THE CULTURAL POLITICS OF AFFECTIVE BUREAUCRACY IN SERVICE DELIVERY TO NORTH KOREAN REFUGEES IN SOUTH KOREA
SEO YEON PARK

ABSTRACT

This study explores the affective dimensions and intersecting politics of service operations for North Koreans, focusing on semi-government institutions, Hana Centers in two different regions of South Korea. It specifically addresses how the rhetorics of institutional language and actual service practices create a certain type of service clientship/citizenship model with regard to North Koreans. In the space where affective governing and interactions take place, the underlying politics of Cold War, ethnic homogeneity and neoliberal welfare regime emerge in the forms of distancing, confusions, dissonances and conflicts. By looking at affective dimensions of service delivery, this study highlights flexible, performative and emotional aspects of the relationships between the service providers and the service recipients. The local service operations at two different Hana Centers reveal inconsistency with and contradiction to the national agenda of the service delivery. Desirable figures of North Korean clientship are represented differently, depending on distinctive characteristics of the locations and mode of governing.