

Article

Educational Success Despite School? From Cultural Hegemony to a Post-Inclusive School

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Abstract

This article explores how a differential thinking has arisen between “us” (locals, natives) and “them” (migrants) in German-speaking areas, how in this context a canned *Rezeptwissen* (recipe knowledge) has established itself and how there has been a normalisation of cultural hegemony in the context of education. This binary thinking has also taken hold stepwise within the concepts of school development and educational programmes. It has contributed significantly to the construction of an educational normality that has retained its efficacy up to the present. Along with the structural barriers of the educational system, the well-rehearsed and traditional conceptions of normality serve to restrict and limit the educational prospects and future perspectives of youth who are deemed to stem from a migration background. These prospects and perspectives for the future have a negative impact on their educational goals and professional-vocational orientations. Our research also shows that ever more youths and young adults are confronting and grappling with this ethnic-nationally oriented understanding of education and seeking to find other pathways and detours to move on ahead and develop appropriate conceptions of education and vocational orientations for themselves. The article explores the need for a “post-inclusive” school and “post-inclusive” understanding of education, which overcome the well-rehearsed and historically shaped conceptions of normality in the context of education, opening up new options for action and experience for the young people involved.

Keywords

cultural hegemony; education; post-inclusive school; post-migration; young people

Issue

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1. Introduction

The point of departure for this article is that the educational opportunities, possibilities of subjectification, and individual positionings of a person are marked and shaped by social structures and are dependent on facilitating and limiting conditions. It is common knowledge that the social resources at an individual’s disposal are not equally distributed. A major role in this is whether persons are perceived as “natives,” “migrants,” or “refugees.” A further aspect of this contextual coil is that as a result of powerful distinctions—“us” (local

natives) and “them” (migrants)—a social normality has become established whose efficacy remains with us today. Educational institutions, and especially schools, which this article focuses on, are a striking example of how this binary manner of thinking functions and how in this way a school-based educational normality has crystallised. In that normality, certain children and youths appear almost routinely as a “deviation” from that notion of what is normal.

The way schools function as some kind of “sorting machines” has recently been the focus of greater international discussion (Domina et al., 2017; Emmerich &

Hormel, 2021; Horvath, 2018; Raudenbush & Eschmann, 2015). In this article, we seek to expand on these ideas and investigate school in the German-speaking areas, with a focus on Austria, with respect to two variables: cultural hegemony and “migration background.” In doing so, we endeavour to build on research that was already able to substantiate a systematic and institutional discrimination of children and youths who are deemed to have a so-called “migration background” (Auernheimer, 2003; Diefenbach, 2007; Diehl et al., 2016; Fereidooni, 2009; Gomolla & Radtke, 2002). We will concentrate in the course of this article on how the “sorting machine” in the German-speaking area was able to produce an exclusive and exclusionary school-based normality and what role cultural hegemony plays in that construction. We ask what influence this educational reality exerts on the educational and professional opportunities of children and youths from migrant families, and how these youths deal with the negative ascriptions and mechanisms of exclusion. We also explore how they position themselves in this confrontation and what actions of resistance become visible in that context.

To render this thinking based on a categorising binary of “us” and the “other” visible, and to undermine and counter it, Edward Said proposed a “contrapuntal reading” that is meaningful for the present analysis (Said, 1994, p. 66), a kind of reading against the grain, a new perspective from the vantage of other worlds of experience. For our present focus here, that means seeking to see the social/societal relations of dominance and their associated conceptions of normality from the perspective of the experiences of youth. Experiences of migration and the lived realities of young people appear not as some sort of special topic but rather the point of fruitful departure for further reflection. To render these experiences visible, interviews with post-migrant youths were conducted in the framework of a research project at Innsbruck University and analysed for this article.

The analytical lens centres here on the living conditions of the young against the backdrop of social/societal power relations; the strategies they develop under restrictive social conditions are also explored. They are viewed not as “victims” of social relations but rather as experts on their life practices, persons who grapple with the living conditions they have found themselves in, positioning themselves within that confrontation.

The present article, borrowing from Mitterer (2011), seeks to engage in a “non-dualistic” reading—one that reflects on the two interconnected phenomena, namely the restrictive social conditions under which the youths exist and the perspectives on the future that they develop under these hemmed in, constraining possibilities. Reflecting on the two perspectives together facilitates clarifying the nexus between the limited options for action in heteronomous structures and also helps to render visible the potentialities present among adolescents and young adults (see also Flecker & Zartler, 2020, p. 14; Lutz, 2008).

In the following section, we seek to shed light on the framework of a theoretical approach to the social context of the school system in Austria and describe the construction of an educational normality that systematically disadvantages the children and youth of the post-migrant generation. Following that, we endeavour, based on biographical narratives, to render visible the impacts and ways of dealing with this cultural hegemony in the school system. In closing, the present article attempts to develop alternative perspectives that fracture and crack open the historical continuity and surmount the established categorical classifications.

Our thesis is that school becomes a site of cultural hegemony, a “classifier” or “sorting machine” that organises and reproduces societal power relations and mechanisms of exclusion. Alongside the structural hurdles of the school system, this school-based conception of normality functions to limit the educational opportunities of the young people who are ascribed a so-called “migrant background.” It has a negative impact on their educational goals and vocational-professional orientations and blocks their “pathways into the future” (Flecker et al., 2020). The article argues the need for a post-inclusive school and post-inclusive understanding of education which surmounts the well-rehearsed interpretations and historically shaped conceptions of normality in the context of education, opening up new spaces for action and experience for adolescents and young adults.

2. Between Cultural Hegemony and Self-Empowerment in the Educational Context

We can speak about a systematic inequality within the educational system in German-speaking areas which leads to a structural discriminatory process of placing children and youth stemming from migrant families at a disadvantage (as an example, see Gomolla & Radtke, 2002). The reluctance to understand such a society officially as a migrant society has led, in these countries, to a situation where phenomena of migration have, over a long period, not been viewed as a central pan-societal concern. Corresponding proper measures, legal, political, or educational, failed to be taken. As mentioned above, the official school development did not react and respond appropriately to this. At best, migration movements were viewed as something exceptional, as a “problem case.” Within the education system, different hypotheses circulated regarding cultural differences. Permanent distinctions were established between pupils from a migrant background and local native pupils by making use of “ethnicising” and “culturalising” interpretations (see, critically, Bukow & Llaryora, 1998). This thinking about difference and otherness was also reflected stepwise in the conceptions of school development and educational programmes; it contributed significantly to the construction of an educational normality at school which today still retains its efficacy and salience. Ethnically-based sorting and

classification go hand in hand with more-or-less subtle devaluing ascriptions, forming “categorical exclusivities” (Neckel & Sutterlüty, 2008, p. 20).

Against this backdrop, we understand schools as a mode of “sorting machines” (Domina et al., 2017). Thurston Domina, Andrew Penner, and Emily Penner described, in a nutshell, how the school functions in this respect when they write:

We argue that educational institutions construct and reinforce highly salient social categories and sort individuals into these categories. These educational categories structure the competition for positions in stratified societies and, in the process, influence which individuals attain which social locations. In doing so, schools, and the categories they help construct, shape the inequality structure of the societies in which they operate. (Domina et al., 2017, p. 312)

In this article, we seek to deal primarily with the imagined category of difference “migration background,” which as a specific differentiating mode of knowledge has become part of normality at school in the post-migrant society in German-speaking areas. In this context, we speak of *Rezeptwissen* (recipe knowledge). This is an institutional or societal form of knowledge that is a result of conventional migration and integration research and their ethnicising logic, a “body of knowledge” that is no longer reflected upon and serves as a guidepost for orientation in almost all areas of society.

Thinking in terms of difference as a premise of knowledge production or reproduction leads, whether so desired or not, to the ethnicising and culturalising of social relations and their bringing into line with pedagogical theory. That has certain consequences for the societal and school-based perception of pupils from a migrant background, impacting their educational careers and educational attainment. The descendants of migrants—the “post-migrant generation” (Yıldız, 2010) appear to have inherited the foreigner status of their parents and/or grandparents. They continue to be viewed and treated as permanent guests, according to the motto: “Once a migrant, always a migrant.” In this context, Castel (2009, p. 84) correctly notes the “generation-transcending transmission of a habitus of deficit.” The cultural hegemony constructed and imparted via these discourses stamps and shapes not just school development and the sphere of education, but society as a whole.

According to Antonio Gramsci, cultural hegemony means the “supremacy of a social group” (Gramsci, 1978, p. 2011). Cultural hegemony in the post-migrant generation then encompasses the production, reproduction, and maintenance of a society imagined to be homogeneous in national, ethnic, religious, linguistic, and racialist terms. None of these categories is unambiguous and every society and biography is marked by multiplicity in this respect. However, hegemonial discourses specifi-

cally assert unambiguousness, certainties that they must repeatedly normalise discursively. They are grounded on the “form of power of categorisation” (Foucault, 2007, p. 86).

Initially important to point out is that the Austrian school system stems from an era in which the dominant orientation was to a class society shaped by the nation-state and its elite. That system still adheres to the model of methodological nationalism and ethnocentrism and believes it can hardly cast aside its structurally conservative and closed cohesive attitude and move on to establishing new concepts of education beyond the national orientation infusing the school system (see Engelbrecht, 1988). It is equally important to know that there is a so-called “differentiated school system” in Austria. This means that after a common four years of elementary school, children must change to either so-called *Gymnasien* or *Neue Mittelschulen* (formerly *Hauptschulen*), depending on report card grades. Thus, children’s educational paths are already separated at the age of 10. The differentiated school system is criticised because it is a major factor in the reproduction of educational and social inequality (Bruneforth et al., 2012; Lassnig, 2015).

In this unequal school system, migration is not understood as a form of the otherwise much-lauded mobility—and thus as an occasion and challenge for reorientation—but rather is perceived almost exclusively as a pedagogical or school problem. It is not fortuitous that pedagogy for foreigners back then was conceived as a compensatory mode of education, aiming to assist pupils in their necessary “integration” into school and society (see, critically, Mecheril, 2018). Under this premise, right from the start, also in the thinking of educational scholars, they were imputed to have a false socialisation: Their factual familial and the required school-based socialisation were automatically viewed as being incompatible. Later on, however, intercultural (see Auernheimer, 2012) and more open trans-cultural concepts (see Datta, 2010) were developed that opened up new perspectives. Yet up to the present, what unites them is a focus on cultural difference. Although deficit-oriented approaches have been criticised for years because of their aspect of “special education” and cultural-ethnic exaggeration (Mecheril, 2018; Yıldız & Khan-Svik, 2011), they have persisted and have remained long entrenched as part of established normality.

Such a compensatory notion proceeds from a premise of damaged or incomplete processes of socialisation and the deficiencies springing from this alleged defect, which are supposed to be compensated for and/or reduced through targeted measures (see Bernstein, 1972). Migration-linked developments and special opportunities qua affordances offered by individual and social multilingualism and trans-border worlds of education for the design of education locally on the spot rarely emerge from the perspective of a methodological nationalism (Hinrichsen & Terstegen, 2021).

To date, there has been no success in achieving a sustainable improvement in the traditionally multi-sectional and selective school system, let alone creating a “post-inclusive school” (as a school for one and all). There is at present no school form in which proper attention is actually paid to the individual, social, cultural, and religious diversity of the student body (see in particular Gomolla, 2005; Riegel, 2009).

It is all too well-known that children from migrant families, in contrast with the local indigenous native comparison group, are clearly overrepresented in marginalised forms of schooling. They far more frequently attend lower secondary (non-college-prep) Hauptschulen and special schools (ÖIF, 2018; Weiss, 2007, p. 33). On the other hand, they are underrepresented in higher-level, more elite types of schools. In this connection, one can rapidly speak of institutional discrimination and the stratification and creation of an “underclass” in the educational system (Gomolla & Radtke, 2002; May, 2021; Radtke, 2004; Yildiz, 2011). The result of such stratification is that lower secondary Hauptschulen and special schools become a kind of “heterotopia” in Foucault’s (1986) sense, morphing into marginalised, territorially stigmatised residual spaces, which, from an “hegemonial” vantage, are devalued and accorded a supposedly deviant normality.

The title of Susanne Wiesinger’s 2018 highly controversial book, much discussed in recent years in Austria, *Kulturkampf im Klassenzimmer: Wie der Islam die Schulen verändert (Culture War in the Classroom: How Islam is Changing the Schools)* clearly expresses this hegemonial, racist attitude. The entire book is based on generalisations and ascriptions; it serves to reproduce the existing racist interpretations and the well-rehearsed and familiar concepts of normality. Wiesinger was not only able to publish her racist outbursts and initiate a public debate about them but in 2019 she was also appointed ombudswoman for values issues and cultural conflicts at the Ministry of Education.

Faults and distortions in the educational system are frequently “explained” and accounted for by pointing to cultural or ethnic differences. According to the long-standing well-known binary cultural model, the modern Austrian education system is the contrary antipode to the tradition-bound and backward migrant children. One can note here just how much ethnically coded knowledge is treated and passed down, taken for granted, within the context of education. We can observe how predetermined images and interpretations flow into the definition of situations, and how they are transposed into habits and elements deemed self-evident that are no longer subject to critical reflection. In this way, the ethnic *Rezeptwissen* (recipe knowledge) becomes, in the context of school, part and parcel of the social stock of common knowledge (Gomolla, 2006, 2021; Radtke, 2004). This unfolds a de-individualising effect where people are no longer seen as individuals but as part of a homogeneous set, as typical representatives of “for-

eign cultures,” “cultural circles,” or “nations.” Thus, they also become the subject of school and educational programmes (see Radtke, 2011).

The results of a textbook analysis in Germany reveal how this works in school lessons: “Migrants appear mostly as victims of social conditions and rarely as active agents....Often an irreconcilable juxtaposition of ‘foreigners’ and ‘Germans’ can be found” (Grabbert, 2010, p. 16). Hintermann (2010) comes to similar findings in her textbook analysis in Austria. Migration is often presented in a truncated and one-sided way from a deficit perspective, while phenomena such as social inequality, discrimination and racism are hardly addressed. The study published by the Federal Government Commissioner for Migration, Refugees and Integration in Germany (2015) also provides several examples showing that the multi-layered heterogeneity of the student body either does not appear at all in the textbooks or only under ethnic prefixes.

It is not without reason that international comparative studies have repeatedly pointed out the lack of equal opportunities in the Austrian or German education system. Multi-dimensionality and strict selection ensure the exclusion of part of the student body from qualified educational careers. In the long run, the school system will not be able to fulfil the social mandate of education for all as long as it remains bound to specific expectations of normality: The ideal student is native, socialised in a single language, and comes from a middle-class family that provides the appropriate educated bourgeois habitus—which of course includes foreign languages, but only the right ones. Any other multilingualism or double first language is perceived as disturbing. In this respect, the school system remains structurally conservative, middle-class oriented, and monolingual (see Schneider et al., 2015). Overall, migrant students from the representative regime (Jacques Rancière) of the school appear “distant from culture” or “distant from education.”

2.1. Resistance Strategies and Practices of Self-Empowerment

As will be shown later with biographical examples, the young people in question confront structural discrimination and stigmatisation, position themselves, and develop resistant strategies and self-empowering attitudes to shape their educational careers through detours. In this context, Seukwa (2007) speaks of the “habitus of survival art.” At this point, one can speak of a tension between de-subjectification and re-subjectification. On the one hand, the representative regime of the school has a de-subjectifying effect on the migrant students. From this perspective, they are not perceived as young people with different biographical experiences; instead, they are reduced to cultural and ethnic characteristics and viewed as representatives of a collective. Thus, individuals become foreign or Turkish

students. On the other hand, the confrontation with these hegemonic attributions and discriminations creates new forms of subjectification. Rancière (2018, p. 48) calls this process “de-identification”: “Every subjectification is a de-identification. Tearing loose from a natural place, the opening of a subject space.”

Rancière describes such counter-hegemonic practices as strictly political action. As Mark Terkessidis has pointed out, all people who are affected by discrimination and exclusion, and thus in a marginalised position, are permanently confronted with processes of de-subjectification and re-subjectification (Terkessidis, 2004, p. 201). These forms of subjectification appear as a way of confronting discriminatory and racist structures. If we want to understand this mechanism, it seems useful to think of the two processes (desubjectification regimes and repositioning) together and argue from there. As the empirical biographical case studies show, migrant students and their parents as supporting instances are in a state of ongoing contestation. In the process, they create new subject spaces for themselves and develop resistant attitudes and self-empowerment strategies. It would be important to take these forms of subjectification, articulations, and self-empowerment practices as an approach to rethinking school and social normality.

2.2. Different Perspectives

The findings of the comparative TIES study in which prestigious research centres in eight European countries participated show that there are indeed alternatives to the Austrian and German educational normality. Some 10,000 young adults between the ages of 18 and 35 in 15 European cities were surveyed regarding their professional situation and educational attainment (Schneider et al., 2015). The results of the study substantiate that in dealing with migration in different social spheres, countries like Sweden and France have been far more successful than, for example, Germany or Austria. In Stockholm, six times more children from Turkish migrant family backgrounds attend college-prep high schools than in Berlin or Vienna and, at least potentially, they have the chance to finish a university course of study and to become active in professions grounded on academic study and a college degree (Schneider et al., 2015, p. 27). In France, the nationwide comprehensive, cost-free system of child care leads to a situation where, for two-year-olds, linguistic deficits can be compensated for before kindergarten and school. In Sweden, cost-free child care and completion of assigned homework tasks at school decouple educational achievement from the educational attainment level of the parents. In addition, in Sweden and France, the transition to secondary school only occurs at the age of 15. These structural conditions serve to ensure that in these two countries, the educational situation of the post-migrant generation from Turkish migrant families is far better in terms of a European comparison (Schneider et al., 2015, p. 27).

The analyses also indicate that every school system has its own snares and pitfalls. It is mainly the general features of the educational system that determine the ratios of success and failure. In most educational systems, there are also “stepping stones” that nonetheless make it possible to achieve educational success via detours and special pathways. In marked contrast with Germany and Austria, the school system in the Netherlands, in particular, provides opportunities that are also utilised by children and adolescents whose parents do not have the corresponding level of educational attainment.

The following biographical experiences from of our empirical study of young persons of the post-migrant generation can serve to make visible the effects of power exerted by cultural hegemony within the school system in Austria. Drawing on their concrete experiences, we should derive a new post-inclusive understanding of the school.

3. Empirical Study: Biographical Experiences of the Post-Migrant Generation

The biographical interviews that we have evaluated for this article provide evidence, on the one hand, of how school structures and experiences of discrimination against young people, especially at school, limit their educational opportunities and (can) block future career prospects and, on the other hand, of how the young people concerned deal with such experiences, position themselves and find their own paths and detours to achieve their educational and career goals.

The interviews were preceded by a public call for participants. The social background of the test persons is thus random—the interviewees positioned themselves principally as persons with a family or personal migrant biography in Turkey and one person with links to Bosnia. We took these specific experiences as a point of departure and contextualised them theoretically and empirically for this study. A total of 12 semi-narrative interviews were conducted with students from migrant families. To guarantee a level of openness, the conversations were conducted semi-narratively; they began with an introductory question and the participants had the opportunity to develop a free narrative during which—and depending on the situation—targeted supplementary questions were also asked. The interviews were tape-recorded and then transcribed. The interviews used in this article were conducted in the context of a research workshop (“Educational Success Despite School?”) in the winter semester of 2020–2021 and analysed exemplarily for the present research question. The research project centres on the following question: How—despite structural hurdles and negative ascriptions and attributions in the context of education—did the interviewees nonetheless manage to mature and move on to become university students? In the interviews, we were especially interested in what experiences these young adults had had in the scope of their school career, how they dealt with this,

and what pathways/detours become visible in this process. The interviews were evaluated and analysed based on the approach of “grounded theory” as developed by Glaser and Strauss (1998) and the concept of the “understanding interview” of Kaufmann (1999).

We have selected eight interviews for this study which illuminate most clearly the specific experiences of the post-migrant generation in the context of the school. The following glances into the case reconstructions of this study do not allow for generalising conclusions regarding the social position of the youth of the post-migrant generation in the school more generally. However, the experiences point to certain patterns of the effects of power, which we interpret as the expression of the normalisation of cultural hegemony in the context of education. At the same time, they open a window onto the subjective forms of dealing with these structural conditions, which we interpret as a contrapuntal and in part counter-hegemonial perspective of the school. The interviews selected illustrate most clearly and impressively the problem statement of our study.

4. Educational Success on One’s Own Account? Structural Discrimination and Acts of Conviviality

The interim results of our study show that the educational and professional preparatory careers of adolescents and young adults are initially dependent on numerous factors that become significant in the educational and professional careers of the student. These include structural conditions of the institution, encounters with members of the teaching staff who act to exclude or support students, the familial background, experience, and efforts to grapple with discrimination and racist exclusion, the economic and social situation, the familial fabric, and the migration history of the parents or grandparents (see also Zartler et al., 2020).

We analyse this circumstance within the tension between experiences of racial discrimination and conviviality (see also Ohnmacht & Yıldız, 2021). The brief insights into the biographies of the young people interviewed show a simultaneity of discriminatory and convivial experiences, both of which must be considered. The concept of conviviality goes back to Ivan Illich and Serge Latouche and arose in the context of debates on the critique of growth and the economy. The new ethic of conviviality emphasises the centrality of gift, trust, and radical equality among people (Illich, 2014). Paul Gilroy has taken the concept of conviviality and opened it up to critical migration and racism studies. According to Gilroy, contrary to racist and fatalistic voices that conjure up a collapse of cities like London due to migration and diversity—which in the German-speaking world is often constructed with the terms “parallel society” and “criminal migrant milieu”—a “convivial culture” (Gilroy, 2004) has developed.

The following examples shed light on the role school experiences can play in shaping the educational career

and professional path of young people, how they deal with that, and how they position themselves. We will present the results of our study on three levels, illustrating at the same time the young people, their environment, and their experiences. These three levels are (a) structural conditions, (b) the impact of the teaching staff, and (c) the relevance of the familial background concerning migration histories.

4.1. Structural Conditions

The educational history of Azra, a female student we interviewed, is exemplary of the structural disadvantage of the post-migrant generation. She migrated at the age of two with her parents from Istanbul to Austria. In elementary school, she was advised to transfer to a special school due to “deficits in the sphere of language.” Looking back on her own itinerary up the cline of advancement, this now educationally successful 25-year-old student speaks about the path she has taken in education. She thinks that it was only by dint of accidental support that she managed to transfer “out” of the special school to a lower secondary *Hauptschule*. Azra is today certain that her being stigmatised as a “special school pupil” served to slow down and lengthen her educational pathway. She says: “They all said that I don’t need special assistance any longer. But OK, then just go and apply to a *Hauptschule* with a certificate in hand from a special school. You’re simply labelled then as a ‘problem child.’” Lower secondary *Hauptschulen* or special schools become spaces here for deviation from the local normality, i.e., they become marginalised, territorially stigmatised residual spaces that from a hegemonial vantage are devalued and accorded a different, inferior quality.

The fact that experiences at school for many children from migrant families are especially explosive in terms of their biography is well illustrated by the biography of a young woman who finished her university studies this year. Elisa was born in Innsbruck and at the time of the interview was 25 years old. Her parents had emigrated from Bosnia to Tyrol in Austria before she was born. Her dad stems from a working-class family and is employed as a construction worker. She says the feeling of social exclusion and stigmatisation was something she perceived and suffered through especially in the *Hauptschule* (lower secondary education). Elisa notes that she did not receive any recommendation to transfer to a secondary school offering further education, even though her grades were good. As Elisa put it:

I recall that the teacher speaking with my mom back then said that I should consider doing an apprenticeship, and so maybe not continue on to the *Gymnasium* for a diploma. But rather that I should go to a school where, after finishing, I could go out and immediately land some job. Yes, after that conversation she’d had, my mom actually had always said right

out that I should attend a high school for continuing education—of course only if that’s what I wanted. Probably she’d already noticed right away that the teacher had maybe only talked about an apprenticeship because we’re “foreigners.”

Due to the constant backing and support she received from her mom, also in difficult times and under trying conditions, Elvsa felt strengthened in her desire to pursue her own educational aims and interests. Consequently, after graduating from the *Hauptschule*, she decided to attend a higher-level vocational/professional secondary school in Innsbruck and then go on to university studies. Her experience at school can be viewed as exemplary for children from migrant families and the challenges they face. These problems are structural. They have become “institutionalised inequalities” (Berger & Kahlert, 2013), as seen in Azra’s segregated educational path. Elisa’s example shows that the sorting machine school often automatically excludes children who are ascribed a “migration background” as part of institutional practices when it comes to the transition from elementary school to a *Gymnasium*—regardless of grades, as Elvsa’s case demonstrates. Within these uneven structural conditions, teachers have a great deal of influence.

4.2. *The Impact of the Teaching Staff: Racial Discrimination and Conviviality*

Ayla’s experiences are illustrative of the reality that in the context of school, pupils are repeatedly confronted with negative images and ascriptions against which they (must) position themselves. Ayla was born and raised in Austria and is at present a university student. She talks about the clichés regarding her origin that she was repeatedly confronted and had to grapple with. Her dad stems from Turkey and her mom is from Austria. She notes that people in everyday life often have to proceed from a notion that all female Turks wear a headscarf or have to pray five times a day, and she criticises the fact that origin is often confused with religion. She talks about the barriers she was permanently confronted with at school. When she wanted to register as a pupil at the *Gymnasium*, both her class teacher and school principal at elementary school were against that. She commented that her teacher had once said to her in front of the whole class: “Ayla, in the *Gymnasium* you can’t always ask so many questions afterwards, and you have to understand everything there much faster.” Ayla explains the difficult communication she experienced with the school principal and her class teacher by referring to the fact that, since she was eight years old, she had worn a headscarf, even though her parents had advised her not to because they knew about the associated difficulties with that at school.

Seyla speaks about similar experiences; her grandparents came from Ankara as guest workers to Austria.

She was born in a small town, grew up and attended school there, and has been living in a bigger city for three years. She says that back then, her elementary school teacher tried everything to prevent her from attending the college-prep *Gymnasium* high school. For that reason, her parents had to struggle with the school and with her teacher there. Finally, she managed to take and pass her high school graduation exam (*Matura*) and went on to study at university.

The narratives of Sükrü and Senem show that positive experiences with the teaching staff can have a motivating effect on the school career and achievement of adolescents. The interviewee Sükrü describes his time at school as initially difficult because, in the beginning, he didn’t have sufficient knowledge of the language: “In my case, it was actually pretty difficult, like, well because I didn’t know German very well, and in kindergarten and pre-school I had some difficulties.” At the beginning of his schooling, he had negative experiences with his elementary school teacher. His first two years at elementary school were marked by lack of support. He recalls that the teaching staff even prevented him from going on to the lower secondary *Hauptschule*: “Well, I can still remember that my old elementary school teacher once told me that I wouldn’t even be able to make it at the *Hauptschule*.” This negative prognosis could well have shaped his further educational career in a very negative way. But after changing teachers in third grade at elementary school, he received sufficient support, and his negative image of the teaching personnel also changed. He perceives this shift as a stroke of “good luck” and comments: “She was very nice and even helped me when I didn’t understand something.”

Senem also talks about similar positive experiences with the teaching staff that were very meaningful for her in vocational school, and mentions that a female teacher in vocational school had supported her in every respect: “Yes, right, the class, the teachers, they were really terrific. Like, yeah, the teachers were there for us and always helped us, no matter what it was, also when we had personal problems. They even helped to improve your grades.”

4.3. *Familial Background, Migration Histories, and the Continuity of Discrimination*

Structural discrimination at school and dependence on benevolent teachers must be considered against the background of the social position of young people of the post-migrant generation inside the school system. Although many of them are already living in Austria in the third generation, they are still considered to not belong within the “methodological nationalism” (Gombos, 2013) of the school system.

Ercan, whose grandparents emigrated from the coast of the Black Sea in Turkey to Austria in the 1970s, and who has been studying at university for two years, does not understand why third-generation individuals here

still have to cope with experiences of exclusion at school and find that their social belonging is questioned as something somehow “foreign.” In his eyes, the school he attended lacked the motivation to shape and design their educational trajectory and career path: “My grandparents come from Turkey. My parents, my siblings, and I grew up in Austria. We belong to this country just like all the others.”

Mehmet, who was born and raised in Austria, has been living and studying for three years in a bigger city. Talking about his time at school, he recalls when after returning from summer vacation he told his teacher how beautiful their vacation trip had been with his parents in Turkey. The teacher replied: “So why didn’t you stay there? You don’t have to be here.” Experiences of that kind permeate his biography.

Our research has also shown that family is an important resource for overcoming institutional hurdles and for the possibility of individual success. Azra told us that her older sister—who had managed to get into *Gymnasium*—played an important role in her educational career. She had always accompanied Azra to school in case of school disputes and problems and also helped her with her homework. In her biographical narration, she compared herself to the students marked as “local” and said that she had to do much more than them to get ahead.

According to Ayla’s narrative, her mother and her cousin were very important for her educational success. Her cousin studied while she was in *Gymnasium* and regularly helped her with homework. “Without him, I probably wouldn’t have made it this far,” Ayla says.

These brief revealing glimpses into the biographical case constructions of our study are meant to show that the pupils of the post-migrant generation interviewed had to contend and grapple with discriminatory structural disadvantages in their schools, which must be interpreted as a manifest expression of cultural hegemony within the school system in German-speaking areas. We have also seen that some of the young persons, contrary to the resistance they faced—in a sense despite their school—have achieved educational success. That achievement of success is then heavily dependent on their individual resources, networks, and the individual support they received from teachers, as the biographical examples illustrate.

5. Conclusions: From Methodological Nationalism to a Post-Inclusive School

As was pointed out above, in comparison with other European countries such as Sweden, France, and the Netherlands, the social diversity and the multi-layered life realities of pupils from the migrant families in the educational context of Austria and Germany largely remain invisible or, if seen at all, their plans and designs for a future life are viewed from the hegemonial perspective as disintegrative or deficient (Schneider et al., 2015). A balanced and vital correspondence between educa-

tional normality at school is lacking on one hand and the super-diverse everyday realities of children and adolescents on the other. This attitude of ignorance, which can be observed both in school conceptions and educational programmes, has a negative impact on the educational goals and pathways of children and adolescents from migrant families and limits their possibilities at school and in professional life.

That is why there is an urgent need to radically open up schools to the outside, to restructure and re-conceive educational processes in schooling, rethinking school-based educational reality and, from that vantage, develop up-to-date “post-inclusive” concepts. In the world of global networking, in which hybrid and trans-cultural situations become the normality, schools also require new orientations, a new self-understanding, and up-to-date principles. In the face of global processes of transformation and the diversification of life realities of children and adolescents, schools have to reinvent themselves and be equipped with new forms of knowledge. We require facilities that are aware of the need for diversity and utilise appropriate educational concepts beyond national interpretations, which take the children and adolescents seriously and open up new horizons of experience and action to them. Post-inclusive schools and a post-inclusive understanding of education see multiplicity, ambiguity, multiple orientations, and super-diverse design for living as the point of departure. They posit that as an occasion for discovery and a vision of what learning can be.

A post-inclusive school is not grounded on historically traditional interpretations and “relations of normality.” Rather it proceeds from the children and adolescents who are concretely there. It takes their everyday realities and living situations as the point of departure. The *Freie Schule Honigfabrik* in the Hamburg district of Wilhelmsburg described by Joachim Schroeder in his study (Schroeder, 2002) is one example of an alternative that radically questions the selective and segregating educational processes of the mainstream regular school, envisioning and implementing instead a different educational normality. The on-the-ground life realities of the adolescents in their neighbourhood are taken seriously and become the point of concrete departure for developing appropriate concepts of education here and now. The alternative school is oriented in its self-understanding to the relations in lifeworlds on its doorstep, the local and specific cultural, linguistic, and economic conditions, and not vice versa. Of crucial and central concern, as Schroeder (2002, p. 220) reminds us, is “to seriously link up with and relate to the social experiences of the adolescents, and to afford them opportunities and options to learn to recognise and practise social responsibility in all learning activities in school and beyond.” This means that a school conscious of diversity and convivial multiplicity has to seek to correspond to and be in tune with the local life relations and realities, the on-the-ground social, cultural, linguistic, and economic prevailing conditions, and

not vice versa—a school that renders possible for adolescents new spaces of experience and thought, and perspectives for the future.

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Conflict of Interests

The author declares no conflict of interests.

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