

# **Exploring Dimensions of Afghan Migration to Europe: Experiences, Discourse and Politics**

**Moesgaard Museum, Aarhus University  
Konferencelokale 4240-301  
February 28 - March 1, 2019**

Over the last decade, persons of Afghan origin have been arriving in Europe in large numbers. Reasons for migration include increasing insecurity and lack of prospects in Afghanistan, and limited opportunities for protection and livelihood in neighbouring countries. Their migration histories are often complex and their journeys arduous. In Europe, recently arrived Afghans are faced with increasing difficulties deriving from restricted access to protection, precarious legal statuses, the looming risk of being deported and overt hostilities. To some extent, hostile perceptions of Afghan arrivals are linked to the military involvement and development initiatives of European states in Afghanistan. Conversely, Afghan diasporas with longer histories in Europe have diverse migration histories and experiences of reception. However, in the lights of recent developments, they are now confronted with some of the same ethnic and religious prejudices with the rise of anti-immigrant populism across Europe.

This joint workshop is organised between the project “ARTlife – articulations of life among Afghan migrants in Denmark” at Aarhus University (Denmark) and the project “(En)gendering Migration, Development and Belonging” based at Neuchâtel University (Switzerland). We invite contributions that explore diverse aspects of the lives of Afghan migrants in Europe, including persons who arrived recently and others who have established themselves in their country of settlement. Specific questions we are interested in include, but are not limited to:

- What changes and trends in European policies and public debates relating to Afghan migrants and towards Afghanistan can be observed?
- How do Afghan migrants navigate an increasingly restrictive European migration regime?
- How are Afghan migrants’ journeys to and through Europe experienced and shaped?
- What challenges do Afghan migrants face in relation to local and transnational family relations i.e. establishing homes, getting married, raising children, caring for elders, handling burials?
- In what ways do Afghan migrants and persons with Afghan origin engage with host societies, families and friends across the globe, digital communities and their country of citizenship?
- How do Afghan migrants articulate themselves and their visions of the future through art production (poetry, photography, theatre, filmmaking, etc.) and digital media?
- How are the experiences of Afghan migrants shaped by intersecting factors such as gender, age, ethnicity, class and religion?
- How do Afghan diaspora organization and persons of Afghan origin in Europe engage in local and transnational politics and development?

**PROGRAM: “Exploring Dimensions of Afghan Migration to Europe: Experiences, Discourse and Politics”**

**Wednesday, February 27, 2019**

Optional, for conference guests that have already arrived in Aarhus:

17.00-18.00: Guided tour at “On the Steppes of Ghenghiz Khan – The Nomad’s of Mongolia”, Moesgaard Museum. We meet at the entrance to Moesgaard Museum.

18.15: Dinner in the restaurant at the Museum

**Thursday, February 28, 2019**

Two-days International Workshop:

Aarhus / Moesgaard Museum.

We have allocated 40 minutes for each paper (25 minutes + Q&A)

**Day 1**

09.00 - 09.15 Morning coffee

09.15 - 09.30 Welcome and round of presentations

09.30 - 11.45 **Settlement**

**Speakers:**

- **Keynote: Alessandro Monsutti:** Reflections on *Homo Itinerans*
- **Carolin Fischer and Anna Wyss:** Repercussions of borders and boundaries in the everyday lives of Afghan refugees in Switzerland
- **Johanna Hiitola:** Afghan parents enacting citizenship in a small Finnish town

11.45.-12.45 Lunch

12.45.-15.00 **Articulations and the body**

**Speakers:**

- **Christian Vium:** ‘I Love my Life!’ Unaccompanied Afghan minors articulating everyday life in a provincial town in Denmark

- **Nichola Khan:** Soma, madness, and painful wanderings: Afghan bodily encounters in England
- **Julie Nynne Bune:** Experimental workshop as methodology: Forum Theatre as embodied storytelling among young Afghan refugees

15.00 - 15.15 Coffee and cake

15.15 - 17.30 **Social media and self-representation**

**Speakers:**

- **Rabia Khan:** ‘When I’m born in a country and they say you’re not from here’: Hazara articulations of ‘home’
- **Sara Bittel:** Title to be announced
- **Karen Walorp:** Collaborative filmmaking and ‘isomorphic’ anthropology in migration research

19.00 Dinner at Restaurant ‘Den Rustikke’, Mejlgade 20, in Aarhus City

**Friday, March 1, 2019**

**Day 2**

09.00 - 09.30 Morning Coffee

09.30 - 11.45 **Deportation and policy**

- Keynote: **Nassim Majidi**, title to be announced
- **Marieke Van Houten:** Power dynamics and strategies of im/mobility in deportation from Europe to Afghanistan
- **Martin Lemberg-Pedersen:** The Humanitarianization of Deportation Corridors. Nordic politics of forced removals to Afghanistan

11.45-12.30 Lunch

12.30 - 15.15 **(Im) Mobility**

**Speakers:**

- **Moa Nyamwathi Lønning:** Layered journeys: Experiences of fragmented journeys among young Afghans in Greece and Norway
- **Esra Kaytaz:** (En)gendering migration, development and belonging: Preliminary findings on the experiences of recently arrived Afghans in Europe

- **Halvar Kjærre Andreassen:** Irregular migration and transnationalism: Competing or complementing perspectives on Afghan mobilities in Europe?
- **Mikkel Rytter & Narges Ghanchi:** Workers for free. Precarious inclusion and extended uncertainty among Afghan refugees in Denmark

15.15-15.30 Coffee and cake

15.30-16.00 Wrap up and discussion of publication plans (special issue, anthropology)

**List of confirmed participants:**

- Alessandro Monsutti, Graduate Institute Geneva
- Carolin Fischer, Université de Neuchâtel
- Anna Wyzz, University of Bern
- Esra Kaytaz, Coventry University
- Halvar Kjærre Andreassen, University of Bergen
- Nichola Khan, University of Brighton
- Rabia Khan, SOAS, University of London
- Moa Nyamwathi Lønning, Norwegian University of Science and Technology
- Sarah Bittel, University of Geneva
- Nassim Majidi, University of Witwatersram, South Africa
- Marieke van Houte, Erasmus University Rotterdam
- Nick Van Hear, University of Oxford
- Julie Nynne Bune, Aarhus University
- Martin Lemberg-Pedersen, Aalborg University
- Johanna Hiitola, Migration Institute of Finland
- Narges Ghandchi, Aarhus University
- Christian Vium, Aarhus University
- Karen Waltorp, Aarhus University
- Mikkel Rytter, Aarhus University
- Josefine Maria Bruun, Aarhus University
- Ida Hage Wilson, Aarhus University
- Lærke Møller Nielsen, Aarhus University
- Nina Vestergaard Andersen, Aarhus University
- Shubhdeep Singh Parwana, Aarhus University

## Settlement

### **Repercussions of borders and boundaries in the everyday lives of Afghan refugees in Switzerland**

*Carolin Fischer and Anna Wyss, University of Neuchâtel*

This presentation explores how linkages between global socio-spatial inequalities and local dynamics of marginalisation and exclusion manifest themselves in the everyday lives of refugees. We combine theories of boundary work with insights from border studies to examine experiences, practices and politics of inclusion and exclusion in contexts of refugee arrival and settlement. A focus on gender and its intersection with other categories of difference lends itself to illuminating the links and discontinuities between territorial borders and social boundaries and their everyday manifestations and effects. We draw on preliminary findings from ongoing research on the experiences of recently arrived Afghan refugees in Switzerland.

### **Afghan parents enacting citizenship in a small Finnish town**

*Johanna Hiitola, Migration Institute of Finland*

My presentation is based on ethnographic fieldwork that I conducted with Afghan families in a small Finnish town during 2016–2018. The main research question in this study is, how Afghan families' possibilities for enacting citizenship is shaped by different positionalities and local welfare services. I utilize citizenship studies and feminist intersectional and class analysis. The small town offers a unique perspective on Afghan families' resources as it only started receiving resettled Afghan refugees in 2012. The Afghans in the town have recently been joined by family members during the 2015 large-scale migration and now the community involves Afghans with many different residency statuses. I found that there are three main areas influences Afghan families' possibilities for enacting citizenship. First, the local integration services may help or hinder possibilities for agency. If the welfare services concentrate on only assisting the family members, who have already secured their residency in Finland, but fail to help or account for those, who are still waiting for their decisions, they end up limiting the families' possibilities for enacting citizenship. Second, the families had very different levels of cultural, economic and social resources which they were able to draw upon. Some informants were illiterate, while some had attended higher education. However, these resources had not influenced ending up in Finland, but instead, the path to the small Finnish town was a coincidence no matter the resources. The families were not able to use their resources fully even after coming to Finland and they especially lost cultural capital. In some cases, acquired cultural capital was even harmful for the informants who were under the threat of deportation, since they were not considered being in a vulnerable position. Third, the families had to endure many kinds of suffering. Their acts of citizenship can be theorized as "small", if social scientific tendencies to stress only the rational choice or active resistance as agency and rebellion are resisted. The families endured suffering in two ways: temporally (living one day at a time) and ethically (constructing respectable selves through suffering). Although suffering was a shared experience for the whole community, it was often endured alone, since the fear of the community's judgement caused many families to hide their problems.

## Articulations and the body

**'I Love my Life!'**

**Unaccompanied Afghan minors articulating everyday life in a provincial town in Denmark.**

*Christian Vium, Aarhus University*

The title of this paper comes from the opening page of 15-year-old Dadshah's personal visual diary. He produced it as part of a workshop conducted over several months in a so-called 'modtage-klasse' (reception class) at a public school in a provincial town in Denmark. Several of the children in the class have come to Denmark as unaccompanied minors from Afghanistan within the last year, like Dadshah, following long and perilous journeys overland. Taking a cue from their visual diaries, this paper challenges the predominant perspective on the spectacular and dramatic itineraries at the expense of their many multi-faceted stories of the personal encounter with everyday life in Denmark.

I present the framework of the workshop in this paper and discuss the notion of 'co-articulation' by detailing ways in which our dialogue unfolded through the processual creation of their individual visual diaries. In addition to establishing an extra-verbal space for dialogue, these manifest articulations, physical objects of personal storytelling, draw attention to the 'ordinary affects' (Stewart 2007) of everyday life among unaccompanied Afghan minors in Denmark.

**Soma, madness, and painful wanderings: Afghan bodily encounters in England**

*Nichola Khan, University of Brighton*

Drawing from the anthropology of madness and soma, mobilities research, and the historiography of Anglo-Afghan relations, the paper explores some psychosocial workings of refugee migration in ways Afghanistan currently lives in England. First, shifting the focus from Anglo to Afghan, historical to contemporary, and genealogical to motile epistemologies can unsettle the British-European artifice and still life of Afghanistan, introduce unexpected incursions of critical disruption to the historical archive, and offer a different view on the present. Next, in regard to ways that knowing is created in motion, the paper queries three scenes of body-world encounters that provoke the relation of the person to the world in the face of loss, ontological dislocation, and everyday pain. These involve ways that somatic and unexplained physical symptoms move and immobilize the bodies of moving people, ways meanings of mental illness and suffering in Pashto (cultural-collective behavior codes) intersect with Western ontologies, and ways people's attempts to re-pace, stop, and manage the long-term burdens of migrant labor play out in everyday lives centered on movement and mobility. In this reading, the body is the connective tissue to the world through which the ability to endure comes into question. Through attention to the incapacity of the ability to endure a relation to harm—and the polymorphous analytic space which opens when psychic pain transforms into a physical symptom, the paper queries the limit of interpretation that is reached by difficult experience turned inside-out in its search for a way to be understood.

## **Experimental workshop as methodology: Forum Theatre as embodied storytelling among young Afghan refugees**

*Julie Nynne Bune, Aarhus University*

This paper presents the methodological framework for my upcoming fieldwork among young Afghan refugees in Denmark. Being at the very beginning of the PhD project and in the process of planning fieldwork I will present my ideas about how a collaborative methodology of forum theatre can facilitate articulations of life among young Afghan refugees.

Participatory theatre was developed by Augusto Boal (1979) as a part of Theatre of the Oppressed. As a method, it aims to engage participants in sharing stories of conflict and oppression through performance. Participants construct scenes in small groups which they perform for the rest of the group. Other participants can then step in and act out different strategies for action. In this sense Forum Theatre works to challenge the given. Since refugees are constantly at the centre of public discussion in media and politics, the idea is that performance can offer young Afghans a platform to collectively experiment, reflect and challenge the common stereotypes they are faced with.

Afghans in Denmark are faced with very insecure prospects for the future. An increase in send-backs from Denmark to Afghanistan as well as a change in politics from focusing on integration to send-backs reinforce the insecurity. This PhD project aims to include young Afghans in their twenties who have finished their integration-program and thus are facing a lot of difficult choices regarding education, job, homeland and marriage. The workshops will serve as a space to explore this insecurity and how everyday hopes and dreams are being negotiated through an imagined what if.

Finally, I address some of the ethical considerations of using this method and working with a group of young Afghans with different ages, ethnicities, gender and possibly traumatic backgrounds.

## **Social media and self representation**

**‘When I’m born in a country and they say you’re not from here’:**

**Hazara articulations of ‘home’.**

*Rabia Khan, SOAS, University of London*

The relationship diasporas have with the ‘homeland’ are multiple and wide-ranging. For some, it is a romanticised notion given the stories told by previous generations, about a land left-behind. For others, their relationship with the homeland may not be as positive, clear-cut or easy to dissect. This is none more so the case than with the Afghan Hazara community.

The Hazaras, as both a religious and ethnic minority in Afghanistan, have for over a century been persecuted and marginalised. And as a result of the community’s sense of continuous isolation and ostracisation, Hazaras both in and outside Afghanistan have a very active social media presence. Hazara social media pages are utilised to raise awareness about the situation of Hazaras in Afghanistan and discuss Hazara current affairs, as well as a tool used to link Hazara

‘movements’ around the globe. In turn, this paper will draw upon discussions with members of the Afghan Hazara diaspora in London and Birmingham, while also examining Hazara social media pages, in order to understand the community’s interactions, perceptions of, and relationship with the homeland.

### **Contribution to the Workshop ‘Exploring Dimensions of Afghan Migration to Europe’**

*Sarah Bittel, University of Geneva*

Many Afghan musicians have been forced to leave Afghanistan to continue their activities abroad due to the Taliban’s extreme censorship of music, banning musical instruments and music itself from public space. This made the continuation of musical practice particularly important within the Afghan diaspora. Based on fieldwork conducted in the greater Geneva area, this paper explores the role of Afghan diasporic music in maintaining and constructing a sense of self and belonging for young Afghan migrants. By following a young Afghan musician from Mazar-I-Sharif, this paper examines how music can be used to maintain ties to peers and bridge national boundaries. The research asks two questions. First, it enquires into the role of the internet and social media in bridging national boundaries allowing people to follow fellow musicians’ practice and broaden their audience. This poses the question how social media facilitates Afghan music practice in the diaspora and the home country. Second, it explores music’s potential to contribute to a sense of being Afghan, particularly for young Afghans who were raised abroad and learned about Afghan cultural practices in the diaspora. This paper is accompanied by a 30-minute documentary film, which helps discuss and interpret the empirical data collected.

### **Collaborative filmmaking and ‘isomorphic’ anthropology in migration research**

*Karen Waltoorp, Aarhus University*

This paper takes its point of departure in the ongoing ‘ARTlife project: Articulations of Life among Afghans in Denmark’ (2017-2020), and its experiments with co-generating spaces of articulation beyond the verbal and that which can be grasped within discourse. The paper focuses on the collective conceptualization and practical efforts in ARTlife Women Film Collective; a group of four women of Afghan background, who grew up in Denmark, and one anthropologist of Danish background. In (planning of) filmmaking, in social media images shared through digital infrastructures, as well as in dream-images in the ‘imaginal realm’, themes emerge that speak to the experiences of the women in the collective. The aim is moving towards an ‘isomorphic’ anthropology (Kohn 2018) where the representation of – and with – the women takes form after the themes and phenomena that are important in their everyday life. It is argued that this approach invites for the dialectic move between strict and loose thinking advocated by Gregory Bateson (2000); remaining systematic and rigorous and working open-ended with no pre-defined end-goal: Daring to stay in the space of the ‘barely’ (Trinh 2016) when researching and representing the experiences of young Afghan-Danish women.



## **Deportation and policy**

### **Power dynamics and strategies of im/mobility in deportation from Europe to Afghanistan**

*Marieke van Houte, University of Oxford*

Since the beginning of the 1990s, a global 'deportation turn' has led to increasingly proactive policy to coerce or force irregular migrants to return. Yet deportation often fails without the compliance of the migrant in question and the authorities of their country of origin, leading to a significant efficacy gap (in terms of policy) or resistance ratio (from migrants' perspective) between those ordered to leave and those who return. The case of Afghanistan, with its four decades of conflict and recurring refugee and repatriation flows, including the most recent wave of out- and onward migration and deportation of Afghans, is illustrative of the effects of both the gradually and acutely increasing significance of deportation regimes, and of the efficacy gap / resistance ratio: although many newly arriving Afghans in Europe receive an order to leave, a minority actually returns. Much of the scholarship on deportation discusses the tensions of legitimacy and legality of deportation in liberal democratic states, or the ethical, legal and practical issues around the involvement of different actors within the deportation regime, such as asylum case workers, police and border agents, but also international organizations, private companies and NGOs, as well as the role of the media and the country of origin. Nevertheless, little attention is given to how the power dynamics between these actors lead to tensions in policy making and implementation, and what the consequences of these power dynamics are for migrants' strategies of im/mobility pre-, during-, and after deportation. In this presentation, I will connect ongoing and prospected research on deportation regimes with previous research on deportation and return to Afghanistan, in order to provide preliminary answers to these latter questions and to set a research agenda for further research.

### **The Humanitarianization of Deportation Corridors. Nordic politics of forced removals to Afghanistan**

*Martin Lemberg-Pedersen, Aalborg University*

The topics of children moving into and or exposed to border-crossing situations remain under-examined across several scholarly disciplines, and more particularly, this also applies to the role and evolution of deportation politics and practices towards children. As an initial analytical step, and in order to traverse this gap, which spans across the disciplines of forced migration, border and deportation studies, the article develops a multidisciplinary analysis of a particular case study, namely the Northern European policy drive to deport unaccompanied minors (UAMs) to so-called reception facilities in Kabul, Afghanistan. The discourses, sociology and political economy of this case are analyzed through the conceptual framework of "deportation corridors" (Drotbohm and Hasselberg 2014) with empirical material spanning the period between 2006-2018, and consisting of interviews with staffers from Danish, Swedish, Norwegian, Afghan, UNHCR, IOM, ERPUM and NGO bureaucracies involved in UAM deportation politics, intra-ministerial communiqués from Denmark, Norway and Sweden obtained through freedom of information acts and archival searches in open access policy documents. As a second analytical step, the article then further examines this deportation policy drive as an example of "humanitarian border control" (Chimni 2000; Walters 2011;

Fassin 2007; Cittuta 2018; Pallister-Wilkins 2015). First by dividing the policy drive for the Afghan deportation corridor into three phases: i) 2000-2008, wherein common-European return politics was developed, culminating with the 2008 Returns Directive, ii) 2008-2014, where a multilateral alliance developed the European Commission-pilot project ERPUM (European Return Platform for Unaccompanied Minors), and iii) 2014-2018, wherein smaller country-coalitions, like Norway and Denmark have pursued deportation ambitions bi- or multilaterally. Second, the article analyzes how the various project applications, policy reports and political statements spanning these three periods have pursued this particular deportation corridor by balancing the moral discourses and registers of care and control, thereby co-opting the language of the rights and best interests of children. These discursive constructions are traced through appeals to concepts like “family tracing”, “family reunification”, “humane and safe return”, “reintegration”, and “care and education facilities.” The article argues that an “humanitarianization” is becoming more discernible as these discourses have developed: While the early phase typically did not include explicit references to the best interest of the child, but was instead explicit about deterrence rationales, this changed in the later phases, as a co-opting strategy emerged in response to the fierce criticism of the deportation corridor coming from researchers, child protection advocacies and national and international humanitarian organizations. In doing so, the article thereby also help establish an under-explored dialogue between the studies of humanitarian border control and of borderland children.

### **(Im) Mobility**

#### **Layered journeys: Experiences of fragmented journeys among young Afghans in Greece and Norway**

*Moa Nyamwathi Lønning, Norwegian University of Science and Technology*

This paper focuses on the experiences of the journeys of a group of young Afghans who arrived in Greece and Norway between 2008 and 2014. Afghans have represented the largest group of unaccompanied minor asylum-seekers arriving in Europe during the last decade. They are a group overwhelmingly consisting of males and are known for undertaking long and arduous journeys. While there has been a considerable increase in the number of young Afghans arriving in Europe, migration itself is not a new phenomenon in the Afghan context. Afghanistan has a long history of migratory movements as part of livelihood and survival strategies, and the almost 40 years of war and conflict in Afghanistan has led to millions of refugees. This paper is based on qualitative interviews, fieldwork and creative methods. It examines how the journeys towards Europe are experienced and shaped, including by prior experiences of migration and displacement.

#### **(En)gendering migration, development and belonging: Preliminary findings on the experiences of recently arrived Afghans in Europe.**

*Esra Kaytaz, Coventry University, Carolin Fischer, Université de Neuchâtel, Anna Wyzz, University of Bern*

This paper presents the preliminary findings of the research project ‘(En)gendering migration, development and belonging: the experiences of recently arrived Afghans in Europe’. The paper draws on a comparative policy review and preliminary data analysis from primary research conducted in Denmark, Germany, Switzerland and the UK. The paper introduces some of the early project findings with a focus on the gendered experiences of reception conditions and asylum and immigration policies in each of the case study countries. Our initial analysis suggests that while reception conditions vary in the countries, most of the expectations of recently arrived Afghans are unmet in the areas of education, employment and shelter. A cross-cutting finding, for instance, was the negative consequences of the difficulties around accessing asylum and secure forms of residence. The overwhelming majority of recently arrived Afghans in our case study countries are male. Afghan women tend to arrive as part of families or through family-based visas. There are three dimensions to the gendered experiences of Afghans that the paper will highlight. Firstly, gender-based persecution is often understood in relation to the claims of women. The gendered aspects of persecution in Afghanistan and assessments of vulnerability in relation to safety in Afghanistan, the availability of internal flight alternatives and safety upon return with reference to single men deserves further attention. Secondly, recently arrived Afghan men may find themselves in a position where they are unable to support their families in Europe or Afghanistan as they are expected to or want to because of their limited access to the labour market. Their efforts however may come at the expense of their own career aspirations. These findings demonstrate how restrictive immigration regimes interfere with the abilities of migrants to contribute remittances and other forms of capital to their communities of origin. Thirdly, there are a number of gendered pressures that recently arrived Afghans face in host communities. Afghan men and women may be subject to anti-Muslim hostility where they live. Single men may find themselves more isolated from local Afghan communities. Highly skilled Afghan women who arrive with family-based visas may face additional challenges in pursuing their educational aspirations or accessing labour markets. The paper will conclude with reflections on the future directions of analysis.

### **Irregular migration and transnationalism: Competing or complementing perspectives on Afghan mobilities in Europe?**

*Halvar Kjærre Andreassen, University of Bergen*

Based upon ethnographic research on the onward mobility of Afghan migrants with a negative decision on their asylum application in Norway, this paper discusses differences and points of convergence between two bodies of literature that contribute to important theoretical insights about Afghan migration. The literature on irregular migration and migrant illegality (e.g. Khosravi 2006, 2010), and the literature on Afghan transnational migration and mobility (e.g. Monsutti 2006, Marsden 2011, 2016). While these bodies of literature are largely overlapping (eg. Dimitriadi 2018), they also constitute quite diverging research orientations that arrive at quite different conclusions. While the scholarship on irregular migration often emphasize the effects that border control, migration management and immigration law have on migrants’ lives (a focus on structure), the scholarship on Afghan transnationalism is mainly concerned with the practices and networks that are deployed to overcome such barriers (a focus on

agency). Seeking a perspective that may shed light upon the lives of Afghans in Europe, this paper suggests that recent perspectives from migration and border regimes studies (Tsianos 2010, Hess and Karakayali 2012) and concepts like appropriation (Scheel 2017), anchorage (Urry 2007) and precarity (Khosravi 2018), may contribute to analyze the complexity of Afghan mobility.

### **Workers for free: Precarious inclusion and extended uncertainty among Afghan refugees in Denmark**

*Mikkel Rytter & Narges Ghandchi, Aarhus University*

This paper focuses on newly arrived Afghan refugees and what we refer to as their “precarious inclusion” in the Danish labor market. In the wake of the moral panic of 2015, when approximately 21,000 asylum seekers entered Denmark, there was a general political agreement that more refugees needed to start working as soon as they were granted asylum. The political slogan was: “They should work from day one” (“*de skal arbejde fra dag et*”). So, in the summer of 2016, an amendment to the existing Integration Act was put into effect. A historic agreement between the government, the confederation of Danish Employers (DA) and the trade unions introduced a new model for the three-year integration program. Refugees now had to start internships (*virksomhedspraktik*), job-training schemes or jobs with subsidies (*løntilskud*) no later than two weeks after being granted asylum and temporary residency in Denmark. In the name of integration, refugees became a cheap labor reserve for private companies.

The new integration programs soon had an effect on labor-market statistics: Back in 2015 only 21% of recent refugees had a job after three years in Denmark. In 2018 the employment rate for refugees after three years in the country was 38%. These numbers were presented by national politicians as an overwhelming success.

However, in this paper we explore how the different internship and job-training schemes are understood and experienced by recently arrived Afghan refugees. Many of our interlocutors explain that despite their willingness to work and earn their own money, they feel that they have been parked outside the real labor market and have a difficult time relating to Danish colleagues, who often ignore them at work. On top of this, the Afghans risk not having their relatively short-term temporary residence permits extended (these are currently issued for 1-2 years at a time). In other words, they risk being deported back to Afghanistan. Currently, the uncertainty, which has been documented in research on asylum centers, seems to have extended into their lives as recognized refugees.

It is the combination of Afghans being included, but not really included on the labor market, and every 1-2 year face the risk of being deported that we call “precarious inclusion”. The apparent successful integration in the Danish labor market is a simplified and politicized representation of much more complicated experiences and realities. In fact, it may be counterproductive, creating a new precarious subclass of underpaid refugees who fear that they might be sent back to war-torn countries if they object to their current conditions in Denmark.