

2023-03-07

Umland

In the name

of LOVE

Google translated from Swedish

Migration in the name of love

Lene Myong

published 3/4 2014 in the magazine Glänta, freely translated

The Danish state cherishes the family relationships of some migrant children, but at the same time makes it difficult for others to be reunited with their parents. Lene Myong writes a critique of adoption and migration policy from a country where the Danish People's Party is now the largest party, and children of white parents are rewarded by the welfare state in the name of love.

was

An important dimension of the debates about adoption that have taken place in the Danish public in recent years is an effort to think together transnational adoption and migration policy agendas. Clarifying critical connections between adoption and migration is necessary, not least at a time when various Danish governments have introduced some of the EU's strictest immigration laws, and when the political climate is marked by strong opposition to immigration by specific groups of people. During the autumn, for example, the Danish government proposed that war refugees who are entitled to asylum should stay in Denmark for a year before any family reunification can be considered. Figures show that right now it is mainly Syrian children under the age of 12 who would be affected by this proposal: around half of the applications for family reunification related to the war in Syria involve this group. If the proposal goes through, these children will therefore have to wait even longer before they can come to Denmark and be reunited with a parent or another family member.

"Brown Islands" (color island)

At the same time, political support for transnational adoption remains strong. In September 2014, a majority of the parties in the Danish Parliament reached an agreement on adoption. The settlement has been met with strong criticism from organizations that represent adoptees, who have pointed out that what it does above all is to maintain a problematic system that basically consists of finding children for Danish parents. From a political point of view, a decreasing number of adoptions is seen as a challenge, because the demand to adopt far exceeds the number of children who can be adopted away.

size trend shows values

In other words, some children are more welcome in the Danish welfare state than other children. Since I myself am an international adoptee, it has become a main issue for me not only to conceptualize adoption as a form of migration, but also as connected with other kinds of migration. You can also say that I want to try to understand how and under what conditions adoption migrants are integrated into the national community. But also how the logics that include me in this community at the same time exclude a number of other migrants.

"not personal"

wow.

There are no exact figures on how many transnational adoptions were carried out in Denmark after World War II, but a conservative estimate is between 25,000 and 30,000. In Denmark, the establishment of transnational adoption practices in the 1950s and 1960s coincides with other migration patterns, such as the rising number of labor migrants in Danish industry. While both adoption and labor migrants in the 1950s were primarily migrants from countries that were geographically close to Denmark, this pattern changed in the late 1960s

"ADOPTIO MERNA"

Patrik Umlberg

Josephin Sköld

Alexander Mahmoud

anticononial ticking bomb

when more and more labor migrants came from countries such as Turkey and the former Yugoslavia. At the same time, the transnational adoption pattern also changed. Interest in adopting children born in Germany cooled and new adoption markets were sought, first and foremost in South Korea and India. Today, it is especially countries such as Ethiopia and South Africa that hand over children for adoption to Denmark.

In 1973, the then Danish government introduced a stop to immigration to Denmark. The Danish politicians primarily wanted to limit the number of labor migrants, and although a legal right to family reunification was introduced in 1983, the rules have been tightened in several rounds since then. Neither the so-called immigration freeze nor the subsequent tightening of family reunification regulations have resulted in any restrictions on transnational adoption migration. On the contrary, the number of adoptions increased during the 70s and 80s, and from a political point of view, there has historically been broad and strong support for transnational adoption.

no restrictions

infertility - population. → the future of the nation.

The logic of love

In Denmark, transnational adoption has traditionally not been considered a form of migration or adoptees as migrants. Instead, from a political perspective, adoption has been seen as a form of family, which in many ways has contributed to maintaining a symbolic distinction between adoption and migration. A difference that is also reflected in how especially the adoptees of older generations grew up, that is, racially isolated from other migrants. Today, however, many critical adoption scholars regard transnational adoption as migration, and the American literary scholar David L Eng has made an interesting theoretical connection between adoption, migration and labor. He also points out that adoption migration from East Asia must be understood by extension of the labor immigration patterns that during the 20th century supplied the United States with labor from, for example, China. But also that transnational adoption in itself must be understood as a kind of work, however, it is not about paid work but about affective work. I myself find this conceptualization useful when it comes to understanding the value produced in and around transnational adoption. As adoptees, we are sought after because of the emotional work we do in the families we become a part of. We turn our adopters into parents. But at the same time, transnational adoption also contributes to preserving a dominant view of the nuclear family as ideal and as the best framework for children's upbringing.

another labor splittrade familjer for coun. forens. kult. and affective work.

experiment: are we here to prove nazism wrong?

want to do good. believe in it.

The demand for children for adoption has been mediated and legitimized with the help of various discourses. The notion of adoption as an altruistic win-win situation for all parties is in decline. Desire and longing to adopt today take on different expressions than in the past. If you follow the ongoing Danish adoption debate, you can repeatedly read descriptions of adoptive parents' love for their adopted child. The declarations of love often appear in connection with the dismissal of the old charity stories about adoption. Many adoptive parents declare that they adopt for purely selfish reasons. The desire to start a family is thus perceived and presented as the main reason for adopting. The emphasis on an egoistic desire for a family as the primary driving force is at the same time

political of recommending of how to bring up a bi-poc person.

Vita
tonier
om hur
BIPOC'S
ska leva.

on vara

- no agency
- there to fulfill

wound in
adoption

to be
accepted
- acknowledgment
as a form of
giving up the
past, total!!!

Today, much more emphasis is placed on the fact that adoptees should know the country they adopt from, that they should socialize with other adoptees and to some extent practice or preserve already existing language skills. However, I doubt that this in itself indicates that assimilation is a thing of the past. Perhaps it is rather the case that assimilation and adaptation to the adoptive family today is articulated through other categories and affects? Here, too, one can wonder what function love has.

What then!

The question of the adoptee's attachment to the adoptive family has, for example, become a crucial theme for many actors in the Danish adoption field. A successful attachment is not only considered important for the child's development, but also crucial for the love between adoptive parents and adopted. This has created a strong interest in and a great demand for knowledge and therapeutic interventions aimed at "strengthening" and reshaping the adoptee's attachment skills. The intense involvement in attachment problems - and the hope that these can be remedied - activates a collective pathologizing of adopted children. But it also gives rise to very clear models of explanation, where relational conflicts and problems in the adoptive family are explained as a result of the adopted person (perhaps) having been exposed to a lack of care and to previous traumas - before the adoption. This temporal logic therefore means that it will be in the present - after the adoption - that the adopted child's attachment skills must be repaired and compensated, so that the adoptive family's love does not risk breaking down.

perspective:
countries seen
as horrible and
automatically in
need of therapy

it's
seen as
not (now
or with the
second
parents.

after the
adoption /
trauma of
how we
get treated

Such a logic is useful when it comes to formulating political demands. In Denmark, for example, the influential interest organization Adoption & Society, which argued strongly that more resources for post-adoption assistance and massive help from psychologists and educators are needed to facilitate attachment to the adoptive family. And these are demands that a political majority in the Folketing chose to accommodate, when in September 2014 they reached the settlement in the Danish adoption area. On the other hand, a long list of other political demands put forward by the adoptees themselves were not heard.

The issue of attachment and especially the relationship between attachment and love deserves to be treated in a far more critical way than is the case today. Simplistic notions that younger adopted children are automatically divided and confused by contact with their first families and that instead efforts should be made to produce primary attachment to adoptive families live and thrive. However, I would rather ask questions about what ideals of nuclear family, care, ownership and physical contact does love draw its nourishment from? And to what extent do you expect the adopted child to embrace these ideals of love, before being considered adequately attached? If adoption rests on expectations that the adopted will be part of a certain, determined economy of love, as both subject and object of love, then what will be the price for showing or not being able to live with this love?

håron frång

A critique of migration policy

(parents')
happiness

≠ love

love → guilt → debt

In order to understand why in Danish society transnational adoption has been regarded as something completely unproblematic while many other forms of migration have been fought with increasing force in recent decades, one can naturally ask questions about the significance of a category such as race. The transnational adoption migrant is part of a (usually) white family constellation and it is this racial intimacy that is maintained/repaid through transnational adoption. After all, we are not only wanted because of the affective work we bring to our adoptive families and the communities into which we are adopted. At the same time, we are integrated into the national community through different logics of love. Logic that tells us we have been adopted because our adoptive parents love us. And that we were adopted away because our first parents love us (not because they were subjected to structural oppression and exploitation). At the end of the day, it is about logics first and foremost aimed at legitimizing and privileging Western world desires and requests to adopt - well noticeable via the practice of "stolen" adoption that is the norm in Denmark, which means a complete family change for the adopted and does not grant the adoptees or their first parents any rights whatsoever to maintain contact.

!!

Love

But how does this relate to the issue of other forms of migration? In any case, I think it is thought-provoking how increasingly strict family reunification rules make it difficult, perhaps even impossible, for, for example, migrant children (who are not adopted) to be reunited with their families in Denmark. In no way does love have the same meaning and importance in the case of these children. It can also be said that unlike the idealized transracial love between adopted children and adoptive parents, the love between migrant children and their migrant parents is in a different way precarious and vulnerable. It will be regulated, minimized and, in the worst case, deported. While the love between adoptive parents and adopted children is seen as something that should be supported and cherished, for example in the therapy room. But the fact is that we who are adopted would not have been welcome in Danish society either if it had not been for our white Danish families. As international adoptees, we are migrated in the name of love. But the price of this migration is that we migrate alone. In the transnational adoption system, there is no possibility for vulnerable or poor families to migrate together if they wish to do so.

the strong difference

their agency is neglected

the act of love to children the real nature of migration covering it.

men vitas kärlek är centrum.

The critical adoption research and adoption activism that is gaining a stronger foothold in Denmark these days questions how society manages life through transnational adoption - and what interests are involved when it comes to sticking to this particular form of life management instead of investing on other types of intervention and structural change. My hope is that in the future this criticism will also be seen to question the premises that make some migrant children attractive and valuable to the welfare state, while other migrant children, who are not about to be adopted by a white, Danish family - are at best considered useless, in the worst case as something that undermines precisely the welfare state. In that context, it becomes absolutely central to examine the connections between adoption and love. Not to find out what love is or who it belongs to - but rather to understand what it does.

how about collectiveness alone - more valuable. more fragile

state demand affective work as a thing the affective labour.

text found in Glänta 3/4 2014

paying with love the comfort of colonial heritage

Handwritten text, possibly a list or notes, with some underlined words and a small table-like structure on the right side.

Handwritten text, possibly a list or notes, with some underlined words and a small table-like structure on the right side.

Handwritten text, possibly a list or notes, with some underlined words and a small table-like structure on the right side.