Resistance and negotiation: The intersection of constraining norms in educational settings[1]

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ABSTRACT

The aim of the paper is to illustrate students' own experiences and educators' observations of constrain power structures that lead to an unequal treatment of children based on gender, ethnicity, race, socioeconomic and other intersecting powers. The composite empirical data, consisting of fieldnotes, interviews and students' notes, was collected in a large city in Sweden. The analysis, based on intersectional analytic framework, demonstrates that children and adolescents are aware that those who, for instance, are racialized, do not speak normative Swedish, have migration background or lack economic resources are marginalised and interpellated as being in the 'basement' of social hierarchies. A consequence of constraining power structures that many children experience is stereotyping, and marginalisation based on racialisation, ethnicization, oppressive gender norms, adults hegemonic position etc. Based on these critical observations, the paper proposes norm-critical perspective to transform these constraining power structure. The shift towards norm-critical perspectives, is not about the rejection of all norms, but rather a possibility to explore, analyse, learn and engage in the ways exclusionary and constraining discourses and practices are created, maintained and contribute to the marginalisation and oppression, while other groups are cited as 'normal' and given privileged positions.

Keywords

Norms, Oppression, Children, Exclusion, Education, Intersectionality, Norm-critical Perspective

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> For several years, two schoolmates saw how their friend Rebecka was abused because of her skin colour. In the end, the girls got enough and reported the school for not having stopped the abuse.
> - If there only was one adult who dared to say 'no' … but there was none, says Matilda, 15.
> - I remember the first time a student at the school called me the N-word. It was in the sixth grade. Before that, I had not taken things so badly, says Rebecka.
> The situation at the school […] got worse over time, even though the problems have been repeatedly pointed out to both teachers and the principal. This summer, two of Rebecka's friends decided to report the school to several authorities because they felt that the school did not act (Trus, 2000).

This newspaper excerpt is just one of many examples of constraining power that negatively affect children's lives and school experiences. The school leadership and teachers have according to the students failed to act in accordance to legislation and stop what Kevin Kumashiro (2000) and Paulo Freire (2000) denote oppression.

Regulatory documents, conventions and laws protecting children's rights, ensuring their prospects, govern educational institutions, not least mutual relationships amongst children, relationships between adults and children and normative citizenship education. For example, consistent with UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, which was incorporated in Swedish law in January 2020, governing bodies in general and educational institutions in particular must ensure that no child, 'irrespective of the child's or his or her parent's or legal guardian's race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, property, disability, birth or other status', is discriminated against (UN, 2020a; The Government of Sweden, 2020). Moreover, the convention underlines that not only do children have the right to express their views, feelings, wishes and opinions, but the development and the best interest of children must guide all 'decisions and actions' that affect them (UN, 2020a, b). Ensuring the development of children's full potential is another important objective. Albeit, these are only five out of fifty-four articles of the convention, they offer an insight into the scope and significance of policies and actions that may follow Swedish incorporation of the convention. Despite rather late incorporation of the convention, Swedish education has for decades had an explicit role in normative citizenship education, prevention of constrain power structures and provision of means and ends for anti-oppressive education (Lindgren, 2004; Dahlstedt & Olson, 2019). Accordingly, the Swedish National Agency for Education (Skolverket, 2020) emphasises that equality and equity must permeate all spheres

of educational institutions, including active work on the prevention of constraining norms, exclusionary power (i.e. oppression, discrimination and harassment) and promotion of equal rights and opportunities for all students.

Seeking to achieve these normative and educational objectives entails that children's voices and experiences of constraining power need to be articulated and heard. Since educational institutions are social spaces, where children spend a vast amount of time, there is an important emancipatory aspect of voicing as well as the issue of social justice and wellbeing. Against this background, I will in the following shed light on constraining norms, hierarchies and other power structures that limit and frame children's lives in educational settings. The aim of the paper is to illustrate children's own experiences as well as educators' observations of constrain power structures that lead to an unequal treatment of children based on gender, ethnicity, race, socioeconomic and other intersecting power axes. Additionally, by analysing and highlighting educators' and students' problematisation of constraining power structures, it is possible to propose transformative pedagogy – an issue that I will return to in the concluding part of the paper. The primary research question guiding the analysis is: Which constraining power structures permeating students' social relations and educational context are in the analysed empirical data viewed as problematic? The secondary, more normative research question is: How can schools transform these constraining power structures? The empirical data, consisting of fieldnotes, interviews and students' notes, was collected in a large city in Sweden, during 2018 and early 2019.

Norms privilege certain bodies, but are transformative

In the light of the analysis of normative interpellations and problematisations that have constraining/oppressive effects on children's opportunities and social positions in Swedish educational settings, it is important to clarify what I in this paper name norms/normativity and oppression/constrain power as well as why I find it important to highlight the problematisation of prevailing power structures. The starting point of analysis is Paulo Freire's (2000) and Kevin Kumashiro's (2000) view that the aim of education is to analyse and understand the dynamics of oppressive social orders and power, and articulate ways to transform them to liberate individuals, groups and society. *Constraining power* or what Kumashiro following Freire names *oppression,* is in fact 'a situation or dynamic in which certain ways of being (e.g., having certain identities) are privileged in society while others are marginalized' (Kumashiro, 2000, p. 25).

The term *norm* relates to taken for granted rules on and ideas about what is socially desirable and normalising on the one hand, and deviant and problematic/problematized, on the other (Butler, 1999; Foucault, 1990). In other words, normativity is about dichotomisation between normal (normalising) and problematic or deviant (deviating). Through problematizing categorisation,

normative ideas regulate who has power or voice and who is disempowered, regarded as a problem or silenced, and which life styles, bodies and identities occupy a desirable or normative social and subject position (Bacchi, 2009; Scott, 2007). The regulatory power of norms influences the notion of how a subject should (not) be, behave or look or whom it should desire. It may be argued that human subjects are created through norms and problematisations because they direct them to perform as 'a good teacher', 'a white fully functional cissexual', 'a good student', 'a kind, quiet and well-behaved child', 'a responsible parent', 'Swedish', etc. (cf. Björkman & Bromseth, 2019; Martinsson & Reimers, 2014; Rydström, 2009). At the same time, one norm is never isolated from other norms. The interdependence and intertwining of norms and thus power structures is called intersectionality and intersectional perspectives on education, urban segregation, ethnicization, racialisation, age, gender and social relations are used in this article to analyse the problematisation of power in educational contexts (Hill Collins & Bilge, 2016; Lykke, 2003). While one cannot imagine a world without norms and power structures; because they are necessary for orientation in and understanding of society; they are nevertheless transformative – not least because of their intersectional and performative nature that leads to disruption, renegotiation, reinterpretation and questioning of power structures.

Compound empirical data in partnership with educators

The point of departure is the analysis of discursive representations of lived and socially shared interpretations of problems in general and norms and constraining power structures in particular (Bacchi, 2009; Jørgensen & Phillips, 2000). In this paper, the way of looking at the world is viewed as the way in which one interprets, describes and understands the world and the objects/subjects that are in it. Through discursive conceptualization of problems, certain objects/subjects become visible and are attributed certain characteristics. Experiences are in the analysis conceptualised as descriptions of both material world, lived social relations, feelings and interpretations of what is going on in the local environment one inhibits (Scott, 1992).

The educational institutions in the focus of the paper are compulsory schools located in socioeconomically disadvantaged areas of the city. The schools are situated in urban areas with high rate of poverty, unemployment and multilingual population and low school-result. The compound of empirical data is used with the aim to give a multifaceted description of constraining power structures in analysed educational settings. Students' sticky notes were collected by hereunder mentioned school-developer, the same person whom I later observed in hirs intervention in one of city's more problematised schools. This school was also the place where I interviewed four educators and conducted observations at a staff meeting. All empirical data was collected in compliance with Swedish Research Council's guidance for good research practices, denoting that all

individuals, at either educational institutions or research-circle, have given their consent and were informed about the aim of the study, while all places and individuals have been anonymised (VR, 2017). When it comes to the representations of problems and normativity there are several interrelated perspectives that dominate the empiric material – migration and socioeconomic status, whiteness and Swedishness, gender, culture and family relations, and not least adults' hegemonic power. These power structures also serve as the foundation of the thematisation of the analysis.

The empirical data consists of:

a. Secondary school students' sticky notes about experiences of constraining power structures and their own perspectives on The Rights of the Child. The workshops, focusing on secondary school students' reflections on these issues, were initiated, led and organised by a school-developer and conducted during 2018. The school-developer also collected the sticky notes and presented them during an interview.

b. An observation at a staff meeting; which involved three school-developers (one of them the above-mentioned school-developer) on the one hand and the principle and school counsellor from a compulsory school on the other; was conducted in spring 2018. The school is reported to have problems with student attitudes and behaviours and the administration had invited school-developers to instigate a transformative intervention.

c. Fieldnotes collected during an observation of those same school developers' intervention in this local school. I conducted observation in spring 2018 in a class consisting of some twenty junior school pupils age 7 and 8.

d. Individual and focus group interviews with four educators working at this school. I conducted the interviews in autumn 2018 and early 2019.

e. A field observation at a compulsory school collected within the framework of a research-circle that focused on participants' analysis of constraining norms and power structures at their own work place. A participant teacher gathered the empirical data in spring 2019. The aim of the research-circle was to develop participating educators' ability to collect empirical data from their own work places, critically analyse oneself, own actions and the educational settings they dwell and eventually transform them.

Intersecting migration, socioeconomic status and whiteness-norms

The recurring frame of reference, when describing schools such as those where this study has been conducted, is that the main social and school related problems are related to students' migration background (cf. Dahlstedt & Foultier, 2020; León Rosales, 2010; Dahlstedt & Lozic, 2017; Ålund, 1997). When for instance the principle describes the characteristics of the school, ze argues that, 'a hundred percent of pupils [at the school] have immigration background, from three generations back to those who arrived yesterday' (Participatory observations, 2018). In the context of interpellation of students as third generation migrants, it becomes imperative to ask the rhetorical question, 'How many generations should one feel compelled to go back in order to find a starting point of one's present ethnic identity?' (Hylland Eriksen, 2002, p. 69). With this in mind, it is important to highlight that even though the primary problematisation may seem to revolve around the issue of immigration and migrant background, this power axes is inseparable from and mutually dependent on other constrain power structures. In fact, the fundamental framework for normative interpellations of children is intersection between migration, socioeconomic power and whiteness. However, for the sake of the clarity, I will start by describing how migration serves as a normative demarcation and relate it thence to other power-axes.

In the workshop about children's reflections on The Rights of the Child and constraining power structures that permeate their lives, one of the students concludes that the term integration is directly related to issues of immigration, arguing that an immigrant is somebody 'who does not speak Swedish', adding that the subject position of immigrant is an integral part of student´s own identity (cf. León Rosales, 2010; Lozic, 2018; Ålund, 2009). By affirming, 'I am in the basement', the child simultaneously articulates internalised negative self-image and structural processes of marginalisation (Sticky notes, 2018), while at the same time linking together Swedish language (deficiency), immigration and sub-ground level social positioning. Vital to say is that migration-background is commonly used as a pejorative remark amongst children. The principle and the school counsellor point out that children call each other 'R-child' (refereeing to 'refugee') to heart or 'lower' someone, while adding that this interpellation is interpreted as worse than saying 'fuck your mother' (Participatory observation, 2018). In further problematisation of student attitudes and behaviours, the school counsellor argues that additional derogatory term used amongst children is Arabic word for a 'tramp'/'drifter', denoting somebody who is in movement and 'worth nothing, owns nothing, has no talent, simply a looser' (Participatory observation, 2018). A desirable and privileging subject position becomes the opposite – denoting, somebody who is wealthy and belonging to stationary or non-migratory population, and as I will soon illustrate, inhabits whiteness. Hence, positioning individuals in social hierarchy and reproduction of normative ideas about desirable bodies, lifestyles, migratory background/movement in space, together with discourses about poverty, are used normatively and subjectifying.

Despite using migration and migration-background as pejorative, awareness of social hierarchies based on dichotomisation between Swedish and immigrants, and self-identification with migrants, many students request changes in social hierarchies, underpinning the necessity of equity and equality, while at the same time differentiating between different migrant groups. First, an image of struggle for inclusion and empowerment of immigrant-subjects is for example reinforced by a child's view that 'everyone should be included and have power to govern [Swe. bestämma], even though you are an immigrant. For example, even if you are not Swedish, you should be able to become someone, such as principle, boss, etc.' (Sticky notes, spring 2018). The point being made is that there are privileged subjects with and in power and those who ought to have (but do not hold) the same power. Additionally, the discourses on governance, the labour market and professional identity and position are characterized by dichotomous ideas that differentiate between immigrants and those who are called Swedish.

Second, although normative discourses expose migration and socioeconomic resources as important and intersecting power axes, it is important to underline that immigrant-subject is not always perceived as a homogenous subject. In fact, geopolitical space of emigration to Sweden (i.e. where an individual or its ancestors emigrated from) together with time spent in Sweden play an important part in social ranking and allocation of power amongst children. The principle and school counsellor draw for instance attention to internal hierarchies between different migrant groups, arguing that individuals who have immigrated from Afghanistan, are 'at the bottom of the hierarchy' at their school (Participatory observations, 2018). At the same time, it is important to underline that geopolitical space of migration is closely related to whiteness norms, something that is already visible amongst primary school pupils as young as seven or eight. In their reflections during a workshop on how to make the school environment more satisfying and safe they demand that 'teasing on the ground of appearance and skin colour' ends and emphasise that their classmates should 'stop offending each other on the grounds of skin colour, language, religion, background and nationality' (Observation workshop with pupils, 2018). Similarly, one of their educators has pointed to a strong impact of demarcation based on racialised discourses.

The skin colour is marked here. It's inevitable! 'You're brown as shit, I do not want to play with someone who is brown!', they may say that!!! The shades are there, so if you come from a 'better' family, you are higher up [in the hierarchy]; academics versus working-class families (Interview with an educator, 2019).

Even though categorisation principles; including demarcation based on physical appearance (i.e. skin colour, height, hair colour and weight), migration background, education, socioeconomic resources etcetera; permeate children's everyday lives and social relationships, constraining power structures are not something that children relate passively to. The following observation from a school library exemplifies how a child actively resists racialised and ethicized

power constraints expressed by a librarian, and in this receives support from another adult, thus building cross-generational unity and resistance.

Jordan [the teacher] is with the pupils in the school library, with the aim to keep an eye on the students and the whole situation there. The librarian has on several occasions stated that ze thinks that some of the pupils are loud and cannot follow library rules. On the other hand, the students say that the librarian offends them. A grade eight pupil sits on the floor of the library and Jordan does not feel that the pupil is disturbing anyone but might be in the way. The librarian then tells [the pupil sitting on the floor] that, 'You should not sit on the floor like a Gypsy'. This is overheard be several students, including one who identifies itself as Romani. The child who was originally addressed does not react much, but Jordan and particularly the pupil with Romani-identity tell the librarian that ze cannot say so. The librarian responds, 'What then?! Gypsies sit on the ground and beg'. Then the student with Romani-identity says, 'It is actually called Romani, and it's not true that all Romani beg'. Jordan was trying to explain to the librarian how inappropriate this is but the answer Jordan gets is 'But, it's true!' (Observation presented at a research-circle by a participant, 2019).

Notably, the two adults, the librarian and the teacher, have power to, if not organise, but at least influence children's allocation and placement in the physical space, in this case the library. However, what stands out most is the racialised discourse and stereotyping of a specific group as well as the resistance by the teacher and one of the students. This rises another question, namely the reasons why so many individuals implicitly accept this oppressive interpellation by the librarian, including the student who is problematized for sitting on the floor. The fact remains that according to the observation, this and many other students did not react and were silent, hence implicitly accepting or agreeing with the librarian's problematisation of the situation. Hence, silence is in this case not neutral, but rather an integral part in the reproduction of constraining power structures. This brings me to another important topos, that of adults' dominant power in educational settings and possibility to resist adults' framing of the educational space and social relationships there, an issue that I will further discuss in the following.

The normative position of adults

In recent years Swedish educational researchers have taken due note of adults' power in educational space as well as children's resistance to and negotiation of prevailing power structures (cf. Ambjörnsson, 2004; Dolk, 2013; Björkman & Bromseth, 2019). In line with this, I want to draw attention to the ways children challenge and negotiate adults' position as tacit norm.

My first [participant] observation was in the corridor at lunchtime, between 11.30 and 11.50 am. There is no canteen at the school and therefore, the pupils eat in their classrooms. /… / It became clear to me that when the pupils needed help

they sought out their mentor and not the nearby adult. The moment I choose to share with you is the situation where the pupils ask the kitchen staff if they could get more bread. One of the kitchen staff then answered the first pupil who came in that it was only one slice of bread per pupil. The pupil accepted this and left. The next pupil to come in asked the same question, 'Could I have more bread?' A staff member responded in the same way, 'One slice of bread per pupil!' This pupil questioned this and said, 'There is lots of bread left, so why can't we get more then?' /… / One of the kitchen staff replied somewhat bothered, 'It's one slice of bread per pupil!' The pupil walked away annoyed. Then the kitchen staff tried to hide the bread. Another pupil got to the food cart and asked, 'Is there more bread left?' 'No, it's finished', replied one of the kitchen staff. 'But I see that there are about ten slices of bread there!' said the pupil and pointed to the poorly hidden bread. 'No, there is no more left,' one of the staff replied. The pupil looked at me [research circle participating teacher/observer who works at this school] and rolled his eyes but walked away. The next pupil came and asked what the kitchen staff intended to do with the bread, 'There is lots left, and we are still hungry!' (Participatory observation presented at a research-circle by a participant, 2019).

As noticed by the observing teacher, the adult kitchen staff regulates students' existential needs (diet) while the students contest regulatory power, infused by a lack of trust between the parties. However, there is a glimpse of possible transgenerational collaboration insofar as when one of the students 'rolls his eyes', he feasibly appeals for help from the observing teacher and the recognition of the resistance. Yet, the moment the student/child encounters a passive teacher/adult who is taking a role of a 'neutral' observer, who strives to separate itself from the reality and thus radical action that may change the observed situation, a status quo is not only reproduced, but even further consolidated. It is important to point out that while the research-circle participant initially expressed a view that researchers, and thus research-circle participants, whose task was to observer own educational institutions, need to be 'neutral' and not influence the observed reality, he changed hir view on neutrality and unresponsiveness. For the observer, it became evident that there is, as Freire (2000) argues in *Pedagogy of the oppressed*, no such thing as neutral education and thus educational research. Moreover, the participatory observation indicates that the lack of personal relations, dialogue and trust between the student/child and the teacher/adult/observer (as well as the kitchen staff) becomes indispensable to the reproduction of adult power hegemony, and unity and consensus between different generational groups (i.e. the observing teacher and the kitchen staff on the one hand and students on the other). Having given an outline of polarisation based on migration, whiteness, socioeconomic status and age/generation, I will in the following, illustrate constraining power structures based on the entanglement of sexuality, clothing, religion and honour as well as once again show that adult's power over students is not always normalising.

Fit in with norms

The fundamental framework for the problematisation of mutual relationships between students is their aspiration to fit in but also evade external social pressure and normalising gaze and interpellations. First, in the analysed empirical data, issues of religion seem to play a significant role. In the reflections on constraining power and the Right of the Child, one of the students condemns 'All this about religion, I mean you should not say anything against other religions and you should not be told not to have friends with another religion' (Sticky notes, 2018). The point being made is that there is regulation of friendship based on religious preferences and dichotomising views on religion. Similarly, the interviewed educators maintain that there is an exclusion based on religious views, food habits and social behaviour (Interviews with educators, 2018 & 2019).

If you are not religious, then you are weird. 'So, you don't believe in God! Why don't you?' /… / The students question teachers: 'Are you a Muslim?' 'No, I do not believe in God.' You need to explain. They do not understand that, and thus distance themselves. 'You are not ours!' Then you are less worthy. Moreover, they may make fun of Christians. We see and hear arguments that every other thing is haram [forbidden in accordance to some interpretations of Islam]. It's something they have learned at home /… / Christmas is such [conflicting] holiday - it is enough that one student spreads rumour that everything on the table is haram, then no one else wants to eat the food. Or, that a specific dish is haram, [the student] gets a whole group drawing to his side. Or, that a teacher who carries a baby in her womb is haram (Interview Educator, 2019).

Consequently, constraining norms are not only related to religion but rather to entanglement of different norms, including students' questioning of adults and gender-related power structures.

This brings me to the second point, namely the regulation and questioning of female bodies and behaviour and these power structures' entanglement with normative masculinity, 'honour culture', fashion, etc. For instance, some educators have argued that there are male students who emphasise separation of social spaces based on gender and endorse 'macho culture' and religious views, while highlighting 'I do not want to sit next to a girl [because] it is it is haram to sit next to a girl' (Interview educators, 2018 & 2019; Observation staff meeting, 2018). For these male students norms seem to define both religious code of conduct and what a 'macho man may and may not be allowed to do'. In contrast, for many female students normalizing gender norms are described as more complex (Observation staff meeting, 2018). The school staff holds for instance that quite often female students are either pressured or in other ways influenced to wear a veil to be accepted by their peers (Observation staff meeting, 2018). Nevertheless, according to the educators, this social pressure does not mean that these forms of femininity have the hegemonic position. In fact, the complex nature and heterogeneity of female gender norms is evident in the view that even

though there is 'fashion about veil, the girls who are viewed as 'cool', are the ones that don't wear a veil' (ibid).

Third, the relationship between social norms and peer-pressure on the one hand and governance of some female students' behaviour is associated with, what educators call, 'honour-related oppression' and 'honour culture'.

Absenteeism from school is high and then there is honour culture. [Students] may agree with us [teachers] that everyone should have the same rights and be allowed to behave as they want to. However, when it comes to their own sisters, if they are to be with someone, this must not occur. So, if a girl is together with another guy, then she is suddenly expelled from the group (Observation staff meeting, 2018)

Educators reason that while it may be socially accepted to talk about equality, equal opportunities and rights of women and men, and freedom of choice, when it comes to own female family members, then some male students demand exercise of control. Indeed, what seems to be a recurrent criticism is the control of female bodies and sexuality, such as secondary school students' views that a female student may 'be seen as a bitch because of makeup, even though [she is] serious' or that 'people stare at me because of my cloth' (Sticky notes, 2018). Before the concluding remarks, where I direct attention towards the possibilities of 'norm-critical perspectives' as a pedagogic tool for the transformation of discussed constraining power structures, I want to highlight that the latter comments illustrate objectifying discourses about female students' bodies and appearances and the attempt to control these bodies and restrict their possibilities and subjectivities.

Transformative education based on norm-critical perspectives

The point of departure has been that educational institution, teaching as well as relationships that take place in schools are permeated by constraining power structures that institutions and those working there are required to contest. Another underlining premise has been that the implementation of normative citizenship and anti-oppressive education requires an understanding of these structures, not least students' own experiences. Indeed, Thomas Ziehe (2003) has argued that emancipatory education requires an understand and acknowledgement of young people's lifeworld. In the analysis of composite empirical data, several examples of intersection between whiteness-norms, migration and socioeconomic position as well as norms and power axes related to age, gender and religion have been depicted but what remains to be answered is how to work to transform these constraining power structures.

In Swedish educational context there has been a shift in implementing and governing anti-oppressive education. Ever since the Swedish National Agency for Education (Skolverket, 2009) endorsed norm-critical perspectives, at the expense

of 'teaching tolerance' (Swe. toleranspedagogik), as a desirable educational policy and practice for addressing and tackling constraining and oppressive power structures (e.g. racism, sexism, heteronormativity, ageism, a person's functional capacity, ethnicity etc.), the scope of theoretical knowledge, research and handbooks has widened (cf. Larskar & Alm, 2017). Despite the rise of research about educators' (i.e. teachers') own analysis of constraining and oppressive power structures at their workplaces, the research field is still in its infancy.

Teaching-tolerance has for a long time had normative position in Swedish anti-oppressive education. This pedagogy positions normative groups (those with hegemonic power) as those in the need of developing tolerance towards, and understanding and empathy for the 'Other'/'Othered' – i.e. marginalised and norm-transgressing individuals and groups. In an analysis of anti-oppressive education in the US educational context, Kevin Kumashiro (2000) has argued that education about the 'Other', while making schools a place where the Other/Othered are given voice and audience; it reinforces oppressive marginalisation, othering and exclusion. Elisabet Langmann (2010), analysing Swedish educational context, points to similar consequences, namely that approaches known as education about the 'Other' and teaching-tolerance, juxtapose Otherness, reinforce dichotomisation and stereotypes, while reinforcing the norm and structural oppression. Sara Ahmed (2012), in her analysis of 'hospitality discourses' in the institutions of higher education, has emphasised that Othering in fact interpellates certain individuals and groups as norms and 'hosts' who are to welcome the 'Other'. This maintains the dichotomy between those who are 'at home' (the hosts); and thus, have a privileged position and power to admit the 'Other' in the community; and the 'Other' (guests).

Based on these critical observations, the proponents of norm-critical perspectives argue that anti-oppressive education should together with students critically analyse the ways in which privileges and normative ideas are created, drawing attention to stereotypical and constraining discourses, including social, political, economic, historic and educational benefits of the preservation of prevailing social order (cf. Lozic, 2018). It is important to underline that the shift towards norm-critical perspectives, is not about the rejection of all norms, but rather a possibility to explore, analyse, learn and engage in the ways exclusionary and constraining discourses and practices are created, maintained and contribute to the marginalisation and oppression, while other groups are cited as 'normal' and given privileged positions. Norm-critical perspectives start from the premise that understanding and questioning exclusionary and constraining power structures may bring about transformation of prevailing social order, at the individual level as well as the organizational and structural level. Furthermore, it is essential to emphasise that the norm-critical perspectives involve profound understanding of poststructuralist critique of exclusionary and constraining power structures, including norm-systems.

Lastly, it must be added that norm-critical perspective, while opening classroom and social-relationships to critical analysis of prevailing norms and power structures and thus possible emancipation, it also exposes educational and social spaces as well as individuals involved to the unknown and opposition to change. While teaching tolerance gives top-down guidance and 'attempts to control and to grasp the knowable, leaving no space open for what is really uncontrollable and unknowable in education', it is also predictable and from a teaching perspective relatively benign (Kumashiro, 2000, p. 46). Transformative education (i.e., based norm-critical perspectives) that is more open-ended and sensitive to and relevant for the specifics of the local context and the individuals involved (i.e., students) may however lead to conflicts, disagreements, retribution and counter-attack, because when power is being questioned and undermined it may strike back, so to say. Thus, while it may well be true that the entanglement with complex social context and questioning of power may make real difference for students, not least because '[l]earning is most powerful when it is closest to what is important in daily life' (Fullan et al., 2018, p. 164), the implementation of norm-critical perspectives may also lead to unpredictable consequences and resistance. Hence, it is important to have in mind that normative citizenship education and questioning of and undermining prevailing power structures and privileges are neither neutral nor uncontested process, something that may require new social competences amongst educators, including relational trust between them and students, inquiry-based learning and resilience.

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