ABSTRACT

UNDER INTEGRATION – THE INTERPLAY BETWEEN CONDITIONS OF CITIZENSHIP AND GENDER RELATIONS AMONG BOSNIAN REFUGEE FAMILIES

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This paper focuses on the nexus of gender relations, citizenship, normalization and integration. It is based on a study made in 1996-1997 in Malmö and Umeå among Bosnian refugees. Under conditions of radical change, as for refugee families trying to normalize their lives, there will surely be strong internal tensions in relation to gender relations. There will also be external tensions vis-à-vis conditions of integration and questions of real citizenship in relation to more formal or more substantial aspects. In my study I can see a close connection between the general conditions for integration in society, and contingencies of real citizenship, and the way one can cope with a change of life patterns between man and women. This is due to the necessity to adapt to expectations and assumed standards in the surrounding society. The point discussed in the paper concerns these connections between processes of normalization and integration on one side and changing gender relations on the other, at the background of principal aspects of citizenship and fundamental conditions for integration. The more restricted conditions for integration, the more problematic changes in gender relations, or the other way around, more equal conditions for integration seems at the same time to open up for changes towards more equal gender relations.