Gender and Migration Culture in the Peripheral North: Challenges and Opportunities

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The Faroe Islands' culture of migration
Key demographic issues
Changing demography of the Faroe Islands

- Youth outmigration
- Female deficit
  - Females more likely to pursue tertiary education than males 54%/46%
  - Tertiary ratio education abroad females/males 60%/40%
- Mobility as integral part of Faroese culture (3000 LDW)
Gender gap 1901-2014

- Female deficit for total population
- Female deficit for population below 70 yrs
Faroe Islands culture of migration
Culture of migration
Youth outmigration as “natural” lifecourse

- Positive about growing up in the Faroe Islands (freedom)
- Natural part of growing-up, developing and “becoming”
- Majority of those aged 14-15 said they will leave the Faroe Islands. All girls and half of the boys
- A necessity for improving and developing, but frequent intentions of returning
- Youth outmigration as:
  - Pursuit of opportunities
  - Anonymity (free from social constraints)
  - Leaving safety net behind
  - Risk-taking
Culture of migration
Perpetuation of youth outmigration

- Social capital and migration
  - Almost all showed reference to others who currently/have lived abroad
  - The safe option
  - Faroese community abroad
- Place polygamy (Beck, 2000)
- Migrants as integral part of Faroese society
Culture of migration

To return or not to return

- Students: Just over 50% of students return (Studni, 2015)
- Key barriers
  - Housing
  - Unemployment benefit
  - Welfare services (e.g. child care)
  - Structures of opportunities
  - Traditional culture
- Female, 23 yrs, studying in Denmark: You don’t move to the Faroes until it is IT that you want to do...Because firstly, it is so closed to get in and when you have finally got in then it is...it is not something that you just can let go of (Føroya landsstýri, 2013)
Gender culture and the welfare system
Gender culture

- Traditional gender culture
- Family capital (Gaini, 2010)
- Paternity leave: Females more against extending earmarked paternity leave than males (Javnstøðunevndin, 2013)
**Gender structures**

- Labour market
  - Relatively few females in management positions, especially in private sector
  - Few female leading politicians compared to other Nordic countries
  - 51% of females work part-time (across all age groups)
  - Family cultural model: Female part-time carer model of the (male) breadwinner family (Phau-Effinger, 2004)
- Welfare services later than surrounding countries
  - Nature of male work has held women in carer position
  - Welfare services less advanced than other Nordic countries
  - Familialism in Faroese welfare model (Sundström, 2006)
Migration and mobility in policy making

- Work with mobility
  - Welfare opportunities for females behind
  - Enable mobile lifestyles
- Incorporate the gendered nature of migration into policy
- Create educational opportunities and dynamic study environment
- Provide opportunities for migrants to return (labour market policy and facilitate return)
Thank you
References

• Tuhkunen, A., (2002) “Ideal life and proud feelings in the north”, Young, 10 (3): 131-141