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Theme section

Poster Children of Integration and the Question of Being a “Good Danish Muslim”

A governmentality-inspired analysis of how the Danish state uses ethnic minority role models

Keywords

integration; role models; subjectivity formation; Muslim youth; governmentality; Danish welfare state

Abstract This article explores the intersection of subjectivity construction among Muslim youth with Danish welfare state governmentality. More specifically, it looks at campaigns in which successful professionals and students of non-Western descent, primarily Muslims, are used strategically as role models to target ethnic minorities in general, and Muslims in particular. By communicating their life stories, the role models become real life examples of successful integration meant to inspire others to follow their path. Thus the campaigns are a part of the prevalent discourse that views minorities (i.e. non-Danish and non-Christian) as particularly problematic to integrate and therefore needing special attention for becoming “compatible” with the values of the Danish welfare state. Taking its departure in these campaigns and applying a governmentality-inspired approach, this paper seeks to investigate normative state-prescribed forms of being a “good Danish Muslim.” It analyses how this image is being constructed and negotiated in a matrix combining welfare state policies and individual self-interpretation.

In Denmark, the young role model of integration is a familiar figure. Since the early 2000s, state-supported campaigns have strategically used students of non-Western descent, primarily Muslims, as role models to target ethnic minorities. With departure in their own life stories and personal example these role models become the exemplars of successful integration that should motivate other ethnic minorities to follow suit. The campaigns can be seen as part of the “Danish value training” that was explicitly introduced in Danish integration policy legislation with the passing of the 1998 Integration Act (Jønsson 2014:

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906-907; 2016). The Act states that immigrants should become self-supporting and contributing citizens on equal terms with other citizens of the Danish state and in accordance with “basic values and norms in the Danish society.” While what “basic values and norms in the Danish society” means is not clarified in the Act, it is the hypothesis of this article that by virtue of being promoted as integration successes, the young role models in the state-supported campaigns are perceived as embodying these values and norms. The interesting question is, whether the normative subjectivities that are being highlighted in the role model campaigns primarily emphasize successful integration in terms of individuals who are ready and willing to enter the labor market, pay their taxes and follow the rules of the state? That is what in the framework of the Modern Muslim Subjectivity Project (MMSP) would be referred to as the “working subject” (see Jung in this volume and Jung and Sinclair 2015: 28). Or is the emphasis just as much on highlighting the role models’ practices as moral subjects? That is – with reference to the common MMSP framework – highlighting norms and values which are not directly linked to labor market participation, but rather to how role models conduct themselves in “private and intimate relationships” (see Jung in this volume and Jung and Sinclair 2015: 28). Thus the question really is what kind of integration the role models are successful examples of? Is it primarily structural workfare integration? Or is it just as much a cultural integration, and as such a negotiation of which role religion/Islam may play if you are to be considered “a good Danish citizen” and a Muslim? In other words what we may call “A good Danish Muslim.”

The various ethnic minority role model campaigns make up a good illustration of how governmentality takes form in the Danish welfare state, namely as a process involving both actors inside and outside the state, as well as top-down and bottom-up initiatives combining a multiplicity of agencies. This combination of agencies is, according to political sociologist Mitchell Dean, a key feature of how governance takes form in modern liberal democratic states, where state building and individual citizen-formation are intrinsically bound together, and where power – not to mention agency – must not be understood as restricted to the state. Dean states that there are many other agencies involved in regulating the lives of individuals and popula-

tions, not least “the non-profit community and social services (...) which are funded partially by the state but run by citizen associations, and by neoliberal use of corporations, charities, and families, to achieve governmental objectives” (Dean 1994, 152). Based on the importance that Dean ascribes to the NGO sector in developing and achieving governmental objectives, I have chosen to focus this article on empirical material of two role model campaigns launched by the Danish NGO KVINFO – The Danish Centre for Research and Information on Gender. KVINFO is in this context to be considered as a semiofficial NGO by virtue of being a self-governing institution under the Danish Ministry of Culture being highly dependent on financial support from the government. Thus the two KVINFO role model campaigns in question – *The Invisible Success* (Den usynlige succes, 2006) and *New Men in Denmark* (Nye mænd i Danmark, 2008) – were realized partly by government funds and partly by private funds. The official campaign documentation, such as written life story narratives and teaching materials, provide the sources for the analysis which will be guided by the question as to which role religion, and Islam in particular, may play when minority youth are acting as role models of good integration in Denmark. The religion of the role models might not have had any significance at all. But it is my hypothesis that religion did play a part in how the role models articulated their life stories, and I base it on the fact that the two campaigns were launched after the Mohammed cartoons controversy in 2005 in a political context where immigrants and ethnic minorities in Denmark are already increasingly identified primarily as Muslims (Yilmaz 2016), and of course the fact that the large majority of the role models are Muslims.

In applying a theoretical framework of narrative identity theories and Foucault inspired governmentality-analysis, the article also addresses how technologies of the self are used in the construction of the ethnic minority role model as a powerful figure in Danish welfare state policy. I argue that the examples given by the role models’ life stories may illustrate what the Danish state considers as “Danish values and norms,” and that these articulations of values and norms serve as templates for being “a good Danish citizen,” i.e. the normative forms of subjectivities that the state encourages. Moreover, I argue that these templates also serve as examples of the permissible ways to be reli-

gious in Denmark or more precisely the permissible ways to be “a good Danish Muslim” from the perspective of the Danish welfare state. And that being a “good Danish Muslim” is, above everything, about being a “flexible Muslim” who never emphasizes religious structure over individual agency.

The article is divided into three parts: The first part is a presentation of the theoretical framework of narrative identity and governmentality-thinking and their relevance to the case study of ethnic minority role models. The second part constitutes a short contextual overview of the use of role models in the Danish welfare state. The third part employs the theoretical and contextual framework in the analysis of the two selected role model campaigns.

Governmentality and the use of life story narration as a technology of the self

Since the two integration campaigns in my case study both focus on the role models’ narration of their life stories, I find it helpful to understand what the act of narrating your life story may imply from a theoretical point of view. In narrative identity theory the practice of telling your life story – who you are, where you come from and where you want to go – is viewed as the key element in constructing personal identity. Thus, having an identity becomes an ongoing act of self-interpretation (Giddens 1991; Horsdal 2009, 2012; Ricoeur 1984, 1994; Taylor 1989). But the story that one will be able to tell about oneself is dependent on the broader cultural, historical and political narratives that one is embedded in and refers to. Thus, a cornerstone of narrative identity theory is that the personal identity is something you construct in a constant interchange of self-interpretation against other available interpretations – that is what I will refer to in this article as constructing yourself within certain “subjectivity templates.” These templates leave the autonomy to interpret oneself somewhat restricted. Or as the Canadian philosopher Charles Taylor puts it: you are nobody until you meet with others and they *call* you by a name.

In Foucault’s thinking the process of being *called* or ascribed identities by others as for example insane, healthy or criminal – or more relevant to this case study, as “immigrant,” “ethnic minority” or “Muslim” – is an act of “subjectivization.” According

to Foucault individuals do not have a real or pre-given identity within themselves. He rather thought of individuals as having a “subjectivity” that was formed by ever-changing discourses and power relations outside the individual (Foucault 1988), i.e. what I refer to as “subjectivity templates.” In later works, Foucault argued that the individual was to a great extent able to influence his own subjectivity formation by exercising “technologies of the self.” Technologies of the self are practices such as dialogue, self-analysis, psychotherapy, education, meditation, diary keeping, prayer and – of relevance to this case study of role model campaigns – the narration of your own biography (Foucault 1988a, 1988b; Rose 1996, 1999). Mastering such technologies of the self would allow the individual to exercise agency and create herself/himself. But technologies of the self are also to be seen as a form of disciplining power, because they may facilitate the individual’s internalization of dominant discourses and power structures (Foucault 1994). Thus, narrating your life story within the framework of a state-supported integration campaign may be seen as a subjectivity forming practice that involves both the role models’ exercise of individual agency or self-government as well as their disciplining in alignment with certain political objectives. According to Foucault a key feature of modernity is the individual’s self-government as a part of governance – also expressed as “governmentality” (Foucault 1991).

The various campaigns using successful ethnic minorities as role models can be viewed within this framework of advocating self-governing citizens, who are in alignment with the Danish welfare state’s objectives for integration. Thus, the role models’ task is to inspire and empower other citizens with an ethnic minority background who have not yet taken on the task of governing themselves in accordance with these rationales.

A sketch of role model campaigns as risk management in the Danish welfare state

In Denmark, the official use of ethnic minority role models began in 2003 where the then *Ministry for Refugees, Immigrants and Integration* (commonly known as the *Ministry of Integration*) formed a national team of young role models who were to tour the country and inspire young people (aged 15-30) to ob-

tain an education. The initiative was part of a larger strategy called *We need all youngsters* that also comprised mentoring networks as well as homework cafés, etc., and was created to counteract the tendency that youth with minority backgrounds did not attend further education on the same level as ethnic Danes – and when they enrolled in an education the dropout rate was twice as high as for ethnic Danes (Brug for alle unge 2007, 8). Since 2003 a lot of similar role model campaigns have evolved in which young professionals and students with an ethnic minority background serve as examples of successful integration.

By 2006, KVINFO launched its first role model campaign named *The Invisible Success*. The campaign portrayed 30 women with ethnic minority backgrounds, mainly Muslims, of which some were also involved in the *We Need All Youngsters* role model campaign launched by the *Ministry of Integration* in 2003. *The invisible success* was followed by a second KVINFO role model campaign launched in 2008 and called *New Men in Denmark*. This campaign portrayed 29 men with ethnic minority backgrounds, mainly Muslims. Both KVINFO campaigns were launched as webpages telling the role models' life stories in sound bites, photos and written first person narratives. The campaigns were marketed under the common slogan "Focus on integration that succeeds" and were seconded by teaching materials targeting primary schools, high schools and language schools.

Other actors such as NGOs (e.g. *Save the Children*), municipalities and public housing associations entered the "market" of supplying ethnic minority role models around 2008 and established their own ethnic minority role model campaigns. Moreover, a number of young students with ethnic minority backgrounds started role model campaigns on their own initiative – such as *Team Success* (2007) *Foreigners Guide Foreigners* (Udlændinge vejleder udlændinge 2013) and *The Blue Stars – Somali-Danish Youth Lead the Way* (De Blå Stjerner – Somalisk-danske unge viser vejen 2016), which have all attracted public as well as private praise and financial support. Thus, what started in 2003 as a state orchestrated initiative of using role models with ethnic minority backgrounds to enhance integration policies has now developed into a much more diverse environment, where multiple agencies from outside the state take part in the construction of "the good Danish citizen."

While the use of ethnic minority role models is a relatively

new tendency, the use of role models as a pedagogical measure is not. Young role models targeting other youth have been used in various campaigns for the past 30-40 years, based on the pedagogical method called “peer to peer.” The idea is that by means of their personal examples, young role models can inspire other youth to, for example, get a healthy sex life, avoid drugs, quit smoking, etc. (Hølge-Hazelton 2004:10) – in other words help young people navigate in risk situations. When the ethnic minority role model started to appear in Danish campaigns in the beginning of the 2000s, it coincided with a general development in the pedagogical approach to immigrants and ethnic minorities taking place at the same time. Where in the 1970s children of immigrants and refugees were seen as somebody *at risk* who needed special help in order to handle life in Denmark, at the turn of the millennium they were to a greater extent seen *as risks* that needed to be handled – especially if they were Muslims. The pedagogical answer to handling this risk was to make use of the successfully integrated immigrant as the good, inspirational example to follow (Padovan-Özdemir 2016; Padovan-Özdemir and Moldenhawer 2016). Thus the role model campaigns using ethnic minority youth that started to emerge in 2003 must also be understood within this prevalent risk management discourse.

The various ethnic role model campaigns evolving since then are structured in different ways, but they have a number of common traits of which the most prominent is the extensive use of the successful personal life story as a means of inspiration and the rationale that everybody can become a success if they want to and work for it. Hence the campaigns are all framed within a discourse of personal agency and the perception of the individual as an enterprise capable of self-realization, which is seen as a governing principle of neoliberalism (Foucault 2008, 1991; Hartmann and Honneth 2006; McNay 2009). The role models thus also participate in producing a discourse implying that skin color, culture, religion, social background, etc. – or what we may also term pre-established narratives or structures of interpretation – are no hindrance to becoming who you aspire to be in the Danish welfare state.

Constructing counter discourses of individual agency and success

The main objective of the two KVINFO campaigns *The Invisible Success* and *New Men in Denmark* has been to challenge the dominant discourse on refugees and immigrants, which is perceived by KVINFO as being too negative and problem oriented (Marselis 2013, 369). Thus, the campaigns are explicitly positioned as counter discourses to mainstream media representation of the ethnic minority woman as oppressed and not part of the labor market and the ethnic minority man as violent and criminal (Andreassen 2005). In order to counter these stereotypical images the campaigns should highlight life stories of successful ethnic minorities that were assumed to otherwise be ignored. As stated in the presentation of *The Invisible Success* when it was launched in 2006: “We rarely hear about women with ethnic minority background, who are successful and lead good lives in Denmark. Their lives are invisible and unwritten in the general public. The invisibility is preserving the perception of bad integration.” Likewise, the male focused campaign *New Men in Denmark* from 2008 was meant to give a “more nuanced picture of how men with ethnic minority background live their lives in Denmark (...).”

In alignment with the objective of providing counter images to the stereotypical mainstream media representations of ethnic minorities, the primary criterion for selecting the role models to be portrayed in the campaign has been to avoid narratives that would be considered as underlining negative stereotypes of ethnic minorities – that means excluding candidates who were not part of the labor market or taking an education, as well as excluding candidates unfavorable toward gender equality. This selection criterion also serves to make sure that the life stories are suitable to be used in the Danish language courses that, apart from introducing newcomers to Danish language, also serve as an important venue for the training in “Danish values and norms” made obligatory with the passing of the *Integration Act of 1998*. Thus, the two KVINFO campaigns both encompass teaching material targeted specifically at these language courses. As an example of this value training, the students can be asked to read about Malik, a Muslim man from Uganda, who is now studying to become a nurse in Denmark. Afterwards the

students are probed to discuss the following statement by Malik's wife: "You know, in Denmark we share all the duties?" Students can also be asked to write a letter to a male friend from Africa and explain to him the gender roles in Denmark. Or they can be asked to read the portraits of the female role models and assign adjectives like: "Clever, skillful, hard-working, stubborn, lazy, steadfast, independent, political, scared, courageous, strong, daring, understanding, tolerant, critical, religious, modern, old fashioned, careful, sensible, adaptable, realistic, sweet, caring etc." And to be sure, all the personal characteristics, with the exception of "lazy," "scared" and "old fashioned," are represented in abundance when reading the life stories of the profiled women.

While the target group of the 2003 *We Need All Youngsters* role model campaign by the *Integration Ministry* was primarily defined as ethnic minority youth, the target group of the two KVINFO campaigns from 2006 and 2008 is much more diverse. The life stories portrayed in the campaigns are both aimed at audiences of ethnic minority and majority background. With respect to the audience of ethnic minority background, the campaigns are supposed to provide inspirational examples of successful integration. As stated in the launching of the women's campaign, these stories are in demand because "women with minority background have a hard time spotting all the role models and pattern breakers, who really exist in Denmark within many different professions." With respect to the audience of ethnic majority background, the campaigns are primarily supposed to counter dominant negative stereotypes of ethnic minorities. Hence the campaigns' target group becomes all-inclusive and by virtue of the profiled life stories being widely accessible on the internet, not only for a limited duration of time but for more than 10 years now, the scope of the campaigns becomes endless.

All the profiled life stories are based on interviews conducted by the KVINFO project manager of the two campaigns. After transcribing each interview, the project manager wrote up a first person narrative and emailed it to the role model. Then a process would follow in which the role model made revisions to the story either by deleting certain sections, changing wording or adding new sentences. Sometimes the text would only need one revision and other times emails would go back and forth for weeks. The extensive revision procedure was carried out in order to enhance the role models' ownership of their stories

(Marselis 2013, 371), that is, in narrative identity terms enhance their ownership of the subjectivities represented in the written life stories. Thus, the ongoing dialogue with the project manager leading to the final version of the life story would be considered as an application of dialogue as a technology of the self in the negotiation of the role models own self-interpretation against the framing and subjectivity positions proposed by the project manager.

When the two KVINFO campaigns were launched as websites in 2006 (*The Invisible Success*) and 2008 (*New Men in Denmark*), the front page of each campaign was showing miniature portraits of each of the profiled role models as well as the headlines of four so-called “theme pages,” namely “education/employment,” “family,” “home/leisure time” and “culture/religion.” By selecting a miniature portrait, the user would enter a subpage of that particular role model and be able to read his/her life story as well as listen to sound bites of the interview that the story was based on. And by selecting a theme page, the user would enter photo galleries showing pictures of the different role models in situations related to the theme in question. The four themes also serve as a structuring principle for the written life story narratives in the way all themes are covered in each story, but in no particular order of appearance. The first campaign theme “education/employment” is clearly directed at inspiring workfare integration and provides normative examples of how the role models in the campaign have all successfully conducted themselves as “working subjects” in Denmark by educating themselves and finding a job. The following three themes “family,” “home/leisure time” and not least “culture/religion” may be understood in relation to the individual’s formation as a moral subject or a “subject of private and intimate relations” (see Jung in this volume and Jung and Sinclair 2015, 28). The KVINFO campaigns’ explicit inclusion of themes related to the private and moral side of subjectivity formation, make these two case studies particularly relevant to the question of what role religion, primarily Islam, is playing in the role model’s articulations of values and norms.

The emergence of the “flexible Muslim”

When examining the life stories profiled in the two KVINFO campaigns, a number of similar articulations of values and norms appear despite the role models' different backgrounds, careers, ages and genders. I code these articulations of values and norms in two main categories: One category that covers examples of how to be “a good Danish citizen”; another category that covers examples of “how to be religious in Denmark.” However, the examples in the two categories are often overlapping. For example the primary example of how to be a good Danish citizen is to be a part of the labor market or prepare yourself to become a part of it. Sometimes this means that you have to adapt your religious practices, as articulated by the master chef Wasim: “I consider myself as a Muslim, but I am practicing in a relaxed way. As a chef I cannot comply with the rule not to eat pork, and my parents fully accept that. They also know that both my brothers and I drink wine.” A less extensive version of adaptation is provided by the chef Roda, who has Somali background:

I have also been reproached for working with pork, but then I explain that pork export is a source of income for Denmark – and that some of this income is used to pay out the benefits on which many Somali women depend. I have no problem working with pork, as long as I don't have to taste it, and I have no problem at all wearing a small headscarf at work.

To be successfully integrated and thus “a good Danish citizen” also includes the necessity of mastering Danish language. The role models often articulate the importance of speaking Danish in connection with the importance of being engaged in civil society, e.g. by taking part in association life and doing voluntary work. Practicing gender equality is also heavily articulated as key to successful integration. Thus, role model males tend to articulate their cooking and childcare skills, while female role models articulate that they are living independent lives and highlight their ability to combine being a mother and having a career. The examples of how to practice gender equality are often linked with examples of the importance of acting against social control – that is, for example, insisting on having friends of the opposite sex, taking part in study trips, dating, etc. Finally the role mod-

els all highlight what we may call the importance of exercising entrepreneurial spirit, i.e. knowing that it is your own responsibility to create a good life in Denmark. That is what in governmentality terms would be considered as self-government. In the role models' narratives the application of self-government – or rather the process of becoming a self-governing individual – is often articulated by use of a narrative U-turn structure. For example, by the role model Nadia, who explains that she used to be very shy and insecure. But at one point, when Nadia began further studies at a business school, she decided to change her personality and do away with the shy girl. She realized that the change was necessary because as she says: “It is important to have self-confidence. If you don't communicate self-confidence and strength, you won't reach your destination.” Nadia succeeded in her self-development project and sums up the experience of becoming a self-assured woman with a retrospective evaluation meant for inspiration: “It was like changing your style of fashion after the summer holidays. Today I have no problem facing a huge crowd and giving a presentation.” The underlying moral of Nadia's self-entrepreneurial life story narrative is that if you do not like a given situation, you can change it. And the moral relates to both inner struggles, in terms of changing or developing your personality, and outer struggles in terms of fighting, e.g. social control, unemployment and discrimination.

As already stated, the above mentioned dominant examples of how to be “a good Danish citizen” often overlap with the dominant examples of “how to be religious in Denmark.” The articulations of how to be religious can be summarized in the following five main themes: 1) the importance of individual agency within structures of religious practice; 2) the importance of choosing your spouse without ethnic and religious constraints; 3) religion should be flexible, not dogmatic; 4) religion belongs in the private sphere; 5) being a Muslim is compatible with taking part in Danish Christian and cultural traditions.

The importance of individual agency within structures of religious practice is emphasized by the majority of the Muslim female role models strongly articulating their free choice to wear/not wear a headscarf (3 out of 30 profiled women wear a headscarf). The business student Nadia, for example, makes this statement: “I deeply respect those who wear headscarf, because I have seen the degrading looks they get. If they want to wear it,

then fight for it, but to me Islam is not about how you dress, it's in your heart." Similarly, the men tend to highlight their free choice to drink/not drink alcohol or eat/not eat pork. This is illustrated by, for instance, the medical student Ahmad, who says:

I still consider myself as Muslim, however not as very religious one. My personal limit is pork, and that confuses many of my Danish friends, who say: "If you eat beef, why don't you eat pork as well?" But I neither have a desire to eat pork nor do I see any advantages of doing it – unlike drinking alcohol which makes socializing easier. And with all the black marks I have already scored in "the heavenly book," one white one surely won't go amiss!

Ahmad's pragmatic "cost-benefit" approach to picking which religious rules and regulations to live by is mirrored in many of the male role model narratives. And in their narratives you also find occasional examples of Islam being visibly invoked whenever it is associated with benefits, regardless of the role models' personal beliefs. Such is the case with, for example, the shawarma bar owner Walid, who struggled seeing his son being harassed in the neighborhood Nørrebro, renowned for its many Muslim inhabitants:

My son also experienced having his cell phone robbed. So one day I bought him a scarf with a depiction of the Quran. Nina (his ex-wife) asked: "Why did you do that, when he isn't Muslim?" I said I didn't care for religion. "But the scarf might prevent our son from being assaulted by some morons, because when they see a picture of the Quran, they will know that the boy's dad is Arab, and it will make them back off."

The second theme emphasizing the importance of choosing your spouse without ethnic and religious constraints is given prominence by the fact that a large number of the role models have married or date(d) ethnic Danes. This is true of 40% of the females and 62% of the males. Some role models have even had a wedding ceremony in a church despite their Muslim background, like the canteen manager Alan, for example, who remembers his wedding in this way:

Before the ceremony we went through the Christian wedding ritual, and I asked him (the Pastor) to leave out the part about The Holy Spirit and Jesus as the Son of God. According to Islam, Jesus is a prophet, but not the Son of God. He respected that and we had a beautiful wedding with guests from all over the world dancing everything from Kurdish dances to break dance, wedding waltz and salsa.

I find this quote particularly interesting, because it shows us a Danish Pastor willing to give up a core, if not the core, element of the Christian creed in the wedding ceremony, which not only reflects the normative idea of Muslims in Denmark being flexible, but also reflects the idea of Christianity and Danish churches being flexible.

The third theme emphasizing that religion should be flexible and not dogmatic is very closely linked to this idea of showing religious flexibility. One example of this adaptability is the nurse student Malik, who says:

My father had three wives, one Christian and the other two Muslim. As a result, my family celebrated both Christmas and Eid. Nor was it a problem in my marriage that my wife was Christian. The only requirement I had was that we kept our meat separate in the fridge as I don't eat pork. When they are older, our children will be able to choose which faith they wish to follow themselves.

The fourth dominant theme in the articulations of how to be religious in Denmark is emphasizing that religion should be kept private. As stated by, for example, the businesswoman Seda: "I am not particularly religious, but at home I have a Quran and it makes me feel safe." Or as the police officer Amir puts it in a more ambiguous way: "I have never disguised that I am a Muslim, nor that religion belongs in the private sphere." But there is one general exception from the emphasis on keeping religion in the private sphere and that concerns Christianity. Many of the role models articulate that Christianity is an important part of Danish culture that you should be knowledgeable about.

This idea is linked to the fifth dominant theme of stressing that being a Muslim is compatible with taking part in Danish cultural and Christian traditions. The role models illustrate this viewpoint by articulating that they and their families have

adopted some Danish traditions – such as celebrating birthdays and Christmas – in their families. Quite a few role models also highlight that taking part in Christmas celebrations, either at the workplace, in the church or at home are good experiences. This is illustrated by the football player Baris:

This year, I celebrated Danish Christmas with my in-laws for the first time. Christmas Eve was with my mother-in-law where we had roast duck, red cabbage and rice porridge. The next day we had Christmas lunch with my father-in-law. It was really fun and a completely overwhelming experience.

With a departure in state supported campaigns using ethnic minorities as role models of successful integration, I initially posed the question of what a “good Danish Muslim” is considered to be. By focusing on two such campaigns by the Danish NGO KVINFO and the life story narratives of the participating role models, I have identified some dominant articulations of how to be “a good Danish citizen” that go hand in hand with the dominant articulations of “how to be religious in Denmark.” I argue that altogether these dominant articulations can be seen as normative templates for subjectivity construction within the Danish welfare state, and that the intersection of these two categories especially can be seen as a guideline for what is considered as “a good Danish Muslim.” Understood in the way that if a Muslim complies with the dominant examples of “how to be religious in Denmark” and makes sure to also comply with – or at least not interfere with – the dominant examples of how to be “a good Danish citizen,” then he or she will be considered “a good Muslim” in the eyes of the Danish welfare state. A relevant question to proceed with is whether such normative templates for being “a good Danish Muslim” are generally perceived and recognized as ideals among the Muslim minority in Denmark? That is, however, neither within the scope of, nor the point of this article.

Conclusion

In this article I suggest that role models who have been promoted as successes of integration can be perceived as exemplars of

the “Danish value training” that was introduced as a political objective of the 1998 *Integration Act*. Hence they may be perceived as embodying the “basic values and norms in the Danish society” that were stipulated in the Act as a criterion for integration with no further clarification. I am arguing that the examples given by the role models serve as normative templates for subjectivity construction with regard to the formation of the “working subject” taking place at the labor market as well as the “moral subject” taking place in private and intimate relationships. Both subject positions are being negotiated by the role models in the campaigns by the application of life story narration as a subjectivity constructing technology of the self. Thus the values and norms that the role models provide based on their own biographies are to be understood as the hegemonic normative subjectivities that the Danish welfare state – understood as a multiplicity of agencies inside and outside the state – seeks to encourage. These subjectivities all emphasize a belief in individual agency over structure. The individual is seen as an entrepreneur, who can take action to change his own life situation for the better. Thus, the good role model is not somebody who was from the beginning an A-student. It is somebody who has been able to transform him- or herself into an A-student. It is a self-managing individual, who is nevertheless in tune with the overall objectives of the welfare state – such as the necessity of making citizens economically self-sustained and capable of contributing to the tax revenue, and by doing so preserving the livelihood of the welfare state. In other words, the campaigns clearly promote integration on a structural level in terms of labor market participation, i.e. they promote normative templates for the formation of the “working subject.”

However, there is also a dominant subtext of cultural value and norm suggestions to be found in the campaigns, a subtext that is much more related to the formation of the “moral subject” and objectives of cultural integration, not least when it comes to religion and the question of how to be religious in Denmark. Above all the role models highlight that religion must be practiced in a private and flexible manner. Therefore, I argue that the templates for subjectivity construction provided by the role models may serve as examples of the permissible ways to be religious in Denmark or more precisely the permissible ways to be “a good Danish Muslim,” and that being “a good Danish

Muslim” is about being a “flexible Muslim” who never puts religious structure over individual agency.

The different role model campaigns portraying young Muslims as successes of integration may all together be viewed as an engagement in the discourse that tries to highlight the disciplinary governmentality of the welfare state. Thus, the role models are to be viewed as both embedded in the rationales of the policies behind the campaigns and, as such, examples of the normative subjectivities that the state is seeking to promote from an outsider’s perspective. And at the same time they are viewed as insiders from an ethnic, and predominantly Muslim, minority that is interpreting these norms and values and, as such, negotiating which role religion may play in this discourse and co-constructing ways to be a good Danish citizen *and* a Muslim.

Abstract på dansk

Denne artikel undersøger krydsfeltet mellem subjektivitetskonstruktion blandt unge muslimer og den danske velfærdsstats governmentaltitet. Mere specifikt ser artiklen på kampagner, hvor unge studerende og erhvervsaktive med anden etnisk baggrund end dansk, primært muslimer, bruges strategisk som rollemodeller for etniske minoriteter generelt og muslimer i særdeleshed. Ved at fortælle egne livshistorier bliver rollemodellerne levende eksempler på succesfuld integration til inspiration for andre. Således er kampagnerne del af en eksisterende diskurs, inden for hvilken minoriteter (altså ikke-danske og ikke-kristne) anses for at være særligt vanskelige at integrere og dermed en gruppe, der kalder på en særlig indsats for at blive “kompatible” med den danske velfærdsstats værdier. Med afsæt i disse kampagner og en governmentaltitetsinspireret analyse undersøger denne artikel statens normative bud på, hvordan man kan være “en god dansk muslim”. Analysen viser, hvorledes denne forestilling konstrueres og forhandles i et felt, der forbinder velfærdsstatens forskrifter og individers selvfortolkning.

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