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Sticky categorizations: processes of marginalization and (im)possible mo(ve)ments of transcending marginalization

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What are the possibilities and/or limitations for becoming subjects differentiated from previous categorizations, such as “troublemaker”, to which certain students are subjected? This is the question analyzed in this paper, based on observations of, and narratives and perspectives of, two 15-year-old ethnic minority boys at a school in Denmark. Drawing on the work of Deleuze and Guattari and their concepts of “smooth” and “striated” spaces, I explore spaces where energies are mobilized through ongoing generated and created relations, and how spaces where this does not seem possible, tend to trap and thereby limit the person being categorized. Through the analyses, I will show how repetitive, limiting categorizations in and over time tend to “stick” to the boys being categorized, and how the sticky categorizations obstruct their future possibilities for change and viable lives within the school.

Keywords: categorizations; smooth/striated space; marginalization/transcending marginalization; differentiation; spacetime mattering

Introduction

This paper examines possibilities and limitations in relation to two young male students’ processes of becoming subjects that are different from (earlier) problematic categorizations, as they are situated in the politics of inclusion of Danish education. Inclusion, in relation to state schools (*Folkeskolen*), has become a widespread buzzword in Denmark. The Danish Government wants all children to have the possibility to learn at state schools, regardless of their prerequisites for learning. The overarching political aim of the idea of inclusion is to reduce the number of students attending special schools and classes, by including all children in what is referred to as “the inclusive Folkeskole”, and is related to the 95% goal which aims to get 95% of the students in a school year group to complete an upper secondary education by 2015 (Ministeriet for børn og undervisning [Ministry of Children and Teaching], 2012). Schools and teachers are as part of this idea obliged by law (Folkeskoleloven, 2010, §18) to consider “the individual student’s needs and prerequisites for learning” when preparing their teaching (my translation).

In this paper, I am interested in how the teaching of some teachers leads to the in-exclusion of two 15-year-old, young, ethnic minority male students, Amir and Saad. I am interested in the students’ perspectives and narratives, and in the analyses I focus on the categorizations to which they are subjected and that lead to their

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exclusion, and ask: What are the possibilities for/limitations on their becoming subjects who differ from these categorizations?

Research design

This paper is based on empirical data collected in 2009 at a school in Copenhagen in Denmark, where I spent approximately four weeks, and one follow-up interview with Amir in 2012. The data are part of a larger PhD project, running from 2009 to 2013, concerning processes of marginalization and transcending marginalization in relation to the school in Denmark, and one in Sweden. Learning from marginal positions may include both marginalizing learning (Mørck, 2011), which often involves being caught up in contradistinctions, dilemmas and/or double binds, as well as expansive learning (Engeström, 1987), that is, collective struggles with these dilemmas and double binds and partly¹ transcending them (Mørck, 2011). The study of this is primarily based on the narratives and perspectives of 11 ninth-grade male and female students, aged 14–16, primarily with ethnic minority backgrounds. The qualitative methods used to collect the 2009 data that constitute the empirical basis of the analyses of this paper include: planned participant observations, where pre-composed observation guidelines brought me closer to especially differences and similarities in student (and teacher) positions and modes of participating (with a differentiation between more or less active/relatively passive) in the teaching; a less specific participation in the field on my part, during the approximately four weeks I spent at each of the two schools, referred to in my final dissertation as “deep hanging out”; semi-structured interviews (with both small groups and individuals) with 11 students, five teachers and a youth education supervisor (in Danish, “UU-vejleder”), and a teaching assistant; informal conversations with students, parents, teachers, supervisors, school principals and other people related to the field; and a review of diverse documents (from the school, the (local) press, etc.).

After the first round of data collection in 2009, I had planned to do follow-up interviews with 7 of the 11 young persons from the first round, who were selected owing to the different ways in which they seemed to struggle/have struggled with double binds, dilemmas and/or contradistinctions in relation to, or outside, the school, which supported my dual focus on both processes of marginalization and transcending marginalization. However, owing to a lengthy break from the project, because of *inter alia* maternity leave in 2010/2011 and work for the university, this was not possible, as several of the young people seemed to have lost interest in the project during this period, during which they all left primary school (*Folkeskolen*). This is considered to reflect some important conditions in the practice of research, to which I will return.

A decentered analytical approach

Both the theoretical and the methodological approach 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 possibilities 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 possibilities and limitations related to participation, action, and such, in these contexts and

communities – for example in relation to the school – are also objects of analysis (Dreier, 2008). Hence, a decentered analytical approach breaks with dominant individualizing discourses (Dreier, 2008, pp. 48–49; Osterkamp, 2000). According to Osterkamp (2000, p. 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 features 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 this case, the decentered analytical approach to researching processes of marginalization and the transcending hereof is firstly based on the young people’s first-person perspectives. 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 is about *going around the perspective* and among other things, examining what the subject *does* and what possibilities and limitations are set for them (Kousholt, 2006). This implies that a subject’s perspective cannot be researched by only including the experiences of the subject in a phenomenological sense (Kousholt, 2006), since in order to grasp the young people’s perspectives, one must also include both the contexts in which the young people participate, and other perspectives than the young people’s, since these are (also) regarded as conditions for the young people’s actions and participation.

With regard to this project and the ambition to research processes of marginalization and the transcending of marginal positions from a first-persons perspective, a decentered analytical approach may be an important part of (critically) identifying local and/or societal conditions, in this case related to the school. However, my “getting access” to the young people whom I have been interested in doing research with, and “getting access” to their narratives and perspectives have to some extent been quite unpredictable, which is reflected on in the following section.

Give-and-take relations in relation to the practice of research

Bourdieu (1990), inspired by Mauss’ “The Gift”, describes a basic principle of give-and-take relations, where the exchange of gifts is understood as the fundamental driving force in relation to the regulation of a practice. Bourdieu argues that the initial exchange of a gift always implies the possible continuation of exchange in the form of a counter-gift; furthermore, the exchange includes the implicit recognition of the recipient. According to Bourdieu, this principle of reciprocal exchange is understood as a disposition which is inculcated in the participants, here understood as the researcher and the participants, as a consequence of their participation in a practice, in this case, the practice of research.

Understanding the practice of research as a practice among other practices, give-and-take relations are (also) part of the research practice. In this sense, and on a general level, the research project I represented to the young participants in 2009 seemed to provide (give) a refuge for them, where their seemingly pressing

narratives of experiences of injustice and unfairness were recognized and considered important contributions, just as the young people in return provided me with their perspectives and narratives which were of crucial importance to my research project. The fact that none of them have explicitly explained to me how they did not wish to participate in follow-up interviews as agreed in 2009, despite our agreement that they could back out of the research project at any time, supports this idea: their sensing that it was their time to “give”, according to the principle of reciprocal exchange, may very well have made it difficult for them to explicitly state to me, how they in fact no longer wished to participate in the project, as previously agreed. Hence, all but one (who never returned my messages) have been very friendly when I approached them for the arrangement of a follow-up interview, only to then resign from communication shortly after, as most of them have. This has given me the impression that their need to “take” with regard to a “space” to share their experiences and challenges is no longer as pressing or perhaps even existent (as the case was with Amir to some extent in the follow-up interview – see later on in the paper), which made it possible to only meet and do follow-up interviews with two of the seven young people in 2012. The young people’s resignation from the project has led me to further believe that the period of almost two years from the first to the second round of data production is a period of time, where I have failed to nurture and “give” to the relation that was first created in 2009, and as a result of this, the young people lost interest in the project I represent and thereby their motivation to participate further in the relational “space” created in 2009, as a place to give – or take. This has obviously created fundamental changes to the general form of the project, and has given rise to more general reflections on the premises for doing research with young, marginalized people, and the implications of such premises, which will be further elaborated on in my final dissertation. Further reflections on researcher positioning in relation to “getting access” in specific to first Saad and through him to Amir will be pursued in the following section.

“Hey, Saad! Did you hear that? – She is Muslim!”

My “deep hanging out” in the field provided me with access to many informal conversations with students, teachers and school staff, which played an important role in the final selection of participants for the project, an approach that is inspired by anthropological and ethnographic approaches to fieldwork (e.g. Lave, 2011; Lave & Kvale, 1995). “Deep hanging out” is a field method whereby the researcher, with no definite purpose, “hangs out” in the field, while at the same time, “deep” reflects the researcher’s attention to the fact that what is experienced is to be used for a purpose (Staunæs, 2004, p. 76; Staunæs & Søndergaard, 2005, p. 58). With regard to the informal conversations during my “deep hanging out”, my ethnic background, as part Yemeni, carried out in concrete body signs (Søndergaard, 1996) by the dark color of my skin, brown hair and eyes, came to be of crucial importance in especially the school in Denmark. On one of the first days I spent at the school, one of the three Muslim girls mentioned in the observations for the second example, with Saad, looked at me intently during a lesson for which the teacher never appeared, and then curiously asked the question: “You’re not Danish, are you?” I explained to her briefly about my background; that I am the child of a mother from Denmark and a father from Yemen, and moreover, that I was born and raised in Denmark, to which she quickly responded: “Is your father a Muslim?” to which I replied “yes”.

She clearly brightened, and yelled across the classroom: “Hey, Saad! Did you hear that? – She is Muslim!” I immediately commented that *I* am not a Muslim, at which she wonderingly responded: “But didn’t you just say that your father is Muslim?”, to which I nodded my head and silently assented, as with my background, I realize that, according to Islam, you belong to the religion of your father.

The information that my father is Muslim seemed to create a special position for me in the context of the school in Denmark, as part of my field work, with respect to my getting closer to some of the boys in the class, and especially Saad, and through his perspectives and narratives, his everyday life in and outside of the school. Hence, shortly after the incident just described, he and one of the other boys, who had barely noticed me at all up to this point, came over to the place where I had been seated by the teachers, and sat down beside me and the girls who had just been talking to me. Slowly but eagerly, Saad started to tell me about his plans for the future, about various difficult episodes from his school life that he had been struggling with, and how he felt that these struggles were making it difficult for him to realize his plans.

In many ways, Saad appeared to be the leader of the boys in the class at the school in Denmark, and the episode described above came to be of crucial importance, in terms of what became possible and not least “accessible” for me in the process and practice of the research: not only did the episode provide access to Saad and his experiences of everyday (school) life, but as the leader, Saad also interested Amir (and some of the other boys), his close friend in and outside of school, in the research that I was doing, in sharing with me his/their experiences of everyday (school) life. The point is that Saad’s (and later Amir’s) interest in me and my project, and the way he decided to entrust me with the discussion in the example presented below, and many others like it, provided me with “access” but was also not accidental. Rather, the incident drew my attention to the implications of being positioned as “other”, while (also) studying processes of othering, and how this “sameing” way of being positioned by the students seemingly foregrounded the differences in gender, age and societal position that existed between us (Khawaja & Mørck, 2009). In line with the concept of strategic essentialism (Spivak, 1993), I used this positioning more or less deliberately in my ongoing approach to/with the students (e.g. during the interviews), which is what Khawaja and Mørck (2009) termed a form of “strategic othering”, which implies consciously using your ethnic and/or religious “othered” position as a mediating, constructive force to create moments of sameness and difference in research. Hence, the incident reveals and emphasizes the question of access in relation to qualitative research; that *how* (the ways in which) we, as researchers, are positioned in the field doing our fieldwork has crucial implications for *what* (knowledge) we get access to, and how these positionings are constantly (re)negotiated.

(Im)possibilities for differentiated processes of becoming a student

A traditional philosophical conceptualization of difference has, following Aristotle, been that of a categorical difference, in which the other is discrete and distinct from the self, with the difference lying in the other (Davies, 2009, p. 17). Within the Deleuzian understanding of difference that this paper is based on, difference is conceptualized through a continuous process of becoming different, of *differenciation* (Davies, 2009, p. 17). For Deleuze, “real difference is a matter of how things – subjects or objects –

become different, how they evolve and continue to evolve beyond the boundaries of the sets they have been distributed into” (Williams, 2003, p. 60).

This paper presents analytical readings of two incidents, and links them to the broader theme of possibilities for, and limitations on differentiated ways of becoming students at the school in Denmark, and by extension to possibilities of partly transcending marginalization. The first episode presented is from an interview with two ninth-grade boys, Amir and Saad, and describes a transition program² at a technical college, which the boys attended a year prior to the interview. This episode illustrates the related processes of becoming a subject in new and expansive ways, which differs from previous ways for (in this case) Amir, to see and understand himself. The second episode is from my observations of Saad during the time I spent at the school. The observations and the following analyses indicate how categorizations seem to become “sticky” in and over time, and therefore difficult to escape, blocking possibilities for change.

In these analytical readings, I find Deleuze and Guattari’s (1987/2005) concepts of “smooth” and “striated” spaces helpful in identifying how the repetitions and movements within the striated spaces of the school seem to block smooth spaces, and thereby thwart possibilities for processes of becoming differentiated from previous ways of becoming a student subject.

Smooth and striated spaces in relation to a viable life

In striated space, lines or trajectories tend to be subordinated to points: one goes from one point to another. In the smooth, it is the opposite: the points are subordinated to the trajectory. (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987/2005, p. 478)

The ontology of the understanding of smooth and striated spaces is that reality is not seen in terms of fixed entities or objects, but instead as a movement indicating an understanding of the subject, not as being, but in terms of “becoming”, as a process (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987/2005). Striated spaces are created by territorial or molar lines that “organize by drawing strict boundaries, creating binary oppositions and dividing space into rigid segments with a hierarchical structure”, whereas smooth spaces create possibilities for change, referred to as “lines of flight”, a line described as “a pure movement of change” (Woodward, 2007, p. 68) that is open-ended.

My reading of a striated movement is one that holds everything *almost* the same, and the line of flight or smoothness refers to when a movement takes off to something new. Here, the *almost* refers to the understanding that an action can never be repeated completely and exactly; one cannot exactly redo a previous action. Hence, in social actions, there are always both repetition and displacement, and in the relationship between the repetition and the displacement, we find the possibilities of variability, and thereby the possibilities for change (Kofoed, 2004, p. 55). This explains Deleuze and Guattari’s (1987/2005) point about thinking of the two spaces not as alternatives to one another, but as interdependently coexisting within the same space, always woven together; the striated space creates rigid striations, and at the same time, the repetitions within a striated space will only *almost* hold everything the same, thereby creating possibilities for smoothness, for change, for deterritorialization. In this way, a movement, striated or smooth, is not based on a rejection of the already known, but on the assertion “that life generates and is generated through movement and invention; it both draws on the already known and it generates something new” (Davies, 2009, p. 20).

Although Deleuze and Guattari (1987/2005) privilege change and difference as forces of life, they understand pure change and difference as equivalent to chaos (Woodward, 2007, p. 70). Therefore, the two types of spaces cannot be thought of in binary terms; one “good”, one “bad”. People actually depend on striations for comfort, security, predictability, for having a safe “plot of land” where they can rest. But the striations can trap you, and it can be depressing. So, the striations are always double in what they are doing and what they are accomplishing. This same duality accounts for smooth spaces, since smooth space, which leads to the line of flight, is exhilarating and exciting, but may also be very dangerous, making it impossible to claim that it is good; in fact it may be just the opposite; it may be disastrous, going off into something unknown (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987/2005, p. 161). Yet, we depend on the line of flight for creating what Bergson (1911/1922) refers to as “creative evolution”. Life itself depends on change; it depends on the new being able to unfold. Hence, life is made up of repetitions and striations, but without the lines of flight, without the opening up of the new, we lose the necessary creative evolution to continue it, to create what Butler calls a livable or a “viable life”:

There must be some chance of a future, of a viable and enduring future, since a human life with no futurity loses its humanness and stands a chance of losing its life as well. [...] It may also be that life itself becomes foreclosed when the right way is decided in advance [...]. (Butler, 2004, pp. 225–226)

With the notion of viable life, the striations and repetitions may sometimes be taken to such extremes that they seem to block smoothness, and thereby, change and the new, and to leading a viable life in relation to school. The point of bringing the concepts of smooth and striated spaces to the analyses of Amir and Saad is to identify how the school’s managerialism, with its externally driven regulations and striated spaces, seemingly coagulated or stagnant in their repetitions and movements, tends to block “the new” with regard to the change created within smooth spaces, with “only the already-known being recirculated inside its tightly regulated relations of power” (Davies, 2009, p. 3), and thereby seemingly blocking the boys’ possibilities to find a viable life in the context of the school. In other words, I use the concepts of smooth and striated spaces to examine how both Amir’s and Saad’s possibilities to become and act in new and differentiated ways are expanded or limited as part of the actual pedagogical encounters in the school practice, thereby contributing to possibilities for/limitations on partly transcending their in many ways marginal positions at the school.

From differentiated becomings to materialized intra-pellations

[...] 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, we were supposed to make a tree house, so for instance, he didn’t say all the time: “get to work!”, or something [...] he himself couldn’t even do it, so for instance he told us to hammer a nail, and we hammered crooked, so he [Glenn] said: “Shit, are you crooked-fingered?”, or something [...], then we laughed and that sort of thing [...] 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)

My first analytical reading of Amir's narrative, above, concerns the way that Amir becomes a subject in relation to his teacher, Glenn, in ways that appear to be new and different from the way he sees himself becoming a subject in relation to his regular (Danish) teacher, Lisa.

Glenn's facilitation of a cheerful mood, an unrestrained atmosphere, a jointedness in relation to the task of building a tree house and not least, a space where Amir becomes a meaningful subject to himself and, apparently, to his teacher, Glenn, seems to represent an overlap between two practices in which Amir participates daily: the school, and a community of friends. The fact that Glenn is capable of being humorous makes him recognizable to Amir, since in many ways, this way of being together is similar to the way Amir and his friends perform together both at and outside of school (Nolan, 2011; Staunæs, 2009; Willis, 1978), and the fact that Glenn does so in relation to completing a school assignment makes him particularly interesting to Amir, since Amir, who is not normally recognized as a "good" student, is here actually recognized as one such. In this sense, some of the contradistinctions and dilemmas that Amir usually struggles with, with regard to his daily participation in and between school (and teachers) and his community of friends, seem to diminish or even vanish in his relation to Glenn, which is underscored by his immediate comparison between Glenn and his daily teacher Lisa.

According to the French Marxian philosopher Louis Althusser (1972), interpellation is a process through which people are hailed and become subjects, and it implies that the social position they come to occupy precedes the individual's subjectification. Originally, Althusser linked the concept of interpellation to ideological apparatuses of the state (e.g. the school, the church, the government and the family). In this sense, Amir seems to have experienced being *interpellated* (Althusser, 1972; Nissen, 2004, pp. 111–114) by Glenn through his language and actions, in what appear to be in new and expansive ways. However, it seems that there is something else and more going on in Amir's narrative, than can be captured by a causal understanding of the relation *between* Glenn and Amir, which the prefix *inter* immediately implies. Hence, the concept of interpellation is here read (diffracted) through Barad's concept of intra-action, a central concept in her agential realistic thinking:

In contrast to the usual "interaction", which assumes that there are separate individual agencies that precede their interaction, the notion of intra-action recognizes that distinct agencies (e.g. space (spatiality) and time (temporality)) do not precede, but rather emerge through, their intra-actions. (Barad, 2007, p. 33)

With her concept of intra-action Barad hereby points out that distinct entities or agencies do not exist prior to, but rather emerge through their encounter, or intra-action, just like an important point with the concept implies, that distinct agencies only exist in a relational way; they do not exist as individual elements (Barad, 2007, p. 33). In my reading of Barad, this is not to say that entities or agencies like students, their bodies, the school, etc. do not exist *prior* to their encounter, but rather that it is in this specific meeting that e.g. the students are fixated in certain (marginalizing/changing) ways, just like other elements are (teachers/school tasks, etc.). It is these elements that in their encounter and further intertwined into everyday conditions, societal conditions etc. are given a certain meaning and thereby agency, and together in the intra-action, are *doing something*; it is in this encounter that a direction is potentially

created for the continuing meaning-making and meaningful action-practices. In this sense, the concept of intra-action constitutes a radical reworking of the traditional notion of causality (Barad, 2007, pp. 175–177). According to Barad (2007, p. 234), causality, however, is “neither a matter of strict determinism nor one of free will”; intra-actions are constraining but not determining. This, read diffractively through the original concept of interpellation, implies that certain spaces hail certain subjects to certain positions (constraining), which the subject can accept, nuance or even reject (not determining), thereby providing the condition of an open future (Barad, 2007, p. 234).

Hence, in the analysis of Amir, the concept of interpellation is further configured into a concept of *intra-pellation*, since this concept helps me further in my analyses of Amir in two important ways. Firstly, it seems that all of the elements/entities described by Amir in the quote above are fixated in certain (new) ways; Glenn, who all of a sudden seemingly sees Amir in a new way, the concept of school, which is now (re)considered to be a place where one can get credit, which opens up (new and viable) possibilities to Amir, the concrete school-tasks of e.g. building a tree house through which one can become the best, Amir who is all of a sudden read as a good student, and the other students who are not, etc. It is in this encounter, in this intra-action, that Amir (as well as the other elements) is hailed (interpellation) and produced (intra-action) in certain transcending ways, which conditions his further meaning-making and action-practice. Hence, and secondly, using the concept of intra-pellation can help us to get closer to a more nuanced understanding of the fact that Amir points to Glenn, out of all of the elements brought up in his narrative, as being the crucial element to his new ways of becoming a student: why doesn't Amir bring up his experience expressed elsewhere in the interviews of being exceptionally good with practical tasks as the one crucial element for his new ways of becoming a student? In my reading of Amir altogether, I see it as an expression of his (shared with others of the participating young people) sense of powerlessness: he doesn't seem to feel that what he is doing is having an effect, and hence, he doesn't know his way out of the troublemaker category, through which he is normally recognized. Not unless somebody, somebody like Glenn will relate to him in another (new) way. This seems to have left Amir with the idea about how it is only the teacher who can make a difference, implying that only if he is with *that* teacher, *then* he will become somebody else. I will return to this.

The intra-pellations that Amir experienced at the technical college, where he participated two days a week for six months (see note 2) in the transition program, with Glenn and some of the other ninth-grade boys seemed to have (expansively) influenced Amir's self-understanding: “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*”. The intra-pellations *did* something to Amir. Something that, according to Amir, made it *impossible* for him to go back to being the Amir he was before, since in the interview with him and his classmate, Saad, he told me how he had almost stopped going to school, as he now awaited a response to his and his parents' application for whether he could be assigned to the other ninth grade, in which Glenn was the class teacher. And he stated that until Glenn became his teacher, he did not want to go to school. Understanding this in relation to the concept of intra-pellation, what has happened is what can be referred to as a (embodied) materialization of the intra-pellation in the technical college, which in the analyses of Amir explains his embodied action-practices since his time spent in the technical

college (e.g. his bunking off). A change had clearly taken place. Amir had changed, and was changing, and could *not* go back and become who he was before the transition program. The new substantialized and materialized ways of seeing and understanding himself are understood as the fact that Amir has seen, discovered and experienced that he can become a subject in ways that accentuate “appropriate” in the sense of “good” (and recognizable) school behavior. And Amir “liked it”; he very much liked himself in this new way of becoming a student, different from the way he saw himself as, and was (recognized) before, to the extent that he is now very absorbed in the idea of dragging this understanding of himself as a student and subject all the way back to his “old” school context. However, as noted by Nissen (2004, p. 114), a change in a person’s self-understanding, such as that experienced by Amir after a short time in the transition program, is seen as superficial and untenable, since in order to fully understand the possibilities for expanding marginal positions that lie within such materialized intra-pellations, it must be worked on continuously/iteratively. Unfortunately for Amir, this was seemingly not the case, which I shall return to.

My next reading is of Amir’s descriptions of the actual *process* through which he became a subject in a new and different way. If Amir’s narrative is read according to a Deleuzian approach to difference, with an emphasis on intensities and evolution (Davies, 2009, p. 18), then I find a happy intensity in the setting of the woodworking class. There, at the technical college, building a tree house with Glenn, with the other boys, with the hammer, with the nail and so on, Amir became different from the self he knew before his participation at the technical college, through his intense engagement with precisely these elements (things/objects/subjects). “I liked it”. A statement that is in many ways very different from his narratives about his school life, in general, at the school he usually attends when he is not participating in the transition program at the technical college, since his participation there was sporadic (he was barely there during the four weeks I spent at the school). The smooth space of the technical college, its framing and the people in it made this special way of being and becoming possible for Amir; the jointly challenging task of building the tree house, the hammer, the nails, Glenn, being kidded, the ease, being able to laugh, together, thereby creating a line of flight for Amir; a chance of becoming in new and differentiated ways. The space at Amir’s regular school seemed to work differently; what became possible for Amir at the technical college was not possible there.

This seems to create an ironic paradox: the smooth space and line(s) of flight created in the Technical College and in continuation hereof Amir’s eagerness to hold on to this and the expansive possibilities it implicated, seemed to push Amir even further from his regular school, since he was not recognized there in such ways. Furthermore, it seemed as though the misrecognition of his desperate attempts to hang on to this new and differentiated student subject, created an even greater resistance on his part toward the regular school, a resistance that in his own words, when I interview him, explains his sporadic participation there. However, his sporadic participation at his regular school seemed to only emphasize further the recognition of Amir as a troublemaker (who is now also bunking off), ultimately making it even harder for him to free himself of the sticky “troublemaker” categorization that he fought so desperately to escape. But the fact that he now knew, that it did *not* have to be that way, that he too could become and be recognized as a “good student”

made returning to the regular school “just like before” (the transition program) unbearable, and, in Amir’s case, quite impossible.

In Amir’s narrative on his becoming a differentiated student, he employs the component of *time* in relation to his participation in the transition program, which I will address in the following section.

Amir’s differentiated becoming, in relation to concepts of time and space

From a Deleuzian perspective, becoming a subject cannot be conceptualized as belonging to a certain category. Rather, it must be understood as the nature of an event or a series of events (Davies, 2009, p. 19; Deleuze, 1990, p. 136). Looking at my general picture of Amir, through the first interview and my observations of him in 2009, that is exactly what seems to be the case: a series of events; a series of events preceding the transition program at the technical college, the actual course at the technical college, and a series of events following the course at the technical college.

Amir makes use of differentiations in time as particularly essential to his production of the narrative of changes in (possibilities and) ways of becoming a subject and in his self-understanding, which provides us with an extended insight into the constitution of his subjectification (Juelskjær, 2009). The fact that this new way of becoming may be considered a differentiated way of becoming for Amir has to do with his prior experiences of becoming a student; as a “troublemaker”. In both Barad’s and Deleuze’s ways of thinking, the past is the condition for the present. The past and the present coexist (Taghuchi, 2010). But not only do the past and the present come to matter in Amir’s experience of a new and differentiated way of becoming a student. The future does as well. Opening up new possible ways of becoming a student, while closing down others:

The existence of the quantum discontinuity means that the past is never left behind, never finished once and for all, and the future is not what will come to be in an unfolding of the present moment; rather the past and the future are enfolded participants in matter’s iterative becoming. Becoming is not an unfolding in time, but the inexhaustible dynamism of the enfolding of mattering. (Barad, 2007, p. 234)

I am not suggesting, with this quote, that linear time is eliminated. Rather, what is suggested is thinking about different time and space components, and that linear time is one of them (Juelskjær, 2011). In this sense, we can analyze Amir’s narrative in a linear way, and thereby order time and space. And we can analyze his narrative in relation to two specific, contextual ways of becoming a student, and make time and space disappear, analytically. Or, we can pay attention to precisely the complexity of the time and space components in the data and thereby obtain an extended insight into the constitution of his subjectification.

Amir’s comparison to Lisa and the way she teaches exemplifies what is suggested by Barad in the quote above; that the past is not “left behind”; it still “is”, and in Amir’s case, it has acquired new facets as it reappears in a new and different form, as lived experience (back then, with Lisa, where he was “just” the “troublemaker”) to reflective positioning with “experience” (maybe it was not just him? Maybe there was also something about her and the way she taught/teaches?) (Juelskjær, 2011). With regard to this, an important aspect of memory and remembering in a Baradian (2007, p. 393) understanding is that they, “are not mind-based capacities but marked historicalities ingrained in the body’s becoming”. Hence, with Amir’s narrative’s

(implicit) division into (jumping) temporal periods, it becomes clear, with Barad, how possible processes of becoming before (past) his time spent at the technical college are no longer possible ways of becoming a subject after (future). Following his realization that he may (also) be recognized as a good student in a school context, despite – or perhaps precisely because of – the fact that the school he attends daily, when he is not at the technical college, is the same as before he participated in the technical college, Amir can no longer become the “troublemaker” who participated minimally or disruptively in classroom activities; he has seen and experienced himself in new ways, which are different from those of the time preceding that which he spent at the technical college. And he “liked it”. A motivation for something else, something different and more has been created, something that he was now capable of relating to as lived experience: a lived experience, a line of flight where things momentarily made sense, an element that is essential to the understanding of this project’s overarching ambition to explore (possibilities for) expansive learning.

According to Barad, time and space are productive forces (2007, p. 234) in the material-discursive practices that constitute processes of becoming. In other words, temporality and spatiality are set through material-discursive practices of “mattering”, where mattering refers to both materializing and meaning-making (Juelskjær, 2009, pp. 56–57). By drawing on Deleuze’s concept of *differenciation*, and by bringing in Barad, the analyses of Amir bring forward an extended understanding of change, that:

[...] change is not a continuous mutation of what was or the unraveling of what will be, or any kind of continuous transformation in or through time, but the iterative differentiations of spacetime mattering. (Barad, 2007, p. 179)

In this sense, time and space are thought of as one in the figure of spacetime mattering. Looking at Amir’s narrative in this way, it suddenly becomes obvious why Amir, owing to his awareness of other and recognizable ways of becoming a student, cannot go back to being who he was prior to his time spent in the technical college. He has become someone else – someone different. And this “someone different” he cannot seem to get to fit into the space of his regular school. But perhaps, with Glenn as his teacher, he can? Glenn, who has seen him become, in new “appropriate” ways? These were some of the questions I pursued in my follow-up interview with Amir, three years later.

When materialized intra-pellations lose their intensity

When I met Amir the second time, in 2012, he was 18 years old. In the three years since I had last spoken with him, he had completed the ninth grade, to attend the 10th grade at another school. After finishing 10th grade, he started at a technical college, with the aim of becoming an electrician. He dropped out of the technical college after the first half year, which he explained to me was because of his poor writing skills. According to Amir, he did very well at the practical tasks, but unfortunately, this was not enough, according to his teacher at the technical college, which led him to drop out. After this, he started an upper secondary commercial program (HH), which he had attended for two months when I saw him in 2012.

Amir explained to me that it had not been possible for him to transfer to Glenn’s class in the ninth grade. Or rather, the school never responded to his application, and around Christmas, he decided that it would be too complicated, since only five

months remained until they all finished school. Which made me wonder; why did the school not hear him? – see him? Seeing him back in 2009, recounting his experiences at the technical college, showed me a young boy full of hope for his future, if only the school... – if only the teachers... But they did not. To many of the teachers, it seemed that he was still the troublemaker, and after the transition program, moreover a bunking one. So, despite Amir's experienced change in becoming a student in new, and more recognizable ways, it seemed as if it had been impossible for him to shake off the "troublemaker" label. I will return to this in the analysis of Saad.

When I asked Amir, he explained what made Glenn so different from other teachers. Amir stated:

[...] He knew how to handle us [...] us troublemakers. Instead of sitting in the school and doing something on a piece of paper, in technical college we had to do something together [...] He [Glenn] was so nice [...] he was good at handling us ... in that way ... he was not like other teachers [...] for instance, if one of us was late for school [...], then he was just like: "Well, that's fine", or if someone overslept, then he was the one who would call you, and then he might even come and get us, if that was the case [...]

He was funny, he joked a lot [...] he would make fun [...] even with us ... He wasn't [...] the kind that would go "NOW you sit down!" [...] I don't know, maybe we were a little bit up and running when we were younger... we didn't understand "NOW, you sit down!"... Then he would come over, then he might [...] pat you here [patting his shoulder], and hold ON up here! THEN we did it! Maybe it's something that boys like. (Amir, interview, 2012)

This statement emphasizes how smooth spaces not only rely on the overall smoothness or striations that constitute the spaces of a school, but also rely on the persons' (teachers and students) abilities to create and handle these overall striations in smooth ways. But despite Glenn's abilities to do this, the materializations of Amir's experienced intra-pellations all together at the technical college were no longer evident in Amir's ways of seeing and experiencing himself as a student, the second time I saw him. Rather, his narratives about participating in school life today reflected an "individualized struggle for success" (Mørck, 2006), where he acts on the premises presented by the school, instead of challenging them, as he did when I first saw him in 2009.

The point made is that partly transcending marginal positions is rarely something a person can do or realize on their own, which was emphasized by my follow-up interview with Amir; rather it involves fundamental changes. In line with Youdell (2006), I emphasize that the marginalization or exclusion of certain students in education is often related to complex societal problematics, and therefore there is rarely one precise and definitive way to transcend marginalization (see also note 1). Hence, partly transcending marginalization often involves more fundamental changes (Mørck, 2010), in order to interrupt the exclusionary and/or marginalizing processes (Youdell, 2006). This was the case with Amir; Amir, together with the other boys, together with the teacher, Glenn, together with the tree house assignment, the smooth space of the transition program and so on, all supported a line of flight, and thereby a differentiation and an expansion of the ways in which he could see himself, and become a student. However, owing to the lack of making the change a fundamental change in the general conditions of Amir's school life, the materialized intra-pellations experienced by Amir lost their intense effect on Amir and his daily

school life over time. In other words, the troublemaker label stuck to Amir throughout his time in primary school, a sense of stickiness which I will elaborate on in the following analyses of Saad.

Once a troublemaker, always a troublemaker

During a lunch break, one of the boys, Saad, with whom I have recently been talking quite a bit, comes over to the table where I have been seated by the teacher. He stands curiously beside me. He asks me whether he may read what I have been writing about him in my observations, as do three of the girls. I choose to show each of them what I have recently written about them [I kept my notes and comments on the observations in a separate notebook]. Together, Saad and I read my observations of him, and he giggles a bit during our reading. We discuss what is interesting about these observations of him. I tell him that one thing I find interesting when seeing him in action with the rest of the class is that my observation of him actually reveals that he often answers the questions put by the teacher(s) to all the students, but because he constantly forgets to raise his hand [which is strictly required by most of his teachers], he never gets to actually show what he knows [the teachers either ignore him, or they interrupt him, telling him to raise his hand, at which point he often gives up]. Saad smiles a bit, and we talk about school in general, how knowledge is power, and many other interesting topics, until the lunch break is over.

Later that day, physics is on the schedule. This is one of Saad's favorite subjects. At the beginning of the lesson, Saad has eagerly taken a desk and a chair, and has put himself in the middle of the classroom. He participates, very engaged and actively, in the teacher, Jack's, teaching, and asks many apparently relevant questions. At one point Jack asks the class a question on electromagnetism. Saad raises his hand. Again [he does this almost every time a question is asked by this teacher]. When Jack chooses one of the other guys to answer the question, Saad bursts out: "Arrh maaan, Jack, you're not being fair!" Jack answers him in a friendly tone, smiling: "Sorry, Saad – you'll be next!" He is not. Yet throughout the lesson he continues to participate and raise his hand, when Jack puts questions to the class.

On his way to the break after the physics lesson, Saad comes over to the table where I am seated, and says to me: "You see what I mean? It doesn't matter if I raise my hand or not! I never get picked anyway!" Saad is referring to the conversation we had earlier that day, during lunch break. I tell Saad yes, I see what he means. (Observations, Denmark, 2009)

The phenomenon noted in this observation of Saad appears frequently in the data collected in 2009, primarily at the school in Denmark, but also at the school in Sweden. What is significant about this observation, though, is that Saad explicitly demonstrates his awareness of his powerlessness by the fact that he seems to be trapped in a (school) world of binary logics in this case, one of "good" vs. "bad" school behavior.

As mentioned previously, striated spaces (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987/2005) impose binary thinking, which groups entities into categories. But that is not all it does. As in the case of Saad and Amir, categories tend to stick. They stick to the person being categorized. And the stickiness increases in and over time, in the sense that the more a person is categorized in a certain way, the category equivalently thickens, sticking even more firmly to the person, making it increasingly difficult for the person being categorized to try to dissociate him or herself from the category; to try to be seen as something/someone else, and more. In other words, Jack seems to be caught up in a binary logic, in this case regarding "good" school behavior vs.

“bad”. I am sure that had I asked Jack, he would most likely have stated that his way of handling Saad in physics that day had nothing to do with him categorizing Saad in certain ways. The point here is that this is exactly what it seems to be about, for Saad: “It doesn’t matter if I raise my hand or not! I never get picked anyway!” Saad is trapped by the binary reasoning provided by Jack (and other teachers), as his last sentence emphasizes. Saad is living in and with this binary logic imposed by the teacher and the striations of the school/teacher, and at the same time, he is living in between the binaries, in the sense that he is neither/nor, or rather, both/and, all of which makes the school see and recognize him in certain ways and, unfortunately for Saad, not in others.

Saad and his friend Amir refer to themselves as “troublemakers”. And apparently they did not just make up that category. They are identified as such by several teachers during the lessons [being corrected, thrown out of class and/or ignored] and during my interviews with them. The “troublemaker” category may be seen as part of the striated space that in many ways characterizes the school. Hence, the category “good” students, closely related to its opposite other, “bad” student (e.g. “troublemaker”), existed even before Amir and Saad entered the school (McDermott, 1993; Staunæs, 2003), ready to render to and subject certain students, like Saad and Amir, that enter (Youdell, 2006). Which is what binaries do; they dichotomize and make us see just that: either-or; black-or-white.³ Not the numerous intermediate shadings and in-betweens. Binary thinking makes us blind to the numerous intermediate in-betweens, to multiplicity and to processes of differentiation. Troublemakers are recognized by teachers as engaging in what is seen as “bad” school behavior. Bad school behavior, as opposed to good school behavior. Nothing in between. Just that. Black-or-white. Binary categories fix subjects in “either-or”, and the apparent essentialization of the fixations is what makes the categorizations “stick”. In this case, it sticks to Saad: “the troublemaker”. It sticks to the extent that intermediate in-betweens become impossible. It is not possible to be a “thickened-sticky” troublemaker who loves physics, even when he/she participates in this particular subject on the premises of the school (e.g. raising a hand, participating in an engaged way in the instruction provided by the teacher, etc.). Even when it appears right there, physically before the teacher, indicated by an eagerly raised hand, performing both the “ability” and the “conduct” of the ideal of good school behavior (Youdell, 2006, p. 97). Even then, some hands are just not seen. Not just any hands; the numerous intermediate in-between-ones. And Saad knows it.

In a previous article, I use the concept of *mis-interpellation* (Hage, 2010) with regard to racial processes of interpellation.⁴ The concept of mis-interpellation is one of three forms of processes of constructing racialized subjects and refers to when the (racialized) subject is first interpellated as belonging to a collectivity “like everybody else”; the subject is hailed by the cultural group or the nation, or in this case the school, which claims to be addressing “everyone” only to brutally remind them shortly after they respond to the interpellation, that he or she is *not* part of the “everybody”, by treating them differently than everybody else (Hage, 2010, p. 122). In my understanding, Hage’s concept of mis-interpellation can also be seen with regard to other othering-processes, than the ones with regard to the social category of race. Hence, in the case with Saad, school/Jack inadvertently come to mis-interpellate students like Saad – whether or not in Saad’s case in relation to race – as belonging to a collectivity (the school/the class), “like everybody else”, as part of the idea of the comprehensive school (the Danish Folkeskole), only to remind them/

him shortly after they respond to this interpellation by going to school, that they are in fact *not* seen as part of the “everybody”, by treating them differently than everybody else (the “normal” students; the majority) (Hage, 2010, p. 122). In this sense, one could say that the way in which Saad performs (Butler, 1993) “good student”, as an in-between – a troublemaker participating engaged with a sudden raised hand – is not an intelligible or recognizable way to perform “good student” within the school. This kind of performativity simply does not make sense within the prevailing institutional discourses that constitute school (Youdell, 2006, p. 45), which in the case with Saad enables us to see, how school comes to exclude and over time marginalize certain students.

Dis/continuous aspects of time in relation to Saad's subjectification

If we bear in mind Barad's point on the existence of quantum discontinuity, I see Saad's last statement as a sign of just that, since a delayed realization of something that has happened prior to it, takes place in and dependent of time and space, in the sense of if and when the conditions (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987/2005) or the circumstances (Barad, 2007, p. 111) are right. The existence of quantum discontinuity will make something in the past matter in the present, thereby forming possible futures – while excluding others. And it is this “jump” from lived present to reflexive positioning with “experience” that in my reading of Barad can (also) be considered to be somewhat discontinuous; we don't know what (in the past), when (time of present moment), where (space) or what the implications may be (future). Listening to Saad's last statement in this way, it appears that his statement becomes a material-discursive reality in which time and space jumps, and where he is all the time located, temporarily, simultaneously and oppositional (Juelskjær, 2011).

So Saad's last comment opens up another time-space (from the present, (many) earlier and future moments of his school life) and in that simultaneity of time-space, he senses and realizes his stuck-ness. With Barad one could say that these creations are not simply going on in Saad's head and in his endeavors in relation to positioning himself but are precisely specific creations of spacetime-mattering – that the (school-)space and the subject (Saad) becomes something else/specific in that exact moment of physics class – and that this moment at the same time (re)shapes the space of the present, the past and the future: “You see what I mean?” (re)shapes (with a ‘jump’ to) our conversation earlier that day, “It doesn't matter if I raise my hand or not!” (re)shapes (with a ‘jump’ to) both our conversation earlier that day, and it (re)shapes (with a ‘jump’ to) the times prior to it, where he did/did not raise his hand and “I never get picked anyway!” (re)shapes (with a ‘jump’ to) past, present and future – so this is how it *is*. School life. For Saad. So, in this apparently banal everyday activity, a more radical creation is being done, a creation that exemplifies how Saad (and other students) all the time is becoming in mo(ve)ments where a manifold of (institutional) time and space shapes him and is shaped by him (Juelskjær, 2011). Saad's statement is continuous in the sense that the expressions within it appear together, one after another, as his statement shows, but paying attention to the time and space components at work in his statement they are also discontinuous, as the analysis shows, ‘jumping’ from one time/space to another, opening up for an extended insight on how (different) components of (also) time and space play a role in the ongoing of Saad's becoming/subjectification (Juelskjær, 2009, 2011). It is through such specific intra-actions that a causal structure is enacted and

thereby rethought in Barad's agential realist account, since such intra-actions do not simply "transmit a vector of influence among separate events" (Barad, 2007, p. 393): intra-actions effect what is real and what is im/possible as, "some things come to matter and others are excluded, as possibilities are opened up and others are foreclosed" (Barad, 2007, p. 393). With regard to Saad, that is precisely what is happening; the incident(s) all together open(s) up to certain possible futures, while foreclosing down others, making it only very clear to him now that the possible futures for him in relation to school do not seem to involve any change in relation to how he is seen and recognized by teachers/school, which his last statement, together with his very apparent frustration, emphasizes. In this sense, the analyses of Saad show how sticky categorizations can have constraining effects for a person's further possibilities for meaningful action-practices, and in relation to Saad, constraints regarding who/what he can (not) become in relation to school.

Partly transcending marginalization

As indicated by Slee (1993/2005), a wheelchair user is not disabled until he or she meets stairs. The same may be said of schools and the students within it: a student is not inadequate until he or she encounters certain spaces where his or her adequacy is not recognizable within the striations that define established (in)adequacy. In this way, the striations of the school and the binary logics imposed by them create an inability or blindness at the school, preventing school from recognizing certain students as anything other than inadequate. This is what Davies (2009, p. 23) refers to, when she says that binaries within striated spaces become naturalized; the students within the school are divided that way because they are that way. Furthermore, the school's inability to see and recognize inadequacy as anything else exists, i.e. because of the dominant individualistic discourse within which what appears to be the student's inadequacy is ascribed to the students. And what is ascribed the concerned students, in this case, Saad, seems to stick to him to an extent that it seems insurmountable for him to change. Even when meeting certain teachers, such as Glenn, as was the case with Amir, it seems hard to change these categorization(s) over time. According to the teacher, Josef, there is a reason for this:

I think it should be arranged with ALL here, at the school, it is not JUST one teacher, well yes, one teacher can start a thing, [...] I can start something, but I feel it should be made general teaching practice here in this school, a generalized policy, and also come from the board of directors, and also come from the municipality, that we have a huge responsibility, precisely because we are placed here in [a deprived urban area of Copenhagen], right next to those two streets, and gangs and stuff. And all those gang members, they come from our school, [...] we have to break it ... (Josef, Interview, 2009)

Josef emphasizes, in line with Youdell (2006), both in this statement and throughout the interview, the point about our obligation and responsibility with regard to helping young people to create viable lives in the school context, since failing to do so will drive them away from the school into other contexts, with gangs being a highly possible one.

What Josef describes as his "feelings" regarding a "general teaching practice" and "policy", I see as referring to Josef's lived experience; changes made by only one individual, one teacher, are unlikely to change much, in the long run. This is the same experience that is described by Amir earlier in this paper: that he alone cannot

effect a long-lasting change. So, what is pointed out to us, explicitly by Josef and Saad, and implicitly by Amir, is that real changes, changes that really make a difference, in and over time, are rarely possible to create by a person alone. Josef hereby underscores the point made earlier, that transcending marginal positions involves fundamental changes, and according to Josef with regard to both “practice” and “policy” – all the way “up”.

Conclusion

In this paper, I have made use of the concepts of smooth and striated spaces, to demonstrate how processes of becoming different, of differentiation with regard to school life are made (im)possible for two young persons, Amir and Saad, in their everyday school life at a Danish school. The analyses indicate how the repetitions within the striated space(s) that in many ways constitute the school obstruct the possibilities for smooth spaces and lines of flight, and thereby expansive movements with regard to marginal positions within the school, enabling the boys to only repeat and propagate the negativity about themselves, in which they become stuck. This “stuckness” is blocking them from being able to transcend problematic categorizations/positions, which leads to the exclusion and marginalization of these students in the context of the school, rather than the inclusion referred to in the introduction.

In the examples used in the analyses, Amir and Saad talk not only about their teachers but also about who they can and/or cannot become, in relation to their teachers, and thereby about a relational flow between the (im)possibilities of their becoming in these relationships. As demonstrated in the analysis of Amir and his participation in a transition program at a technical college, his experience of the opening up for smooth spaces, creating a tremendous line of flight for Amir, opening up possibilities for him to partly transcend marginalization with regard to his school life, is related to – but is also analyzed, through the concept of intra-pellation, as more than just – his relation to the teacher, Glenn. In contrast, the analyses of Saad demonstrate another teacher, Jack, who with his repetitions within the striated space of his teaching and the school, neglects to recognize Saad and his attempts to become a student in new and differentiated ways, and hence obstructs possibilities for Saad to partly transcend marginal position(s) with regard to his school life, only enabling a reproduction of his marginalization. Both these examples emphasize a sense of powerlessness in the relational discourse running through the boys’ narratives; that the teachers to the boys play not only an important, but a crucial role in creating (new) possibilities for change. Changing and expansive movements toward becoming something else; toward becoming something more than just the “troublemakers”; and toward partly transcending marginalization.

The troublemakers are not just being made so in present moments. As the analyses show, the past of being categorized as such affects not only the new, present moment, but also what futures are made possible and which are not. Hence, the analyses in this paper identify how problematic categorizations tend to stick to those being categorized, with a tendency to increase in “stickiness” in and over time, blocking possible expansive and viable futures of change.

So the past matters. As does the future. Both come to matter in the iterative becoming of both matter and subject, in (both the, and future) present moments. But differentiation and change lie not in the past, but in possible future present

moments, and the sticky categorizations imposed by the repetitions and movements within teachers' and school(s)'s striated spaces seem to block smooth spaces and lines of flight, making it impossible for the boys to make the changes they so desperately seek, to partly transcend their marginal positions at the school. In other words, the analyses of this paper demonstrate that it is crucial to young people like Amir and Saad that smooth spaces are opened up, within (the striations of) the educational system, in order for them to co-create possible futures of change. Only then is it possible for these young people to create evolution; to create viable lives and to make the changes that will help them toward partly transcending marginalization with regard to their school life.

Notes

1. According to Mørck (2006, p. 30), partly transcending marginalization involves a complex “zig-zag-movement” that is made up 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.
2. According to the Youth and Education advisor (in Danish: U&U-vejleder) affiliated to the school in Copenhagen, the transition program is an arrangement made in collaboration with the technical college, for certain eighth–ninth-grade students who “come from socially disadvantaged families”, who are not “ready to make the choice of [future] education” and “who are facing difficulties in learning in the classroom” (Interview 2009; my translation). The students attending this program attend in technical college two days a week for a period of six months, and the rest of the time they spend in the usual ninth grade. With them in the technical college is a teacher from their daily school, in this case the teacher Glenn, who has the pedagogical responsibility for the students, while a subject teacher in the technical college has the technical responsibility. The transition program can be seen as part of the overall aim of inclusion in relation to the 95% goal-setting, mentioned in the introduction.
3. Although several race-related issues appear in my material, this is not what is meant here. Here, “black-or-white” refers to binary ways of thinking. Owing to the framing of this current research project, being my PhD dissertation, and the research questions that steer it, I have had to choose certain analytical foci/delimitations (cuts) with regard to each article, although I am well aware that the people’s lives I am interested in researching, are not so divided, but are much more complex. Reflections on this complexity and how the analytical cuts are made are clarified in my final dissertation.
4. Hage’s concept of mis-interpellation is here primarily used with regard to the hailing (constraining) part of the concept of intra-pellation described earlier.

Notes on contributor

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