**Discourses we live by: Narratives of memory, teacher identity and marginalization**

In this presentation I wish to present findings and discussions from my PhD thesis. The work is based on narrative life stories from 14 student teachers as well as interviews with teacher educators and class room observations.

Memories draw on personal recollections of experience as well as on collective societal discourses. In this way, narrative stories will reflect the individuals processing of the broader dominant discourses in society. At the same time, biographical narratives are a powerful source to understand the construction of memories, meaning making and the narrative identity of the individual.

In this presentation, I will suggest that such constructions are influential in peoples motivations and choices of education as well as the meaning they attach to these choices.

In relation to this, I find the discourses we live by of major importance to understand the challenges of inequality and lack of mobility in the educational system. Hence, the presentation will discuss how the student teachers’ narratives of school memories and communities are formed by such dominating discourses.

In Denmark, debates on school politics have in the recent decades addressed the role of the public school in an increasingly multicultural and globalized society. As a part of this the school has increasingly become an arena for debates on integration issues. Since the late 1990s this development has to varying degrees been characterized by a political re-nationalization of subject content as well as growing concerns about in particular students with Muslim and Middle eastern background. Discussions like these are part of the social landscape in which the student teachers navigate. From this perspective it is relevant to further investigate how concepts such as culture, religion and citizenship are articulated in the cultural subjects as well as in the student’s experiences of their own education.

I the presentation such questions will be discussed from the perspective of teacher students who have experienced being categorized as ‘different’ due to an ethnic or religious minority identity. Analysis show that students who experiences such categorizations often also have experienced teacher labels in which categories such as ‘Muslim’ or ‘bilingual’ intersect with lower academic expectations. In the presentation I address how the students respond to such discourses and accordingly how they seem to adapt to, negotiate or challenge the categories, they are given.

Throughout the narratives norms and ideals for ‘the good teacher’ as well as their own teacher expectations are expressed and negotiated. From this it follows, that the students who experience negative categorizations also find it difficult to form a constructive teacher identification. On the contrary they seem to either adapt to and reproduce the discourses of the dominating school culture, or experience additional marginalization.

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