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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this article is analysis of discursive marginalisation through education in Nordic welfare states. What knowledge do Nordic research discourses produce about marginalisation through education in Nordic welfare states? What are the Nordic contributions to research discourses on marginalisation through education? We apply a discourse theoretical approach and analyse 109 peer-reviewed publications on marginalisation by the Nordic Centre of Excellence "Justice through education in the Nordic countries" (NCoE JustEd) between 2013 and 2017. The publications are from Finland, Sweden, Norway and Iceland. Four critical Nordic research discourses reconceptualise marginalisation in relation to dominant educational discourses on marketisation, Eurocentrism, gender equity and ableism. These Nordic research discourses document discursive effects of the dominant, normalising discourses in terms of stigma, segregation and exclusion of poor, working-class students, non-white and immigrant students and descendants of immigrants, as well as sexual minorities and disabled students. Based on ethical, epistemological and methodological considerations, the critical Nordic research discourses produce knowledge about marginalisation as a relational, intersectional and interdiscursive phenomenon. The critical Nordic research discourses de- and reconstruct knowledge about marginalisation in Nordic welfare states.

Introduction

The research object in this article is discursive marginalisation through education in the Finnish, Swedish, Norwegian and Icelandic welfare states. Involuntary marginalisation forces individuals and groups into disadvantaged positions in education and society. We apply discursive marginalisation as an umbrella concept for various forms of exclusion through education. A rationale for studying discursive marginalisation through education in a Nordic context is the common history of the Nordic states as strong welfare states. Dominant educational discourses in this context emphasise egalitarianism, equality of opportunity, gender equity and inclusive education (Blossing, Imsen, & Moos, 2014).

Analysis of exclusion and marginalisation becomes particularly challenging and even more important in this discursive context. Against this background, we chose to analyse publications on marginalisation from the Nordic Centre of Excellence "Justice through education in the Nordic countries" (NCoE JustEd) (www.justed.org). In international research in this field, central themes are exclusion/inclusion in relation to: social class, gender and sexuality, racism and racialisation, disability and special needs (Bastien & Holmarsdottir, 2015b; Birkelund, 2013; Dykes & Delport, 2017; Keogh, 2008; Liasidou, 2012; Pink & Noblit, 2017; Vincent, 2014). Our analysis focuses on these themes.

The Nordic discourses on marginalisation through education unfold in different educational fields: in the sociology of education and urban studies, in multicultural, intercultural, anti-racist and postcolonial studies of education, and in gender studies as well as in disability studies. In these fields, different discourses about marginalisation, exclusion and social justice are at work but without a shared theoretical framework. This is a challenge to the analysis of marginalisation through education. However, while each discourse on marginalisation may focus primarily on one variable, such as social class, gender, ethnicity or disability, closer examination of the Nordic discourses reveals that these categories often intersect. Furthermore, there are recurring themes and topics that cut across the specific discourses: notably analysis of different forms of exclusion and the effects on educational trajectories, identities and belonging. In dealing with these discursive discontinuities and continuities and their effects, we apply a discourse theoretical approach (Foucault, 1971, 1995).

Discourse theoretical strategies

Discourse analysis explores how knowledge production and power relations intersect through discourse about a specific phenomenon; in this case marginalisation through education. A discourse constructs the object of which it speaks, in terms of production of power/knowledge and categorisation of individuals, groups or social relations (Foucault, 1995). Research discourses on marginalisation have social *effects*. This applies to the studies of marginalisation that we analyse, as well as to our own analysis of these studies. Hence, ethical, epistemological and methodological considerations are particularly important in construction of the research object and the analysis of discourses on marginalisation.

Instead of studying marginalised students, we analyse discourses about marginalisation, produced in Nordic publications. We explore the following research questions: what knowledge do the Nordic research discourses produce about marginalisation through education in the Nordic welfare states? What are the Nordic contributions to studies of marginalisation through education?

According to Foucault, discourse analysis falls into two groups: critical analysis of *effects* of discursive exclusion, and genealogical analysis of conditions of discursive formation, appearance, growth and variation. Our major focus in this article is critical analysis of *effects* of discursive exclusion. We analyse this at two levels. We address the effects of discursive exclusion, and in terms of the constitution of Nordic discourses on marginalisation through education.

We apply the following methodological principles outlined by Foucault (1971); firstly, analysis of discursive *exteriority*, that is discourse appearance at the enunciate

level (Foucault, 1995). Secondly, we treat discourse as a *discontinuous* activity, analysing discontinuities and continuity within and across four Nordic discourses on marginalisation, which we identify through our analysis. Thirdly, we address the principle of discursive *specificity*. The four educational discourses we identify are specific in terms of their research object and theoretical perspectives, and how they conceptualise marginalisation and social justice. Fourthly, we address discursive *regularity* and *the external conditions of existence* of the discourses (Foucault, 1971). We conduct the analysis at the enunciate level and at interdiscursive level, focusing on discursive struggles and de- and reconstruction of knowledge about marginalisation through education.

Methodology

This article is based on discourse analysis of peer-reviewed articles, books and book chapters by members of the Nordic Centre of Excellence "Justice through education in the Nordic countries" (NCoE JustEd)[1]. The publications are from 2013 to February 2017. This timeframe is defined by the establishment of JustEd in 2013 and the deadline we set for our selection of JustEd publications in February 2017 for contribution to this special issue of *Education Inquiry*. The Nordic Centre of Excellence produced 600 peer-reviewed publications within our timeframe between 2013 and February 2017. We searched publications about exclusion/inclusion, marginalisation, gender and sexuality, racism and racialisation, disability and special needs, which are central in studies of marginalisation. We analysed titles and abstracts of the available 600 JustEd publications and selected 109 publications that addressed these themes. Unfortunately, no Danish publications from JustEd matched our requirements within the timeframe. Hence, there are no Danish publications in our sample. We limited the sample and analysis to the publications from Finland, Sweden, Norway and Iceland. The majority of the publications in our sample are in English, with a few publications in Finnish or Norwegian. There is an uneven distribution of publications in relation to the different themes, with relatively more publications on social class and marginalisation and racism and marginalisation than on gender/sexuality or disability/ special needs and marginalisation. The studies in our sample are empirical as well as theoretical. They address comprehensive, secondary education and teacher education, with a major focus on secondary education. The studies focus on educational policy, teaching practices and curriculum issues, and the effects in terms of inclusive or exclusive education and marginalisation.

Our first reading through of the publications focused on marginalisation and exclusion/inclusion in relation to these four themes: social class; racism and racialisation; gender and sexuality; and disability and special needs. The purpose at this stage was to identify what the Nordic publications say about marginalisation and exclusion in relation to these four themes. This amounts to analysis at the enunciate level (Foucault, 1995). In order to make our analysis transparent to the reader, we present our findings from the analysis at the enunciate level in the first section of this article. We present this under four headings. These headings communicate our findings based on interdiscursive analysis of the Nordic studies. We found that the Nordic studies addressing social class and marginalisation, constitute a discourse on marketisation. The Nordic studies on racism and racialisation and marginalisation, constitute a

discourse on Eurocentrism. The Nordic studies on gender and sexuality and marginalisation constitute a discourse on gender equity. The Nordic studies of disability and special needs and marginalisation constitute a discourse on ableism.

Interdiscursive analysis explores the production of knowledge about a phenomenon in different discourses that address the same phenomenon, in our case marginalisation. At interdiscursive level we analyse specificity, discontinuities and continuity between the four Nordic research discourses on marginalisation, and relate this to other Nordic and international discourses on marginalisation through education. We include in the analysis other relevant Nordic and international research publications than those produced by JustEd members, including Danish publications. The Danish publications are important in their own right and especially important since we lacked Danish publications in our sample of JustEd publications.

The Nordic studies we have analysed construct four critical research discourses on marginalisation through education as shown in the sections that follow. The first section accounts for the knowledge production about marginalisation in the four Nordic research discourses at the enunciate level, with particular focus on the effects of discursive marginalisation. The next section addresses discursive exclusion and inclusion. The third section presents our interdiscursive analysis. We discuss the four Nordic discourses we have identified in relation to each other, and in relation to other Nordic and international discourses on marginalisation through education. We reflect on the contributions of the critical Nordic counterdiscourses on marginalisation, and discuss briefly external conditions of existence that generate dominant, normalising discourses on marginalisation (Foucault, 1971, 1995),

A discourse on marketisation and marginalisation

Nordic studies of social class and marginalisation constitute a critical discourse on marketisation. Marketisation refers to privatisation within public education and implementation of market principles in education. A Nordic discourse explores the discursive effects of marketisation on exclusion, segregation and marginalisation in Sweden (Alexiadou et al., 2016; Dovemark & Arreman, 2017; Dovemark et al., 2018; Lundahl, 2016). Similar studies of marketisation have been produced in Norway (Bjordal, 2016) and in Finland (Seppänen, Kalalahti, Rinne, & Simola, 2015), and in a comparative Nordic perspective (Blossing et al., 2014). Market mechanisms such as economic incentives and competition, school choice and privatisation are embedded in education in all the Nordic countries, but Sweden has taken the lead in marketisation of public education (Lundahl, 2016).

The discourse on marketisation highlights processes of social class and ethnic segregation in secondary education mediated by school choice, choice of vocational or academic programmes, and choice of programmes with a special emphasis (Beach, Dovemark, Schwartz, & Öhrn, 2013; Dovemark, 2014; Dovemark & Beach, 2015; Öhrn, 2012).

Publications from Sweden, Finland and Norway focus on the social class distinctions found between vocational and academic tracks (Nylund et al., 2018). The studies analyse the role of school choice, differentiation and marginalisation of students with working-class, special needs and immigrant backgrounds (Dewilde & Kulbrandstad, 2016; Lahelma, Lappalainen, Palmu, & Pehkonen, 2014; Lappalainen & Aaltonen, 2014;

Lappalainen, Mietola, & Lahelma, 2013; Niemi & Kurki, 2014; Nylund, 2018). In Norway, for instance, approximately 30% of the students drop out or otherwise do not complete secondary education within five years (Vogt, 2017). The majority of these are in vocational tracks.

Educational structures and content prepare a number of students for marginality and life in the precariat, with permanent exclusion from education and work (Dovemark & Arreman, 2017; Dovemark & Beach, 2015). Therapeutic educational provisions individualise youth unemployment by excluding market mechanisms from the discourse on youth unemployment.

A structural and pedagogical divide between academic and vocational programmes generates positive stereotypes of students in academic programmes and negative stereotypes of students in vocational programmes (Jonsson & Beach, 2013, 2015; Nylund et al., 2018). In turn, this has negative effects on the quality of education for those affected (Jonsson & Beach, 2013, 2015).

A meta-ethnographic study documents marginalisation as an interdiscursive and intersectional phenomenon in which territorial segregation (housing) of populations with low socioeconomic status intersects with dominant media and educational discourses expressing negative stereotypes and low educational expectations of students in these areas (Beach et al., 2013). This analysis is consistent with international studies in the field of urban education (Pink & Noblit, 2017; Tolonen, 2017).

Ethnographic research on working-class boys, however well intentioned, has generated stereotypes of working-class boys as anti-school and disinterested in academic work (Rosvall, 2015). In order to avoid essentialist analyses of working-class boys, Rosvall argues in favour of theory-driven research. A similar argument is put forth in a study of epistemological and methodological challenges in research on youth at the margins (Pihl, 2015). Theory-driven and multilevel research that challenges class hegemony and power/knowledge is a form of discursive resistance to culturalist and essentialist analyses of marginalisation through education (Pihl, 2015). Empowering methodologies are critical ethnography and participatory action research involving youth at the margins as researchers (Bastien & Holmarsdottir, 2015a).

A discourse on Eurocentrism and marginalisation

Nordic studies of racism and racialisation and marginalisation constitute a critical discourse on Eurocentrism. Eurocentrism (also Western-centrism) is a worldview centred on and biased towards European and Western civilisation, implicitly regarding this culture as pre-eminent. A discourse on Eurocentrism explores the legacy of colonialism and its impact on curriculum, the content of education and social interaction and marginalisation in schools (Juva & Holm, 2017; Mikander, 2016). A Finnish study has explored worldviews in textbooks on Finnish history, social studies and geography (basic education, years 5–9) published between 2005 and 2010 (Mikander, 2016). The textbooks marginalise a large proportion of the world's population, thereby perpetuating ideas in the classroom of superior and inferior peoples and cultures (unless challenged by teachers) (Mikander, 2016).

Studies show that teaching and social interactions in schools are conceptualised as being colour blind or culturally neutral, yet simultaneously cultural and educational ideas about "the normal student" based on white, Western and middle-class standards are being conveyed (Juva & Holm, 2017; Mansikka & Holm, 2011; Riitaoja, 2013; Rosvall & Öhrn, 2014). Similar conceptions about the ideal "normal" student are found in Norway (Chinga-Ramirez, 2015, 2017).

Negative name-calling is very common in schools. In Finland, approximately 65% of students with an immigrant background have experienced this kind of harassment (Kankkunen, Harinen, Nivala, & Tapio, 2010). Racist remarks or behaviours are often dismissed as jokes and goofing around or not intentionally hurtful (Rosvall & Öhrn, 2014). By not openly acknowledging everyday racism and preferring to take a colour-blind approach, ethnic discrimination and racism do not become issues that can be dealt with in schools (Dovemark, 2017; Souto, 2011). Teacher discourses tend to reconceptualise racism as cultural difference. Thereby, teachers can avoid dealing with discrimination and racism as a phenomenon in their schools (Holm & Mansikka, 2013). In relation to openly far right extremist and racist discourses, schools need to deal explicitly with racism, Islamophobia and anti-Semitism (Von Brömssen, 2013). The argument is that education is instrumental in developing and continuing discussions of democratic values and norms. This implies deconstructing the ideology and practice of the extreme, far right, anti-democratic movements.

Schools in the Nordic countries are segregated according to immigrant status (Bjordal, 2016; Dovemark & Holm, 2015; Gudmundsson, Beach, & Vestel, 2013; Nordli Hansen, 2017). Segregation also takes place within schools (Dovemark & Holm, 2015; Juva & Holm, 2017). Racialised policies and practices permeate processes of marginalisation through education (Dovemark & Holm, 2015; Juva & Holm, 2017; Pihl, 2010). Students experience this through textbooks (Mikander, 2016) and the curriculum design (Riitaoja, 2013). In Denmark, the languages and history of minority students are excluded from the curriculum, and hence are discriminated against (Horst, 2017).

Studies from Norway and Denmark show that, at an interpersonal level, non-white students are categorised as "foreigners" (Chinga-Ramirez, 2017; Padovan-Özdemir, 2016; Solbue, 2014). In Norway, educational discourse about *equality* tends to be implemented as discourses about *sameness*, treating "whiteness" and "Norwegianness" as the same, with marginalising effects (Chinga-Ramirez, 2017; Solbue, 2014). At the same time, the students resist being categorised as foreigners (Chinga-Ramirez, 2017; Solbue, 2014).

Intersectional analysis indicates that a middle-class background is favourable for social mobility through education, even for non-white students. When controlling for social class, there is no significant difference in Norway between the performance of students with a majority background and those with a minority background (Chinga-Ramirez, 2017). One-third of minority students who complete upper-secondary school get better grades than majority students get and go into higher education at a higher rate than students go from majority backgrounds. In Norway, social class accounts for these positive educational results among students with a minority background.

A discourse on gender equity and marginalisation

Nordic studies of gender and sexuality and marginalisation constitute a critical discourse on gender equity. A dominant discourse on gender equity is strong in the Nordic welfare states, with reference to equality of opportunity and equity in education regardless of gender. In the discourse on gender equity and marginalisation, the publications we analyse address two specific topics: gender segregation in vocational training (Lahelma et al., 2014; Lappalainen et al., 2013) and the marginalisation of sexual minorities based on heteronormativity (Kjaran & Jóhannesson, 2013; Lehtonen, 2016). Despite longstanding policies for gender equity in the Nordic welfare states, a gendered labour market still exists (Brunila & Edström, 2013; Lehtonen, 2016). Young men and women still choose vocational routes in accordance with gendered subjectivities (Lappalainen et al., 2013), even though they have equal opportunities to choose differently. Relatively few girls go into building construction, and relatively few boys train for the caring professions. Various evaluation processes of "ideal" children in Finland and Sweden favour gendered subjectivities founded on essentialist discourses about the differences between boys and girls (Odenbring & Lappalainen, 2013). A dominant heteronormative discourse defines gender only in terms of male and female. Heteronormativity considers a heteronormative sexuality as normal and superior to any another sexuality (Lehtonen, 2016). Structures and activities in schools are mostly heteronormative (Brunila & Edström, 2013). The result is othering and experiences of institutionalised heterosexism that marginalise non-heterosexual and transgender youth (Kjaran & Kristinsdóttir, 2015). Gender equity in education requires gender work and attention to the intersections of gender, marketisation and heteronormativity (Brunila & Edström, 2013, p. 302).

Heteronormative discourses silence the subjectivities of sexual minorities and make them invisible (Kjaran & Jóhannesson, 2015; Kjaran & Kristinsdóttir, 2015). Silence and invisibility often surround non-heterosexual and transgender youth, both in curricula and school cultures in general (Kjaran & Jóhannesson, 2015; Kjaran & Kristinsdóttir, 2015). Thus, processes of othering and marginalisation related to heteronormativity operate through explicit and implicit distinctions.

Heteronormativity and gender-segregated vocational training are difficult for non-heterosexual, transgender youth and those who do not fit the gendered/heterosexual norm. Gendered expectations influence non-heterosexual and transgendered youth more than other students in choosing educational and career paths (Lehtonen, 2016). This is particularly evident with non-heterosexual boys, transfeminine youth and those boys who do not express their gender in accordance with hetero-masculine expectations. Such young people experience pressure in the labour market and in vocational training to act masculine in order to fit into the dominant culture (Lehtonen, 2016). This pressure limits their educational choices and increases their risk of dropping out of school and failing to complete their education (Kjaran & Kristinsdóttir, 2015; Lehtonen, 2016).

The effects in terms of education and educational trajectories can vary individually, as these young people may use different strategies to accommodate their non-heterosexual/transgender identities and/or create their own space. Some find ways to fit the norm (Lehtonen, 2016). Others avoid potentially homophobic/transphobic

educational opportunities (Kjaran & Kristinsdóttir, 2015; Lehtonen, 2016) by trying to create their own queer space (Kjaran & Jóhannesson, 2013).

A discourse on ableism and marginalisation

The Nordic studies of disability and special needs and marginalisation constitute a critical discourse on ableism. Ableism is a discourse that favours the able body and mind, and discriminates in favour of able-bodied people. At the epistemological level, ableism informs differential diagnostics, which is applied in educational assessment of "learning disabilities" (World Health Organisation, 1992). Critical research studies deconstruct ableism and the effects of medicalisation and differential diagnostics in education in general (Grue, 2011, 2016; Pihl, 2010). Categorising students with learning disabilities serves both as a tool of inclusion (providing access to education and resources) and as a tool of exclusion (conceptually excluded from the norm) (Helakorpi, Mietola, & Niemi, 2014; Kauppila & Lappalainen, 2015; Niemi & Kurki, 2014; Niemi & Mietola, 2016). A prominent manifestation of exclusion is placement of students with special needs in segregated groups or classes. Whether teachers, the school or peers perceive a student as abled or disabled is fluid, situational and dependent on the educational environment, educational culture and social norms (Niemi & Kurki, 2014), as well as the effects of standardised assessments (Arnesen, 2017; Pihl, 2010). The more competitive the educational system, based on standardised assessments, the stronger is the exclusion from ordinary education of students categorised as having special needs (Arnesen, 2017). Exclusion takes place at a discursive and organisational level, resulting in educational provisions intended to "help" the excluded to be included. However, including the one defined as different and excluded has already excluded the subject (Niemi & Kurki, 2013; Riitaoja, 2013).

The child psychiatric system of expertise and knowledge exercises the power of definition of learning disabilities. A diagnosis individualises the pedagogical challenges related to multiplicity in the student population. "The problem child" is lifted out of ordinary teaching and taught according to an individual curriculum. Categorisation of normality, deviance and disability is historically, culturally and socially specific (Ingstad & Whyte, 1995; Pihl, 2010). This is even the case in relation to the application of the medical model itself (Grue, 2011, 2016; Grue, Johannessen, & Rasmussen, 2015). Discourses within special needs education perpetuate dichotomies between the able and the disabled, the normal and the abnormal, based on a medical model as opposed to a cultural one. This is a form of knowledge construction in which multiplicities in mental and physical capacities are excluded from the concept of normality and standard education. This is also a form of discursive exclusion, which some disability studies problematise (Oliver & Barnes, 2012). High-stakes testing and standardised educational and psychological assessment based on Eurocentric assessment criteria establish discursive links between whiteness and "smartness" with subsequent disproportionate placement and segregation of students from ethnic minorities in special needs education (Leonardo, 2009; Oswald, Coutinho, & Best, 2001; Pihl, 2010; Trainor, 2008).

Discursive exclusion and inclusion

A fundamental principle of exclusion is the prohibition to speak (Foucault, 1971). Do the Nordic studies exclude or include the voices of youth at the margins speaking up against marginalisation? Some of the Nordic publications include analysis of youth speaking out against marginalisation. These studies focus on youth agency and individual or collective political attempts to achieve equity and social justice (Beach & Sernhede, 2013; Carlson, 2015; Dewilde & Skrefsrud, 2016; Pihl, 2015; Rosvall, 2015). A study of youth resistance to segregation through education in secondary school concludes that the resistance did not succeed because the youth lacked political tools for successful action (Öhrn, 2012). This analysis is confirmed by Rosvall's study (Rosvall, 2015) of reproduction of stereotypes of working-class boys. The boys' substantial efforts to improve their vocational education by appealing to the school rector did not succeed. The critical Nordic discourses indicate that youth who speak up are once again marginalised whenever school leaders and teachers fail to recognise their protests against marginalisation through education. Youth resistance to marginalisation is also discussed in relation to youth riots (Pihl, 2015). Youths who riot in poor suburbs protest against police brutality, poor education, unemployment and social exclusion. However, the riots often backfire on the youths. The riots seldom improve the lives of young people and their communities at the margins. Rioting youths often lack knowledge and concepts with which they can analyse their position at the margins, articulate political demands, and organise their struggle for quality education, work and housing. Epistemologies and theories that deconstruct domination and exploitation based on social class, gender, ethnic background or ability thus become crucial to knowledge production and dissemination in teacher education and schools. Equally important is knowledge dissemination about successful collective political struggles against marginalisation and for social justice (Pihl, 2015).

Nordic studies document student resistance to social marginalisation in schools in terms of students' appropriation of school space (Kjaran & Jóhannesson, 2015; Von Brömssen, 2013). Other Nordic studies highlight student resistance to negative stereotyping and "Othering" performed by teachers and fellow students towards immigrants and descendants of immigrants (Chinga-Ramirez, 2015; Solbue, 2014).

Interdiscursive analysis

Discursive discontinuity and continuity

The four critical Nordic research discourses we have identified analyse marginalisation primarily in relation to class relations, ethnic relations, gender relations and ability/ disability relations. These objects of analysis constitute discontinuities between the discourses. Discontinuities also pertain to the application of theoretical frameworks. The discourse on social class and marketisation is informed by Marxist theory, focusing on the dialectic interaction between social class, knowledge and culture in social reproduction and marginalisation through education (Beach et al., 2013; Bernstein, 1975; Dovemark & Beach, 2015; Gudmundsson et al., 2013; Pihl, 2015). From this theoretical perspective, neo-liberal economic policies and practices and the subsequent marketisation of education are manifestations of the dominating ideas of the ruling

class. The critical Nordic research discourse on marketisation deconstructs this from within. In the discourse on Eurocentrism, the research object is racialised discursive policies and practices. Post-colonial and anti-racist theory informs this critical discourse. The discourse on gender and sexuality is primarily informed by gender and queer theory, while the discourse on ableism is informed by critical disability theory and anti-racist theory. Application of specific theoretical and conceptual tools facilitates specificity in the deconstructive analysis of marginalisation through education. However, it also facilitates discontinuity in the analysis of marginalisation, with a primary focus on social class relations, ethnic relations, gender relations or disability relations. In real life, these relations intersect. Several Nordic contributions acknowledge this through intersectional analysis (Carlson & Kanci, 2017; Chinga-Ramirez, 2017; Gudmundsson et al., 2013).

Our analysis indicates that specific theoretical frameworks for analysis of marginalisation are important, but are insufficient as preconditions for deconstruction of marginalisation through education. Analysis at interdiscursive level *across* specific discourses is required in order to capture continuity in processes of marginalisation through education. This is our approach in the analysis of the Nordic discourses.

The four Nordic research discourses deconstruct effects of discursive exclusions at the macro-level (marketisation, Eurocentrism, heteronormativity, ableism), at the institutional level (for example, the effects of therapeutic educational measures and school choice) and at the individual level (effects of stigma, pedagogical segregation and devaluation). The criteria for our analysis of marginalisation are the effects of discursive exclusion on the individuals and groups concerned, as documented by the Nordic discourses.

International studies of marginalisation draw a distinction between studies *on* and *about* youth at the margins and studies *with* youth at the margins (Bastien & Holmarsdottir, 2015b). Discourses *on* youth at the margins define marginalised youth as the research object. Such studies are prone to essentialism and culturalisation, tying the individuals to their marginalised position as working class or the cultural or deviant "Other". The Nordic counter-discourses show that culturalisation and essentialist analysis are especially evident in dominant discourses on working-class students, boys in particular, and in dominant discourses about immigrant students and descendants of immigrants (Gudmundsson et al., 2013; Møller, 2013; Pihl, 2015; Rosvall, 2015). Essentialism and culturalisation are manifestations of discursive marginalisation and power/knowledge in the Nordic context.

Several Nordic studies recognise student resistance to marginalisation. However, the Nordic discourses indicate that schools rarely engage students at the margins in work against marginalisation through education. Teachers rarely acknowledge these students' voices, whether they are students with special needs (Barneombudet, 2017), working-class boys (Rosvall, 2015), or non-white or transgender/non-heterosexual students (Kjaran & Jóhannesson, 2015).

The critical Nordic discourses deconstruct normalising discourses about the ideal, white, able, middle-class, gendered student, theorising discursive marginalisation within a context of Eurocentrism and a colonial legacy. Raising the analytical level from the micro- to the meso- and macro-level and including intersectional analysis resists essentialist analysis that otherwise runs the risk of reifying negative stereotypes of

youth at the margins (Anthias, 2012). Young people belong to several categories at the same time. Critical Nordic discourses address this phenomenon through intersectional analysis (Carlson, 2015; Chinga-Ramirez, 2017; Gudmundsson et al., 2013).

In our analysis, we acknowledge the discontinuities and continuity among the four Nordic research discourses on marginalisation. The critical Nordic research discourses document that dominant, normalising discourses devaluate specific individuals and groups, whether they be working-class students, non-white students, transgender/non-heterosexual students or disabled students. Stereotyping and stigma devaluate the social, cultural and educational resources and intellectual capacities of students at the margins, whether in vocational or academic courses. Discursive devaluation disciplines the subject.

Devaluation is a discursive manifestation of what Fraser calls mis-recognition (Fraser, 2003). Mis-recognition treats some individuals or groups as inferior, excluded or simply invisible. Fraser treats redistribution and recognition as distinct perspectives on, and dimensions of, justice without reducing either dimension to the other. The critical Nordic research discourses attend to these two dimensions of social justice.

De- and reconstruction of knowledge from within a Eurocentric realm

International studies tend to analyse marginalisation in relation to specific groups of students in specific fields and discourses (Bernstein, 1975; Ladson-Billings, 2010; Oliver & Barnes, 2012; Sleeter, 2008; Arnot, 2009). The Nordic field of research is similarly constructed. However, the Nordic discourses we have analysed tend to construct the research object (marginalisation) as a relational phenomenon in contrast to studying "marginalised youth". This challenges objectifying knowledge production about the marginalised working class, immigrant, disabled or queer student. Equally important are methodological innovations (Holm, 2015; Pihl, Van Der Kooij, & Carlsten, 2017). An epistemological break with methodological nationalism facilitates deconstruction of ruling discourses that repeatedly categorise immigrant students, their families and descendants as strangers, educational problems and potential threats to the national welfare state (Carlson & Kanci, 2017; Padovan-Özdemir, 2016).

In Denmark, there is interesting continuity and discontinuity between two critical and comprehensive discourse analytical studies on marginalisation of students with immigrant backgrounds (Horst, 2017; Padovan-Özdemir, 2016). Both studies conceptualise marginalisation of non-white students with immigrant backgrounds as instrumental in the reproduction of the monocultural Danish welfare state. The first study (Padovan-Özdemir, 2016, p. 265) concludes that marginalisation is the effect of a deeply rooted, national(ist), racialised professionalisation and a civilising pedagogy. The second study (Horst, 2017), identifies a shift in Denmark from a normalising dominant discourse on equality to a normalising discourse on differential treatment that discriminates against ethnic minority students. Whereas Horst prioritises educational recognition of ethnic difference (teaching in the mother tongue), Padovan-Özdemir conceptualises ethnification as integral to discursive marginalisation.

Anti-racist and post-colonial discourses analyse the effects of the Western colonial legacy on educational content and practice (Carlson, 2015; Juva & Holm, 2017; Mikander, 2016). Central topics are the discursive construction of the superior white,

able, middle-class, "normal" students and the inferior non-white, deviant, working-class, disabled, queer and immigrant students, affecting students' identity and sense of belonging. The critical Nordic research contributions illuminate how dominant educational discourses ascribe negative characteristics to students in terms of inferior intelligence, culture, subjectivity, ability or employability. In so doing, the critical Nordic research discourses perform discursive resistance to these forms of marginalisation.

In this article, we have analysed knowledge production about marginalisation within and across four Nordic research discourses. Epistemological, theoretical and methodological considerations are paramount in the production of knowledge about marginalisation. Such considerations pertain to all aspects of the research process: definition of purpose; the construction of the research object; the research question, epistemological assumptions; theoretical perspectives; the methodological tools; and the analysis. A discourse analytical approach and critical reflections imply that we as researchers reflect on the knowledge production of which we ourselves are a part, questioning the effects of categories in use and whether structural conditions and agency are adequately considered in studies on discursive marginalisation.

Conclusion

The four critical Nordic research discourses we have analysed shed light on processes of discursive marginalisation through education in four Nordic welfare states, which prioritise egalitarianism, equality of opportunity regardless of social background, and gender equity. Firstly, the critical Nordic research discourses deconstruct how dominant educational discourses conceptualise the content and distribution of educational resources and relations. Secondly, the critical Nordic discourses develop educational theory and methodologies for redistribution of educational and economic resources in order to raise the quality of education for students at the margins. We define these critical Nordic research discourses as counterdiscourses. They define education for democratic citizenship as the major purpose of education.

In the current context, a normalising neo-liberal educational discourse on marketisation mediates marginalisation. This dominant discourse establishes a discursive order that constitutes conditions of discursive formation in interaction with a Eurocentric discourse, a heteronormative discourse and an ableist discourse. Discursive marginalisation interacts with market demands in a stratified, global educational and labour market. Contrary to dominant marketisation discourse and neo-liberal claims, the Nordic discourses document negative effects of marketisation in terms of increasing and new forms of segregation and marginalisation through education at the expense of fostering democratic citizenship and social justice through education. The critical Nordic research discourses show that effects of dominant, normalising discourses are stigma, segregation and exclusion of poor, working-class students, non-white and immigrant students, and descendants of immigrants, as well as sexual minorities and disabled students.

Marginalisation draws on a colonial, Eurocentric legacy in which the nation-state and the white, able, heterosexual middle class define their cultural capital as superior. This privileges reproduction of discursive, class and cultural domination and marginalises the constructed "inferior Others". Critical Nordic research discourses deconstruct

these processes of marginalisation from within. These Nordic research discourses reconstruct knowledge about marginalisation, taking into account the importance of discursive, academic resistance and youth resistance, and intersectionality. Nordic contributions develop arguments for social justice through education based on recognition of the social and cultural resources of all students and on student participation in research and collective actions for social justice.

Note

1. Nordic Centre of Excellence "Justice through education in the Nordic countries" (NCoE JustEd) was established in 2013 (www.justed.org). All authors of this article are members of JustEd. See the publications from the centre at: http://www.justed.org/publications/.

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