Unveiling Exclusion:
A Conceptual Exploration of Parent Pedagogicalisation

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Abstract

CONTEXT. The study investigates the concept of parent pedagogicalisation, with the aim to explore, as well as articulate, its analytical content. The notion of parent pedagogicalisation involves normalising forces governing parents to take responsibility for children's learning, especially targeting the child who differs from the norm and whose achievement is at risk. Set against the background of current global educational tendencies aiming at standardisation and marketisation, understandings of 'normal' become increasingly narrower, involving a growing number of children at risk of being excluded. The narrowing perceptions of what is considered 'normal' induce a fear of exclusion from educational opportunities and from subsequent, future citizenship. In this discursive climate, parents are ascribed a significant role in supporting the child's learning, especially in cases of children considered 'outside of normalcy', often involving professional experts guiding parents on how to support their child's educational achievement. Although various scholars have discussed the concept of parent pedagogicalisation, its content is still underexplored and under-theorised.

METHODS. Through empirical exploration of parents' narratives, this study investigates the content of the concept of parent pedagogicalisation with the purpose of providing a theoretical lens that may support the identification of parent pedagogicalisation. The data is drawn from an empirical sample consisting of a group of parents which has been strategically chosen; in an educational context, this group is expected to be exposed to normalising forces associated with professional guidance. The dataset consists of parents' narratives on their experiences with professional guidance concerning their child's learning, social participation and future citizenship following cochlear implantation. The data contains 27 written narrative responses to an online, qualitative questionnaire with open-ended questions, and 14 follow-up interviews.

FINDINGS. Data analysis identified three key dimensions central to the content of the concept of parent pedagogicalisation: 1) parents' perceived need for knowledge, 2) an instrumental perspective on supporting the child's learning, and 3) no respite.

KEY MESSAGE. Our proposition is that the three themes signify dimensions in a mechanism that makes up the construct of parent pedagogicalisation. The dimensions demonstrate a complexity and width that expose normalising forces and how they operate, allowing reflections of potential implications for parents and children that relate to processes of inclusion and exclusion. The potential implications are discussed in relation to a) *parents caught in the nexus between empowerment and disempowerment*, and b) *the pedagogicalisation of parents—a counterproductive paradox*.

Keywords: parent pedagogicalisation, exclusion, normalisation, conceptual analysis, governing parents

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Points of Interest:

- The study investigates the concept of parent pedagogicalisation, with the aim to explore, as well as articulate, its analytical content.
- The notion of parent pedagogicalisation involves how parents support their child's learning, especially in cases when the child is considered as different from the norm and the child's learning is at risk, often involving professional experts guiding parents on how to support their child's learning.
- Through exploring parents' narratives on their experiences with supporting their child, including the professional support they receive, the purpose of the study is to provide a theoretical lens that may help identify processes of parent pedagogicalisation.
- In so doing, the paper offers reflections on potential implications of parent pedagogicalisation concerning processes of inclusion and exclusion.

Introduction

Across continents, the notion of parent pedagogicalisation and its regulating influence on parents has been addressed by various scholars over the past few decades (Baez & Talburt, 2008; Depaepe et al., 2009; Depaepe & Smeyers, 2008; Popkewitz, 2003; Popkewitz & Bloch, 2001; Ramaekers & Suissa, 2012; Ribolits & Zuber, 2004; Smith, 2009). The concept is associated with normalising forces that govern parents into supporting children's learning and educational achievement, in particular targeting the child whose achievement is at risk, the child who does not 'fit', and is "placed outside of the qualities of normalcy" (Popkewitz, 2003, p. 54).

Echoing a Foucauldian notion of normalisation and its inherent forces of power (Foucault, 1975), Popkewitz (2003) suggests that pedagogicalisation rests on the power of the norm inducing disciplinary mechanisms, targeting the child and family 'outside of normalcy'. Iris Marion Young (2006b) defines normalisation as

> […] a set of social processes that elevate the experience and capacities of some social segments into standards used to judge everyone. In this process the attributes, comportments, or ways of life that are 'normal,' in the sense of exhibited by a majority or by dominant social segments, come also to have the connotation of being 'best'. (p. 95)

As Young indicates, the idea of what is 'normal' steers what is considered as being 'best'; this is reflected in Popkewitz' (2009, p. 185) notion of pedagogicalisation as concerned with "the children who are not in the all, that are the targeted populations for social policy to rescue from failure". Popkewitz (2003, p. 54) describes these trends as "processes of rescue and salvation". In the educational context, the pedagogicalisation of parents thus entails "practices that order, classify, and normalize" children's characteristics (Popkewitz, 2003, p. 55).

Foucault claimed normalisation to be an integral part of public life, a "universal truth" ingrained in institutionalised regulations and language, taken for granted by society (Kenway, 1990, p. 203) and hence not subject to critique. Simultaneously, according to Young (2006a), normalisation has ramifications that 'do' something to people. These "harms of normalization" (Young, 2006a, p. 96) work their exclusionary ways through social structures that disadvantage and oppress those "who do not fit or fail to measure up" to the general standard. Young emphasises that these norms designate people as different, and "the disadvantages they suffer as a result usually affect central aspects of their lives" (Young, 2006b, p. 95). Normalising forces exclude through stratification of social structures, excluding that which is considered deviant. Following Young, many suffer injustice, not being granted access to participation in society or in decisions concerning social structures affecting their lives,

conflicting with a principle of equal opportunity (Young, 2006b). The normalising forces inherent in parent pedagogicalisation may sustain exclusion, and thus counteract inclusionary ambitions in the educational context.

Our ambition is to explore the concept of parent pedagogicalisation and its inherent normalising forces. The purpose is to provide a theoretical lens that may enable the identification of parent pedagogicalisation, outlining a proposition of a generalised concept, allowing reflections on potential implications related to processes of inclusion and exclusion. Our interest in exploring the concept is related to the identification and reduction of possible exclusionary forces; in this context, our research interest is anchored in perspectives on inclusion as defined by Tony Booth (2000), as

> […] the process of increasing the participation of learners within, and reducing their exclusion from the cultures, curricula and communities of neighbourhood centres of learning. […] It is about giving learners an equality of regard irrespective of their background, gender, sexuality, disability and attainment. (p. 78)

Historicizing the Concept of Parent Pedagogicalisation

Popkewitz (2009, p. 171) refers to pedagogicalisation as "the expertise of science" governing parental conduct, in which the expertise is culturally and historically defined. The concept of parent pedagogicalisation is linked to the notion of educationalisation—a term referring to solving social problems by education (Smeyers, 2009). Where educationalisation had a collective focus, pedagogicalisation focussed on the individual as "a seemingly isolated site" (Popkewitz, 2009, p. 171). At the turn of the 20th century educationalisation of the family referred to rationalising the lives of the family and child to relate to collective, social belonging. Thereafter, at the turn of the 21st century, pedagogicalisation focussed on individuality and the family as lifelong learners (Popkewitz, 2009), indicating "a mode of living as continuous innovation, self-evaluation and monitoring one's life" (Smeyers, 2009, p. 235). Popkewitz (2009) explains the educationalisation of the family as a process altering the private sphere of the family by turning the family "into an object of public intervention in the shaping of society" (p. 173). Educationalisation was motivated by the formation of the welfare state; in particular, those considered as different from the norm were targeted with intervention programs due to "perceived moral disorders" (p. 171). New scientific approaches generated ideas about how life should be conducted, thus changing the child and family (Popkewitz, 2009).

Depaepe et al. (2009) use the concept of *pedagogization* to describe tendencies similar to educationalisation. The authors relate pedagogization to the "steady expansion and increased depth of educational action during the nineteenth and particularly the twentieth centuries" (Depaepe et al., 2009, p. 14). The increased expertise that had emerged in the interbellum between WWI and WWII was anchored in a scientisation of pedagogy. The expansion of pedagogical professionalism provided strategies for the alleged solution of social problems and thus claimed territorial gains for the professional field of educators, psychologists, and so forth (Depaepe et al., 2009). This kind of pedagogicalizing expertise, embedded in normalising incentives, is referred to by Popkewitz (2009) as "a particular form of expertise that functions to shepherd who 'we' are, who we should be, who is not included in these spaces and thus abjected" (p. 187).

As, at the turn of the 21st century, pedagogicalisation focussed on the notion of lifelong learning and continuous processes of innovation and self-evaluation, it targeted particularly the "disadvantaged child in need of rescue" (Popkewitz, 2009, p. 172). The 'disadvantaged child' needs rescue due to the risk of being cast out, excluded because of not fitting into normalized spaces (Popkewitz, 2009). Set against the background of current global educational tendencies aiming at standardisation and marketisation (Sahlberg, 2011), the spaces regarded as 'normal' seem to become increasingly narrower, involving a growing number of children at risk of being excluded, considered "unlikely to achieve in competitive market-driven school systems" (Tomlinson, 2012, p. 267). The narrowing spaces of what is considered 'normal' induce fear of becoming excluded (Popkewitz, 2009). In this

discursive climate, parents are ascribed a significant role in the child's education—the family being "one of the latest sites to show the effect of the rampant performativity characteristic of our late-modern age" (Smith, 2010, p. 357). Within this context, and especially in cases involving children considered 'outside of normalcy', pedagogicalisation of the parent signifies the "remaking of the parent", educating parents about how to support their child's learning, in line with social policy initiatives (Popkewitz, 2003, p. 51).

The Research Process

Sampling

In exploring the analytical content of the concept of parent pedagogicalisation, seeking to determine its theoretically decisive features, the empirical sample has been strategically chosen. Our study followed a process of theory-based sampling, which concerns the selection of a case expected to represent a particular theoretical construct. As stated by Ragin (1992), theory-based sampling is a methodological step, conducted when exploring theoretical formulations. Cases are selected specifically, with a particular interest to explore, as well as refine, a theoretical construct: this involves a narrowing of the empirical focus in the service of theoretical articulation, keeping that which is not relevant from a theoretical standpoint, "empirically silent" (Ragin, 1992, p. 222). In this way, empirical evidence is used to articulate theories.

Building on Ragin (1992), the empirical case of parents of deaf children using a cochlear implant (CI)[2] has been selected. This group is expected to be subject to parent pedagogicalisation due to the normalising forces associated with the professional support and the scientific expertise it represents. In choosing the device for their child, parents may express hope for a 'normal' life for their child, involving the achievement of spoken language (Bruin, 2017; Sach & Whynes, 2005). In the process of promoting the achievement of spoken language after CI, early intervention in the form of professional support and parent education is considered essential (Archbold & Wheeler, 2010; Cruz et al., 2013). Professional institutions may provide support services directed towards the child, towards schools and preschools, and towards parents, in the form of counselling, speech and language therapy, as well as parent programmes. In Norway, where this study was conducted, educational policy states that following their child's cochlear implantation, parents "need support and guidance from professionals with audiological experience" (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2010, p. 16). Hence, there is a wide range of professional support available, consisting of parent programmes and counselling, educating parents on how to support the child's spoken language learning. The parents in the study received professional guidance from both a medical context as well as an educational context, involving audiologists, physicians, psychologists, and special needs educators.

Anchored in Young's (2006b) definition of normalisation, we expect parents of children who use a cochlear implant to encounter pedagogicalisation in educational contexts, due to the implant's "potent promise of normalization (or at least parents' interpretation of such a promise)" (Young & Tattersall, 2007, p. 217). Parents perceive this promise as depending on the condition that they perform according to certain standards (Matthijs et al., 2012). Due to the normalising forces associated with the CI-context, including the parents' exposure to professional guidance and the scientific expertise it represents, our presupposition is that the selected sample provides a magnifying glass that has the potential to unpack, enlarge, and bring into view, the mechanisms involved in parent pedagogicalisation.

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[2] A cochlear implant is a surgically implanted hearing device that provides access to sound, and thus to spoken language, to a person diagnosed with profound hearing loss.

Data Construction and Analytical Approach

Data were constructed by asking parents about their experiences with professional guidance concerning their child's learning, social participation and future citizenship following cochlear implantation. Two data sets were constructed through two types of qualitative inquiry: an online questionnaire with open-ended questions and semi-structured, follow-up interviews. The questionnaire resulted in 27 written responses, consisting of rich, written descriptions of parents' experiences with the professional support, as well as how the professional support affected parents' ways of accompanying their child's learning in every-day-life. Of the 27 parents who answered the questionnaire, the parents of 14 children agreed to participate in individual interviews. In the interviews, parents were asked to reflect upon the nature and focus of the professional support, as well as what the support meant to them. The parents were asked about the child's learning and participation in social interaction, as well as the nature of their involvement in accompanying their child's learning processes. Furthermore, parents were asked to reflect upon their expectations and hopes for the future. Building on Braun and Clarke (2006), the thematic, interpretive data analysis consisted of two phases, of which the initial phase was primarily anchored in an inductive approach, followed by a deductive approach. The initial phase focussed on what the parents report about their experiences with professional support, as well as their involvement in supporting the child's learning. The initial phase indicated traces of parental feelings of responsibility concerning the child's success with the implant and subsequent educational achievement, social participation and future citizenship. The first phase further revealed parental doubts about doing the 'right' thing or not doing 'enough'. This confirmed previous research stating parents' feelings of responsibility for their child's success with the implant, as well as parents' insecurity concerning their role in the support (Bruin & Ohna, 2015; Bosteels et al., 2012; Hardonk et al., 2011).

In the inductive phase of the analysis, three key themes were identified:
1) Parents' perceived need for knowledge
2) An instrumental perspective on supporting the child's learning
3) No respite

The aim of the second – deductive - phase of the analysis was to check whether the key themes worked in relation to the entire data set (Braun & Clarke, 2006). In a deductive process, the three key themes were applied in coding the entire data set, confirming them as central characteristics of the parents' experiences. In developing an outline of a generalised concept, our proposition is that the three themes signify dimensions in a mechanism that makes up the construct of parent pedagogicalisation.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations have been prevalent throughout the whole research project, concerning the participants' vulnerable position, the researcher's role, as well as securing participant anonymity, in line with procedural ethics (Guillemin & Gillam, 2004). To ensure the processing of personal data to be in accordance with data protection legislation, the study was assessed by the *Data Protection Official for Research* at the *Norwegian Centre for Research Data (NSD)*. The study follows the overarching ethical guidelines as presented by the Norwegian *National Committee for Research Ethics in the Social Sciences and the Humanities* (NESH, 2021). Issues of informed consent, confidentiality, and the responsibility to do no harm have been core principles throughout the study. Concerning anonymity and storage of data, the study has followed the guidelines provided by the *Data Protection Official for Research (NSD)*. Close attention was paid to Kvale and Brinkmann's (2009) notion of "moral enterprise" (p. 62). The notion relates to the researcher's moral responsibility in encountering research participants, as well as the researcher's moral responsibility for possible consequences of the inquiry. In concert with Guillemin and Gillam's notion of "ethics in practice" (2004, p. 262), referring to the validation of ethical issues on a day-to-day basis, the research process has been characterised by

ongoing reflection on the protection of personal integrity of the research participants and respect for their privacy (NESH, 2021).

Analysis

The following section presents the three dimensions in the mechanism that makes up the construct of parent pedagogicalisation: 1*) Parents' perceived need for knowledge*, 2) *An instrumental perspective on supporting the child's learning*, and 3*) No respite*. The analysis indicates the parents' perception that the "promise of normalization" (Young & Tattersall, 2007, p. 217) depends on their performance according to certain standards.

1) Parents' Perceived Need for Knowledge

The parents' perceived need for knowledge is expressed through their narratives on the wish to learn as much as they can about supporting their child's language and subsequent educational achievement, social participation, and future citizenship. Most parents do not have previous experience with the situation in which they find themselves; therefore, parents talk about feeling insecure. As one mother says, "We were very uncertain about what would be the right thing to do for our daughter" (mother, girl aged 5). In this regard, the analysis indicates that the parents value the professional support as crucial; the expert knowledge provides guidance on how to support the child's spoken language. Because the child's future is considered to depend on it, the parents use a lot of energy to deliberate about making the 'right' choices. These engagements generate insecurity, especially since the 'right' choice is connected to 'success', described by Young and Tattersall (2007) as the "great promise" of a "normal" life (p. 218). Therefore, signing up for as many courses as possible gives parents a sense of control. "We join every course we can get our hands on […] to think as parents that one doesn't have to join these courses is unbelievable and very naïve" (mother, boy aged 4).

The parents in the study express a need to learn about how they can support the child's spoken language. They want to learn about methods, and they point to the professional support as a legitimate source for help. Having someone teaching methods, provides a sense of security:

> Having a method teaches you to do it right all the time [...] It makes it easier than if you had to do it on your own. You wouldn't have known what to do and you would've used the wrong methods, trying a lot of different things […] so it's good to have someone who knows the right way to go. That has been absolutely *crucial* […]. The security it provides is very important, knowing that we have methods which someone has confirmed we use well. (parents, boy aged 4)

The parents' perceived need for knowledge is connected to their hopes and anxieties about the child's achievement and comes forward through the parents' desire to learn as much as they can; parents view their insufficient knowledge of supportive conditions for spoken language as a possible threat to future outcomes. "All the time you have the feeling that there might be something you miss […] you start wondering what you do *not* know that you *should* have known" (father, girl aged 5). The child's future opportunities are seen to depend on the parents' knowledge, or lack thereof. "You become very afraid to do the wrong things, that we might destroy something that could have been good" (mother, boy aged 9). Not knowing is about losing control:

> I'm terrified of future black holes; I mean as to how to conquer them but also how to detect them. How can you know what they do not get? That is something I think is the scariest of all… that I would not know about this until it is too late to fix. (mother, girl aged 6)

The parents express that they feel that the more knowledge they have about how to support the child's spoken language, the better the child's future opportunities may be. In their search for knowledge, reassurance, and confirmation of doing things 'right', parents seek empowerment in a sense of gaining confidence and control over the situation. The expert knowledge of the professional support provides a sense of control over one's ability to provide the 'right' conditions for supporting the child's learning.

2) An Instrumental Perspective on Supporting the Child's Learning

The parents in the study provide detailed descriptions of their extensive involvement in structured training and practise of their children's linguistic skills, involving learning to listen, practising pronunciation and grammar, as well as building vocabulary. The analysis indicates an instrumental reasoning in supporting the child's spoken language learning. The instrumental perspective reflects an input-output logic relying on the idea that the more that is invested in training and practise, the better the results will be. To improve future outcomes, the parents describe the need of using specific methods to work with the child to promote spoken language. Subsequently, as Smith (2010, p. 361) states, the experts will tell parents "what works". Because parents are feeling insecure, they put their trust, and seek empowerment, in the professional support's expert knowledge to tell them what to practise, and how. As the mother of a 4-year-old boy describes, "They have said what we have to practise, so this is what we do".
The parents express that they are expected to relate to their children in educational ways. "We got a lot of advice on how to practise with him, and teach him; it was a huge job, doing that at home" (mother, boy aged 7). Activities are specifically goal oriented, pursuing predefined ends. "We started to work with Anna before she got the implants, and each time we didn't know how to go on, the counsellor could tell us what to work on, so we had something to aim at, the whole time" (mother, girl aged 3). The parents express that they feel responsible for the child's results; therefore, they spend extensive time and effort daily, on practising with the child. Reflecting an instrumental perspective on supporting the child's learning, the parents' narratives express insecurity; not doing enough might have consequences for the child's spoken language development. "Our son doesn't get it for free […] the recommendations from the hospital were daily practise, of listening and speech" (mother, boy aged 6). The analysis shows that parents work extensively with the child, putting their trust in the methods taught by professional support. "[We had to] acquire techniques and work with those" (parents, boy aged 4). The parents' involvement in supporting children's spoken language development thus becomes disconnected from language as a communicative resource; instead, it becomes characterised by an instrumental approach, implementing methods that are expected to deliver a predefined outcome. The instrumental perspective builds on, and takes for granted, a causal input-output logic in which certain outcomes are posited as an achievable goal, and "anything parents do along the way is understood as effecting the next step and, crucially, as taking us one step closer to reaching this end-point" (Ramaekers & Suissa, 2012, p. 14). The impressions of the instrumental perspective on supporting the child's spoken language represent a parental struggle, which is described by Bosteels et al. (2012) as a struggle to provide the 'right' conditions for a 'normal' future life.

3) No Respite

The parents express that being in their situation means investing time to stay informed and to act; there is always more to be known, always more to learn. It means being proactive, getting no respite from constant vigilance and working with the child's spoken language; there is always more to be done. The parents express that the more practise, the better the child's achievements may be. However, as the mother of a 7-year-old boy describes the constant spotlight on achievement comes at a cost: "You have to work for it; we have actually worked for many, many, many, many hours, for many years". Subsequently, parents feel anxious and guilty about possibly doing the 'wrong' things, or about not doing 'enough'. The implants' "promises of cure" (Bosteels et al., 2012, p. 993) on condition of the parents' involvement cause parents to take enormous responsibility, working very hard with the child

to achieve what is considered a 'normal' spoken language. In concert with Nelson (2010), a tendency of vigilance arises from parental anxiety about the child being excluded from educational opportunities and subsequent, future citizenship. "I feel I can never relax; you *have* to stay up to date, continuously" (mother, girl aged 6). Parents express that their involvement requires lots of time and effort, "It takes a lot, it requires time; it requires that you stay up to date, in many ways, *if* you want your child to have the same opportunities as every other child" (mother, girl aged 5).

Because the parents feel responsible and insecure, they describe doing whatever they can to direct future outcomes towards a best possible result. Time is spent on informing people in the child's surroundings about the child's needs, whether this concerns school, the neighbourhood, family, or extracurricular activities. "We have to stay involved, to make sure he gets it all" (mother, boy aged 7). Parents report that supporting the child's spoken language requires that "one has to persevere, not give up, which means one needs to have a constant focus on what's best for the child, and for the family. This requires masses of energy because it's a full-time job" (mother, boy aged 5). The continuous vigilance is described as tough and strenuous, but "in retrospect one would not like to think that one could have done things differently, better, or, you know, that we didn't fight hard enough" (parents, boy aged 4). Notwithstanding their continuous vigilance, the parents express insecurity whether what they do is right, or enough. "It is hard, to feel that the initiative should be yours. One feels the whole time that there might be something you miss, something you should have known" (parents, girl aged 5). Parents express their fear, "One becomes very afraid to do the wrong stuff, that we might ruin something that could have been good for him. We actually carry an enormous responsibility" (parents, boy aged 8). Parents report on being endlessly involved in homework and school issues:

> We use much more time than others do, because we sit with him at least an hour every day, it's the only way. There are goals to be reached, we must check whether he has understood concepts and such […] We must be active concerning school and homework; if not, there might be gaps. (mother, boy aged 11)

The parents focus extensively on—what they consider as—their responsibility for future educational outcomes and the significance of their involvement. With this comes an insecurity that is tied to feelings of not knowing what is 'good enough'; hence, there is always more to 'do'.

The Construct of Parent Pedagogicalisation and Reflections on Potential Implications Concerning Inclusion and Exclusion

The proposed conceptual construct clarifies and illuminates the normalising processes inherent in parent pedagogicalisation. As such, the mechanisms involved reveal three dimensions which expose normalising forces and how they operate. The parents become caught in the professional's expert knowledge, sustaining the view on the child as different, in line with Young's (2006b) notion of normalisation. Parents become part of the expert knowledge constructing the child as different, in need of compensating measures that may, with reference to Booth (2000), subsequently exclude the child from the regular communities of learning. Hence, the normalising forces inherent in parent pedagogicalisation may sustain exclusion, and thus counteract inclusionary ambitions, both on part of the parents and the educational system. The expert knowledge is given preference to the parents' personal experience: "The 'expert', the 'specialist', and the 'professional' produce, promote and service 'regimes of truth'", acting as "judges of normality" (Kenway, 1990, p. 175). The experts exert, to echo Foucault (1982, p. 781), "a form of power which subjugates and makes subject to". Hence, the analysis allows reflections on potential implications for parents and children that relate to processes of inclusion and exclusion. In the following section, the proposed construct of parent pedagogicalisation and its potential implications are discussed in relation to two conundrums: i) *Parents caught in the nexus between empowerment and disempowerment*, and ii) *The pedagogicalisation of parents - a counterproductive paradox*.

Parents Caught in the Nexus between Empowerment and Disempowerment

The analysis indicates how the dimensions in parent pedagogicalisation express how the normalising forces on parents operate. The dimensions seem to reflect how the parents seek empowerment. Empowerment here refers to "the subjective state of mind that gives a person a sense of competence, mastery, and strength and, hence, a sense of control and agency" (Lam & Kwong, 2012, p. 67). We argue that as the parents search for empowerment, they encounter disempowerment.

In seeking empowerment, the parents will concur with the normative expectations about the 'right' things to do, following the advice provided by the professional support. Assarsson and Aarsland (2011) state that to govern means to understand what motivates individuals, so people may be directed into desired directions. Hence, pedagogicalizing forces govern through utilizing "the parent-child relationship and what appears to motivate it" (Baez & Talburt, 2008, p. 27). "The goal is to work on what motivates parents, so they act voluntarily" (p. 35), recognizing that

> […] what motivates parents is a mixture of love and fear: a love that guarantees parents to act in the best interests of their children, and a fear that failing to act will lead to disastrous consequences for their children. (Baez & Talburt, 2008, p. 35)

The analysis indicates that the parental fear of failing to act in the 'right' ways is paramount to the choices that parents make, and the actions taken: the awareness that actions will involve future consequences, means the parents will do anything to support their child's learning. As the analysis indicates, working on becoming a 'better' parent involves subduing to processes of pedagogicalisation, which come to the fore as *Perceived need for knowledge*, *An instrumental perspective on supporting the child's learning* and *No respite*; there are seemingly no alternative options. In line with Young (2006a), the analysis thus indicates how the "harms of normalization" (p. 96) affect the parents. In an analysis of media discourses of "good parenting", Assarsson and Aarsand (2011, p. 78) claim that a significant issue in governing parents involves refraining from alternative options. Building on Foucault (1991, 1997), as well as Assarsson and Aarsland (2011), the analysis indicates that parents may become caught in a discourse in which any other actions than those ingrained in the three dimensions would be considered as "inappropriate and an issue for correction" (Assarsson & Aarsand, 2011, p. 90), by both the professional support and the parents. This reflects Foucault's (1982) notion of a form of power which subjugates, making the parents subject to the professional support.

In this climate, the professional support's expert knowledge is given supremacy over parents' personal experience (Smith, 2010); the parents' expectation that professionals know best is endorsed by the "elevated status of 'truth-telling' professionals" (Guilfoyle, 2005, as cited in Lam & Kwong, 2012, p. 70). Lam and Kwong emphasize that in professional parent support, an implicit assumption resides that the scientific knowledge taught is superior to folkways of parenting. "Parents surrender their sense of agency to expert authority. Therefore, parent education may unwittingly disempower parents even though it means to enhance their competence" (p. 67). Rather than *being* empowered, Lam and Kwong state that parents may *feel* empowered, due to a sense of agency and control. However, *feeling* empowered whilst not *being* empowered may eventually have a negative effect on parents' confidence, creating a "paradox of empowerment" (Lam & Kwong, 2012, p. 65). In the analysis, the paradox becomes visible through the expressions of how much the parents rely on the professional support, whilst simultaneously revealing their insecurity whether they support the child in the 'right' way, or whether they should do 'more'. A similar notion of paradox is offered by Depaepe et al. (2009). The pedagogicalisation of parents, he argues, may not create empowerment, nor emancipation. On the contrary, building on Ribolits and Zuber (2004), Depaepe et al. claim that pedagogicalisation may induce a "domestication of thinking" (2009, p. 16). The result is not empowering parents and emancipation, but rather teaching parents that professional knowledge has prevalence and authority over their own personal experience and intuition (Depaepe et al., 2009). The consequences of pedagogicalizing forces in parent support may therefore be patronizing, not aiming for autonomy and

independence, but rather leading to a "subjection of the spirit", making parents ever more dependent on the scientific expert knowledge in professional guidance (Depaepe et al., 2009, p. 16).

In summary, the analysis shows that the parents in the study seek empowerment; however, they simultaneously encounter disempowerment. The normalising forces inherent in pedagogicalisation may cause continuous uncertainty of not being 'good enough'. Gewirtz (2008, p. 421) points to Illich and Verne (1974), claiming that a danger may arise that a perpetual parental project as continuous self-education may be experienced by parents "not as the symbol of […] unfinished development, but as a guarantee of […] permanent inadequacy" (Illich & Verne, 1974, pp. 12-13).

The Pedagogicalisation of Parents—A Counterproductive Paradox

The past few decades have witnessed an increase in normalising forces that has been evident in school policies in post-industrial countries (Tomlinson, 2012). Normalising practices are increasingly ingrained in the global, educational reform movement, which is characterised by educational standardization, teaching for predetermined results, test-based accountability policies and increased governmental control of schools (Biesta, 2007, 2009, 2013; Sahlberg, 2011). Following Tomlinson (2012), the increase in normalising forces on children is induced by a political context, which from the 1980s onward has placed educational change and reform under economic imperatives and competitive market ideologies. The marketisation of education induces a definition of 'normal' that leaves room for a decreasing number of children. Through mobilisation of an ever more expanding army of professionals and practitioners, children at risk of not gaining expected credentials and skills receive extended attention, designed to enhance their opportunities to compete successfully in a global economy (Tomlinson, 2012). Smeyers (2009) argues that, in this climate, an ever more dominant importance is ascribed to meritocratic values, imposing a duty of responsibility to the home. Following Kainz and Aikens (2007), these dominant discursive practices may carry implications that the roots of success, as well as failure, are found in the home. Governed by policy agendas, parents may be pressured by "messages […] about the responsibilities to deliver both the school and home setting which will provide 'the best' for their children" (Vincent, 2017, pp. 541-542). The current ideas position parents as "drivers of educational excellence" (Saltmarsh & McPherson, 2019, p. 2). It seems fair to argue that, in this context, the normalizing forces in parent pedagogicalisation may flourish.

Suissa (2006) points out that the problem of parents ensuring children's achievement is "not the complexity of this task […] but the fact that it is conceived as a task at all" (Suissa, 2006, p. 72). In response, Gewirtz argues for the importance of learning-free spaces, involving spending time together with no end beyond itself. A permanent requirement to learn may lead to "potentially corrosive effects of pervasive pressures and expectations" (Gewirtz, 2008, p. 422), experienced as oppressive by both parents and children. Reflecting on the findings in the analysis, the normalising forces inherent in pedagogicalisation may govern parenthood into an "educational project", turning family life "into a didactic hothouse" (Gronemeyer, 1989, p. 27). The underlying worry is that this may become counterproductive from an educational point of view (Gewirtz, 2008). Therefore, the parental wish to support the child's learning as it comes forth in the analysis, runs the risk to create a situation where education may retract. As Gewirtz (2008) points out, a constant obligation to perform may create resistance on part of the child. Feeding on a fear of exclusion from educational opportunities and subsequent, future citizenship (Nelson, 2010), parent pedagogicalisation may hence leave parents confined in a counterproductive paradox.

Due to the perceived significance of parents supporting children's learning (Furedi, 2008), as well as the increase of normalising practices in educational policies on an international level (Tomlinson, 2012), parenthood seems to entail an ever more proactive interventionist style, premised on fostering children's learning to increase future chances in life (Barrett & Edgerton, 2015). Notwithstanding the significance of parents supporting their children in general, the study indicates that normalising practices inherent in pedagogicalisation may be detrimental for the parents and subsequently the children involved. Especially when children differ from the norm, the professional parent support may

run a risk of becoming a site of "intense regulation" (Baez & Talburt, 2008, p. 25), inducing a parent role that gradually becomes more functional than relational (Bloch & Popkewitz, 2000).

Concluding Remarks

Our aim has been to propose a theoretical lens, an outline of a generalised concept; hence we propose that *The parents' perceived need for knowledge*, *An instrumental perspective on the child's learning* and *No respite* make up the conceptual construct of parent pedagogicalisation. In line with Ragin (1992), the strategically chosen empirical case has provided a magnifying glass that has helped to unpack, bring into view, and articulate theoretically decisive features of the concept of parent pedagogicalisation. To explore the strength of the proposed conceptual construct of parent pedagogicalisation, more studies are required, involving different empirical cases of parents expected to be exposed to normalising forces. The specific group of parents who participated in the study is part of a wider, ever-expanding group of parents who encounter normalising pressure due to neoliberal market orientation in educational systems (Tomlinson, 2012). Various groups of parents may therefore encounter normalising practices and thus enable further exploration of the analytical content of parent pedagogicalisation: how it operates, the mechanisms involved, offering further reflections on implications concerning inclusion and exclusion.

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