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Ethnic Minority Students in – or out of? – Education: Processes of Marginalization in and across School and Other Contexts

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Abstract

In what ways is students' participation in school related to their participation and becoming subjects across the school context and other contexts in which they participate? This is the question analyzed in this paper, based on observations of, and narratives and perspectives provided by, three 15-year-old ethnic minority boys and their teachers at a school in Denmark. Drawing upon Davies' concept of teaching-as-usual, I explore exclusions and marginalization inside school before exploring how these can be seen as connected to, and seemingly having an impact on, the lives the students lead outside school, with an understanding of this connection rooted in Holzkamp's (2013) concept of conduct of everyday life. In this regard, I make use of concepts of recognition (Honneth, 1995 (1992)) and viable life (Butler, 2004) in order to point to how a lack of such within the school tends to drive the students away from the school context, while simultaneously driving them towards other contexts outside school, with gang related street communities (Mørck, et al., 2013) being a particularly potential one.

Introduction

Since the publication of the results of OECD's first PISA survey in 2000, Denmark has had an increased focus on students of non-Western heritage, most often referred to as ethnic minority¹ students. The reasons for this increased focus has to do with the PISA results pointing out how ethnic minority students in Denmark are struggling in terms of reading skills compared to their ethnic majority classmates, as well as PISA's highlighting of the specifically Danish phenomenon (compared to other OECD countries) that descendants of immigrants in Denmark perform at almost the same level or worse as immigrants (PISA 2000 and 2003 in Mejding (ed.), 2004). Sparked by Danish results in the most recent PISA surveys, Denmark is, yet again, facing heated debates regarding ethnic minority boys and men in

¹ I use the term *minority* not as a numerical distinction, but rather as a term related to societal power relations (Phoenix, 2001: 128). *Ethnicity* is understood and used within a social psychological understanding of how ethnicity is about the meaning that people ascribe to and understand that certain differences have, rather than as a static character, and thus, as something someone just *are* or *has*.

particular, their poor reading skills, and their failure to complete an upper secondary education.

The PISA assessments tend to describe and interpret students in abstract, statistical ways, within a *conditioning discourse* where students are placed into contexts where only “impacts” and “outcomes” are registered (Holzkamp, 2013), leaving out the perspectives and narratives of the subjects involved. Applying Holzkamp’s concept of ‘reasoning discourse’, this paper attempts to break with interpretations of these students within a conditioning discourse which stresses a number of risk factors for such young men (e.g. becoming involved in gang related street communities (Mørck et al., 2013) and -conflicts), as well as for society in general (e.g. rejecting upper secondary education).

The dis-/connections between marginalization in- and outside school are analyzed and interpreted based on Holzkamp’s (2013) concept of *conduct of everyday life*; a concept which implies that, in order to understand and grasp a person’s *participation* and ways of living in *one* context, one must (also) pay attention to his/her participation and ways of making sense *across* this specific context and others in which he/she participates. This involves assuming the individual in question’s *first person perspective* in relation to their ‘*reasons for action*’ and their ‘*life interests*’ (Holzkamp, 2013).

A fundamental aspect of the concept of marginalization used in this paper is that it is closely related to a lack of access to participation in and across various contexts, thereby implying that the young students encountered in this paper, Amir and Saad, have limited influence on essential conditions of their own lives (Mørck, 2006, 27).

As part of the analyses, I discuss opportunities and barriers for Hakim, Amir and Saad to lead what Butler (2004) refers to as “viable lives” within a school context where the dominant discourse of ‘teaching-as-usual’ (Davies, 2006), with its individualizing and at the same time relational implications² (e.g. (lack of) recognition (Honneth, 1995 (1992))), seems to create certain tensions, double binds and contradictions for some students. This, in turn, co-creates the marginalization of these students within the school context. As the question mark in the headline indicates, there is no direct or linear connection within the collected data between marginalization within the school context and outside it. Rather, it points to some interesting threads that do however suggest what could very well be a connection in this particular case, and thus, others like it. I will return to this by the end of the paper.

Background and research design

Some ethnographic educational research points out how the school reproduces certain students’ marginal positions in society (e.g. Ferguson, 2000; Olsen, 1997; McDermott, 1993; Willis, 2003 (1977)). Furthermore, there is Danish research literature which points to why things go wrong at school for students with ethnic minority backgrounds (e.g. Gilliam, 2005; Gitz-Johansen, 2006; Elsborg, et.al., 2005) by focusing on how marginalization is reproduced within different institutions by elaborating the implicit and silent processes through which educational professionals, despite their good intentions, contribute to further marginalization of young people with ethnic minority backgrounds (Gilliam, 2005; Hjerrild, 2005; Bek-Pedersen, 2005; Bundgaard & Gulløv, 2005; Vitus-Andersen, 2004).

² Several of the young people’s narratives reflect a relational flow between the (im)possibilities of their becoming in relation to the teachers.

Qualitative research on how some people succeed in transcending marginal positions in society includes research on so-called pattern breakers³ (Elsborg, et.al., 2005; Elsborg, et.al., 1999) incorporating the perspectives of the ‘pattern breakers’ themselves. In these studies a hegemonic personalized discourse is reproduced, including an individualized understanding of transcending societal marginal positions, thereby implicitly disregarding societal conditions and a deeper analysis of the person’s participation in different contexts⁴ and communities. However, there are exceptions which incorporate such perspectives; for example, Mørck’s (2006; 2011) research on how it becomes possible to learn and partly⁵ transcend marginalization when young people participate in what she refers to as *boundary communities* with a primary focus on young men with ethnic minority backgrounds within the “wild” social work community in Copenhagen.

The empirical basis for my research in this paper is 9th grade students. As such, my study differs from other Danish research within the field which focus on young men (Mørck, 2011), young people in upper secondary education (Elsborg, et.al., 2005), primary level students, from the pre-preparatory classes (1st-3rd grade, see e.g. Gitz-Johansen, 2006; Højholt, 2001) to the intermediate stage (4th-6th grade, see e.g. Gitz-Johansen, 2006; Gilliam, 2005; Staunæs, 2004; Kofoed, 2004).

Within the general practice field of social pedagogy in particular, but also partly within the practice fields of education and special needs pedagogy, there is a tendency towards individualized learning theories in approaching marginalized students. The focus here is often on marginalized students’ learning *disabilities* and *lack* of learning. This focus reflects a propensity to seek explanations for and solutions to learning difficulties and other problems through a focus on the individual’s limited cognitive, social and/or personal preconditions, and/or on problematic family relations. In this paper, I build on studies of children’s development within a social practice theory framework (Kousholt, 2006; Højholt, 2001; Hviid, 2001) and approach to learning (Morin, 2007) rooted in participation across time and place. In line with these studies, my research concerns not only the structural and dynamic interactional processes of marginalization within the school which have been expertly explored in much of the research mentioned above, but also how these processes can be understood to influence the lives of young people outside the school context.

The theoretically informed empirical analyses within this paper are based on data produced during autumn 2009 at a school in Copenhagen, Denmark, where I spent approximately four weeks. The data are part of a larger project, running from 2009 to 2014, that investigated processes of marginalization and transcending marginalization among ethnic minority

³ The concept of pattern breakers refers to: “(...) people, who broke with a childhood environment that socially is characterized by factors such as lack of education, unemployment, financial deprivation, poor housing conditions, abuse and violence, and, from a psychological perspective, with clientization, support arrangements and victim roles”. (Elsborg, et.al., 1999: 15-16) (own translation).

⁴ Nissen (1996: 227) uses the Danish term *handlesammenhænge*, which in Dreier’s version (2008) is translated as context(s).

⁵ According to Mørck (2006: 30), partly transcending marginalization involves a complex “zig-zag-movement” that consists of many small steps and opposed, complex changes that take place in and across various contexts and communities in which the person takes part. In this sense the partly becomes important because there is rarely one precise and definitive way to transcend marginalization.

students in Denmark and Sweden⁶. Learning from marginal positions may include both marginalizing learning (Mørck, 2011), which often involves being caught up in contradictions, dilemmas, and/or double binds, as well as expansive learning (Engeström, 1987); that is, collective struggles and partial transcending of these dilemmas and double binds (Mørck, 2011). It is within this so-called double perspective on learning from marginal positions, that the research project's focus on *both* marginalizing learning *as well as* expansive learning is substantiated – a perspective which in many ways differ from the tendency to focus on *either/or*.

Combining anthropologically and ethnographically inspired fieldwork (see e.g. Lave & Kvale, 1995), the study is primarily based on the narratives and perspectives of 12 9th grade students aged 14 to 16, mostly⁷ with ethnic minority backgrounds. Seven of these students were from the school in Denmark and the remaining five were from the school in Sweden. There were seven boys and five girls. Initial interviews were conducted in 2009, and follow-up interviews and/or informal conversations with seven selected students were conducted during 2012/13. The qualitative methods used to collect the 2009 data that constitute the empirical basis of the analyses presented in this paper include:

- planned participant observations, where predetermined observation guidelines helped me establish – in particular – differences and similarities in student (and teacher) positions and modes of participation (differentiating between more or less active/relatively passive);
- a less specific participation in the field on my part during the three to four weeks spent at each of the two schools, referred to as ‘deep hanging out’⁸ (see Lagermann, 2014a);

⁶ In practice the overall project's analyses are based on the data produced at the school in Denmark. The reasons for this include the lack of a gatekeeper and limited conditions on my behalf for “doing trust” (Jefferson, 2004) at the school in Sweden, all of which is described more thoroughly elsewhere (see Lagermann 2014a). The fact that the data from the school in Sweden are not directly included in the analyses does not, however, mean that Sweden has not been present during the analytical phase. The data from Sweden have throughout the process had the function of being a context which, analytically, has provided a contrast to the data from Denmark, and have in this way occasionally contributed to challenging and/or offering a more nuanced understanding of the data from the school in Denmark. On other occasions, as is the case in this paper, the Swedish data have supplemented the data from Denmark and hence consolidated findings there.

⁷ Occasionally my project and/or I seemed to be of relevance to people I met in the field, who I had not immediately thought of as potential participants. This was the case with Luis, a Danish (white) student – the only one – in the 9th grade in Denmark, as well as with Alice, a Swedish (white) student of Danish descent in the 9th grade in Sweden. Both students were on closer examination struggling in and/or outside school with regard to marginalization.

⁸ *Deep hanging out* constitutes a fieldwork method by which the researcher is “hanging out” in the field with no immediate or concrete purpose, but with an intention (cf. “deep”) to generate embedded bodily knowledge of the place. In other words, the intention is to understand the meaning of what is said and done, and, moreover, what is neither said nor done, in different contexts with divergent constellations of positioning (Staubæs & Søndergaard, 2005: 58 ff.), in order to thereby get an insight into the young people's space of possibilities, that constitutes particular features of common conditions in the school.

- semi-structured interviews (2009 and 2012/2013) (both individual and in small groups) with twelve students, five teachers, a youth education counsellor (in Danish, ‘UU-vejleder’), and a teaching assistant;
- informal conversations (2009 and 2012/2013) with students, parents, teachers, counsellors, head teachers, and others related to the field;
- a review of various documents (from the school, the local press etc.).

Drawing on the data produced in the school in Denmark, the analyses that inform this paper include the narratives and perspectives of two teachers; Jim and Julie, alongside my observations of Julie (and the student Hakim) in the class, and the narratives and perspectives of two students, Saad and Amir. The data produced in the school in Sweden are sometimes used to support findings and with regard to the overall study.

A decentered analytical approach

Both the theoretical and the methodological approaches are based on a desire for a decentered analytical approach. A decentered analytical approach is based on the assumption that people’s lives and actions are related to opportunities and limitations which are manifested in and across contexts. In more concrete terms, a decentered analytical approach refers to analyses addressing the subject as participating in and across various social contexts and communities, and where opportunities and limitations related to participation and action in these contexts and communities – e.g. in relation to the school – are also objects of analysis (Dreier, 2008). Hence, a decentered analytical approach breaks with dominant individualizing discourses (Osterkamp, 2000; Dreier, 2008: 48-49). According to Osterkamp (2000: 11), the individualistic view has a hidden function in the reproduction of unequal societal power structures, in the sense that we exclude other people from being our responsibility. Moreover, this exclusion is justified on the basis of presumed characteristics of the marginalized individuals themselves, thereby holding them accountable for how they are treated. This kind of individualistic discourse involves a tendency to make use of cultural, essentialized differential explanation models (Staunæs, 2004) as an overarching framework for explaining why some are excluded from “the norm”. In this way their “inadequacy” appears to be the reason for their difficulties, whereby they themselves are implicitly blamed for their life situation.

In striving to fulfil the overall ambition of foregrounding the voices of young people, both in the analyses presented in this paper and in the project in general, the decentered analytical approach to researching processes of marginalization and the transcending hereof is based first and foremost on the young people’s first person perspectives (see Lagermann, 2014a). The concept of a first person perspective is in this sense contrasted with a third person perspective, for example those of “experts” in the field (Hunniche & Mørck, 2006). Researching subjects’ first person perspectives involves *going around the perspective* and, among other things, examining what the subject *does* and which opportunities and limitations are set for them (Kousholt, 2006). This implies that a subject’s perspective cannot be researched solely by including the experiences and narratives of the subject in a phenomenological sense (Kousholt, 2006). In order to grasp the young people’s perspectives, one must also include both the contexts in which the young people participate and the perspectives of others, in this case the teachers for example, since these are (also) regarded as conditions for the young people’s actions and participation.

The research question at the center of this paper implies an investigation of how the *connections* between the young people's positions and perspectives within the school and their life outside school inform their premises for participation and action. As such, it would seem expedient that I follow the young people in and across several contexts in which they participate. However, due to ethical considerations substantiated in my relatively short time spent in the two schools, I did not find this appropriate. The fact that my knowledge of the contexts in which the young people participated during their spare time (and after completing lower secondary education) stems entirely from their own (both during and outside the interviews) narratives and perspectives (and those of other meaningful persons in their lives) can thus be considered a methodological limitation. However, interviews in smaller "natural groups"⁹, as was the case when I first interviewed Saad and Amir together in 2009, create a unique opportunity to gain access to knowledge about the communities and the lives led by young people outside the context of the interview in specific and the school in general. Access was in this case propagated by the group's particular way of communicating – both with each other and, to a considerable extent, with the interviewer/researcher (see Lagermann, 2014a: 98ff).

In line with a decentered analytical approach to the overall ambition of investigating processes of marginalization and changing movements of transcending marginalization among ethnic minority 9th grade students, the basic research design of the overall project is based on a research tradition which can be referred to as social practice theory. Here, situated learning is refined and integrated within Danish-German critical psychological practice research (Lave, *in prep.*; Mørck, 2006: 13). Within a social practice theory research tradition, learning is explored as an integrated part of changing practice with an underpinning of the importance of researching subjects' participation and possibilities for action in and with social practice under and with certain conditions (Mørck, 2006).

The research design is further influenced by a theoretical and analytical ambition of incorporating post-structural concepts into the overarching framework of social practice theory. This is done, with a substantiated assumption that combining these approaches enable the study of given practices with a focus on the subjects' interactive processes of categorization and subjectification as a phenomenon that is *both* historical and discursively constituted, *and* at the same time as a local practice that creates possibilities for actions¹⁰.

As part of this paper I apply Honneth's (1995 (1992)) concept of *struggle for recognition* with regard to the critical psychological concept of *action potency*; the lack of and ensuing struggle for recognition has a restricted effect on the subject's action potency. The concept of struggle for recognition is in this paper also used with regard to the post-structural concept of *cultural intelligibility* (Butler, 1993), through which certain actions are made (im)possible, and is, as

⁹ Amir and Saad knew each other and hung out together outside school as well and hence constituted what I refer to as a "natural group" (see Lagermann, 2014a: 102).

¹⁰ The ways in which an encounter between different theoretical apparatuses implies a "clash" in their at times divergent scientific theoretical positions is in the overall project investigated and challenged with a metaphor of *friction* (Hvenegaard & Staunæs, 2014 (*in prep.*): 19; Tsing, 2005). By replacing "clash" with friction we are reminded of how different components and un-homogeneities in this encounter can lead to new thinking-arrangements that open new analytical paths to approach the complexity that co-constitutes the phenomena we, as researchers, are trying to grasp (see Lagermann, 2014a).

such, fundamental for the understanding of Butler's concept of *viable life* introduced later in this paper. Hence, Butler's concept of viable life is here used in continuation of Honneth's concept of (struggle for) recognition; as I will show, it is precisely this struggle for recognition of the lives they (want to) lead that, paradoxically, is making life unlivable for Amir and Saad. The concept of viable life thus allows us to grasp the *effect* of Amir and Saad's restricted action potency; life loses its meaning – an effect that implicates the risk of losing life itself: “life itself becomes foreclosed when the right way is decided in advance (...)” (Butler, 2004: 225-226). Combining this theoretical setting with Holzkamp's (2013) concept of *conduct of everyday life* and the empirical examples allows me to analyze and thus suggest how an experienced restricted action potency *within* the school, results in a loss of meaning within the school context and life therein becoming unlivable, and further, how this “unlivableness” is dragged *outside* school and becomes co-constitutive of how life is performed there by Amir and Saad.

Analytical readings

As part of the broader research project, the analyses presented in this paper reflects the project's overall objective of investigating processes of marginalization and transcending movements of change among ethnic minority 9th grade students from the young people's perspectives, and comprises three steps (see also Lagermann, 2014b):

The first step involved an initial reading along¹¹ the total dataset where the focus was on identifying and highlighting the places where the young people seemed to be caught up in issues, crises, dilemmas and/or double binds with regard to certain teachers and/or the school and/or life outside school as part of processes of marginalization, just as their struggles with these were highlighted with regard to the investigation of expanding/transcending movements of change. It was in this process that the first tentative beginning of the analyses presented in this paper began to take shape, and it was only later during one of my ongoing literature studies, that I came across the concept of teaching-as-usual as a way to understand and conceive what appeared to be taking place in the empirical examples with Hakim and Saad. In this first step, phenomena were also highlighted which couldn't be straightforwardly understood through the pre-understandings of marginalization and the partial transcending hereof which otherwise guided this first reading of the material.

In *the second step*, a reading across the complete material was conducted where phenomena highlighted during the first reading were compared and an attempt was made to categorize them according to different themes in an analytical catalogue. It was during the initial analyses based on the findings in this step and the literature studies linked to these, that I came across Butlers (2004) concept of (lack of) viable life, as a way to conceive what seemed to be a shared premise for several of the students participating in this study¹².

¹¹ The readings of the complete material were conducted *along and across* with the aim of identifying “common characteristics and specific characteristic” (“fellestrekk og særtrekk”) and “tendencies and exceptions” (“tendenser og unntak”) (Haavind, 2000: 35; my translation).

¹² Also, I had the privilege and the pleasure of receiving great and profound feedback from Bronwyn Davies in 2011 with regard to another article (See Lagermann, 2014b), which led me on to the concept of viable life, and for which I am deeply grateful.

In *the third step*, phenomena which didn't entirely fit within the first and the second step were analyzed – there was something else, something more, going on, and an important part of this process was to figure out how this could be conceptualized.

With the original critical psychological research design, these analytical readings have been governed by predefined concepts; however, at the same time, I have, as mentioned, been particularly preoccupied with the young people's own descriptions of practice, implying an openness and curiosity on my part with regard to letting new phenomena take form. This creates the opportunity for research to transcend the dichotomy between theoretical stringency and practice relevance – an important methodological point within this approach (Mørck & Nissen, 2005: 130; Højholt, 2005: 24).

With regard to the project in general, and this paper specifically, a decentered analytical approach can be an important part of (critically) identifying essential (local and/or societal) conditions *outside* the subject. In the case of the analyses presented here, this concerns the school which has a decisive impact on expanding the young people's opportunities for partly transcending marginalization. In order to get a sense of these conditions with regard to investigating the school as a space of possibilities for the participating young people, and in line with *going around the young people's perspective* as part of the first person perspective outlined above, many of my (planned) observations were specifically focused on contexts of teaching since teaching, after all, constitutes the primary activity at the school. In the following analysis, I take a closer look at what Davies (2006) refers to as "Teaching-as-usual" – a concept that in many ways characterizes what I observed as generally taking place in the classroom, and which seems to have certain (limiting) implications for young people, in this case Hakim and Saad.

Teaching-as-usual

The students in grade 9.a are back from their fall break. The English teacher Julie briefly explains about the final exam for which the students are about to embark on a trial run. The test begins as Julie shortly hereafter begins playback of a tape recording.

Initially, most of the students glance around uncertainly, but eventually begin answering the test questions, as expected by Julie. However, a number of students [among them Hakim and Saad] appear to have not understood what is expected of them. They sit, looking around at one another, and at the other students, giggling seemingly uncomfortably while flicking through their papers. In Julie's initial explanation, she did not explain that the students are supposed to answer the questions in writing *while* the tape is playing. Julie does not respond to their confusion; she writes something in a book, ticks off the students on her list, and looks up at the class. One of the students, Saad, starts to secretly text a message on his cell phone.

When the listening task has finished, the students must start the reading part of the test. One of the boys, Hakim, asks Julie if he can leave the classroom. Julie says no, but states that she has noticed that Hakim is not doing anything with regard to the test. He explains to her that he doesn't understand what is going on, and asks Julie what he is supposed to do. When Julie leaves her desk and reluctantly heads towards where Hakim is seated, she silently answers with a dismissive attitude and in an ironic tone: "Well, I don't know – read Chinese or something?" At Hakim's desk Julie tries to read out loud to him, and explains what he should do. Hakim looks around a bit and clicks his tongue. However, he seems to be trying to keep up with Julie's explanations. When she is

done, Hakim says out loud: “I can’t!” to which Julie replies: “You have to!” (Observation, Copenhagen, 2009)

Hakim’s participation in lessons in class 9.a is generally somewhat sporadic. During English lessons, however, Hakim seems very eager to participate, even though he struggles with the individual tasks he is presented with. Yet Hakim is a student who Julie, the English teacher, refers to as a ‘troublemaker’. According to Julie, he is constantly messing about, and refuses to take anything seriously. In my interview with Julie, who is also Hakim’s French teacher, I asked her about how she handles it when some of her students keep asking for her help, and, during the conversation, I chose to exemplify this with the observation above of Hakim during the English lesson. Julie responded very clearly:

Well, there’s not much to do, really, and especially not ... for *him*; I think it’s very much related to some [lack of] maturity... He is very, very detached in the French lessons, but he has always been allowed to sit there, because there was a certain prestige in being there, and not being removed from the class. (...) so nobody asks him whether he masters anything or not. But he is NOT taking the final exam! He is not... (Julie, interview, Copenhagen, 2009)

Davies (2006) points out how a dominant discourse within the school, which she refers to as ‘teaching-as-usual’, constitutes teachers’ conduct of ‘teaching-as-usual’ practices. Within the dominant discourse of teaching-as-usual, teachers think of learning as an individual activity. They assess individual performances and take themselves to be legitimately doing so. In relation to this, many classroom rules are about ensuring that the work that is done is the assessable product of individual students (ibid.). Within the discourse of ‘teaching-as-usual’, the competent students, along with their teacher, create the context that is recognizable as a classroom, thereby maintaining the binary of good/bad student. Good students know “how to behave”, and in doing so, they position (Davies & Harré, 1990) the teacher as the authority and are themselves positioned as cooperative students, while the students who disrupt this order are characterized and marked as “problem students”, just as Julie characterizes Hakim in the interview. Problems are hereby seen as inherent to the students and are interpreted in terms of how these students differ from the others. The ways in which this classroom scene works is usually not visible to the participants within it, but are rather taken for granted (Davies & Hunt, 2000).

I regard the empirical example from the English lesson above as Julie’s practice of teaching-as-usual, and the example does not stand out in the overall data from 2009, which emphasizes its as-usual character. The point in using the concept of ‘teaching-as-usual’ here is to show how this particular discourse, with its simultaneously individualizing and relational implications (e.g. Julie’s lack of recognizing Hakim’s attempt to participate in her teaching), seems to create certain tensions, double binds and contradictions for some students that result in the exclusion and marginalization of these students within the school. This seems to be the case for Hakim in the observation above, since he seems to be struggling to actually become *part of*, rather than *against*, what is taking place in the classroom as seen from Julie’s (and other teachers’) perspective. Despite Hakim’s attempts to actually participate, he is not recognized within this discourse and thus barely considered a legitimate participant by Julie, which the quote above emphasizes.

In my interview with the class teacher, Jim, he explains to me how he too sees these kinds of practices from other teachers, supporting my observations, and how he feels that they have nothing to do with being a teacher. Jim explains:

I... saw three of them [from the other 9th grade], three of those students who I also see around the neighborhood while they are up to no good ... eh... three of them sitting outside [in the hallway]... with an anthology... which is... 600 pages... and then they are sitting, and have been asked to read, eh, "The cottages" by Pontoppidan... Eh... and then... I stop and just talk to them, and then I say: "But how far have you guys got in reading this text?"... And then they say: "Well, we have read the first four sentences", and then I'm like: "Okay, all right..."... And then these sentences are something about that there was a smallholding [in Danish: husmandssted] in... I don't remember... a smallholding... on... the parish border [in Danish: sognegrænse]... And now, this is just the first sentence!!.. And the students are sitting there, and then I ask: "Okay... but what; do you guys know what a smallholding is?", eh, and then I continue: "So, what is a parish border?"... And I mean, just regarding the content of this first sentence, they hadn't understood anything, and here I feel: dammit, that is not teaching! I really don't think it is. There is no idea in that; there is nothing in it for them! I mean, I do believe ... (...) we've read selected works by Pontoppidan, and I think... that he does have something to say to them, those texts have something to say to them, but dammit, not like that! (Jim, interview, Copenhagen, 2009)

What Jim is critically pointing out in this quote is central to an understanding of how teaching is meant to be practiced in Denmark. The ways in which school curricula and syllabuses in Denmark work is that they set out learning objectives every second or third year (Step goals, in Danish: Trinmål - after 2nd, 4th, 6th and 9th grade) which apply to every student (Common Goals, in Danish: Fælles Mål 2009). However, it is stated clearly how these learning objectives are to be achieved through the teachers' teaching, which implies a freedom of methods on the teachers' part. What *is* stated is the importance of the teacher's didactic considerations and assessments, although these are not specified, but are instead left to the individual teacher to handle. The fact that there are no specific strategies for the teacher regarding how to handle, for instance, reading and comparing an author's works (which is part of the curriculum in 9th grade) means that there seems to be considerable didactic variety in how such lessons are taught by different teachers, as the example suggests and which my classroom observations in the two schools support. However, the opportunity for didactic variety is not coincidental, but is very much related to the Public School Act (In Danish: Folkeskoleloven) from which it appears that:

Lesson planning, including forms and methods of teaching, teaching materials and content selection, must in all subjects live up to the objectives for public schools, objectives for the subject, as well as topics, and be varied so as to correspond to the individual student's needs and abilities (Folkeskoleloven (Public School Act, Denmark), 2013, § 18; my translation)

As such, each individual student should be guaranteed the opportunity to encounter a teaching practice that corresponds with their individual needs and abilities, often referred to as the teachers' obligation to practice differentiated teaching (see e.g. Folkeskoleloven (Public School Act), 2013; EVA, 2011). However, this does not seem to be the case based on my

observations in general, and the example with Julie and the quote from Jim more specifically. And one reason for this, I see as related to the teachers' conduct of 'teaching-as-usual' practices, since the 'teaching-as-usual' seems to imply a similarity in teaching, in the sense that the individual student's "needs and abilities" are not taken into account. This implies further that the individualization at play here seems to be a particular kind of individualization, where the students whose "needs and abilities" fall outside the norm are marked as problem students, as the case with Hakim (and Julie) shows. And what is marked in the case with Hakim as problematic behavior on his behalf is read and understood as owned by the individual student, in this case Hakim; "(...) there's not much to do, (...)... for *him*" *inter alia* because of, according to Julie, his "[lack of] maturity".

Several of the students who I interviewed in both 2009 and 2012/13 talked about the differences between the teaching practices of different teachers. Amir was one of those students:

[...] there was the guy [Glenn] that went with us to the technical college for half a year. [...] we were there every day [...] I got credit all the time and I was told, that, I was the best... that I was [...] the one that made the most effort, and so on, and [...] I was there every day. [...] I liked it because Glenn [...] he laughed with us ... [...] he was with us while we worked, you know [...] he didn't say all the time: "get to work!", or something [...] and if it had been Lisa [their Danish teacher], she would have just said: "Get to work! You have to do this now, otherwise you have to leave the school!", or... He [Glenn] is the type that well, if you can't do it, then you can finish drawing instead, and then he'll say something funny, or something, and then you'll feel cheerful, and then you will want to do it. (Amir, interview, 2009)

What is interesting about Amir's narrative and others like it, is the apparent weighting in this regard of who they can, and in particular who they *cannot* become in relation to these teachers, hereby pointing to a somewhat relational flow with regard to these student-teacher-relations which seems to vary dramatically from teacher to teacher. In fact, they point to a shift in opportunities of becoming more desirable and tolerable students (to the school, the teacher – and themselves); how they are in fact able to partly transcend their, in many ways, marginal positions when certain teachers relate to them in ways other than those which the "teaching-as-usual" practice, exemplified in the case with Julie above, seems to render possible (see Lagermann, 2014b). This points to and has strong implications for the ethics of teaching practice; not only because all students, according to the law, have the right to encounter a teaching practice corresponding with their individual needs and abilities. Rather, it is because what seems to be, among other things, some teachers' lack of practicing a curiosity and responsibility (according to the Public School Act (Folkeskoleloven, 2013), Denmark, § 18: subsection 1+2) with regard to examining the possible reasons why some students do not appear to take school seriously, instead individualizing the problem and ascribing it to the students themselves (See Lagermann, 2014a). And not just any students: the "bad" ones; the troublemakers. Like Hakim. In this way, the binary of good/bad students is maintained within the teachers' teaching-as-usual practice at the expense of those students who are excluded and marginalized, with implications for these students' everyday lives not only *in* school, but, as I shall return to at the end of the paper, seemingly also *outside* school.

The following example from my observations in 2009 at the school in Denmark is one of many where students, in this case Saad, actually try to challenge and negotiate the teachers'

teaching-as-usual. I see this challenging of the teacher's teaching practice as an actual attempt by Saad to adapt the teaching practice he encounters so as to match his needs and abilities; to get it to make sense to him.

Negotiating the teacher's teaching-as-usual

Danish is on the schedule in 9.a. The class is going through some grammar stuff together. One of the students, Saad, is participating actively, seemingly answering the teachers' questions correctly. Every now and then, the students are asked to solve a task individually by the teacher Kate. When this is the case, Saad starts talking to his classmates, joking around, and being shushed by Kate repeatedly.

At a certain point, the students are given a specific task they must solve individually once again, and this time only using the dictionary they've been handed. Saad calls for Kate from his seat several times in a row: "Kate!... Kate!... Kaaate!...". But Kate is busy helping other students. At one point, she says to Saad across the classroom that he will have to wait a while; that she is just talking to someone else. Saad answers her, saying: "'I wasn't really calling for you. I was saying 'ri-iiight!'", and he gives me a knowing look and smiles. A while later, Saad asks Ali, the guy who is sitting next to him, and who is seemingly solving the task without any problems, for help. Ali is about to answer him, but Kate shushes him. Ali says to Saad in a wronged tone: "Oh well, I am not allowed to say anything!" which causes Saad to immediately blurt out: "Kate! You're such a killjoy!" Shortly after, Saad gets up and walks across the classroom to his good friend Malik, to figure out how Malik has solved the task. Kate immediately says to him that he must remain seated, and that he is only allowed to use the tools he has been given [a dictionary]. (Observation, Copenhagen, 2009)

The example shows a young man trying quite hard to participate in solving the task set by his teacher. Not just once, by repeatedly calling for his teacher's help; or twice, by asking his classmate sitting next to him, Ali, for help; but three times, as he eventually gets up and walks across the classroom to his friend and classmate Malik in order to see how Malik has solved the task. However, Saad's first attempt to solve the task by calling for his teacher is not an acceptable approach within the teaching-as-usual discourse, where the appropriate way to ask the teacher a question is to raise your hand and patiently await your turn. Saad's second attempt to solve the task isn't acceptable either, since tasks within the teaching-as-usual discursive practice are, as mentioned earlier, an individual matter, where asking the person sitting next to you is not an acceptable way of solving the task. Saad's third attempt to solve the task is not an acceptable way to solve it either, since this too is characterized as breaking with the tasks-as-an-individual-matter, where looking after a classmate is defined as cheating.

Gillborn (1990) emphasizes how school contexts are framed by teachers' formal as well as non-formal constructions of the "ideal student", incorporating class, gender and racial ideas and conceptions of 'appropriate'¹³ student-performativities' (ibid.: 25); an ideal that has been shown to have a decisive impact on how African-Caribbean boys in UK schools are seen and understood (Youdell, 2006). This is also the case for some of the ethnic minority boys who

¹³ The understanding of the concept of "appropriate"ness is drawn from Butler's (1993) concept of *cultural intelligibility*, referred to earlier in the paper.

participate in this project, especially those from the school in Denmark¹⁴. And not just any boys, but the boys who are in many ways positioned in and struggling from marginalized positions, as is the case with Hakim and Saad mentioned above. In this sense Saad's, and to some extent Hakim's, ways of participating in classroom activities and performing as a student in that regard are in many ways in stark contrast to and counteract the pro-school identity (Youdell, 2003) of a 9th grade student, since the ideal student, even the barely tolerable ones, do not muck about, click their tongues, slouch, send text messages, crack jokes, move their bodies around in the classroom during lessons, etc. I have shown elsewhere how racialization intersects¹⁵ with marginalization (Lagermann, 2013). In that regard I show how themes of race (only) seem to be an issue with regard to the students that in many ways already struggle with being marginalized. I point to how race (and 'Muslimness') becomes a social predictor: the more you struggle with marginalization, the more 'black' or Muslim you become (ibid.). However, the counteractive pro-school identity behavior on behalf of some of the boys¹⁶ indicates that there would seem to be more going on than can be captured by focusing on the intersection of these two social categories alone.

According to Youdell (2003), the discursive field is constituted and constitutive of representations in not merely linguistic, but also bodily ways (or visual or otherwise). In this sense, boys seem to differ from girls in the overall project data, although there also seems to be variety within these social categories of gender. In my conversations with some of the boys, both during the interviews and outside, as well as when seeing them in action in the classroom, I see these ways of performing as a student as similar to what Youdell (2003: 13) suggests is part of a "tacit agreement" amongst the boys where "(...) the masculinity of subcultural privilege and irreverence to school norms is maintained bodily (...)". This implies that: "(...) the boys have a practical sense of the value of their bodily dispositions in this [school] context and deploy these as second nature in ways that sustain both their masculine identities and their legitimate participation in education." (Youdell, 2003: 13). In this sense, the tacit agreement that seems to be a necessary collective practice would appear to provide the boys with the kind of recognition they seem to be so desperately seeking within the school (I will return to this), and a collective practice that is in many ways similar to their ways of being together outside school, e.g. by Saad's "taking the piss" out of the teacher (Willis, 2003 (1977)). Hence, the boys' ways of being together seem to create a certain group identity that is in many ways similar to the one Youdell (2003: 3) refers to with regard to the African-Caribbean boys in her study: The boys' bodily practices (clicking their tongues, slouching, texting messages, cracking jokes, moving their bodies around in the classroom during lessons) cite and inscribe their subcultural identities, reasserting and confirming their status despite – or maybe precisely because of? – its denial by the school (Youdell, 2003: 18). However, this group identity is seen and read, within the dominant school discourse and some of its

¹⁴ This specific way of participating in what took place in the classroom during some teachers' teaching practices seemed to be particularly characteristic for precisely this group of boys in the school in Denmark – a way of participating that did not seem a possible, let alone meaningful way of participating for any of the students I saw in the school in Sweden.

¹⁵ The concept of *intersectionality* is especially strong within Critical Race Feminism (see e.g. Creenshaw, 1995)

¹⁶ This kind of counteractive pro-school identity behavior is what Allen (2013) refers to as the act of "balancing school and cool", an act which in many ways is performed differently between the boys in this paper, and thus distinguish Saad's and Amir's ways of participating in school, which I will return to by the end of this section.

teachers' teaching-as-usual-practices, as "evidence" of these students' intolerable identities as learners, which have been pointed out to add to understandings of the processes of institutional racism inside schools (see e.g. Gillborn, 2008; Youdell, 2003; Sleeter, 1991; Foster, 1990)¹⁷. In this sense, I experienced how the behavior of some of the ethnic minority boys, particularly in the school in Denmark, was seen and understood by several of the teachers as challenging their authority as teachers (cf. informal conversations with teachers in the school's staff room and in interviews with selected teachers). Their in many ways exclusionary response to this behavior was, more often than not, explained within a kind of individualistic discourse which involves a tendency to make use of cultural, essentialized differential explanation models (Staunæs, 2004) as an overarching framework for explaining this response to me. This was for example the case when I interviewed Julie in 2009, when she, on my invitation, explained to me Hakim's behavior in her class: "Well, there's not much to do, really, and especially not ... for *him*; I think it's very much related to some [lack of] maturity...". In this way, Julie's in many ways excluding behavior, shown in the example above, is seemingly justified on the basis of presumed features of the marginalized individuals themselves, in this case Hakim's, thereby holding him accountable for the way he is treated (Staunæs, 2004). Hence, this way of participating and performing on the boys' behalf seems to create a double bind for the boys; the recognition they provide each other with in this way of performing and participating in the classroom is making them even less recognizable within the dominant school and teaching-as-usual discourse, thereby marginalizing them even further.

The example with Saad illustrates how I more often than not see certain students struggling to solve the tasks set by the teachers by negotiating other, more collective strategies. I interpret the impetus for their actions as attempts to be recognized as competent students within the discourse of teaching-as-usual; attempts that are made over and over again. Based on this example and others like it, and in my conversations with the students in general, it therefore seems that students who are not immediately recognized as competent students within teachers' 'teaching-as-usual' practices are actually striving to work their way into such a position.

Saad is among the students who explained to me during the interviews how they find school boring; some with reference to certain teachers. Saad explained to me during my interview with him and his friend and classmate Amir how "You have to move on in life", and how "You can't move on (...) without having been to school". He feels that "You have to have something". You *have to*. There is something Saad seems obliged to do, something he feels that he *has to do*. As in; there seems to be no alternatives. Saad goes to school because he has to, and because there is something in the school that he has to have, which he can only get there. In the school – no place else. This explains his persistent attempts to participate in the classroom practices, even on the premises that seem to exist for people like Saad; people who therefore only go to school because they "have to". This specific way of participating in school is what is referred to by Mørck (2006) as "hanging in there", and what in Saad's case

¹⁷ Several race-related issues appear in my material. Analyses concerning these issues are published in another paper (see Lagermann, 2013). Owing to the framing of this current research project, and the research questions that steer it, I have had to choose certain analytical foci/-delimitations (cuts) with regard to each paper, although I am well aware that the people's lives I am interested in researching are not as divided, but are much more complex. Reflections on this complexity and how the analytical cuts are made are clarified elsewhere in the overall project (see Lagermann, 2014a.).

means “hanging in there” in order to get his final exam without which he can’t “move on in life”.

Amir, like others I interviewed in 2009, went even further in his explanations, since he explicitly explained to me how he only goes to school to be with his friends, meaning Saad and others who he also spends all of his spare time with outside school. This underlines how participation in communities *outside* school, in Amir’s case with his friends, has a decisive impact on participation *in* the school; friends become the reason for Amir to even go to school, his *reasons for action* (Holzkamp, 2013), and, as I will show next, this also seems to work the opposite way around; how the struggle for participation and recognition *inside* school has an impact on the lives led by students like Amir and Saad *outside* school.

(Lack of) recognition and viable lives as part of marginalization

According to Honneth (1995 (1992)), people depend on *recognition* of their abilities and accomplishments, and the experience of being disrespected in relation to this recognition can become the motivational driving force for a struggle for recognition. Butler (2004) stresses, however, the paradox of how a person may feel the urge to be recognized in order to live, and how at the same time the limited conditions for being recognized make life “unlivable”. The livable, bearable life, referred to by Butler as a *viable life*, stands in contrast to her notion of ‘the good life’ which, according to Butler, is only available to people whose lives are already possible and recognizable and who do not have to devote most of their energy to figuring out ways to survive and persist.

I see the boys’ attempts to be included as competent students as a struggle for recognition in order to lead a ‘viable life’ within the school. However, Saad does not seem to be able to influence and expand his learning conditions. In fact his attempts seem to have little or no effect on the teacher, or even have the opposite effect, as shown by Julies’ obvious annoyance. And the boys don’t seem to sense that they have any chance to influence the teacher in order to receive the recognition they crave; they feel absolutely powerless in that regard, and fail to see how their actions are having just the opposite effect. But what they very well do sense is that their repeated futile attempts to participate in the schoolwork practices are making life in school “unlivable”. And in the case of Amir, this realization has led him to resign; now there are only his friends left to legitimize his physically sporadic participation in school. “There’s nothing to do at home” becomes Amir’s motivation for attending school; “Then I can hang out with them [his friends] there”.

My observations of these boys in the classroom remind me of lions in a cage; they seem trapped. And part of the trap is the individualism of the education system in general, and the teaching-as-usual practices in particular. So the boys are caught in a set of paradoxes, one being that they don’t seem to see the point of going to school, and at the same time they realize that this is their *only* opportunity: there is nothing else. And not only is school their only possibility of participating in a societal practice outside their homes, but this specific possibility is (re)producing and holding them in certain marginalized positions and/or categories that seem to “stick” to the person being marginalized in and over time to such an extent that it seems insurmountable for to him or her to change (Lagermann, 2014b). In this sense life in school becomes “unlivable” in Butler’s (2004) terms, making it hard, and to some extent impossible, for the boys to lead a viable life *within* the school. As I will soon return to, this seems in turn to influence the lives led by these boys *outside* school.

Processes of marginalization in and across the school and outside

I view the “unlivable”ness that in many ways characterizes the boys’ everyday school life as closely related to what Søndergaard (2012: 360) terms “social exclusion anxiety”. Social exclusion anxiety refers to when individuals experience insecurity about whether they legitimately belong to a certain group, or fear exclusion and marginalization. Emotions related to such feelings of exclusion and marginalization are, among others, the meaninglessness that in many ways characterizes the unlivable. Feelings of meaningfulness, on the other hand, derive from a sense of acknowledgement and legitimacy within a group, which explains why the boys, who explicitly narrate their sense of exclusion and marginalization within the school, strive for such acknowledgement and legitimacy elsewhere.

Several of the boys that I interviewed and spoke with, both in Denmark and in Sweden, spend a lot of their time outside school in the streets. The two boys, Saad and Amir, even refer to themselves as “street kids”. When I talk to them about this street life, Saad and Amir seem very clear as to why they choose to spend their time in the streets:

Saad: It might be cold, but it’s better to be standing out there, than to be sitting in a [youth] club (...) and rot (...)

Amir: What are we supposed to do in the [youth] club?

Laila: What are you supposed to do in the streets? Could you explain to me? What are you doing in the streets?

Amir: At least you’re having more fun with each other on the streets than you are in a [youth] club...

Laila: Why? Can you do something else in the streets that you can’t do in the [youth] club?

Amir: Yeah... (...) In the [youth] club, it’s the same with the pedagogues as it is at school: “You can’t do this! You can’t do this! You can’t do this!” (...) It’s not all [the adults], just some of them...

(Saad and Amir, interview, Copenhagen, 2009)

This conversation is interesting for several reasons. One being that Amir’s last statement emphasizes the point made earlier about the relation discourse that runs through the students’ narratives when they talk about their teachers and other adults with regard to their not-/succeeding in school. Another interesting thing about this conversation is how Amir is talking about presence and absence, since he, when asked, defines what you *can* do (presence) in the streets by what you *cannot* do (absence) in the youth club, hereby implicitly explaining to me the viability of the street with the non-viability of the club. This illustrates the main point of this paper with regard to the conceptualization of marginalization; namely how participation *in* the school has a crucial impact on the lives led by these students *outside* school. Amir’s explicit comparison to life in school shows and emphasizes how these young people are fed up with being made to feel wrong, and how being made to feel wrong and not being recognized are what sums up Amir’s experiences with school; experiences that have led him to spend his time in the streets, with his friends, away from any adults telling him what to do, and especially what *not* to do.

In my interview with Amir and Saad, I was curious about this street life and which possibilities it seems to offer. One thing is, as the boys state, that it brings them away from more organized communities (such as the youth clubs), but spending a bit of time close to them on the streets, mostly during lunch breaks, where the students have permission to leave the school area, it seems to be about more than that. Whereas the street is normally regarded as a transitory location, for getting us from A to B, this is not what it seems to be about for the boys. They break with this norm by using the street and the space it provides them as a place of sojourn, where they explained to me that they can spend time together with as many as 26 of their friends who will come and go, and where it seemed to me that certain codes seemed to be attached to their being together¹⁸. This place of sojourn appears to create a different space to the boys, a space of their own, even if illegitimate¹⁹ with regard to the street as a transitory space. But most importantly, it seems like the streets provide them with a space where they do not have to struggle in order to see themselves as recognizable, and thus viable, subjects.

However, this hanging out in the streets seems to extend the boys' double bind with regard to marginalization, as touched upon earlier. The street space, where they seem to feel recognized, and thus viable as subjects, also involves potential risks of marginalization; a marginalization extending beyond the confines of the school. Firstly, due to the illegitimacy of using the streets as a sojourn, and secondly since, hanging out in the streets is not without its risks, according to some of the teachers that I interviewed, particularly those at the school in Denmark, since this particular neighborhood that the boys live in, and where the school is located, has faced and continues to face an array of issues related to crime, gang related street communities (Mørck et al., 2013) and -violence. This is something which the boys also touched upon, and according to one teacher, Josef (interview, 2009), "all of those gang members; they come from our school (...)".

Critical psychology operates with the concept of *generalization from single cases* (Mørck, 2006; Mørck & Nissen, 2005). In this regard, Mørck (2006: 247) underlines how a critical psychological concept of generalization is based on consideration of what can be characterized as *general*, *particular* and *specific* respectively for the practice in question, the analyzed situations and the participants involved. In this sense the processes of in- and exclusion conceptualized as social and cultural phenomena as analyzed as part of this paper is a somewhat general phenomena, which the short initial literature review in this paper emphasizes. This fundamental premise, that the school in- and excludes among the students who attend it, thus implicates that the practice of school and education on a *general* level is far from an innocent process, but rather is a perilous journey into processes of belonging, separation, learning and alienation (Lagermann, 2014a). As mentioned, the school which Amir and Saad (and Hakim) attends is placed in a quarter of Copenhagen, which has faced and continues to face an array of issues related to crime, gang related street communities and -

¹⁸ Unfortunately my overarching focus and (time) schedule for the project did not provide me with the opportunity to follow up on this so-called (according to Saad and Amir) street life.

¹⁹ The *illegitimacy* of the street as a place to hang out; a place of sojourn is here understood in (its binary) relation or contrast to what the street is "normally", and hence legitimately used for – a (transitory) place/space that gets a person from A to B. Theoretically the illegitimate/legitimate term with regard to the street here refers to the hierarchy between the privileged – which is equivalent to what is seen as "normal" – and its "other"; what gets included and what gets excluded from "the norm" (Davies & Hunt, 2000).

violence. Hence, unlike other neighborhoods in Copenhagen, this particular area has certain potential gang related categorizations attached to it, historically and media wise, which differs from other neighborhoods in Copenhagen. This implicates, as mentioned by Josef and on a *particular* level, together with the more *specific* circumstances of Amir and Saads life situations certain risks of being caught up in gang related street communities – risks, that are particularly gender related, and thus especially a risk on the boys' behalf, since none of the girls assume the space of the streets the way the boys do.

In other words, it seems as if processes of marginalization, as they emerge in relation to the participation of certain students, in this specific case Amir and Saad, *in* school and in this particular area of Copenhagen, , also increase the risk of them becoming marginalized *outside* school. As such, it seems possible to suggest that the problems and dilemmas outlined in this paper could be somewhat general and hence apply to other young people in similar life situations.

Conclusion

This paper attempts to show how we may understand processes of marginalization as related and connected to participation in and across various contexts. More specifically, my analyses point to how participation in the community with friends *outside* of the school, has a decisive impact on participation *in* school, resulting in classroom participation with seemingly marginalizing consequences, and furthermore how school plays a crucial role in the marginalization of certain students – not only *in* but also across the school context and other contexts in which these students participate. Drawing on Honneth (1995 (1992)) and Butler (2004), the analyses emphasize how people rely on recognition as humans. Hence, the analyses point out how a lack of such recognition within the school may drive students into seeking recognition in other places and in other communities; for instance, with their friends in the streets.

The impossibility of creating a “viable life” within the school context is driving the boys away from school, and at the same time it is driving them into other contexts; contexts where “you’re having more fun with each other” and where no one will tell you “You can’t do this! You can’t do this! You can’t do this!”. The boys seem to have found such a context in the streets, among their friends, which in this particular case, and with a specific focus on spaces of possibilities for students like Amir and Saad, involves the potential risks of becoming involved in gang related communities and -conflicts, and of rejecting upper secondary education, etc. Hence, my analyses point to a shared responsibility from educational policy makers to classroom teachers to try to understand their own contribution to “creating and withholding the conditions of possibility of particular lives” (Davies, 2006: 435). Hence, if we are to expand the opportunities for marginalized students to partly transcend their marginal positions – not only *in*, but also *outside* school – it is necessary to keep on questioning what it is that makes for a viable life and how we are each implicated in constituting the viability or non-viability of the lives of others (*ibid.*).

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