

The bridge of love – migration, borders and citizenship

Case: Family unification in a corner of Europe

An EU frontrunner, Denmark has introduced very restrictive rules for family unification in the past decade. This has spurred intense public debate as well as marriage movement across the bridge to Sweden to circumvent Danish regulation.

Theme: Liberal democracy revisited

Cross-border movement poses a challenge to classical conceptions of liberal democracy. When immigrants and citizens exit, enter and dispute the rules of membership who then is the people and what rights do they have?

Theory: Deliberative and agonistic democracy

Contemporary theories of deliberative and agonistic democracy have a more dynamic and porous conception of the boundaries of democratic community. But these approaches tend to focus on public action. Hence private strategies of entering and exiting the territory are hard to make sense of within these frameworks.

Question: Contesting borders

How have migrants and citizens renegotiated the boundaries of liberal democracy in the Danish disputes over family unification from 2000 to 2010? What conceptual implications, if any, does this have for deliberative and agonistic theories of democracy?

Data and method: Voice and exit in the field

Field research on both sides of the bridge: In-depth interviews with migrants and citizens who moved, stayed or took part in public debate. Textual analysis of public debate in strategically selected newspapers, television coverage and internet-media. Focus on how border crossing is narrated and citizenship constructed.



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