SOCIAL INCLUSION THROUGH EDUCATION IN DENMARK:
POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

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ABOUT EDUMIGROM
The EDUMIGROM research project aimed to study how ethnic differences in education contribute to the diverging future prospects of minority ethnic youth and their peers in multiethnic urban settings. It made a departure by recognising that, despite great variations in economic development and welfare arrangements, recent developments seem to lead to similar disadvantages for certain groups of second-generation immigrants in the western half of the continent and Roma in Central Europe. Although formally enjoying social membership with full rights in the respective states, people affiliated with these groups tend to experience new and intensive forms of involuntary separation, marginalisation, social exclusion, and second-class citizenship. By selecting specific communities and schools in nine member states of the European Union (the Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Germany, Hungary, Romania, Slovakia, Sweden, and the United Kingdom), the project explored in a cross-country comparative perspective how existing educational systems, policies, practices, and experiences in markedly different welfare regimes contribute to these processes of “minoritisation”. Considering that schools are key agents in knowledge distribution and socialisation, the project examined how educational practices in compulsory education conclude in reducing, maintaining, or deepening inequalities in young people’s opportunities for advancement and their access to the labour market, and, concurrently, how they are forging the social contacts, interethnic conduits, and strategies of identity formation of adolescents from diverse ethnic backgrounds.

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This policy brief will discuss on an introductory level how ethnic categorisations are produced in public and political discourse concerning educational inequalities in Danish society. Taking as its point of departure this discursive framework, the paper seeks to illuminate how public and political discourse on ethnic minorities influences the administrative and pedagogical responses to ethnically diverse schools and educational inequalities between minority and majority students. Summarising the Danish country-based findings from quantitative and qualitative studies within the EDUMIGROM research project, this paper contributes with new perspectives on schooling and life strategies of ethnic minority youth in the everyday context of interethnic relations at ethnically diverse schools. In conclusion, we offer policy recommendations based on our research findings and knowledge of best practice.

Framing of public and political discourse in Danish society

The popular use of “ethnicity” in Danish public and political discourse is closely related to the historical process of labour migration from third world countries since the 1960s (Kallehave and Moldenhawer 2008: 5–9). This immigration's demographic effects on Danish society are today still being presented as something rather new, hence the discursive and statistic maintenance and reinterpretations of the term immigrant (in Danish: indvandrer). This imagined “newness” of immigration might be explained as a result of a continuous political effort to maintain a monocultural definition and understanding of Danish society (Horst and Gitz-Johansen 2010). In the beginning of this historical period immigrants were termed guest workers and thus expected to leave the country after a limited period of time. However, many of them settled and reunited their families in Denmark. Children of these immigrants were born and raised and are now termed descendants or second/third generation immigrants.

The categorisations above still find resonance in the present public and political discourse. However, in the course of the last 20 years “ethnicity” has become a widespread concept for categorising immigrants and their descendants originating from southern Europe and/or third world countries, thus represented as “people with another ethnic background than Danish” (in Danish: folk med anden etnisk baggrund end dansk) and/or “ethnics” (in Danish: etnikker). Within the last ten years categorisations as “bilinguals” (in Danish: tosprogede) and “New Danes” (in Danish: Nydanskere) have appeared side by side with the ethnic categorisation as attempts at both political correctness and strategies of inclusion.

The category of ethnic minorities seems to be delimited to anthropologic, sociological, political, and educational research on immigration, though the category of ethnic minorities is used publicly and politically in relation to the German minority in southern Denmark holding special cultural and educational rights, opposed to other ethnic minorities residing in Denmark.

When assessing “ethnicity” in Danish public and political discourses, the perspective of equality seems to present further explanatory value. This is perhaps due to the equality mindset deeply...
inherent in the Danish welfare state that is built on social rights not least after the implementation of comprehensive social political reforms during the period of 1969–1974 (Jønsson and Petersen 2010: 147). Due to its historical development in an ethnically rather homogenous Danish context, the interpretations and applications of the concept of equality have had an implicit understanding of the target groups of societal care to be of Danish ethnic origin – that is Danish citizens. This implicit understanding of those less advantageous who are supposed to be equal to the rest of "us" are already part of "us" – the ethnic majority. Hence, it could be argued that the process of promoting equality in a Danish context has historically been interpreted as the process of making people the same – ethnically and socially (Kallehave and Moldenhawer 2008: 31, Buchardt, Kampmann, and Moldenhawer 2006).

When understanding the use of “ethnicity” in Danish public and political discourse from the perspective of equality, one must understand that “ethnicity” appears to be a “disturbing” category for the promotion of equality, exactly because the target groups of equalising interventions are historically and socio-economically categorised yet share the same ethnic background as the majority. The socially deprived ethnic Danes are, so to speak, already in advance of a potential social intervention recognised as a legitimate part of society and therefore entitled to social benefits and interventions. In principle, ethnic minorities hold the same rights of the welfare system as do the ethnic majority, but in public and political discourse there seems to appear a general mistrust of these principal rights of ethnic minorities, since they are not like “us” – the ethnic majority.

Social equality being an inherent universal right within and goal of the Danish welfare state, the public and political discourses seem somehow to be less prone to the European Union discourse of recognition and rights of ethnic minorities (Horst and Gitz-Johansen 2010). This might be explained as an effect of the universalism of social equality, of which the ethnic “sameness” is taken for granted (Kallehave and Moldenhawer 2008: 31).

The above attempt of a historical contextualisation of “ethnicity” in Danish public and political discourse hopefully illuminates why there seems to be an intriguing intersection between social categorisations and ethnic categorisations when speaking about the promotion of equality. Hence, the public and political discourse seems to reflect a constant commuting between social and ethnic categorisations and understandings of the less advantageous. For this reason there seems to be a tendency in Danish public and political discourse that people from the socially deprived segments of the majority, to a larger extent than ethnic minorities, are made legitimate receivers of social care and welfare benefits, whereas ethnic minorities’ social deprivation is mistrusted and usually explained in essentialist cultural terms. Jöhncke even argues that equality actualised as “sameness” is a fundamental productive imaginary for the formation of the Danish – and even Scandinavian – welfare state (Jöhncke 2007: 37, 49).

There are of course counter discourses which advocates a multicultural “rights and recognition” approach in order to even the educational gap between ethnic minority students and ethnic majority students (Horst and Gitz-Johansen 2010: 145–50). Nevertheless, these multicultural positions are primarily
confined to critical research and alternative practices, which seems to be excluded from policy making (Krististjansdottir and Timm 2007).

The general public and political discourse on ethnic differences in education appear, so to say, as a monocultural position that interprets equality as "sameness" and thereby promotes an assimilationist approach that must compensate for ethnic minority students' supposed lack of Danish cultural knowledge and Danish language competencies. The monocultural position, so to speak, constructs the ethnically diverse school as an *a priori* societal problem due to its concentration of ethnic minority students. This becomes the predominant explanatory framework for understanding the educational underachievement of ethnic minority students, and thereby also the basis for administrative and pedagogical intervention.

These interventions take the form of compensatory approaches, in which schools with a substantial number of ethnic minority students (25 per cent appears to be a "magic" number) are economically compensated with the allocation of extra resources. In recent years many of such schools have embarked on major image make-over projects in order to attract and sustain ethnic majority students. Such development projects have appeared under the headings of "magnet schools" (in Danish: Magnetskoler) and “championship schools” (in Danish: Spydspidsskoler) branding themselves with special school profiles focusing on creativity, sports, high academic standards, etc. (Københavns Kommune 2006). Many of these schools are at the same time also promoting themselves as "7-11 schools", that is, whole-day, 16-hour schools (in Danish: Heldagsskoler), a school model, in which students attend school for eight to sixteen hours a day, supposedly keeping the "exposed" ethnic minority students off the streets and out of deprived homes while engaging them in healthy activities at school.

It should be noted in this context that all these interventions concerning the ethnically diverse school are not talked about in terms of ethnicity. Rather, the ethnic category is reinterpreted in the form of the bilingual category (Thomsen, Kallehave and Moldenhawer 2010: 3).

It could be argued that speaking of bilingual students instead of ethnic minority students has paved the way for the interventions mentioned above. Not least, it has paved the way for the relocations (dispersion or bussing) of many ethnic minority students having a "not unimportant need for 'Danish as a Second Language' training" that supposedly could be compensated for by attending schools with smaller concentrations of ethnic minority students. Furthermore, it could be argued that relocation of ethnic minority students on the basis of language deficits dismantles accusations of discrimination.

Within these compensatory restructurings of the ethnically diverse schools, there appears to be a substantial focus on the responsibilities and obligations of the ethnic minority parents in supporting their children's performance in school. Recently, there have been major investments in supplementary training of teachers in dealing with school–parent partnerships. Additionally, parental classes have been established in order to introduce ethnic minority parents to the proper ways of supporting their children in school.

In summary, there seems to be a problem-oriented way of categorising and dealing with ethnic
minority students, which according to Horst and Gitz-Johansen (2010) presents “the issue of ethnic diversity and ethnic underachievement in education as a question of minority children and their families lacking cultural, social and linguistic resources or, in other words, the deprivation paradigm” (Horst and Gitz-Johansen 2010: 147).

Assessing the category of ethnicity in Danish public and political discourse illuminates how the ethnic “other” and/or ethnic minority is constructed as a problematic issue when speaking of equality in education and in society as such. In this discourse ethnicity becomes associated with the constructions of “the dangerous radical Muslim”, “the leeching unemployed immigrant”, and/or “the suppressed immigrant woman” feeding the deprivation paradigm with mythical figures (Kallehave and Moldenhawer 2008).

Hence, approaching the process of integration as something a priori problematic accentuates the assimilatory interventions in the promotion of equality in the welfare society with reference to securing social cohesion (Kallehave and Moldenhawer 2008). In addition, when promoting the examples of successful integration of ethnic minorities, it is often within the vocabulary use of terms such as the “quiet” integration or the “invisible” integration of educated and/or employed self-sustaining immigrants2 (Pedersen and Rytter 2006). Such a vocabulary for the supposedly successful integration of ethnic minorities accentuates and sustains both the “workfare” approach (Kallehave and Moldenhawer 2008) to integration and the category of the problematised ethnic “other”.

Main findings of the Danish EDUMIGROM reserach and their new contributions

The aim of the Danish country-based EDUMIGROM research on ethnic differences in education has been to illuminate how social, gendered, and ethnic categorisations intersect, and how this complexity appears in educational strategies and identity formation processes of ethnic minority youth in lower secondary schools.

The empirical study consists of a quantitative survey conducted in the eighth and ninth grades of seven schools in two different areas in the city of Copenhagen, in which a total of 392 students filled in questionnaires, supplemented with school and teacher questionnaires. The two areas were chosen due to their large proportions of ethnic minority populations (above the Danish average). Moreover, the selection of the two areas was connected to the fact that the municipality of Copenhagen has targeted both areas for special educational interventions due to the high concentrations of ethnic minorities in order to promote equality in education outcomes, social cohesion, and interethnic stability.

As an effect of the high ethnic diversification rate in the two areas the study has been forced to operate with rather pragmatic ethnic groupings of Pakistani, Turkish/Kurdish, and Middle Eastern groups.

2 Available online: http://www.kvinfa.dk/side/539/?personId=21
In order to ensure statistical significance in cross-tabulations with these ethnic groupings, we have neglected a more detailed ethnic categorisation. The same ethnic diversity of the numerically limited ethnographic sample inhibits the significance of the selected visible minority groups in the qualitative part of the study. Thus, it has been difficult to qualify one group of ethnic minorities to be more integrated or separated than others (Moldenhawer, Kallehave, and Hansen 2010: 57).

The quantitative survey study of the seven selected schools has presented insightful knowledge of correlations between socio-economic status, gender, and ethnicity. Moreover, it has functioned as a mapping of the landscape of selected schools in order to inform the selection of two schools for further ethnographic field study.

The two selected schools are located in the same area, but divided by two rather distinct neighbourhoods of different socio-economic and ethnic compositions.

*These differences are further reflected in the very different levels of public and political attention paid to the two areas. Whereas Belleview seems to receive very limited public and political attention, Fraser is often characterised as a ghetto and as an area dominated by lack of integration into the Danish society (Moldenhawer et al. 2010: 11).*

Fifty per cent of Belleview School’s student body is from an ethnic minority background, whereas 90 per cent of Fraser School’s student body is from an ethnic minority background.

Though interethnic relations have been a key research interest, this part of the ethnographic inquiry has been limited by the fact that only two students out of the entire student sample had an ethnic Danish background. In addition, it is worthwhile noting that the ethnographic investigation of interethnic relations has been delimited further by the short period of observations inside and outside school.

In spite of the above-mentioned limitations of the investigation, we find that new and complex perspectives on ethnic differences in education have been gained due to the fundamental understanding of the intersectionality of socio-economic, gendered, and ethnic categories. Hitherto, in an analytical perspective it has been fruitful to operate with “ethnicity” “as a plastic and changing badge of membership which is located in wider set of linked identities” (Ball 2006, cited in Moldenhawer, Kallehave, and Hansen 2010: 5). This conceptualisation of “ethnicity” has enabled us to analytically grasp the complexities of ethnic differentiation as it appears in the narratives of the ethnic minority students, teachers, and ethnic minority parents. Since the process of migration can be said to represent a fundamental life condition for visible minority groups in Denmark, we have found useful inspiration in Abdelmalek Sayad’s (1999 and 2004) conceptualisation “of migrants whom he characterises as agents of simultaneously emigration and immigration” (Moldenhawer et al. 2010: 6). Identity formation processes of ethnic minority youth is hence to be understood as constant processes of coming to terms with one’s history of emigration and immigration. This conceptualisation of ethnicity and migration counters immigrant, state-centred research on migrants and ethnic minorities.
The key findings of the quantitative and qualitative studies will be presented and discussed below, and then related to existing research on ethnic differences in education.

The quantitative study clearly confirms earlier research on the matter of the correlation between parents' levels of education and socio-economic status and student performance in school. The lower the level of education and socio-economic status is in the family, the lower academic performance of the student, regardless of ethnic background. Ethnic minority families primarily being of lower socio-economic status, it is evident that ethnic minority students score lower in school than their ethnic majority peers. When elaborating further on the category of gender, it appears that ethnic majority girls receive the highest grades, whereas ethnic minority boys receive the lowest. This confirms earlier and present research often explaining this pattern as a result of female gendered socialisation processes being more adaptive to the education system (Jakobsen and Liversage 2010: 49–51). This explanation may additionally be qualified by our qualitative teacher interviews, where they often explain the ethnic category in gendered terms differentiating between "the quiet hard-working ethnic minority girl" and "the misbehaving Muslim boy" (Moldenhawer et al. 2010: 33; Gilliam 2010). Nevertheless, our data show that minority boys from lower-status families report that they get higher grades than majority boys from the same social position.

All students aspire across ethnic and socio-economic differences for upward mobility by means of education. Our quantitative data set even shows that "minority students aim for a white-collar job to a higher degree than majority students – despite their parents' lower average education level" (Thomsen et al. 2010: 63). One might argue that this runs contrary to the evidence of a performance gap between ethnic minority and majority students. The teachers, on the other hand, speak of the too-high ambitions among ethnic minority students and their parents. We, on the other hand, would like to pose the question for further inquiry: namely, where does minority students' extended trust in the educational system come from? Our data might suggest a tentative answer to this question, that being, that the political discourse of "workfare" has been internalised by the minority students to such a degree that it shapes their life strategies. Even the minority students most reluctant to cooperate at school express an understanding of the importance of schooling, if not for appreciating knowledge but feeling safe and protected against crime (Moldenhawer et al. 2010: 56).

Education and crime – being a vocalised binary pair in the above example and echoed in most of the interviews with ethnic minority students, their parents, and even teachers – confirms the reproduction of the public and political discourse problematising the ethnic minority category in terms of associating it with crime, violence, unemployment, etc. – in other words, all that is excluded from the norm of the workfare paradigm. The ethnic minority students show a lucid awareness of this workfare discourse and, as said before, internalise it in the form aspiring for the ideal of an educated immigrant.

*Although both parents and children think of themselves as different from ethnic Danes, we conclude that neither students nor parents explain their positioning in*
solely victimised terms. Rather, they emphasise the possibilities one has if working hard, and underscore the importance of education as means of social mobility (Moldenhawer et al. 2010: 67).

Thus the ideal of the educated and/or employed immigrant is strongly connected to the idea of free choice and individual responsibility. These presumptions of success being prevalent categories of the knowledge society and workfare paradigm may offer an explanation to why the majority of ethnic minority students aspire for higher education degrees in spite of the fact that some of them receive grades below average (Mørch et al. 2008).

Schooling strategies

In order to understand ethnic minority students' aspirations, attitudes toward, and practices in school, we have found the concept of strategy valuable. The analytical avenues of the notion of strategy explore not only the consciousness of students, but just as much their practical knowledge and experiences of what is possible and impossible within their accumulated personal and cultural history (Moldenhawer et al. 2010: 25). By this analytical devise we have extracted two schooling strategies among ethnic minority students. One is a strategy of commitment in which education is an existing tradition within the migrant family. A so-called committed student values education itself and presents a rather disciplined approach to schooling, not at least because education is less a means of individual success as it is a dimension of a common family social mobility strategy of the migratory pattern of investment (Moldenhawer et al. 2010: 26). In opposition, the other strategy is a strategy of instrumentation, where education is solely a means of success for the individual student. Though the family presents positive attitudes towards schooling, social relations are valued just as importantly as academic accomplishments, which might be explained by a weaker tradition of education within the family (Moldenhawer et al. 2010: 26).

In relation to the earlier mentioned public and political discourses on 'the educated immigrant' one might ask if the two schooling strategies should be understood in the theoretical perspective of late modernity, where education and work are understood as projects of individual self-realisation separated from the bonds of family (Mørch et al. 2008: 10–17; Kallstenius et al. 2010: 140). In this perspective, late modern self-realisation often stands in contrast to collective life-forms of migratory background. However, we argue that our use of the analytical category of strategy instead of the socio-psychological category of identity implies a fundamental reflexivity, which is not restricted to only late modern identity formation. Rather, the category of strategy offers an inherent reflexivity of all human practice and decision-making. Perceiving strategy as inherently reflexive implies that the two schooling strategies, though not individualised, are (collectively) reflexive. Hence the identification of the two schooling strategies offers alternative understandings of ethnic minority youth's identity formation in late modern European knowledge societies (Moldenhawer et al. 2010: 65, Mørch et al. 2008).
Nevertheless, when correlating attitudes towards school and future life with socio-economic background and gender our quantitative findings point out that ethnic minority students of higher socio-economic status are more prone to "late modern majority" values, that is, living in nuclear families. Whereas ethnic minority boys are more likely to prefer a life within 'traditional' extended families, etc. (Thomsen et al. 2010: 69).

However, our qualitative findings suggest a much more complex understanding of ethnic minority students' life strategies. When combining the students’ school strategies with their identity strategies (see below) from the perspective of intersecting social, gendered, and ethnic categories the students seem to perform an adaptation to a late-modern Danish knowledge society, nonetheless, proactively (re-)positioning their ethnic othered and migratory identities (Moldenhawer et al. 2010: 26, footnote 35). Thus, we believe that our analytical integration of the category of inherently reflexive strategy and theoretical understanding of migrants as agents of simultaneous emigration and immigration challenges the general immigrant state centred approach of socio-psychological investigations of identity formation and integration processes among ethnic minority youth in late-modern Europe (Mørch et al. 2008, Alsmark et al. 2007). Our findings, so to speak, suggest alternative identity configurations and processes of adaptation among ethnic minority and migrant youth in Europe.

Our identification of ethnic minority students' non-assimilative adaptation to Danish society may also offer an explanation to why our data sets do not suggest any clear strategy of opposition, as both the Danish scholar Laura Gilliam (2010) and other country-specific investigations of the EDUMIGROM project (Schiff, Messing, Moldenhawer and Kostlán 2010: 21–31) find among ethnic minority students (Moldenhawer et al. 2010: 36). “[A]ll students strongly insist on being part of the majority society with equal rights and to some degree equal opportunities. (…) [Nevertheless] most students acknowledge that they are and also perceive themselves as ethnic minority” (Moldenhawer et al. 2010: 60).

**Identity strategies**

Together with the two schooling strategies we have identified three strategies of identity among ethnic minority students. In the following paragraphs we will first present them individually and then discuss them in relation to their intersection with schooling strategies and categories of socio-economic status, gender, ethnicity, and migration.

The identity strategy of **ethnic pride** presents itself in the form of the student’s nurturing of close relationships with their parents, extended family, and the wider ethnic community in Denmark and abroad. However, this does not mean that students with the identity of ethnic pride alienate themselves from the Danish society. The second strategy of identity is termed **reflexive ethnicity**, and thereby characterised by an adherence to a cultural diversity that perceives mixed ethnic identity affiliations as an advantage. This identity strategy also displays a positive attitude towards the values of the workfare
paradigm and the knowledge society. Third, we have identified an identity strategy of downplaying
ethnicity. This last strategy is displayed as a distance towards ethnic identification. Instead, it promotes
mixed ethnic/immigrant identities that are converted into subcultural and locally-anchored identities (i.e.,
“‘hip hop’/”gangster” – attitudes). This identity strategy seems to be produced due to a general feeling
of not being accepted as an immigrant by the majority society and in opposition to society outside the
subcultural arena (Moldenhawer et al. 2010: 42–47).

These three identity strategies point to the ethnic minority students’ overall understanding of
“ethnicity” as something positive and advantageous. But when associated with the immigrant category,
“ethnicity” becomes a burden and a label of failure and disintegration. From the perspective of the
students’ non-assimilative schooling and identity strategies, our findings display a desire among the
students to escape the logic of exclusion learned and experienced by their parents – but even more
important, they consciously are making an effort to escape the general stereotyping of “the immigrant
on the dole.” This stereotype can be said to be constructed on the grounds of the deprivation paradigm.

In contrast to ethnic minority students’ general positive perceptions of “ethnicity,” teachers
explain this ethnic attachment as a result of the students’ lack of rootedness in Denmark. Teachers try
to compensate this supposed deficit by explaining to the students “what they really are” (Moldenhawer
et al. 2010: 34, citing a teacher). This example of negotiations of the ethnic category suggests that the
teachers reproduce the discourse of deprivation, hence understanding successful integration as becoming
“the same” (as the ethnic Danes).

The above negotiations between teachers and ethnic minority students may offer an explanatory
framework for understanding why it appears in our quantitative findings that students of a mixed
minority-majority identity feel twice as good in school as students identifying with only one ethnic
identity (Thomsen et al. 2010: 72). Namely, it could be that mixed identity students simply find it easier
to navigate in relation to teachers as well as in relation to their peers of different ethnic backgrounds,
and thus display a general feeling of recognition and safety in school. These findings find resonance
in earlier research on immigrant transformation processes (Mørck 1998; Røgilds 1995, Lindholm and
Vinderskov 1997) that suggest hybrid identity formations among ethnic minorities. This empirical hybridity
challenges the assimilationist understanding of adaptation as an “either-or” position. Instead, it suggests
a “both-and” position, in which ethnic minority students can feel strong attachments, for example, to the
Pakistani ethnic community, and yet appreciate the value of education and employment (Moldenhawer
forthcoming: 10). These findings may perhaps disturb the traditional majority/minority dichotomy and
pave the way for further investigations into new and complex “ethnic” differentiations (Thomsen et al.
2010: 72).

As mentioned earlier, the correlations between and intersections of schooling strategies,
identity strategies, and gender point further to the investigation of these “novel ethnic” differentiations
in education. From this pattern of schooling strategies, identity strategies, and gender we may extract
three configurations of ethnic minority students’ strategic practices in school.
The first configuration displays ethnic minority girls who are committed to schoolwork and represent either a reflexive ethnicity or an ethnic pride identity strategy. The fact that these girls do well in school is explained in popular terms as a result of a rather disciplined and traditional upbringing, by which ethnic minority (read Muslim) parents try to keep their daughters away from “Danish” leisure activities, etc., preparing them for marriage. However, the girls interviewed strongly emphasise their strategic use of various ways of negotiating expectations and (re)construction of ethnic identities that combine an adherence to traditional as well as modern values and educational goals (Moldenhawer et al. 2010: 62).

The second configuration shows evidence of a male gendered relation between a schooling strategy of commitment and an identity of downplaying ethnicity. These ethnic minority boys do well in school, but feel rather burdened with the troublesome categorisation of the “criminal trouble-making immigrant.” In order to escape this negative categorisation, they downplay their individual ethnic backgrounds, replacing it with a mixed minority identity turning the problematised “immigrant” category upside-down. They, so to speak, reinvent the immigrant category in a positive subcultural youth strategy of empowerment among interethnic minority peers. Yet they feel a need to be a step ahead of the Danes in regards to academic performance in order to escape the aforementioned exclusionary categorisations of the troublesome (male) immigrant (Moldenhawer et al. 2010: 63). As such this points to ethnic minority students’ continuous negotiations and reinterpretations of possible and impossible categorisations of “the immigrant” and/or “the ethnic othered” in regards to the minority students’ positioning in- and outside school.

The third configuration includes both boys and girls, who display an instrumental approach to schooling by putting more effort in sustaining their social relations within the ethnic community, and thereby showing an ethnic pride identity strategy. These students often do poorer in school due to little educational capital in the family. However, they seem to take advantage of close relations to the family and larger ethnic community, inasmuch as the boys seem to find potential employment in family businesses, if failing at school. The girls, however, do not seem to have this opportunity, and therefore are more at the mercy of the school system’s selection processes.

In summary, our findings point to ethnic minority students’ general positive understanding of “ethnicity” when it comes to matters of identity, however, sharply distancing the “ethnic” category from the negatively loaded immigrant category. Nevertheless, when “ethnicity” in the form of “bilingualism” appears in academic matters, it is valued negatively by the students. This is further sustained by the teachers’ vocalisation of “ethnicity” in terms of language deficits and a limited horizon among the ethnic minority students. Interestingly, the teachers do not perceive “ethnicity” to matter inside of school, which they describe as an educational institution of inclusive pedagogy with almost non-existent conflicts with ethnic connotations (Moldenhawer et al. 2010: 32–37).
Zones of exception

The same understanding of the school as a place where ethnicity does not matter is to be found among the ethnic minority students as well. Except, as mentioned before, when it comes to understanding hindrances to academic achievement.

Hitherto, our quantitative findings show evidence of a high level of interethnic interaction among the students that may challenge dominant views on ethnically segregated peer-cultures in ethnically diverse classroom practices and school life (Thomsen et al. 2010: 72). Correlating the level of interethnic interaction with the socio-economic and gendered categories, we find that girls interact more than boys, and boys with a socially higher status interact the least. Furthermore, minority students prove to have a higher level of interethnic interaction than average. This being said, interethnic interaction among minority students might include majority students to a lesser degree, hence pointing to a high level of interethnic interaction among ethnic minority students exclusively.

Though some ethnic minority students tell of interethnic interaction outside of school, primarily in connection with sports activities, it is our impression that the school stands out as a zone of exception. By this, we suggest that the ethnically diverse school may be understood as a sanctuary from the negative representations of ethnic minorities in public and political discourses, especially when it comes to social interaction and social well-being of the students (Moldenhawer et al. 2010: 57). However, when considering the question of “ethnicity” in relation to academic performance, the zone of exception dissolves and the deprivation paradigm comes into play.

Thus, we see the teachers commute between a “colour-blind” inclusive pedagogy, at the same time explaining academic difficulties with reference to nationalised ethnic categorisations supplemented by socio-economic categorisations. Hitherto, the ethnic minority students seem to commute between positive ethnic identifications and internalisations of public discourse on the quiet but successful self-responsible minority student, on the one hand, and the experience of othering along the borders of residential areas accentuated by the forceful dichotomy of the immigrant category versus the native category, on the other hand.

Following in the footsteps of the presumption of schools being shaped by the communities where they are embedded (Szalai et al. 2010: 3), our findings have shown a strong localisation of the “ethnic” category, in which the residential area becomes the main distinction of belonging for ethnic minority students – and hence dismal prospects for academic success and future “integration.” At the same time, the content of this distinction is not entirely negative: it implies complex strategies of identity that simultaneously belong to a certain neighbourhood and long for something else – outside the “ghetto.” Thus, the notion of the school as a zone of exception becomes intensified when speaking of a school situated in a so-called ghetto area, as is Fraser school in opposition to Belleview school.

The notion of simultaneous belonging and longing further complicates the investigation of ethnic differentiations in stigmatised schools with high concentrations of ethnic minority students.
The fact that our research samples consist of both Muslim independent schools and public schools with different concentration levels of ethnic minority students has not proven a straightforward correlation between high concentrations of ethnic minority students and low academic performance. However, we do tentatively suggest a correlation between high concentrations of ethnic minority students and a general feeling of safety and recognition among the students. Therefore, it might to some extent be through the strong self-esteem that is cultivated in Muslim independent schools, which are characterised by “voluntary” segregation and a student body from upper-status families. Hence, the question is whether it is feasible to operate with a distinction between “voluntary” and “involuntary” segregation – the argument being that segregation is a structural factor and not reducible to subjective accounts of voluntary/involuntary actions (Thomsen et al. 2010: 65–73). In her transnational study of a Pakistani independent school in Copenhagen, Marta Padovan-Özdemir (2010) points to a possible critique of understanding segregated schools in victimised and disintegrated terms. We should rather understand segregated schools and their catchment areas in the perspective of their interdependence with and strategic positioning to the surrounding society, state policies, and transnational networks (Padovan-Özdemir 2010). This might be true for Muslim schools established by the community, but hardly holds for the schools that became segregated due to the processes of exclusion and marginalisation of ethnic minorities.

In addition, we would like to raise in this discussion whether the performance gap between majority and minority students should be explained in terms of the concentration rate of ethnic minority students, and whether on that basis it should lead to political interventions in the shape of compensatory language stimulation and relocation of ethnic minority students (Kampmann 2003: 111)? We might ask the question where such an explanatory framework and its interventions leave the competencies and influence of teachers and school managers.

In conclusion, we argue that the inquiry of ethnic differentiation in education cannot be understood solely in terms of “ethnicity” as a pure independent category. Ethnic differentiation in education is rather to be investigated as processes of inclusions and exclusions in and through different political, economic, and social arenas on global as well as local levels (Alsmark et al. 2007).

Suggestions for future inquiries

The key findings from our quantitative and qualitative investigations of ethnic differentiation in education in Denmark point to the need to challenge immigrant, state-centred research on migrants and ethnic minorities. Hence, we suggest further research on how ethnic differentiation is produced through the discourses and practices of the welfare state system. Hitherto, we stress the importance of understanding the welfare immigrant state responses to its immigrant population from the perspective of its transnational relations to emigrant states (Kallehave and Moldenhawer 2008: 44). In this vein, we emphasise the resurgent
need for exploring the migrant category in its transnational social, economic, and political relations in order to embrace the complexities of ethnic differentiation in education, and in society as such.

The transnational perspective further highlights the importance of critical education research, which is able to feed the political system without reproducing popular normative notions of integration as a one-way process of assimilating the culturally deviant migrant. In other words, a research that can problematise naturalised constructions of differentiation along ethnic, gendered, and social lines (Buchardt et al. 2006: 11).

Along the deconstructional work on the production of ethnic, gendered, and social categories, we suggest further longitudinal, comparative inquiry into the educational, social, and family-related pathways of minority vis-à-vis majority students (Thomsen et al. 2010: 38, 71). Such comprehensive research must include vertical as well as horizontal multi-level analyses correlating state policies and public discourses with interethnic relations in everyday life and pedagogical practices in order to understand the (re) production of inequalities. Moreover, the EDUMIGROM research project has proven the strength and fertility of comparative research inasmuch as it challenges empirical as well as analytical/theoretical concepts and categories of the educational subject and educational system/organisation.

As our findings have challenged the popular dichotomy of majority/minority, we see the need for further inquiries into the relations between particular ethnic, gendered, and/or social minorities and the education system, presumably demanding new ways of objectifying the "othered" subject in education (Øland 2007).

Policy recommendations

By a utilisation of our key findings and our framing of the public and political discourse, we address a number of policy recommendations in four major aspects below.

Improving education for minority ethnic youth and enhancing their inclusion in education

Earlier in this summary, we discussed whether to look for explanations of and solutions to the performance gap between ethnic majority and minority students in the concentration level of ethnic minority students. With inspiration from David Gillborn (Institute of Education, University of London), we would recommend to move the focus from the level of ethnic minority concentration to the actual practices of teachers in ethnically diversified classrooms. According to Gillborn, it is not as much a question of equal opportunities but rather a question of equal performance. The teachers have a responsibility to diminish that gap in performance by turning with equally high expectations to all students (Burchardt et al. 2006: 10).
The change of teachers’ practices may be supported by extensive supplementary training in the subjects of Danish as a Second Language and Intercultural Pedagogy, supplemented with collegial observation in daily classroom practices. The curriculum of this supplementary training programme encourages teachers and school managers to meet the challenge of mobilising the cultural and linguistic capital of minority ethnic students in order to promote an inclusive teaching and learning context (Kristjánsdóttir and Timm 2007).

On a governmental level we recommend that the above suggested changes may be supported by policies that appreciate diversity and allow people to forge new identities that are recognised and valued on equal terms at school and in wider society. Such policies should be echoed in the national curriculum as well as in local schools’ set of values.

However, we do recognise that in order to enhance social cohesion in ethnically diverse schools and in their local districts, it is crucial to reinforce the societal role of the school. We recommend the school to elaborate its cooperation with professionals and voluntary civic organisations outside of school. A good example of such civic cooperation could be the case of the highly ethnically diverse H.C. Andersen School in the municipality of Odense, which characterises itself as a “7-11” offering its free facilities to the disposition of local organisations and initiatives. One of the two selected schools in the Danish community study, Fraser school, is one such similar “whole-day school” (in Danish: Heldagsskole). The openness of schools encourages a grounded local commitment to the school, and thereby its students.

Local commitment may be further nourished by a dialogical approach to the development of intercultural school-home partnerships and cooperation. A sustainable intercultural school-home partnership is characterised by mutual recognition, clear alignment of expectations from both parties, awareness of intercultural communication, availability of professional translators, and not least the acknowledgement of the school’s/teachers’ responsibility for the success of such cooperation (Padovan-Özdemir 2008).

This being said, we emphasise the importance of a radical change in public and political discourse on “immigrants”. The forceful discourse of deprivation and integration as “becoming the same” in relation to categories of immigrants and ethnic minorities needs to be challenged by a fundamental recognition of the fluid and strategic character of ethnicity (Moldenhawer forthcoming). Hitherto, we recommend an understanding of migration as a condition of life to some members of society. This way migration is not to be seen as standing in opposition to the national welfare state, but rather to be understood in its interdependent relations to both the immigrant and emigrant state as well as to transnational communities.

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3 Available online: http://www.dettevirker.dk
Interethnic relations

Challenging the popular idea of the "ghetto" area/school as being something *a priori* problematic, accentuates the potentiality of voluntary segregation as a way to combat inequality (Buchardt et al. 2006: 13), as has been shown earlier in this summary with the example of Muslim independent schools.

However, we do not suggest ethnically segregated and socially exposed residential areas and schools be left on their own. They are still to be recognised and included as a community within the wider community and society. Such recognition and inclusion presupposes a fundamental understanding of the diversity within these targeted areas and educational institutions and their potential contribution to wider society.

With reference to the countrywide social, cultural, and environmental interventions in socially exposed residential areas around the municipalities of Denmark under the headings of "Neighbourhood Boosting" (in Danish: Kvarterløft) and "Area Rejuvenation" (in Danish: Områdefornyelse), we recommend to sustain and further develop this work in the spirit of civic inclusion. Though the aforementioned residential area interventions all stem from a governmental level, they are inherently executed in terms of a bottom–up approach. In other words, on the local government level the financial funds are allocated and broad political goals are decided for the use of these funds. However, Gl. Valby Area Rejuvenation (part of the municipality of Copenhagen) is a good example of how project managers have invited local inhabitants to participate in the development of ideas on how to spend the funds so that the intervention actually meets the needs of the local people. Furthermore, local inhabitants have been given the opportunity to take part in the actual distribution of funds among different projects.

One such project is the "Project Manager Training" project that offers a course on the management of voluntary projects and that includes intercultural communication skills, networking skills, and basic project management. The overall aim of the project has been to gather local inhabitants from diverse social and ethnic backgrounds to cooperate and create interculturally sustainable social projects that bridge the rather segregated neighbourhoods of Valby in Copenhagen.

This approach stands in strict contradiction to less inclusive interventions in socially exposed residential areas. Such interventions have lately been characterised by subtle relocations of "unwanted" inhabitants – that is, unemployed ethnic minorities – by means of raising rents or evicting whole families on the grounds of one family member's criminal activities.

Activating interethnic relations by means of inclusion instead of exclusionary measures may enhance the feeling of safety and recognition in school that our sample of ethnic minority students display in the area outside of school and in wider society (Moldenhawer forthcoming: 20).

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4 Available online: http://www.kk.dk/Borger/BoligOgByggeri/OmraadebaseredeIndsatser/Omraadefornyelse.aspx
5 Available online: http://www.kk.dk/Borger/BoligOgByggeri/ByfornyelseVedligeholdelse/Omraadefornyelse/Valby/HvilkeProjekterErDer/Projektmagerkursus.aspx
Ethnic inequalities and welfare

It has been widely acknowledged throughout this paper that the universal welfare state is not a “colour-blind” administration. It is rather a culturally specific system of a certain social order that promotes and sustains an exclusive common “we” in opposition to, that is, the ethnic “other” (Jöhncke 2007: 59). On the basis of this acknowledgement, we recommend a revision of the ethnic categorisations that are constructed in order to explain social inequality in education, since they are inherently “a product of an administrative imaginary of the problematic and culturally deviant immigrant and descendant” (Moldenhawer forthcoming: 229, our translation).

In other words, we pose a challenge to the structural blindness of the welfare system in order to illuminate the inherent inequalities of the national education system as a framework for displaying the difficulties in operationalising multicultural, anti-racist, and/or intercultural values into a pedagogical practice (Buchardt et al. 2006: 11, Kristjánsdóttir and Timm 2007).

Minority and general citizens’ rights

Challenging the negative rhetoric of integration spurs the implementation of citizenship education on the educational agenda. The actualisation of citizenship education based on key international human rights conventions delimits the possibility of equating equality with “sameness” (Buchardt et al. 2006: 12). The Danish national curriculum does still not include exclusive citizenship education. This might have to do with a long-standing tradition and self-image that citizenship education is part of all school activities and subjects, and therefore does not need special attention. There is and has been a tendency in Denmark to equate Danish national identity with democracy, leaving those who are rhetorically non-nationals (immigrants and ethnic minorities) outside of the (national) democratic community.

In recent years several development projects in education and ministerial campaigns have been undertaken as a result of the discourse on the “democratically deprived immigrant” and “the radicalised Muslim” (Ministry of Education 2009). Though we do recommend the promotion of citizenship education, we would also criticise the grounds on which citizenship education programs are enacted.

In spite of our critique of the ministerial campaigns in Denmark, we recognise the positive substance of some different public campaigns such as “Democracy Because” and “Co-Citizen” – both

6  “Democracy Because” is a Danish national education campaign offering lower and upper secondary schools to engage in a joint effort to better understand and communicate democracy and social citizenship. The campaign challenges all students to reflect upon what it means to be a co-citizen in a democratic and inclusive community. The teaching materials cover the themes of rights, responsibility, equality, community, democracy, and participation and the students can participate in a national competition for the most creative expression of democracy. Available online: http://www.demokratifordi.dk

7  The “Co-Citizen” project aims at creating a network of researchers, school managers, teachers, and school boards, who can exchange knowledge on the promotion of active citizenship in education. Moreover, the project aims at developing positive
of which promote active, social, and inclusive citizenship that appreciates diversity and its contribution to society.

This double-sidedness of the promotion of citizenship points to the need for further inquiries into the relations between political governmental levels of education, public discourse, local educational practices, and the everyday life formations of ethnic minority students and their families. How can we promote inclusive citizenship without stigmatising certain minority groups? How can we close the educational gap between ethnic majority and ethnic minority students without compensating for but rather building upon the cultural and linguistic resources already existing among ethnic minority students? These are the key questions to be answered in future research and future policymaking in relation to ethnic differentiation and educational prospects for urban youth in Denmark and in an enlarged Europe.

Literature


diversity management models and inclusive schools policies. This should be sustained by the development of pedagogical programs to prevent marginalisation of minority students and promote active citizenship and equal participation. Through these programs the students should acquire knowledge of the ideas that the Danish democratic polity is build upon. Based on this knowledge the students are encouraged to make use of the liberties, rights, duties and responsibility they have in regards to the school and the wider society. Available online: http://www.medborger.net.


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