

Transnational Marriages among Ethnic Minorities in Denmark: Good subjects, Good citizens and good lives

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Overview



- The debate over ethnic minority marriage – what is possibly at stake?
- Marrying transnationally – what good subjects are created in the process?

Data (qualitative)



- Study on ethnic minority partner choice carried out by SFI in 2003 (published 2004)
- Ongoing project on transnational marriages (2004-2008)
- Newspaper articles/leaflets etc.

Part I



- The debate over ethnic minority marriage – what is possibly at stake?

The Danish debate



- Begins mid-1990s
- Focus on forced marriages (seen as a prototype of transnational marriages)
- Heavy legislation, focusing on the transnational aspect

Analytical framework



- Why the focus on marriages (sexuality)?
- Power as an element of sexuality
- Sexuality as a point of control (Foucault)
- Sexuality as a point where control can be lost

- *The nation is usually imagined as female, the state as male... The nation as woman generated representations of the nation as under threat and sexual danger Recently, many nationalist movements, both state seeking and state sanctioned, have...enforced restrictive notions of woman in the name of nation. Other mobilizing identity movements deploying markers of religion, ethnicity or race also display a central concern with the rights and relations of women, imposing surveillance and control of in-group movements and sexual relations (Pettman 1998, pp. 157, 159-160)*

- *The “public order” is a broad formulation of the way in which we have established ourselves in our Christian country. It is the way in which we behave towards each other in tolerance, manners, friendliness, kindness and mutual understanding and respect. In short, it is the way we treat each other. And this way of life does not fit with the Muslim lifestyle. The Muslim way of life runs contrary to Danish Christian ideas. It runs contrary to Danish perceptions to accept separation of the sexes, forced marriages, female circumcision, violence and brainwash of young students. Not to forget [Islam is contrary to] mannered, nice and civilized behavior (Kjærsgaard 1998)*

Conclusion 1



- What norms and perspectives on good subjects are created by the state?
- What kind of subjects do ethnic minorities become in this process?
- What are the means to discipline diverging subjects?

Part 2



Marrying transnationally

A story



- www.fasote.org





- www.fasote.org

Conclusion 2



- The individualized strategies for choosing spouse transnationally
- Embedded in transnational field
- On the brim of the nation state?
- Establishing norms, good subjects and good lives transnationally