressions that shape the identity of the newspaper in the media system and society (Mc Nair 2011: 70). Furthermore, editorials are intended as interventions

in the political debate and policy making; thus, they have a different orientation than many other journalistic genres, such as news (Mc Nair 2011: 12). As its daily circulation covers 8% of Finland's population as well as a great number of people who read it without a subscription, *Helsingin Sanomat* holds quite a hegemonic position in Finland's public debate.[ii]

We collected 34 unsigned editorials and five signed editorial columns for our research corpus from the *HS* archive by searching all material between 1999 and 2010 using the keywords 'family [*perhe*]' AND 'migration [*maahanmuutto*]'. For the parliamentary plenaries, we searched all plenary sessions that dealt with amendments to the Aliens Act or the implementation of the Act, and narrowed them down to those that featured the keywords 'family [*perhe*]' AND 'migration [*maahanmuutto*]'. We analysed a total of 20 parliamentary plenary debates.

We asked how two debate arenas frame family migration over the 11-year period and how these frames condition cultural citizenship and belonging. We paid particular attention to the intersecting roles of age, gender, ethnicity, race, and religion. In order to examine the problem definitions in the two social fields, we used a text analysis method based on the 'What is the problem represented to be?' (WPR) framework (Bacchi 2009) and on news framing analysis (Reese 2010). Both of these qualitative methods consider language use as socially constitutive. According to this understanding, debates that ground policy making are not reflections of arguments naturally existing in society, but rather socially constitutive speech acts that shape our understanding of family migration and eventually contribute to the policy agenda and policy framing. Although these two methods are grounded in similar epistemology, scholars tend to use them to study different social fields. WPR examines problem

definitions in policy making, whereas news framing analysis studies problem

definitions in the news. WPR aims to trace the assumptions and discourses behind

problem representations, while critical news frame analysis focuses on the way actors

use frames strategically in public debates.

We combine news frame analysis and the WPR approach throughout the data, and

thus come close to critical frame analysis (CFA), a type of analysis that introduced the

concept of 'policy frame' (Verloo 2007). The WPR approach alone is not adequate

for analysing political speech and journalistic text, as it does not analyse the strategic

use of certain frames, which is crucial in CFA. However, we included the WPR

approach in order to show that policies and debates about policy proposals define

problems instead of just offer solutions to them. To include this notion of

problematization, we combine elements of WPR and CFA in our methodological

toolbox. We identify what we call 'problem framings', but in addition we pay

attention to agency and the strategic use of frames. However, in the scope of this

article we cannot do a full-fletched WPR analysis that would include the genealogy of

certain discourses. Instead, we are more interested in defining how certain

problematizations are brought to the public agenda and how the framings of the

intentions of different actors conflict and converge.

Analysis: Problem framings in their socio-political context

General observations of the research material

Finland's first Aliens Act was passed in 1991. In the 1990s, Finnish members of

parliament treated family and migration as potential future problems. This self-

positioning of Finland as a periphery nation that has not *yet* experienced the perceived

larger problems of immigration runs through the Finnish public debate over the years

(see also Keskinen 2009). Amendments to the 1991 Aliens Act in 1999 brought family migration and family reunification issues into parliament, therefore we selected this year as the starting point for our analysis. In the media, the topic began to gain attention after the turn of the millennium, notably after 2008.

A new Aliens Act came into force 1 May 2004, and during its drafting the MPs of the three largest parties were divided in their parliamentary speeches on immigration issues between the more liberal parliamentarians and the more populist or conservative parliamentarians. One reason for these diverging opinions lies in the tensions between the government and parliament. MPs might criticize the bills in parliamentary debates, even if their party was in the government or involved in the committees that draft and amend laws. However, this internal party division on the rhetorical level did not affect the parties' voting behaviour, as most Finnish parties in parliament follow party discipline. Only the Green Party, the Swedish People's Party and The Finns were more unified internally in their position on immigration: the Greens and the Swedish party are more liberal, while The Finns remained more restrictive. These divisions within the larger parties and between the smaller parties emerged in the debates in the first part of the new millennium and continued throughout the researched period.

Helsingin Sanomat is rather careful in its positions on migration policy. In the editorials the newspaper argues for stricter immigration control but also for more integrative policies, while maintaining a commitment to a humanitarian position. As immigration has become such a politicized and polarized issue, Helsingin Sanomat carefully negotiates its identity and social position on this controversial topic in ways that avoid alienating its readership.

For this article, we specifically analysed how parliamentarians and editorial authors

construct gender, age, religion, ethnicity, and race, and how these intersecting categories contribute to specific problem framings regarding family migration. We identified three different discursively constructed problem frames in both the editorials and the parliamentary debates: family migration as a problem, the migrant family as a problem, and Finnish culture and policy as problems (see table 1). The first two frames deny cultural citizenship by creating a categorical suspicion of certain migrant families. The third frame, on the contrary, critically assesses the denial of cultural citizenship. Here, cultural citizenship is framed as the right to care, as the analysis shows. This last frame gains its momentum in editorials and debates in 2009, when racism and 'unjust' migration regulations are criticized in connection to a highly mediatized case of two elderly women, which will be analysed more closely in our third analytical section in this article. As we will show, this case is a prime example of how age and gender crucially shape the borders of belonging.

The following table condenses the manifestations of the three frames in the analysed texts. The table sums up the main results of our analysis: the ways in which migrant families and Finnish families and society are positioned, what types of solutions are presented for the constructed problems, and what kinds of moral positions are taken. By moral positioning we refer to the normative qualities that are given to different actions and groups.

Table 1 here

Table 1. Problem framings in the editorials and the parliamentary debates between 1999 and 2010.

Problem frame	Family migration as a problem	Migrant family as a problem	Finnish policy and culture as problems
Keywords	Anchor children, satellite children, sham/false marriage, refugee travelling, asylum tourism, asylum shopping	Culture clash/difference, non-integration, cost to the welfare state	Justice, humanity, international reputation
Assumptions: Defines migrant family/family-related migration as	Devious and deviant (adults)	Patriarchal culture, low educational level, family violence, objects of integration measures, burden to the welfare state	Traditional family values, extended families
Assumptions: Defines Finnish family/Finnish society as	Honest, child protective, not responsible for dangerous migration forms Porous and naïve	Under cultural threat, high gender equality	A society which has lost family values, cold and inhumane bureaucracy
Presented solutions	Restrictions on immigration regulation, a humanitarian approach to children and the elderly	Regulate migration and family life through legislation, integration and public awareness	Policy change towards more humane and just regulation, awareness of multicultural families
Gender, age and ethnicity	Suspicion of Roma and Somali families, unaccompanied children, suspicion of children's age	Somali, Muslim families, migrant males as threats for 'their' women, elderly relatives as a burden to the welfare state	Suitable victims: female, white, Christian, elderly grandmothers
Moral positions on citizenship and belonging	Immorality of migrant parents (*threat*) vs. high morals of Finns and Europeans: unaccompanied children are *victimized* Migrants morally unsuitable, unworthy of citizenship	Finnishness as a moral and social norm into which immigrants are expected to integrate, full cultural citizenship denied Finnish culture/family values *threatened* by migrant families Migrant women as *victims* of their families Suitable female migrants can be 'saved' by Finnish culture	Migrants as moral examples and *victims* of Finnish bureaucracy Racism as a social and moral issue, and a concern of international reputation Finnish regulation of cultural citizenship is critically assessed
Agency: Proponents of the frame	Some conservative politicians and editorials concerning certain migrant groups	Some conservative politicians and editorials concerning certain migrant groups	Some liberal politicians, Christian Democrats and editorials on the 'grandmother case'

Boundaries of gendered citizenship

Integration issues and entry regulations intertwine in debates on immigration,
particularly those on family reunification. The main argument is that regulations on
family reunification attract migrants who are difficult to integrate. Following this
logic, parliamentarians and journalists depict certain groups of migrants as culturally
unsuitable for social citizenship, which requires a social contract with a Nordic
welfare state (see also Kofman et al. 2013). Integration thus features as a mechanism
that works for some, but not for others, which highlights the belief that the ability to
integrate can be determined before immigration, 'at the border'. Race, ethnicity,
religion, and gender intersect in ways that condition cultural suitability at the border.
Muslim migrants in particular repeatedly appear in the analysed debate arenas as a
group that possesses intimate and cultural characteristics hindering integration and
access to citizenship, such as a 'violent' family culture, a culture that excludes women
and restricts them to their homes, a low educational status and a high illiteracy rate.
This common notion appears in research across Europe (see, for example, Grillo
2008; Phillips & Saharso 2008; Roggeband and Verloo 2007). In the Finnish context,
this European-wide suspicion towards Muslims intersects with racial stereotyping and
manifests in the treatment of Somali families as ultimate Others. As both children and
migrant women appear as central figures in these debates, it becomes clear that
Muslim men are only implicitly present in the 'migrant family', namely in perceptions
of violent masculinity.

This gendered and racialized positioning emerged in a parliamentary debate in
2002 in connection to a mediatized family tragedy in Sweden[iii]. Liberally oriented

members of parliament from both the Green Party and the Swedish People's Party referred to the Swedish case of the 'honour killing' of Fadime Shahindal in order to argue that violence against migrant women is becoming a growing concern in the Nordic countries.[iv] As this debate demonstrates, the problem framing of a non-integrated migrant family is also a concern among liberal politicians, and it converges with conservative and populist views. The positions differ in their orientation towards solutions to the constructed problems: the liberals advocate for the improvement of integration programs, and conservatives wish to restrict migration.

In the Swedish case, the father of a Kurdish-Swedish young woman, Fadime Sahindal, killed her in 2002 because, according to the mediated representation, the father claimed that she had 'shamed' the family by not accepting an arranged marriage and choosing her partner by herself (see e.g. Keskinen 2009). The following extract illustrates how integration measures were presented as the main solution to (culturalized) family violence among liberal politicians. In this discourse, the problem of non-belonging is situated within the cultural traditions of the migrant family. 'Their' imagined culture is excluded from citizenship: it does not qualify as a resource for social participation.

> Immigrant women who care for their children at home are at risk of getting entirely estranged from society. […] In Sweden the tragic honour killing of Fadime Shahindal last year raised attention. […] Our integration system has to be able to prevent such cases. (VNS 5/2002, HaVM 20/2002 pk 5 February 2003, Granvik/r,)

Reducing violence toward migrant women to questions of culture and 'their' family contributes to an ethnicized or culturalized understanding of the processes of

gendered violence. Family violence in an 'ethnic' context is depicted as 'cultural', whereas violence in a majority context is framed as an individual and psychological disorder (see e.g. Grewal 2013; Keskinen 2009).

This and other reasoning that presented migrant families as threatening to their women centres implicitly and explicitly on Somalis. Their depicted unworthiness as potential citizens appears in very subtle ways that only implicitly refer to culturally exclusionist arguments. Three editorials (HS 4 February 2004, 26 October 2008, 3 April 2010) warn that through family migration and 'large families', the number of Somalis will double in a short time in Finland, a fear that regularly appears among the parliamentarians of the national populist party The Finns. While integration is presented as the main solution to potentially threatening migrant families among the liberal parliamentarians, the editorials argue that integration of Somalis is particularly difficult because of a high illiteracy rate. The repeated underlining of the inability to read and write serves as a powerful metaphor of a racialized, primitive, unskilled and culturally backward people. As Finland prides itself as a highly educated (white) society, (black) illiteracy is a sign of total Otherness. Although most of the Somali migrants are young, and the concern of the 'doubling' of the Somali minority is based also on (expected/imagined) high birth rates, illiteracy is accepted in the debates as an essentialist character of Somalis. This racialized positioning of the Somalis further distances them from being included in cultural citizenship.

Vulnerable children as victims

'*We want to take real refugees here, real persecuted mothers and children.'*
(HE 15/2000, 1k, 14 June 2000, Karttunen-Raiskio/kok)

While the debates on migrant women peaked at the beginning of the 2000s, the situation of unaccompanied children as asylum seekers, particularly of Somali origin, became a central figure in Finnish political debates towards the end of our research period. Defenders of quite opposing policy solutions framed migrant children as victims and in need of protection. We found that both proponents of stricter policies (conservatives and national populists), as well as those who were worried that the current legislation is too strict and conflicts with the human rights of children (liberals), used the problem frame of the child in need of protection.

Conservatives defined unaccompanied minors as 'anchor children', referring to an amoral procedure where parents would send their children to Finland as 'anchors' who would then 'pull' the rest of the family onto the Finnish shore. The Minister of Interior (Social Democrat) pushed the anchor child metaphor to the public debate, and the term stabilized as normal language during the research period. This term constructed a figure of deviant parents who sacrifice the safety of their own children – a rhetorical move that again draws a boundary between the ethical 'us' and amoral Others who do not qualify for citizenship.

Both the editorials and the parliamentarians presented tighter restrictions on family migration as solutions to the problem of anchor children and justified these solutions by presenting young girls as victims. For instance, an editorial in 2010 was concerned that Somali girls are 'chartered to Finland as second wives, maids or into prostitution' (HS 1 September 2010). Several MPs – both from large parties in the government and in the opposition – related the arrival of unaccompanied minors to exploitation in the forms of human trafficking, organ trade and smuggling[v].

A number of parliamentarians from the larger parties and The Finns party argued that stricter immigration legislation would protect unaccompanied minors[vi] and prevent parents and relatives from misusing their children. This discursive manoeuvre that presents stricter immigration control as humanitarian protection draws attention away from European border controls and migration legislation as a crucial part of the problem rather than a solution to it (Pickering & Weber 2006). It also obscures the possibilities that migration may bring to a young person's life. Family migration is represented as a danger, particularly for young women, and staying at 'home' is offered as the best solution for them (see also Pajnik 2010: 60). Despite the fact that parliamentarians depict children as being in need of protection and compassion, this does not automatically make them eligible for cultural citizenship. According to this problem frame, their family life is not disrupted by war, political persecution, the loss of family members or European border control, but by their own families.

Unaccompanied children were also at the centre of attention of those who defended migrants' rights. However, in this case the legislation and family reunification practices were depicted as a threat to the well-being of children. Politicians who spoke from this critical position defended the rights of children using three points. First, they criticized the slowness of family reunification; second, they discussed whether siblings are immediate family; and thirdly, they asked whether family reunification worked in the best interest of the child. Unlike the conservative politicians who regarded border control as a solution to the problem of vulnerable youth and denied any access to citizenship, the liberal politicians' arguments acknowledged children's rights to seek a better future and to belong to the society as full citizens. In these debates, young age works as a marker of inclusion. Those who

call for better protection of young migrants' rights and defend their interests present the family life of unaccompanied children as something that should be protected. Here, children feature as being entitled to cultural citizenship, making their young age simultaneously a factor that hinders and promotes family reunification.

Thus far, we have identified intersections of race/ethnicity, gender, and young age that shape particular public perceptions of migrant family life. Our last analytical case works as a prime example of the intersectionality of different categories, as here it was the combination of age, gender, religion, and race which created a certain notion of belonging.

Age, gender, religion, and race as conditions for belonging

While debates on family immigration, reunification and integration were throughout the research period concerned with the 'unworthiness' of some migrants for cultural citizenship, the third problem frame, Finnish culture as a problem, is case specific. This frame developed specifically in 2008–2009 when the issue of two elderly (grand)mothers of Finnish citizens was broached in the media and parliamentary agendas through the active campaigning of the institutionally and culturally influential Evangelic Lutheran Church, NGOs such as Amnesty International, and the families of the two women. Their proximity to cultural citizenship emerged in articulations of belonging that depicted them as suitable for mainstream Finnish gendered, heteronormative, racial and religious values. The elderly women, one from Egypt and one from Russia, had overstayed their tourist visas and received deportation decisions from the Finnish authorities and were presented to the public as

vulnerable and dependent on their adult children, who were Finnish citizens. Influential Finnish personalities joined the campaign to support their cause, including the President of Finland, Tarja Halonen. In both cases the decisions of European Court of Human Rights prevented immediate deportation. The families ran a public campaign to make their case heard in the wider society in ways that would not have been technologically feasible some years earlier. They used social media such as Facebook to disseminate emotional stories and images of the grandmothers who were facing deportation far from their closest relatives. Social networking sites played a major role in gathering people to participate in more traditional demonstrations, which the mainstream media reported about. The mediatized campaign raised this case into public awareness, and editorials and parliamentarians discussed it several times. The case of the two elderly women is the only one in the analysed material that is clearly media driven, meaning that the parliament only picked up the debate after the media had widely discussed it.

This is the only specific issue in the research material about which *HS* positioned itself with a pro-migrant stance on the topic of family migration. The *HS* editorials defended the cultural citizenship rights of these families as the right to care for their elderly relatives. In the summer of 2009, *HS* published editorials on this case in shorter intervals than was usual for stories related to families and migration. The first *HS* editorial on this issue claimed, 'Where there is no reasonableness, there is no justice' (12 June 2008). While the discourse of care drew on emotions, *HS* also demanded changes to the current law so that it would include elderly parents in the realm of cultural rights for family life. One such demand included criticism of the concept of a 'nuclear family' and the current legal requirement for the 'full dependence on relatives living in Finland' (HS 12 June 2008).

A year later, in 2009, the headlines of *HS* editorials demanded a change in the deportation decisions: 'Fairness to deportation decisions' (HS 2 July 2009), 'Deportation decision to be reassessed' (HS 8 July 2009), 'Humanity' (HS 10 July 2009), 'Unreasonable law must be changed' (HS 5 September 2009). However, over a few months in 2009, the *Helsingin Sanomat* retreated from its earlier demands to pass a new law that would make it easier for elderly relatives to obtain a residence permit in Finland and warned of the increased burden on welfare expenses that elderly migrants would presumably create (HS 5 September 2009). The problem framing in which Finnish society was presented as unwelcoming soon flipped back to one where family migration became a problem. The immigration of elderly migrants, although worthy of inclusion in principle, was in practice seen as creating a threat to the welfare state[vii].

The initial problem framing that the families, religious and advocacy groups advocated concerned migrants' rights to family life and the right to include grandparents in the concept of 'family'. The advocates called for cultural citizenship rights for families living in a transnational condition. They based their argumentation on the understanding that nation-state borders produce inhumane structures for the families in question. Finnish citizens are unable to care for their transnational family members, and therefore they are unable to practice cultural citizenship. The Finnish public widely supported this struggle at a time in which the general political climate in Finland was rather critical towards migration.

Nevertheless, the understanding that current welfare provisions would not be compatible with the increased immigration of elderly relatives soon became more salient in the debates. Thus, nationally bound economic justifications overran the moral ones, and this argument claimed that citizenship rights were a zero-sum game

when it comes to welfare provisions. A fear of an unknown number of dependent 'grandmothers' waiting to enter Finland featured in the later phase of the debate. Welfare appeared as a limited resource that covers primarily 'us' and 'our' families and which is 'our' right as citizens. 'Our' citizenship came to be hierarchically above 'theirs'.

What followed after the mediatized discussion was a motion by the Christian Democrats only a few months after the extensive media debate on the 'grandmother' question. The proposed law would have changed the requirements of dependency on relatives living in Finland from being 'entirely dependent' to being 'considerably dependent'[viii]. The Christian Democrats criticized Finnish notions of family in which 'inter-generational ties are breaking' and demanded that Finland should learn from the more inclusive family models where members of the younger generation look after their parents[ix]. Once again, the migrant family functions as a trope for stereotypical understandings, but instead of being threatening and oppressing, the Christian Democrats activated an imaginary of the migrant family having a culture of caring for one another, a culture that stands in opposition to Finnish individualized family structures. Cultural citizenship rights feature in these debates as the right to care for elderly family members. The case provided the Christian Democrats a discursive space to promote their own conservative and heteronormative family values. The motion did not make it into law and lapsed when the current parliamentary period came to an end in April 2011. Both liberals and the Christian conservatives shared the moral position that supported wider rights for elderly women. Only the nationalist populists and national conservative opposed this flexibility in the law. This wide appeal on moral and humanitarian grounds made it more acceptable for *HS* to take a clear stance in its editorials.

Finally, the existence of such a mediatized campaign involving elite members of mainstream society makes us ask: What were the qualities that made these migrants suitable for such inclusiveness? The grandmother case clearly shows how markers of difference and sameness as well as intersections of gender, race, ethnicity, and age are used to discursively construct an 'ideal victim' (Christie 1986). The women were referred to as grandmothers, and the whole public episode was called the 'grandmother case'. This intersection of age and gender produced a class position of economic dependency. While the welfare society is expected to care for the elderly in Finland, it is also socially acceptable that an elderly female (more than a male) depends on relatives for care and finance. Moreover, the grandmothers' suitability for care was conditioned by race and religion. The two women were Christians, which made it possible for the Finnish church and the Christian party to openly support their cases. In the visual images of their appearance, they did not differ from mainstream Finns. In addition, the mixed Finnish-Russian and Finnish-Egyptian families featured as Finnish families in the debate, which focused on the rights of Finnish citizens to care for their family members, a strategy that positioned these families as 'one of us' (see Griffin & Braidotti 2002). The migrant background of the grandmothers was 'whitewashed' in the public debate, as the grandmothers appeared both visibly and culturally similar to any average Finnish grandmother next door. Thus, we can see how claims for cultural citizenship are intersectionally conditioned. It seems quite probable that this campaign would not have been possible if it had featured two black Muslim elderly men from Somalia.

Concluding discussion

Understandings of what constitutes a family and what is a culturally acceptable family lie at the heart of the cultural and national identity construction that

condition belonging and access to cultural rights, which are fundamental for cultural citizenship. The problem framings on migrant families and family migration can be seen as a continuum on the moral negotiations of intimate citizenship. Moreover, in the Nordic countries, the future of the welfare state is under pressure, which accelerates public attention to such intimacies and positions them in the foreground of cultural, social and political citizenships. Our analysis shows how debates over family migration position discourses of care at the centre of cultural citizenship and how these discourses are intersectionally conditioned.

Our analysis of the two arenas of public debate, parliamentary addresses and newspaper editorials, confirmed that discussions on family and immigration construct discursive borders of appreciated and worthy social life and unwelcomed and threatening 'unsocial' life. We observed discourses that flowed between the editorials and parliament, without being able to clearly define the power relations between the two. The expression 'anchor child' first appeared in the political debate in parliament and was later accepted in the editorial discourse. However, the newspaper forcefully drove the debate on the grandmother question, which was later only taken up in parliament by the Christian Democrats.

For those arguing for more liberal immigration policies, family life is presented as a moral human right and as a means to integration and citizenship. Conservatives who argued for stricter policies presented family as a potential threat, either as an economic welfare burden or as a problem for social order. Both sides used victimization and images of vulnerability to support their arguments, and both used the category of a migrant family as a mirror, an 'ethnic reflection' against which Finnish society, culture and belonging are (re)valued and (re)confirmed. This ethnic reflection depended on an interplay of intersectional categorizations, particularly

those displaying young or old age as well as female gender as categories which – particularly when they intersect – position migrants as being worthy of cultural citizenship rights.

Social construction of 'our' identity against the Other is a trajectory that has roots in colonialism and the construction of the hegemonic West (e.g. Hegde 2010; Keskinen et al. 2009). The notion of protecting 'women and children' (see Enloe 1990, 199; Hagelund 2008) is an example of gendered migration debate and policy (see e.g. Roggeband & Verloo 2007, 280), and it was salient both in calls for restricting immigration as well as in those which argue for more inclusive policies. Our analysis also highlighted how the category of 'grandmother' brought together specific intersecting conditions of gender, religion, class, race, and ethnicity in ways that raised certain individuals' worthiness. The elderly women's gender and the fact that they had children and grandchildren made them suitable for dependency and care. This strategy of humanitarianism granted them potential access to cultural citizenship. Nevertheless, regarding their potential rights to social citizenship, they and other family migrants were portrayed as potential burdens on the Finnish welfare state. Furthermore, the debate concerned not only these migrant women's belonging, but in addition, it touched on Finnish citizens' (the children of these grandmothers) right to invite their mothers to Finland and care for them *here*. In contrast, the debate on 'anchor children' concerned the right of an unaccompanied minor to invite his/her caregivers to Finland. Those who opposed family reunification in these cases demoralized the parents and argued that the children are in danger here and should be cared for *there*.

Interestingly, instead of focusing on the migrant family, the third problem frame flipped the issue around and presented Finnish society as problematic in the

first place. This kind of humanitarian and inclusive framing of elderly women offered
HS and some political actors an opportunity to position themselves as 'humanitarian'
in a climate of polarized opinion and increasingly closed-door politics. Moreover,
humanitarianism played a role among those who wished to restrict immigration
throughout the research period. The family reunification provision in the Finnish law
was presented as enabling trafficking and contemporary slavery. Tighter family
migration policies, particularly of Somalis, therefore, were presented as caring
protection of minors and women. This leads us to ask why care became an important
discursive strategy for cultural citizenship.

Unlike the discourse on rights, humanitarian provisions of care usually seem
apolitical, driven by language of emergency and exceptionality. Gendered violence
and serious illness become objective, legitimate and measurable factors by which one
can prove one's 'humanity' and qualify as a worthy subject for 'apolitical'
compassion and, potentially, citizenship (Ticktin 2011). This is the kind of
complexity within which the Finnish debate on family migration became entangled.
The illnesses of the two white Christian ladies were highlighted in the campaign as a
quality that made them even more socially acceptable for dependency and thus
worthy of inclusion. The intersection of age, family ties, gender, class, illness, and a
Christian and half-Finnish background qualified these women for humanitarian
action. This initial acknowledgment of cultural citizenship, the right to take care of
elderly parents, however, turned out to be a second-class belonging, after all. The
Finnish public and politicians withdrew from their humanitarian positions when the
administrators warned them about threats to 'our' welfare system, thus limiting the
cultural rights of these families. Socially acceptable dependency gained the women
public attention and compassion. Paradoxically, however, illness and old age were

also arguments against their inclusion and were conditions that limited their accessibility to social citizenship. The categories that condition citizenship rights are interlocking, and as our analysis shows, a certain constellation of intersecting categories influence migration discourses and policies. This differential positioning of migrants calls for an analysis that is sensitive to the complexity of intersectionality (McCall 2005).

European states have tightened conditions for the belonging of migrants in many ways. Eleonore Kofman has demonstrated a shift in the 1990s towards a contractual model of citizenship and belonging. Migrants are subject to surveillance, and their motivation and ability to integrate is under suspicion. This surveillance also reaches into intimate areas of family life. Migrants are treated more and more like guests who depend on the hospitality of the host, and they are supposed to be grateful for being tolerated. States have constructed a civic stratification in which different categories of migrants and ethnicities are granted different rights of entry, residence and access to social and political citizenship. Immigration becomes the first border post in filtering prospective citizens and limiting diversity. Widening the gap between citizens and 'disruptive' outsiders can be a means of proclaiming the protective capacity of the state, a paternalist securitization assuaging fears of an external threat, in exchange for accepting decreased protection and rights for outsiders. Thus, what we see is new differentialist racism, selecting people as being suitable and adaptable for membership in a society (Kofman 2006) and setting up the right to cultural citizenship, which is important for social and political citizenship. Intimate family lives and humanitarian discourses of care are currently situated in the foreground of public negotiations over cultural citizenship. It thus becomes ever more vital to untangle the ways in which certain categories such as age, gender, class, and ethnicity

intersect and position single groups and individuals along different axes of exclusion. Research needs to focus on public perceptions of the family life of different groups of migrants and to explore the discourses of care central to the construction of cultural citizenship and policy-making processes.

Acknowledgements

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Notes

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[i] The number of applications for migration for family reasons grew in 2010; the annual total of 10,611 applications in 2010 represented an increase of 25 per cent in comparison to the previous year.

[ii] Finland has a unicameral parliament, and coalition governments are the norm. In the past two decades, the three largest parties – the Social Democrats (sd), the Centre Party (kesk) and the National Coalition Party (kok) – have, in different combinations, formed the government. The media system in Finland reflects a high level of journalistic professionalism, a large newspaper readership, a relatively strong commitment to public service and press councils.

[iii] Parliamentary source material: VNS 5/2002, lk 5 June 2002, Ylä-Mononen /kesk,; VNS 5/2002, HaVM 20/2002 pk 5 February 2003, Haatainen /sd, Lehtomäki,/kesk.

[iv] Parliamentary source material: VNS 5/2002 lk 5 June 2002, Mertjärvi/vihr,; VNS 5/2002, HaVM 20/2002 pk 5 February 2003, Granvik/r.

The rhetoric of foreign examples, with comparisons to other countries' political and social circumstances, tends to be common and features as a political argument in Finnish debates (Kettunen 2011). In questions related to immigration, it is Sweden in particular that tends to feature as a reference point in these comparisons.

[v] Parliamentary source material: HE 240/2009,lk 17 November 2009, Rajamäki/sd, Ukkola/kok, Zyskowicz/kok.

[vi] Parliamentary source material: HE 166/2007 1.k 17 February 2009, Vistbacka/ps, Rajamäki/sd.

[vii] Journalist Pauli Vahtera (2010) who writes about economics from a welfare chauvinist perspective "calculated" the expected "cost of elderly relatives" and presented these figures in a weekly current affairs program Ajankohtainen kakkonen on the public broadcasting company's TV channel YLE 2 and in the tabloid Iltalehti.

[viii] Parliamentary source material: LA 89/2009, lk 5 November 2009. In addition, Minister of Migration and European Affairs Astrid Thors from the Swedish People's Party proposed a change to the law in the Ministerial Working Group on Immigration Policy in 2010 but failed mainly because of opposition from the National Coalition Party. The Russian woman returned voluntarily to Russia in June 2011 after the Russian prime minister at the time, Vladimir Putin, assured her health care. She died a month later. The Egyptian woman received a residence permit in 2010 when it was evident that she would not live very long. She died a month later.

[ix] Parliamentary source material: LA 89/2009, lk 5 November 2009, Räsänen, kd; Palm, kd.