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**Rationalizing Exclusion: The argument for ,breathing space' on the border**

Sweden was considered as among the world's most liberal refugee receiving countries up until the implementation of the temporary restrictive laws that come to force in July 2016. The restrictive laws are intended to reduce the pull factors attracting many asylum seekers to Sweden. They were supported by a public discourse that called for a "breathing space" for Swedish institutions to maintain the efficient reception and integration of the newcomers. Based on analysis of the three major national newspapers, I will illustrate the way the Swedish debate rationalized restrictive measures aiming to exclude refugees from Swedish society while at the same time maintaining a moral stance on the responsibility towards refugees based on humanitarian grounds. The end result of such process of rationalization is the tacit support of exclusion to maintain cohesive and efficient institutions.

The analysis of Swedish newspapers between 2011-2016 shows that the main frames for discussing the refugee crisis are: conflict and securitization; humanitarianism; and responsibility. While a large majority of the newspaper articles analyzed for that period show that the humanization of refugees and the refugee crisis is a strong tendency in the coverage, half of the articles focused on the role of institutions to meet the responsibility towards the influx of refugees. Keeping the argument within the institutional and rational realm allowed for the justification of exclusion based on rational/institutional grounds staying away from the moral argument and the questioning of the need to lend a helping hand to refugees.