Inkludering, marginalisering, integration?
Enskilda medborgares identifikationer och kommunalpolitisk utveckling

av

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Abstract


This thesis focuses on the individual experience of being a migrant in the context of the development of local, municipal politics concerning immigrants, in Sweden during the time period between 1972 and 2002. The thesis is based on two different empiric materials. One consists of narratives from networks of Muslim women migrants in the suburban, immigrant-dense area of Fittja in the municipal of Botkyrka, located in the greater Stockholm area. The other consists of immigrant-centered policies and political decisions, found in Botkyrka municipal archives.

The thesis focuses on a dynamic time period when big-city areas in Sweden have become increasingly heterogeneous and where integration policies have become a growing part of political agendas but where segregation and societal differentiation in many cases are increasing in spite of political efforts to achieve equality and multiculturalism. In this complex context, the thesis examines the relation between local political structure and individual agency. The study shows that subjective factors such as motherhood, background or future plans often are most important when defining an individual self-image in relation to the major society, which in turn impacts active, subjective strategies of inclusion or marginalization. Ethnicity, culture and gender are however, in almost all cases, the factors around which well-meaning municipal immigrant-related political discourses are based in Botkyrka. The interviewed women are highly included in different areas outside of the political framework, although this activism often goes unnoticed in the hegemonic political system that reproduces unquestioned, collective categorization concerning immigrant women as passive “victims”. The findings in this thesis’ historical case study therefore indicate the development of a “non-meeting” between political structure and immigrated citizens, which leads to a critical discussion regarding the contents of inclusion and marginalisation as well as the meaning of political rhetoric like integration.

Keywords: immigrant narratives, identity, local political development, discourses, integration, marginalization, inclusion, individual, structure.

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