

## **Welfare Regimes and Images of poor and welfare Recipients**

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**Abstract:** The article investigates how poor and social assistance clients are depicted in British, Danish and Swedish newspapers. The study is inspired by American media studies that have documented an overrepresentation of African Americans. It is expected that due to the institutional logics of liberal welfare regimes the negative stereotyping of poor and social assistance clients is resembled in Great Britain; despite the fact that the salience of the race issue has been modest in Britain. In contrast it is expected that due to the institutional logics of social democratic welfare regimes this negative stereotyping is less severe in Swedish and Danish newspapers; despite the fact that both countries have become multiethnic and the salience of the issue has been high in the Danish case. The first preliminary results support the theoretical argument.

### **Introduction**

Why is public support for anti-poverty policies so weak in liberal welfare regimes and so strong in social democratic regimes? This is one of the puzzles that have occupied a number of scholars. One of the dominant views is that it comes down to ethnic heterogeneity (e.g. Alsina & Glazer 2004).

This position is especially dominant among American scholars, which is caused by the fact that a number of studies show a clear link between attitudes toward African Americans and attitudes towards welfare policies (e.g. Gilens 2000). However, if ethnic heterogeneity has a general impact on attitudes towards anti-poverty policies then the difference between the liberal and social democratic regimes become even more puzzling. The country closest to an ideal type social democratic regime – Sweden – has within the last two decades turned into a multiethnic society, This is caused by an inflow of asylum seekers and family reunifications. In 2006 immigrants and their children (both parents born outside Sweden) made up 16.8 percent of the population and they are highly overrepresented in the social assistance system. At the same time there seems to be no decline in the high public support for spending on social assistance (Albrekt Larsen 2006:150). The same has been the case in Denmark, one of the other social democratic regimes. Here immigrants and their children have come to make up 10.6 percent of the population (2009). At the same time Denmark has had a very heated political discussion of the immigration issue. Thus, in contrast to the Swedish case, Denmark has a successful right-wing party in parliament and immigration is a very salient political issue. But again survey studies show that there has been no decline in Danish public support for spending on social assistance (Albrekt Larsen 2006: 150).

If one refrains from making a simple reference to culture - which often is not specified more narrowly and thereby impossible to falsify – these findings support the argument that there is an institutional logic behind the cross-national differences in public support for anti-poverty policies (Albrekt Larsen 2005, 2006, 2008); an institutional logic that seems to overrule the impact from heterogeneity. However, the theoretical argument about an institutional logic is often not supported by empirical evidence. Often it is just stated that due to the institutional setup, e.g. need-tested benefits, the public discourse will be different. The aim of the article is to improve this line of reasoning by showing that these institutional logics can be linked to the way that the mass media

present “reality” to the public. More concretely we will analyse the amount and type of pictures, which Swedish, Danish and British newspapers use to illustrate their articles about poverty and recipients of social assistance.

The study is inspired by the American media studies, which have shown a stereotypic presentation of African Americans. Gilens (1996) e.g. showed that African Americans were heavily overrepresented on pictures in articles about poverty. Furthermore they were shown in situations that made them less deserving than the non-African Americans. Gilens used the findings to explain why Americans, when asked about the racial composition of poverty in survey questionnaires, largely overestimates the share of poor African Americans. By conducting similar analyses in two social democratic regimes the article will show that there might be an institutional logic behind the media coverage. And by including another liberal regime with a less intensive debate on ethnicity - UK -the article will also show that the stereotypic media coverage is linked to the liberal institutional setup and not only a matter of Americans simply being against blacks.

The article is divided into six sections. The first section outlines the institutional argument and explains why the media images are believed to be of large importance. The second section discusses the country selection and presents the data material. The third section reports the amount of pictures of poor and welfare recipients in the three countries. The fourth section reports the ethnic composition of persons on the images. The fifth section links the ethnic composition to the content of the articles. The last section summarizes the findings and discusses their implications.

### **The institutional logic behind public deservingness discussions**

The theoretical point of departure is the idea that the programmatic structure of the welfare schemes influences the deservingness discussion in different countries. In table 1 it is shown how welfare states dominated by selective benefits and services are believed to foster a discussion about the

extend to which poor and unemployed fulfil the criteria of need (are they really needy?), control (is it their own fault?), identity (do they share identity with the majority?), reciprocity (have they contributed in the past), and attitude (are they grateful). It is also shown how welfare states dominated by universal benefits and services are believed to discourage these discussions about the fulfilment of the deservingness criteria (see Albrekt Larsen 2008; Van Oorschot 2000).

**Table 1**  
**The Effects From Respectively Selective and**  
**Universal Social Policy on Different**  
**Dimensions of Deservingness**

Dimensions of Deservingness	A Welfare State Dominated by Selective Benefits and Services	A Welfare State Dominated by Universal Benefits and Services
Need	Open the discussion of whether recipients are in need	Close the discussion of whether recipients are in need
Control	Open the discussion of whether recipients are to blame	Close the discussion of whether recipients are to blame
Identity	Define the recipients as a special group distinguished from the well-adjusted majority	Define the recipients as equal citizens who belong to a national "us"
Reciprocity	Highlight the boundary between those who give and those who receive	Blur the boundary between those who give and those who receive
Attitude	Open the discussion of whether recipients receive benefits and services with a grateful, docile, and compliant attitude	Close the discussion of whether recipients receive benefits and services with a grateful, docile, and compliant attitude

Source: Albrekt Larsen 2008

It is a classic thesis that systems dominated by universal benefits and services (the ideal type policy of the social democratic welfare regime) and systems dominated by selective benefits and services (the ideal type policy of the liberal welfare regime) generate quite different public discussions and perceptions of recipients. The typical coverage of the incidence of long term unemployment in

liberal and social democratic welfare regimes is quite different. If we take the United States, the country closest to the liberal ideal type, the unemployed are covered by a short period with unemployment benefits, and after that, those in need (i.e., those without private savings or insurance) are covered by selective benefits and services such as Medicaid, Temporary Assistance to Needy Families, food stamps, general assistance, and so on. In contrast, the unemployed in Sweden, the country closest to the social democratic ideal type, are covered by a long period with unemployment benefits, combined with a large number of citizenship-based services and benefits such as general health care, child allowance, basic old-age pension, housing allowances, and so on. Means-tested social assistance is available to those who have not qualified for unemployment benefits, but it only plays a minor role.

Following Rothstein (1998), the first step of the argument is simply to point to the fact that a selective policy that aims to provide the needy with economic resources must determine (a) who is needy and (b) how much they need. Therefore, “The public discussion of social policy in a selective system often becomes a question of what the well-adjusted majority should do about the less well-adjusted, in varying degrees, socially marginalized minority” (Rothstein, 1998, p. 158). The general fairness of the policy is also open to challenge, as the majority might start asking “(a) where the line between the needy and the non-needy should be drawn, and b) whether the needy themselves are not to blame for their predicament” (p. 159). Relating this argument to the deservingness criteria one could say that a system dominated by selective welfare policies opens discussions of need and control (see Table 1). The identity dimension of deservingness is also influenced by this logic, connected to selective policy, as “the very act of separating out the needy almost always stamps them as socially inferior, as ‘others’ with other types of social characteristics and needs” (p. 158). Furthermore, it is obvious that the boundaries between “them” and “us” generated by a selective welfare policy highlight who benefits from the welfare state (i.e., those

who pay little or no tax and receive targeted benefits) and who loses on the welfare state (i.e., those who pay tax but do not receive any benefits). Thus, the reciprocity of the system will be perceived as very low, which increases the importance of grateful, docile, and compliant attitudes among those who receive the targeted benefits or services.

In liberal welfare states the deservingness discussions are believed to be more intense in situations, where (the perceived) job possibilities are good, as in the US in the 1990s. In that case the poor are believed to be in control of their misery. The deservingness discussion is also believed to be more intense in situations, where the welfare benefits and minimum incomes are so low that the “bottom” of society is forced to adopt a life style that distinguish themselves from the middleclass. These institutional logics can be intensified when they conflate with ethnic divides, which they did in US (e.g., Alesina & Glaeser, 2004; Freeman, 1986; Glazer, 1998; Goodhart, 2004). Thus, the American public came to perceive poverty as a black phenomenon, which lowered public support for anti-poverty policies (Gilens 2000).

How poverty so closely came to be linked to African Americans has naturally been of scholarly interest in USA. The simplest explanation is that African Americans were overrepresented in the poverty statistics. However, Gilens (1996) study showed that the media coverage also had an impact. He analysed the 206 pictures in three major magazines in period from 1988 to 1992 and he demonstrated how the newsmagazines depicted many more African Americans than they actually made up of the official statistics. Besides the general overrepresentation it was also shown that African Americans were overrepresented among the working-age adults and underrepresented as elderly and as children. Thus, African American poor were shown in working-age, whereas white poor were shown as children or old. Thereby (following the argument above) African Americans were depicted as less deserving because they were age groups where they could get a job and therefore were in control of the poverty. There are reasons to believe that such images are a good

way of measuring stereotypes and probably also has an independent influence on public attitudes (see below).

The logic of a system dominated by universal welfare policy is in all aspects contrary to the logic within a system dominated by selective policies. In the Scandinavian systems of “Rolls-Royce universalism,” no line needs to be drawn between the needy and the non-needy. Thus, the discussion of need and to what extent the poor and unemployed are in control of their neediness becomes more or less irrelevant. As Rothstein (1998) argues, welfare policy does not, therefore, turn into a question of what should be done about “the poor” and “the maladjusted,” but rather a question of what constitutes general fairness in respect to the relation between citizens and the state. The question becomes not “how shall we solve their problem?” but rather “how shall we solve our common problem (healthcare, education, pensions, etc.)?” (p. 160). Instead of defining a line between “them” and “us,” universal benefits and services actually help define everybody within the nation-state as belonging to one group. The reciprocity discussion is also suppressed in social democratic regimes. For the majority of citizens, it is not an easy task to calculate whether one is a net winner or a net loser, even though welfare states dominated by universal policies have been shown to be the most redistributive nation-states within the OECD area. If the cost-benefit analysis were done at the individual level in a given year, the calculation would be manageable. The market value of the universal benefits and services received in that year would be subtracted from the amount paid in value-added tax (VAT), income tax, and different duties. But the calculation is complicated, and it becomes even more complicated if the costbenefit analysis is done at the household level and within a lifetime perspective. In that case, the amount of VAT, income tax, duties, and so on paid by the family during a lifetime would be subtracted from the value of free education for the children, the old-age pension of one’s partner, the likely use of free hospitals, the likely use of unemployment benefits, and so on. The most likely end result is that an ordinary

citizen does not start to calculate at all. So the point is that both the programmatic structure and the very size of the ideal social democratic regime (see also Korpi & Palme, 1998) blur the boundary between net winners and net losers, which restrains the reciprocity discussion. Finally, as the institutional logic of universalism suppresses the discussion of need, control, identity, and reciprocity, the attitudes among recipients of benefits and services also become more or less irrelevant. Nobody expects citizens—including the poor, the unemployed, or the immigrants—to be grateful because they receive a basic old-age pension, have access to free hospital treatment, have access to heavily subsidized child care, and so on. Furthermore, the generosity of the social benefits and high minimum wages enable many of these groups to adopt a middleclass lifestyle, whereby it becomes easier for the majority to feel a shared identity with these groups. And finally the highly regulated labour markets give the public the perception that unemployed cannot simply get a job by lowering their wage demand i.e. they are not in control of their situation (see Albrekt Larsen 2006 for full argument).

Such institutional differences might be illustrated by survey studies conducted in different countries. Albrekt Larsen (2006; 2008) e.g. shows that those living in countries dominated by residual welfare policies are much more likely to explain poverty with laziness than those who live in countries dominated by universal welfare policies. In the following we will substantiate the same argument by analysing how the media portrait poor and social assistance recipients in Denmark, Sweden, and Great Britain. We have basically two motivations for taking this approach. Following the line of reasoning within modern media sociology (see e.g. Lester & Ross 2003) we believe that pictures are a good way to capture the stereotypes that exist in different societies. Thus, newspaper pictures are not random “snap shots” of reality but constructed illustrations that try to tell the whole story in a very condensed way. This construction both take place in situation where the picture is taken – the photographer select persons, places, angles etc. – and in the situation where

the editor choose one out of many (already) constructed snapshots. The second motivation is that pictures probably have a larger impact on opinion formation than text; at least it is a well established fact that pictures easier evoke emotional feelings than text.

The first thesis is that due to the institutional logic of the deservingness discussions the Swedes and Danes will – despite a heavily overrepresentation of third world immigrants and asylum seekers on social assistance - not be exposed to the same negative stereotypes of poor and social assistance clients as the Americans. Naturally there is an “us” versus “them” discussion – especially on cultural issues and especially in Denmark. But the inclusion in the encompassing universal schemes, e.g. public day care, public schools, high schools and universities, public health care probably help to define these groups as fellow citizens. In a Scandinavian context it is e.g. very difficult to use the angle 1) that “we” paid for “them” when everybody seems to pay for everybody, 2) that immigrants simply could get a job when everybody knows that wages are negotiated at a central level or 3) that immigrants should be more grateful when they receive benefits when nobody expects others citizens to be grateful for the benefits and service they receive. Following Rothstein one might even argue that Swedish and Danish newspapers might be inclined to present poverty and unemployment as a societal problem, which their societies have failed to solve. If this is the adopted frame then it fit best with pictures that present poor and social assistance clients as persons that try their best to get by. Thus, one might even argue that Swedes and Danes might be exposed to (too) positive stereotypes of poor and social assistance recipients.

The second thesis is that due to the institutional logic of the deservingness discussion the Brits will – despite a more moderate ethnic debate than in the US – also be exposed to negative stereotype of poor and social assistance clients. If this is thru we have reasons to believe that the American experience is not only a matter of the conflict between black and whites but also a matter of the institutional logic that influence the deservingness discussions.

## **Country selection and the data material**

The selection of countries have already been somewhat discussed. USA functions as a shadow case and she is chosen because she represents a country that come closest to Esping-Andersen's (1990) description of a liberal welfare regime. UK is chosen because she also represents a liberal welfare regime but at the same time the race issues have not been nearly as salient as in the USA. In fact despite inflow of immigration UK is known as a country where there has not been any severe political mobilisation on the topic. This enables us to see whether the institutional logics in themselves can generate the negative stereotypes of poor and social assistance clients. Sweden is chosen because she represents the country closest to Esping-Andersen's description of social democratic welfare regime. Nevertheless, besides these regime characteristics Sweden is also known as a country where the salience of the immigration issue has been very low. Some scholars even argue that there is a general elite consensus about not bringing this issue to political agenda (e.g. Rydgren 2005). Thus, a lack of negative stereotypes could be caused by this elite consensus instead of the institutional factors discussed above. Therefore we also include Denmark, which represents a social democratic welfare regime where the immigration became very salient (Goul Andersen 2003). Within the Nordic countries Denmark also stands out as the case where the right wing party has been most successful. Thus, if we were to see a replication of the American experience of creating negative stereotypes towards minorities living on welfare benefits we should expect it to be in Denmark. This enables us to see how the institutional mechanisms operate under the "worst" conditions.

In each of the three countries we have selected the five largest nation-wide newspapers. In Denmark that is Jyllandsposten, Politiken, Berlingske tidende, BT and Ekstrabladet (Dansk Oplagskontrol 2009). In Sweden it is Aftonbladet, Dagens nyheter, Expressen, Göteborgs-Posten and Svenska Dagbladet (Tidningsutgivarna 2009). And in UK it is The Sun, Daily Mail,

Daily Mirror Daily Telegraph and Daily Star (Audit Bureau of Circulations 2009). The papers available for free were excluded because many are local newspapers and because their archives are scattered. In the selected newspapers we have searched for articles that included the words poor, poverty and social assistance<sup>1</sup> over a five year period from 2005 to 2009. In the Danish case we also included the name of the special social assistant scheme targeted at newly arrived immigrants (starthjælp), as the social assistance schemes became dual in 2002. Among the large amount of articles found in this full text search we selected those that dealt with national issues (i.e. all international poverty stories were excluded). Furthermore, we only included articles that had pictures with persons that were or had been poor or recipients of social assistance benefits.

A complete search in all five newspapers in a five year period results in a vast amount of articles. Thus, instead of a complete search we sample random days within the period from 2005 to 2009 (stratified on year and weekday). By sampling random days we reduce the amount of articles to process without the risk of cross national bias due to extensive media coverage in a period in one country. By stratifying on year and weekday we make sure that there is no bias due to yearly or weekly cycles of articles about poverty<sup>2</sup>. In practice we sampled one random week at a time meaning that we drew a random Monday, a random Tuesday etc. until we had a constructed week. In each country we kept sampling constructed weeks until we within each country reached 100 pictures (+/-5). The number of constructed weeks that it took to generate 100 pictures is used as a measure for the density of pictures of poor people. With this search strategy we are able to process the material and maybe most importantly the free text search secures that our search can be conducted the same way within each national setting (classification systems of newspaper topics vary very much from country to country). Finally we coded the content of the largest picture and the

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<sup>1</sup> Social assistance = the name specific poor relief benefits.

<sup>2</sup> Based on the Danish search results and the preliminary Swedish results there seems to be both a yearly and a weekly cycle. The yearly cycle shows it self by a higher density of articles about poverty around Christmas. The weekly cycle seems to be that the density of poverty articles is higher in the weekends.

main topic for all the cases of the articles. As we use US as a shadow case and take point of departure in Gilens' (1996) study, we have coded the selected pictures in a way that as far as possible resembled Gilens initial coding. Thus, we coded sex, age, employment status and ethnic background or colour for each person in the picture. Furthermore we coded the main topic and where the picture was taken<sup>3</sup>.

The electronic archives that the searches were conducted in does not all contain pictures or indication of a picture in relation with the article. This means that the pictures cannot be retrieved from the electronic archives in most cases. The exception is Denmark where most of the articles are available as a copy of the original newspaper page in pdf-format and thereby in colour. For these articles it could be established whether the article contained a picture or not right away and it could be retrieved. For all other articles they had to be found in manual microfilm archives and copied if the article contained pictures of poor people. This means that articles retrieved from microfilm are in relative poor quality and in black and white, which e.g. made it hard to establish ethnicity/race in some cases.

\*\*\*\*\* The relatively time consuming process of retrieving pictures to the relevant newspaper articles has unfortunately resulted in a delay of data collection. Thus, in the following part of the paper there are only results from the Danish case and the American shadow case. The search for pictures in Swedish newspapers is progressing nicely and at the time of writing the relevant articles are found but not retrieved from the microfilm archives. It is the authors impression that there are fewer articles about poverty in Sweden than in Denmark and furthermore that fewer of the articles contain references to immigration. The search in UK is yet to be started. \*\*\*\*\*

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<sup>3</sup> The code scheme can be seen in appendix 1.

### The amount of pictures of poor and welfare recipients

In the Danish case it took six week-samples to collect 95 articles with pictures over the 5 year period. 6 week-samples is 42 days a year and 210 days all in all. Thus, we found an article with pictures of poor people every second-and-a-half day we sampled. Politiken published 30 articles about poverty within the period investigated and is thereby the Danish newspaper that has published most articles about poverty. The 30 articles correspond to one article every week of our sample. It is the newspapers that can be labeled as broadsheet papers (Politiken, Jyllands-Posten, Berlingske Tidende) that have the highest density of poverty articles. They all have more than 20 articles. The tabloid papers (BT, Ekstrabladet) have considerable lower density of poverty articles with only 13 and 7 articles.

**Table 2:** Stories on Poverty in US newsmagazine (1988-1992) and a Danish sample of newspaper articles ( 210 days in the period from 2005 to 2009)

	Number of stories	Number of pictures	Number of poor people pictured
<b>U.S.A*</b>			
Times	44	36	86
Newsweek	82	103	294
U.S. News and World Report	56	67	180
<b>Total</b>	<b>182</b>	<b>206</b>	<b>560</b>
<b>Denmark</b>			
Politiken	30	30	76
Jyllands-Posten	21	21	43
Berlingske Tidende	24	24	44
BT	13	13	24
Ekstrabladet	7	7	15
<b>Total</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>202</b>

\* Source: Gilens (1996)

If we compare the Danish case with the US shadow case on the amount of articles found in the paper or newsmagazine with the highest density of poverty-articles, it seems that the density of articles is greater in US than in Denmark. Newsweek published 260 times during the 5 years Gilens (1996) studied and published 82 (table 2) articles about poverty. In other words there

was an article about poverty almost every third time Newsweek were published. That seems to be a higher frequency of articles per times published compared with Politiken, as Politiken only prints an article about poverty every 7<sup>th</sup> time it is published (210 times published/30 articles) (table 2). If we do the same calculation on an aggregate level the same pattern emerges as the average publishing rate in Denmark among the all five newspapers selected was every 11<sup>th</sup> time. In the US the average publishing rate among the three newsmagazines was third-and-a-half time published. We can acquire another indicator of the density on an aggregate level if we calculate the number of articles per publication day. The result of this calculation<sup>4</sup> is that in Denmark there 0.45 articles about poverty were published per publication day: In the US the corresponding figure is 0.80 articles per publication day. That shows that there are almost twice as many articles per publication day in the US than in Denmark.

The results seem to correspond very well with the relevance of the deservingness discussion in liberal and social democratic welfare regimes. In social democratic welfare regimes the deservingness discussion is almost non-relevant, as discussed above, and therefore it is not relevant for newspapers to publish many articles about poverty or welfare recipients. In liberal welfare regimes the deservingness discussion is much more relevant and therefore a part of the news criteria for editors on newsmagazines. This indicates that the density of articles about poverty in US is greater than in Denmark because of the institutional logic in the different welfare regimes.

Before making any conclusions there are some conditions one has to take into account. Newspapers and newsmagazines are two different kinds of media with different news criteria, they publish with different frequency, have different layouts regarding picture etc. The articles are also retrieved in differently in the two studies<sup>5</sup> and the way we measure density

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<sup>4</sup> Denmark: 95 articles in 210 publication days, 95 articles/210 publication days  $\approx$  0,45 articles/publication days.  
US: 206 articles in 260 "publication days, 206 articles/260 publication days  $\approx$  0,80 articles/publication days.

<sup>5</sup> Gilens uses the *Readers Guide to Periodical Literature* to find the articles which enables him to search on topic and do cross searches on related topics. This might result in a finer web than our search string in full text articles and therefore

(publishing rate of poverty-articles) might be biased<sup>6</sup>. So trying to compare results from our study with Gilens results is basically like comparing apples and oranges. But even though comparing apples and oranges is impossible they are both fruit and newsmagazines and newspapers are still written news media. Thus, strong tendencies found when comparing unlike matters say something about the difference between the two. So, even though the validity of the results is not great the tendencies that we find when comparing the Danish and US results may hold true and the results shows a strong tendency to higher density of poverty articles in the US than in Denmark.

### **The ethnic composition in pictures of poor and welfare recipients**

Gilens (1996) found that there was a heavy overrepresentation of African Americans in the media portrayals of poverty in the US. In the three newsmagazines that Gilens studies there were twice as many African Americans in the portrayals than the true proportion of poor (Table 3). Our thesis is that the same kind of misrepresentation will not be found in the Scandinavian countries due to the institutional logics of the social democratic welfare regime (see above).

In the Danish case the ethnicity of the poor has been coded when given from the text and if ethnicity was not given the colour (white/non-white) has been estimated. The two variables (ethnicity and colour) have been merged to create an indicator of ethnic background. The ethnic background has been established for 196 of the 202 persons found the pictures which corresponds 97 percent of the persons.

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lead to a higher density of poverty-articles in the US case. Furthermore we do not gather all articles in our search but retrieve only those that contain pictures, which again might lead to a lower amount of articles retrieved in Denmark.  
<sup>6</sup> By measuring on publishing rate of articles we overlook the fact that weekly newsmagazines covers a whole week of events and daily newspapers only covers 24 hours. This also could have a positive effect on the density of poverty-articles in newsmagazines.

**Table 3:** Stories on Poverty in US newsmagazine (1988-1992) and a Danish sample of newspaper articles (in the period from 2005 to 2009) and the representation of African Americans and non-ethnic Danes in pictures to these stories.

	Number of stories	Number of pictures	Number of poor people pictured	Percent non-ethnic	Percent African American	True proportion of poor African americans/ non-ethnic**
<b>U.S.A*</b>						
Times	44	36	86	-	65%	-
Newsweek	82	103	294	-	66%	-
U.S. News and World Report	56	67	180	-	53%	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>182</b>	<b>206</b>	<b>560</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>62%</b>	<b>29%</b>
<b>Denmark</b>						
Politiken	30	30	76	54%	-	-
Jyllands-Posten	21	21	43	24%	-	-
Berlingske Tidende	24	24	44	36%	-	-
BT	13	13	24	8%	-	-
Ekstrabladet	7	7	15	7%	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>202</b>	<b>35%</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>21%</b>

\* Source: Gilens (1996)

\*\* Source: U.S.A: Gilens uses the U.S Bureau of Census as source for the true poverty rate. Denmark: Finansministeriet 2004, The true level of poverty is in Denmark set to less than 50% of the median income.

The ethnic Danes constitute 65 percent of the poor people pictured and the non-ethnic constitutes 35 percent. Compared with the true proportion of non-ethnic<sup>7</sup> poor in Denmark there is a misrepresentation as the true proportion is 21 percent. This entails that the newspapers in Denmark over represent poor non-ethnic Danes by half a time more than the true proportion. The misrepresentation of poor non-ethnic Danes on the aggregate level covers the fact that there is great difference in the representation of poor non-ethnic Danes between the 5 Danish newspapers. Thus, Politiken misrepresent poor non-ethnic Danes with two-and-half time as many the true proportion and on the other hand Ekstrabladet had almost 3 times fewer poor non-ethnic Danes than the true proportion. Again, there seems to be a divide between broadsheet papers and tabloids, as both tabloid papers underrepresented poor non-ethnic Danes and the broadsheet paper overrepresented.

As expected the misrepresentation of poor non ethnic Danes was not as distinct as in the US. On the other hand it was more distinct than the institutional logic of the social democratic

<sup>7</sup> Non-ethnic Danes are in the statistics from Finansministeriet (Ministry of Finance) defined as first and second generation of immigrants.

welfare regime suggested in light of the deservingness discussion. This result could be expected though as immigration and integration issues have had high saliency in Denmark since 2001, as we mentioned above. Does that mean that there is a stereotypical representation of poor people in Denmark as non-ethnic Danes? Not necessarily. The high saliency of immigration and integration issues in Denmark is not only due to people being dissatisfied with immigrants crossing the border. On the contrary, the majority people that found the issue of immigration important in the 2007 election were people with libertarian attitudes to immigration (Dejgaard 2008: 62). This means that the overrepresentation of poor non-ethnic Danes might be due to positive stories about people getting out of poverty and therefore not a negative stereotypical representation. This will be further investigated in the section about ethnic composition and the content of the article.

All in all; our findings about ethnic stereotypical representation suggests that the institutional logic of the social democratic welfare regime does not hinder the misrepresentation of ethnic minorities in media portrayals of poverty but it seems to limit the extent of misrepresentation compared to a liberal welfare regime.

### **The ethnic composition and the content of the article**

When relating the deservingness discussion to the media portrayals of poor and poverty it becomes vital to establish whether some poor are portrayed as more deserving than others. We have already shown that poor non-ethnic Danes are over represented in the media portrayal, but are they also portrayed as less deserving than the ethnic Danes? In light of the deservingness discussion and the institutional logic of the liberal and social democratic welfare regime, we expect there to be a more negative portrayal of stereotyped groups of poor (African Americans or non-ethnic Danes in this case) in selective liberal welfare regimes than in universal social democratic welfare regimes. On the other hand the salient immigration issue and the cultural conflict between ethnic Danes and non-

ethnic Danes might influence the portrayal of non-ethnic Danes. To establish whether there is a negative stereotypical representation of poor non-ethnic Danes as there is of African Americans in the US case, we have to look at the content of the article that the pictures belong to. Hence, we have coded the main topic for all articles collected. By reading the articles, attaching keywords and evaluate which keywords fitted to which topic we have coded the 95 Danish articles into 12 categories. Some of the categories resemble categories in the American study (Gilens 1996) and others are created to match the national context.

In the US, Gilens (1996: 525-527) found that there was a strong negative stereotypical representation of the African Americans when looking at the topics of the articles. In stories about the least sympathetic topic, which Gilens deemed to be *Underclass*, there was a 100 percent representation of African Americans and the more sympathetic topics such as *Medicaid* and *Employment programs for the poor* the African Americans were substantially less represented<sup>8</sup> than other groups. This led Gilens to conclude that African Americans were portrayed as less deserving.

**Tabel 4:** Ethnicity of people on pictures of poor in a Danish sample of newspaper articles (in the period from 2005 to 2009) by topic of story.

	Number of stories	Number of people pictured	Number of ethnic danes pictured	Number of Non-ethnic danes pictured	Percent Non-ethnic danes
Poor and welfare recipients getting jobs	14	18	6	12	67%
Housing/Homelessness/Ghetto	9	17	7	10	59%
Labour market situation	6	22	14	8	36%
New poverty-policies	6	12	9	3	25%
Employment programs	9	14	11	3	21%
Poor	18	32	27	5	16%
Labour market situation for the weakest poor	5	9	8	1	11%
Poor Children	6	14	13	1	7%
Christmas help	6	12	12	0	0%
Casework (Unemployment)	3	3	3	0	0%
Early retirement pensioners wants to work	3	4	4	0	0%
Miscellaneous others	10	39	14	25	64%
<b>Total</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>196</b>	<b>128</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>35%</b>

<sup>8</sup> 17 percent African Americans in articles about Medicaid and 40 percent in articles about Employment programs for the poor. The average representation of African Americans in all the articles were 62 percent (Gilens 1996: 525)

In the Danish case the results are not as clear as in the American because there are both positive and negative stereotypical representations. The most sympathetic topics are *Poor and welfare recipients getting jobs, Poor children, and Christmas help*. The least sympathetic topic is *Ghetto*, which can be compared to underclass in the US. When looking at the sympathetic topics and the overall percentage of non-ethnic Danes in the stories there is a heavy overrepresentation of non-ethnic Danes in the stories about *Poor and welfare recipients getting jobs*. This indicates that there is a positive representation of poor non-ethnic Danes. But when looking at stories about *Poor children* and *Christmas help* there is a heavy underrepresentation - in fact there is no non-ethnic Danes in the stories about *Christmas help*. This indicates that there is a negative representation of non-ethnic Danes in stories about the really needy poor<sup>9</sup>. The least sympathetic topic, *Ghetto*, have a high percentage of non-ethnic Danes which matches well to the proportions of non-ethnic Danes in ghetto areas<sup>10</sup>. In the eight largest Danish ghetto areas there was an average of 68 percent non-ethnic Danes (Ministeriet for flygtninge, indvandrere og integration 2004) and 59 percent were pictures in the stories about ghettos. Thus, the representation of poor non-ethnic Danes in stories about ghettos is close to the true proportions<sup>11</sup> and thereby the ghetto topic does not constitute any misrepresentation in the Danish case.

To sum up the findings; it seems that the results are dialectic because of the overrepresentation on some sympathetic topics and underrepresentation on others. These seemingly dialectic results makes more sense when looked upon through the salient immigration issue and the “us” versus “them” discussion that follows such a conflict and this issue. There is no negative stereotypical representation of those non-ethnic Danes that moves into employment because the perception of non-ethnic Danes in employment is that they are better culturally integrated into

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<sup>9</sup> Poor non-ethnic children constitute 28 percent of the poor children in Denmark (Finansministeriet 2004).

<sup>10</sup> Ghettos are in a Danish context defined as housing areas where there is a high percentage of the residents who are on public support.

<sup>11</sup> The average is calculated from the numbers in *Regeringens strategi mod ghettoisering* (Ministeriet for flygtninge, indvandrere og integration 2004, Chapter 4).

Danish society (Nielsen 2004, 221-250). Thus, non-ethnic Danes in employment are considered more as one of “us” seen from an ethnic Danes point of view. On the other hand non-ethnic Danes that are not in job are considered as one of “them”. This points to that there is differentiation between the well integrated and the less integrated in relation to how poor non-ethnic Danes are portrayed. The well integrated are positively represented and the less well integrated are portrayed more negatively as they are not represented in stories about those really in need (*Poor children, Christmas help*).

The Danish findings correspond well to our expectations when compared to the US case, meaning that there is no unequivocal negative portrayal of non-ethnic Danes as of African Americans (on the topic of underclass). Still there is a fly in the ointment in relation to what could be expected from the institutional logic and the deservingness discussion as the expectation was that there were no negative stereotypical portrayals in a social democratic welfare regime. The salient immigration issues seems to have an influence on the media portrayals and it turns out that the poor non-ethnic Danes without employment are portrayed more negatively than poor ethnic Danes and poor non-ethnic Danes in employment. So the stereotypical portrayal is not of non-ethnic Danes as a group as it is of African Americans in the US, but instead it is of unemployed non-ethnic Danes. These results matches the results of the previous analysis very well as the institutional logic behind the deservingness discussion does not hinder negative portrayal of poor non-ethnic Danes but it limits the extent and groups the negative and positive portrayals.

### **Conclusion and perspectives**

The aim of the paper has been to show that there is a link between the institutional logic of welfare regimes and the way mass media present reality. Furthermore the aim has been to support the argument that declining support to anti-poverty policies in liberal welfare regimes and increasing

support in social democratic welfare regimes is due to the institutional logic of the different welfare regimes and not a simple function of ethnic heterogeneity (as some American scholars have argued). The link between the support and the institutional logic is the deservingness discussion and the media presentation of poor and welfare recipients.

We cannot really conclude much at this state of our study as we have not collected the pictures needed in Sweden and UK, which means that we have no data from countries where the saliency of immigration/race issues are low. Still our results show us the trends that we expected. Firstly that more articles about poor and poverty was published in the liberal welfare regime than in the social democratic welfare regime. Secondly that race/ethnicity was more distinctly over represented in the media portrayal of poor in the liberal welfare regime. Finally that poor African Americans were portrayed more clearly as less deserving in the liberal welfare regime than poor non-ethnic Danes were in a social democratic welfare regime. These results indicate that the regime differences have an effect on the media portrayals of poor and welfare recipients because the stereotypical representation of non-ethnic Danes is not as distinct as in the US, despite the saliency of the immigration/race issue in both countries.

The indications about the institutional logic and media portrayals of poor in our preliminary results lend support to the argument that declining and increasing support to anti-poverty policies in liberal and social democratic welfare regimes is due to the institutional logic of the welfare regime. If the indications hold true that the media portrayals of poor and welfare recipients are dependent on the institutional logic of the two welfare regimes, then the media portrait of poor and welfare recipients might be one of the important link between the institutional structures and the public support for anti-poverty policies. With the link between the institutional logic and the support for anti-poverty policies in place one can start to explain why the public support for anti-poverty policies increases or decreases in the welfare regimes.

Such results do naturally not solve the chicken and egg problem, i.e. do institutions really create public opinions or is it the other way around. However, we actually find it wise operate with a circular idea of opinion formation. This circle is created by the dynamic relationship between the institutional logic of the welfare regime, the media portrait of poor people and the formation of opinions towards anti-poverty policies. The institutional logic influences the deservingness discussion, which influences the media portrayals of poor people and the construction of opinions towards anti-poverty policies are dependent (among other elements) on the media portrayal of poor people (Zaller 1992). The public opinions can then lend support to the welfare regime logic and the circle is complete. This circular motion can affect public attitudes in both directions. In liberal welfare regimes it seems to be a downward spiral as the support for anti-poverty policies are declining and in social democratic welfare regime it is an upward spiral as the support is increasing.

Hopefully the Swedish and UK cases will support these preliminary results. When we look at the stories that we have found in the Swedish case (no pictures yet) then it seems that they support our argument. So far we have found very few articles about poor, poverty and welfare recipients and very few of those have been related to the immigration issue. We have no indications about the results in the UK case as we have not started to collect the stories yet. Our big concern about the collection of stories is the quality of the pictures that we get from microfilm archives, because they are black and white. Therefore we are trying to acquire access to the digital newspaper archives of all five UK newspapers, which seems to be possible. In the Swedish case we have to settle for microfilm copies.

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# Appendix 1

## Coding scheme:

### *Article level*

Var 1: Article number

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Var 2: Country:

- |   |         |
|---|---------|
| 1 | Denmark |
| 2 | Sweden  |
| 3 | UK      |
| 4 | USA     |

Var 3: Newspaper

- |    |                    |
|----|--------------------|
| 1  | Politiken          |
| 2  | Jyllandsposten     |
| 3  | Berlingske Tidende |
| 4  | BT                 |
| 5  | Ekstrabladet       |
| 6  |                    |
| 7  |                    |
| 8  |                    |
| 9  |                    |
| 10 |                    |
| 11 |                    |

Var 4: Year

- |   |      |
|---|------|
| 5 | 2005 |
| 6 | 2006 |
| 7 | 2007 |
| 8 | 2008 |
| 9 | 2009 |

Var 5: Months

- 1 January
- 2 February
- 3 Marts
- 4 April
- 5 May
- 6 June
- 7 July
- 8 August
- 9 September
- 10 October
- 11 November
- 12 December

Var 6: Day

\_\_\_\_\_ (between 1 and 31)

Var 7: Number of words in the article

\_\_\_\_\_

Var 8: Number of pictures in the article

\_\_\_\_\_

Var9: The main topic of the article

\_\_\_\_\_

*Picture level (we take the largest picture with relevant persons)*

Var 10: Number of relevant persons on the picture

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Var 11: Where is the picture taken

- 1 Work place / work situation (activation included)
- 2 Search situation
- 3 Casework (i.e. caseworker at the picture)
- 4 In public space – housing area
- 5 In public space – others
- 6 At home in kitchen
- 7 At home in living room
- 8 At home, others
- 9 Others

Var 12: Does the picture include the following symbols

Var_12_1:	Alcohol	Yes (1)	No (2)
Var_12_2:	A bench	Yes (1)	No (2)
Var_12_3:	Guitar	Yes (1)	No (2)
Var_12_4:	Over weight	Yes (1)	No (2)

Var 12\_5: Other symbols (write)

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*Person level ( relevant persons coded from the left to the righth)*

Var 13 article number

---

Var 14 person number (from left to right, first left is one, second two etc. )

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Person X\_1: Sex

- 1 Male
- 2 Female
- 3 Cannot be determined

Person X\_2: Exact age (given in article)

\_\_\_\_\_ (write number)

99: Not available

Person X\_3: Estimated age (best guess)

- 1 0 – 8
- 2 9 -17
- 3 18 – 29
- 4 30 – 64
- 5 65 –
- 6 Cannot be determined

If 1 or 2 in Person X\_3 (0 – 17 years):

Person X\_4: Shown together with parent (s)

- 1 Mother
- 2 Father
- 3 Both mother and father
- 4 No parents
- 5 Cannot be determined

If 18 years and above

Person X\_5: Dominant activity at present (given from text)

- 1 Unemployed without receiving any benefits
- 2 Unemployed receiving benefits
- 3 Unemployed in activation
- 4 Unemployed, others
- 5 Student
- 6 Self-employed
- 7 Wage earner
- 8 Pensioner
- 8 Other
- 9 Cannot be determined

Person X\_6: Exact ethnic background (given from text)

\_\_\_\_\_ (write country of origin)

98: Immigrant but exact origin not stated

98: Danish but not stated

Person X\_7: Estimated ethnic background (from picture)

- 1 White
- 2 Non-white
- 3 Cannot be determined

If non-white

Person X\_8: Estimated ethnic background (from picture)

- 1 Africa
- 2 South America
- 3 Middle east
- 4 Asian
- 5 Greenland
- 6 Cannot be determined

If non-white and female

Person X\_9: Do the person wear a scarf

- 1 No
- 2 Yes, fully covered or only eyes can be seen
- 3 Yes, but face can be seen
- 4 Yes, but size cannot be determined
- 5 Cannot be determined

Person X\_10: Do the person smile?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 3 Cannot be determined