What is compensatory pedagogy trying to compensate for? Compensatory strategies and the ethnic 'other'

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Compensatory pedagogy is in theory a strategy used to manage social and cultural diversity (Sleeter, 2007) by providing extra resources or special treatment for so-called deprived groups. A problem with this particular kind of approach to social and cultural diversity is that it lacks critical awareness of the way social differences (i.e. race, gender, class and language) are constructed (Hall, 1997). This article examines how teachers use different strategies to compensate and minimise ethnic differences and why these strategies fall short of intended purposes. More specifically, the purpose is to understand how pedagogy that takes compensary approach can reaffirm the construction of racialised social differences (Bonilla-Silva, 2005) and how this approach can be counterproductive to the intended purpose of creating social equity between so called `ethnic Swedes´ and the marginalised ethnic `other´. The study is based on ethnography carried out at a secondary school in an urban area with a large multi-ethnic population. Analysis of the data is informed by theory from post-colonialism and critical race (Leonardo, 2009; Loomba, 1998; 2005). The results suggest that compensatory strategies are inadequate because they are based on a deficit perspective of the working-class and racialised ethnic `other´. [1]. (Banks, 2008). In sum, this approach tends to be an affirmation of 'otherness' rather than an equaliser because of the uncritical approach to the construction of `race´, class, gender and language norms. A critical awareness of norms is needed in order to transform education practices into more equitable, representative and culturally democratic forms (Banks, 2005).

Introduction

This paper is based on my currently ongoing PhD work which comprises of an ethnographic study of knowledge construction processes in schooling. The overarching topic concerns race, class, gender and language norms produced in the knowledge construction processes with fifth and ninth grade students. The academic purpose is to gain knowledge about social and cultural norms in knowledge construction processes in schooling that can contribute to social inequalities. While researching the process of knowledge construction I observed that pedagogical strategies were used to compensate for ethnic and racialised social differences brought up in teaching and learning practices among year five and nine students.

Knowledge in this study is viewed as a social construction, embodied, personalised and subjective, but at the same time situated in a social, historical and political context that controls the (re)production and valorisation of specific kinds of knowledge(s). The individual constructs his or her own meaning-making about the world, but the formal learning processes – policy, curriculum implementation and evaluation - within education dictate and control *official knowledge* from the top down (Apple, 2004). Furthermore, knowledge and knowledge construction are viewed here as a processes

embedded in social and cultural norms concerning race, class, gender and language that impact the production, distribution and valorisation of specific kinds of academic knowledge to specific social groups (Banks, 2006). This article examines the pedagogical discourse and the strategies used to compensate for ethnic and social differences from a critical pedagogical perspective. A critical pedagogical perspective raises the questions: Whose knowledge? And in whose interest is this knowledge being constructed? According to critical pedagogical theorists there is a need to identify and discuss cultural features in the pedagogical discourse in order to alleviate growing social and economic disparities (Banks, 2006).

When students are not achieving learning goals through the curriculum, teachers modify their teaching strategies in order to accommodate students' needs. This is a challenge for all teachers, especially teachers working in schools in multi-ethnic, segregated neighbourhoods characterised by territorial stigmatisation and multiple dimensions of poverty, i.e. high unemployment, bad health rates, low income, short term education and social assistance (cf Borelius, 2004). It is a tall order for teachers and educators to compensate for social inequities through teaching and learning practices in schools. Yet, most Western societies today must deal with issues of Diaspora, integration and segregation. This places a burden on educators to live up to policy and curricular guidelines on national and local levels that focus on minimising social exclusion and promoting integration bilaterally.

Educational policies and practices have often emphasised integration of minorities and immigrants into the mainstream education (SOU 1996, p.55). Yet, there is little agreement on how integration in education is best achieved (Bunar, 2010). This is typical of what Stuart Hall (2000) calls the 'multicultural question', a dilemma facing European and other Western nations which reduces multiculturalism to integration of immigrants and ethnic minorities into mainstream society. When put into practice, multicultural and intercultural education often fail because these take a deficit perspective in which minorities and immigrants need to be compensated for their lack of knowledge and skills valorised by the dominant society (Möller, 2010).

Compensatory education focuses on the individual student and family and how to best accommodate and adapt the individual into pre-existing structures. Basil Bernstein (1971), a sociologist and theorist within in the sociology of education criticised `compensatory education´ and the educational system because of its failure to provide adequate learning and instruction for working-class children. Critical social and pedagogical theorists oppose the *deficit perspective* because it focuses on the need to transform the individual rather than creating a more equitable system that can accommodate social and cultural diversity without repression. If the nature of society is understood to be basically fair and just then the question of how education can best accomplish integration will continue to be misleading.

The theoretical impetus comes from post-colonialism, critical pedagogy and critical race (Apple, 200; Leonardo, 2009; Loomba, 1998; 2005). These theories provide a platform to critique approaches to multiculturalism that essentialise differences and defer social and political judgment (Clemente & Higgins, 2008). Together they provide

the analytical concepts to examine how `race´ is socially constructed. These theories assume the premise that `race´, even though it is no longer a legitimate biological concept, still has social and material consequences (Leonardo, 2009). Race continues to stratify and classify people along the lines of culture. Cultural racism occurs when cultural differences are seen as inherent, immutable and fixed (Mirza, 2006). Post-colonial theory, critical social theory and critical pedagogy are useful in demonstrating how `race´ is a viable form of oppression in a racialised social order (Bonilla-Silva, 2005) even within a liberal democratic society such as Sweden (Pred, 2000). As such, the empirical data is intended to illustrate the racialisation of the students as the ethnic `other´. . Although there is a myth of social and cultural equality at work, which infers a different-but-equal approach, the pedagogy seems to be compensatory and normative, as opposed to a critical and transformative pedagogy (cf May & Sleeter, 2010).

Method

The ethnography applies in this study involves direct observation of the everyday lives, routine practices and ordinary classroom activities over a period of three years. The data production process includes three years of fieldwork in three successive ninth grade classes and one term in a fifth grade class. During those three years I spent on average four days per week, six weeks in the autumn term and six weeks during the spring term, for 36 weeks in total conducting direct observations in the same school with ninth graders and one autumn term with the fifth graders and their teacher teams. I conducted observations in the fifth grade class because their teacher had had the first ninth grade class in which I began my fieldwork. I followed the teacher to the fifth grade class, but then later decided to limit the study to knowledge construction in year nine, the last year of compulsory education in Sweden.

The data provided for this article comes from direct observations and conversations with teachers, administrators and students in class 9E and 9F and class 5B. In this article I have included data from classroom observations, an interview with one of the principals, and several follow-up conversations with four teachers after their lessons in Art, Social Studies and Life Orientation. `Follow-up´ refers to conversations I initiated with students and teachers shortly after activities were finished and in direct conjunction with the lesson. I also took part and initiated conversations in teacher meetings and with groups of students, on topics related to direct observations, at different points in time in order to follow-up on themes and issues that arose in the writing-up process of fieldwork.

Direct observation involved using a participant observation strategy in which I took part in the students' and teachers' learning activities in the school curriculum. I actively took part in classroom discussions by asking questions and discussing the work with the teachers and students during class time when the students performed individual and group learning activities. As opposed to being a passive observer, observing from a distance, I took an active role in order to build relationships, learn social codes and norms and gain an understanding of school life from an insider's (emic) perspective. In these situations I was neither student, nor teacher, but tried to assume a role as a teacher's assistant. The informal and formal conversations

(interviews) and documents of students work are secondary to my field notes in which direct observations and participation in classroom learning activities were the predominate mode of data production, writing-up and analysis of ethnographic field notes.

Despite an emic perspective (insider's view), ethnography can still be considered to be a form of colonising, in that it objectifies people and their activities by making ordinary everyday taken-for-granted activities as foreign and exotic for the purpose of research. By actively taking part in classroom activities I became part of the pedagogical discourse [2] (Bernstein 1996; 2000) that regulates the content and instruction of learning. That is to say, the formation, distribution and valorisation of particular kinds of official knowledge(s) (Apple, 2004) that are produced for a specific social group.

The purpose of the ethnography was to take part in norm-building activities through direct observation of instruction and learning processes in order to learn about the pedagogical discourse and its symbolic meaning. To gain access to norm-building activities I chose a critical ethnographic method in order to examine the process of knowledge construction of knowledge(s) about race, class, gender and language. Critical ethnography is a perspective that focuses on power and social inequalities (Carspecken, 1996). It is `critical´ in the sense that there are knowledge(s), unofficial forms of knowledge, outside, excluded or marginalised by dominant social norms and the mainstream academic curriculum (cf Banks, 2006). On the whole, my research examines the relationship of norm-building and marginalisation of knowledge(s) about race, class, gender and language in the process of knowledge construction.

In this article, I discuss teacher discourses and the formation of race, racism and racialised knowledge and its consequences for students learning. The purpose is not to demonise or `other´. the teachers and teaching strategies as inadvertently racist, but rather to make race, racism and racialisation of knowledge an explicit analytical point (cf Leonardo, 2009). I propose that race, racism and racialisation of knowledge occur in everyday teaching practices through stereotyping and norm-building activities. The article is divided into three main parts. The first part examines the construction of ethnic and social difference and how this difference creates a divide, figuratively and literally, between the school and the inhabitants of Woodbridge community and the dominant society. (All names of people and places used in this study are pseudonyms.) The second part examines how educators attempt to close the divide through compensatory strategies. The third part concludes that compensatory strategies paradoxically strengthen the divide between the racialised ethnic `other´. and the mainstream.

Deficient or just different?

This section concerns the social construction of differences in social and discursive practices in the processes of knowledge construction. I examine the way differences are constructed in language, beliefs, attitudes and norms as expressed and enacted by students, teachers and the administration within the context of Woodbridge school.

These social and discursive practices are examined in relationship to the pedagogical discourse, the formation, distribution and valorisation of specific forms of knowledge related to `race´ [3] and pedagogy as a compensatory measure of social differences. The analysis suggests that the pedagogy becomes a process of acculturation that is by and large a compensatory measure needed to amend cultural deficiencies in relation to the dominant culture (Banks, 2008; Gitz-Johansen, 2006).

Woodbridge is a suburb within a larger municipality in Sweden that is characterised by what urban sociologists term `territorial stigmatisation´ (see Sernhede, 2009). This implies an area or space that is seen as separate and inferior to the dominant society due to high unemployment, segregation, marginalisation, poor health and other indicators of poverty. It is an urban area, not `urban´ in a positive sense of modernism, sophistication and cosmopolitanism, but rather the type of urban associated to exclusion, stigmatisation and stereotypes of urban people who are working-class, people of colour (cf Leonardo, 2009). In order to compensate for the negative social imagery associated to the area and to aid integration, Woodbridge School has fabricated an international and intercultural profile (Möller, 2010). This profile emphasises local and international exchanges between schools, as well as, the individual development of the students' languages and cultures. It is important to note that categorisations and labelling practices such as `White´, `working or middle-class´ and `people of colour´ are problematic because they affirm essentialist notions of class and race in which biological or social inheritance becomes deterministic, static or immutable. Furthermore, the labels `working-class´ and `people of colour´ are problematic due to their counterparts affirming white middle-class normativity.

Leadership perspective of ethnic differences

The headmasters in charge of the school are also responsible for the formulation and implementation of the pedagogical discourse, that is to say the organising principles of the curriculum. Two principals worked together at Woodbridge during the time of my fieldwork. The headmaster, Thorvald, had responsibility for the pre-school, the pre-school class and grades 1-4. The headmistress, Marie, was responsible for the lower secondary school, grades 5-9. I talked to Marie about the school's intercultural and international profile, its implementation, obstacles, as well as the ways in which she viewed marginalisation and stigmatisation of the students at Woodbridge.

Prior to starting work at Woodbridge, Marie herself had worked with the development of a large government funded project called *storstadssatsningen* to improve integration in urban areas. In her own words the *storstadssatsning* was in part intended to compensate for a lack of common history and the lack of social networks amongst new groups of people living in urban areas. The principal, Marie, explained:

> The *storstadssatsningen* was based on taking a perspective from below. Working with active participation of the residents and working with people's involvement to compensate for the fact that people come from all different places: Norrland (north of Sweden), Iraq and Somalia and who do not have a common history or common network and that you can create a network within

>this little community, which then can have a huge impact on comfort and children's security. (Marie)

Marie's involvement in *storstadssatsningen* partly carried over in her role as principal at Woodbridge. The school development plan was a direct result of the government funded project. The development plan contains two solutions to deal with segregation on the school level. One solution is to help non-Swedes build a so-called 'dual identity' based on the concept of biculturalism. There is an embedded contradiction in the concept of 'biculturalism'. This concept is somewhat contradictory because the identity of Swedishness is defined by who is not included in the category Swedish. Difference has to be constructed and maintained for the duality to exist. The bicultural solution in actuality upholds social and cultural differences. The second solution is to strengthen skills in Swedish as a second language and maintain language skills in the mother tongue. The emphasis on language acquisition as the key to integration is overwhelming in integration politics and public debates. However, the emphasis on Swedish language acquisition places the solution to segregation firmly in the laps of the individuals who are living in segregated areas. This type of solution can be seen as shallow and simplistic because it neglects structural forms of discrimination that contribute to housing and socio-economic segregation of new arrivals to Sweden and the majority population (cf Andersson, 1998; Bunar, 2010; SOU 1996:55).

The development plan outlines the pedagogical and curricular approaches used to aid and support language development for multilingual students and the importance for the individual to maintain a bicultural identity. The plan asserts the necessity of mastering the Swedish language effectively and adequately while also arguing for support of students' mother tongue. However, obstacles in the implementation of the development plan occurred when the project, and the funding by the state government to improve integration was discontinued.

The implementation of the school development plan had been put on hold because of the ongoing economic crisis and redundancies within the municipality. The more pressing and primary concern for the teachers at Woodbridge School was their future employment. From an administrative point of view this inhibited discussions on teachers' values and attitudes towards multilingualism and bicultural education because teachers could not focus on school reform when their positions where threatened.

The employment of multilingual and bicultural teachers was a direct application of the development plan. Bicultural pedagogy was primarily manifested in the actual teachers employed at the school, not in the pedagogical practice in ordinary classroom instruction. The forced lay-offs of bilingual teachers meant for the most part a stop to the implementation of the multilingual and bicultural program. Marie interjected that the only tools left to work with now were supportive and constructive attitudes towards students' multilingual ability.

> Now if we cannot have an optimal model with bilingual education then, without bilingual teachers, we can at least have a positive attitude towards students' origins and have a supportive attitude of students' experiences and knowledge. … We know that in research in Sweden, in many different contexts, and internationally, that the monolingual majority teacher's attitude and approach plays a very important role for their self-perception. This, in turn, plays an important role in their [students] motivation and driving force to succeed in school. That is what we are left with right now you can say.
> (Marie, principal)

The vision is to be supportive of the students' bicultural and bilingual ability. Yet, it is just this ambition and extension of the school development plan that is in jeopardy because of the financial crisis within the municipality. The potential threat of lay-offs at this time had imposed yet another hinder to implementing the school reform program originally initiated by the *storstadssatsningen* outlined in the development plan. In the interview with the principal I referred to the emphasis on Swedish culture:

> ÅM: There is still a strong emphasis on Swedish, Swedish culture and Swedish traditions and competencies. I find it difficult to see this bicultural belonging and support for linguistic diversity. In policy it exists, but it is not always expressed in the instruction.

> Marie: I am aware of this and it is a long process to get all to 'join the train'. This is something that needs to be worked on constantly. We have been forced to focus on other issues … This is something that must be worked on long-term with as I usually say 'a fool's stubbornness'. Slowly but surely turn the ship in another direction. … We are simply not in that phase where we have a focus on that. It doesn't work like that. I have worked with the development of the municipal schooling for over 20 years and if there is something that I have learned is that sometimes it is necessary to reverse or at least cease. … There are great changes underway, redundancies, in which people are affected down to the skin. Then it is very difficult to get attention for school reform work.

The opposition towards inclusion and the lack of inclusive practice that I observed was explained in terms of metaphors. Marie describes the process of acculturation and steps towards integration as a journey. She uses the metaphors 'join the train' and 'turn the ship' as descriptive expressions in which teachers' attitudes and perceptions are running parallel to, but not in-sync with the development plan. The journey metaphors imply that there is a final destination in which acculturation can be achieved. Yet the emphasis on the process of acculturation and inclusion is more of an issue for the individual students' identity transformation than the perceptions and attitudes of the teachers to enacting 'bi-culturalism' through pedagogy.

> ÅM: There is often talk about the students' need to get out, that they need to get out of Woodbridge. That this is very important. It is an indirect way of

saying, "There is no future here and that there is not much reason to stay."
They need to get into the mainstream society.

Marie: You can see it like that, but I don't interpret it in that way. I could also
see it that way with the view (*inställning*) that I have. But I don't interpret it
that way. I have seen at this school, during the time that I have been here, that
many of our students are enormously ignorant about life outside of
Woodbridge and they are also very insecure and afraid. They need a greater
sense of security if they do not go with their parents and private networks
outside of Woodbridge and experience different situations that are necessary
to live in the Swedish society. They are poorly prepared for life in the
Swedish society outside of the Swedish school. They really are in need of
that, but finding the right form for this is not easy.

The focus on mainstream culture is seen as a direct means of promoting integration and
acculturation. The students are perceived as lacking in knowledge and experience with
Swedish society, "…many of our students are enormously ignorant about life outside
of Woodbridge and they are also very insecure and afraid," (Marie, principal). Their
ignorance, that is being unaccustomed and unfamiliar with Swedish society is regarded
as an obstacle to integration and a deficiency that needs to be compensated for in order
"to live in the Swedish society". But, this lack of experience and knowledge is not to
be interpreted as a devaluation of their life experience in Woodbridge according to the
principal.

Marie firmly rejected a deficit perspective, "instead of a deficiency perspective that
they arrive here with a lack knowledge of Swedish, and that they lack knowledge that
other Swedish students have who have gone to school; we can support their
competencies, provide positive and high expectations and not neglect their experiences
and their culture and their language" (Marie, principal).

It becomes apparent that life in Woodbridge is external to, or at least not recognised as
being part of the Swedish society. Students are expected to bridge this difference by
compensating for their own "lack of knowledge of how the Swedish society works,
how it is, and getting into the habit of socialising with Swedish people" (Marie,
principal). It is the students' lack of language skills and 'social savvyness' that is the
obstacle to integration, not the way the mainstream society views people of colour,
immigrants and communities such as Woodbridge. This is the essence of blaming the
victim typology (Banks, 2008). Yet the question remains: Is this just a social and
cultural difference? Defining Woodbridge inhabitants and the students of Woodbridge
as different and separate from dominant social norms can be seen as a form of
symbolic power and of a racialised social structure (cf Bonilla-Silva, 2005; Bourdieu &
Passeron, 1977 & 1990).

In this construction of difference as a lack of contact with the mainstream there is an
underlying presupposition and inference to race. The construct of 'Swedish' versus non-
Swedish implies that there is a white middle class normativity at work when ethnic
categories and labelling practices are used. In my own questions and Marie's answers
to these, references are made to 'Swedish people' and 'Swedish society'. These labels

are not racially neutral but connote 'whiteness' [4] and white normativity as an identity marker of Swedishness.

Students lack mainstream experiences

One afternoon I approached Ingrid, the student guidance counsellor, and asked her if she had a moment to talk. I was harbouring questions that had grown from her presentations with class 9E about future career and educational opportunities. Ingrid worked not only at Woodbridge, but served other schools within the municipality as well. I was curious to find out her view of the students' needs and expectations in relation to students elsewhere. In our conversation Ingrid emphasised three aspects about the students' needs: 1) increased contact with the world outside of Woodbridge, 2) more contact with ethnic Swedes, 3) more exposure to the Swedish language.

> The students need more experience and contact outside of their own community (*omvärldskunskap*). The students are isolated from the larger society. There are no ethnic Swedes here. They need to have more Swedish (i.e. input of the Swedish language) … The school is tough because they lack contact with the larger society and community. They are isolated here, there is a lack of language skills and language experience. Parents here need a lot of support as well, to learn how the society works. (Ingrid, guidance counsellor)

Woodbridge community is not seen as a part of the dominant mainstream society. The inhabitants of Woodbridge are viewed as isolated and lacking in contact with Swedish people. Despite official policy, `society´ does not seem to include the culturally diverse, multi-lingual and multi-ethnic inhabitants of Woodbridge. The larger `society´ that seems to be referred to is a homogeneous 'Swedish' society. Woodbridge's multi-ethnic and poly-lingual population, which by and large includes people with immigrant backgrounds, is indirectly categorised as non-Swedish, while the students of Woodbridge need contact with ethnic Swedish people in order to succeed in school. This is similar to the assumption that black students in the United States would benefit from learning next to white students (cf Kozol, 1991). Despite Marie's rejection of a cultural deficit perspective, lack of contact with Swedish people is viewed as a deficiency that needs to be amended in order to acculturate to the dominant social order (cf Banks, 2008, p. 53). The principal denied the idea that the emphasis on mainstream Swedish culture is a direct devaluation of the area and the people who live there. Yet it is apparent that from the leadership perspective the students are "enormously ignorant" and are "very insecure and afraid" of Swedish life and culture outside of Woodbridge.

Indirect devaluation of Woodbridge

Every year eighth and ninth-graders receive information about future career and educational choices in preparation for upper secondary school (a separate system in Sweden). The individualised program (IV) is an upper secondary curriculum for students who are not eligible for entry to upper secondary school. The IV program offered a practical/vocational program for students aiming to get into food management. The program was promoted as preparation for future work within the

food industry, restaurants and cafés. Mia the homeroom teacher for 9E informed the class about the program. She read aloud from an information sheet which stated:

> *Individual Program Café, restaurant and food industry in Woodbridge.*
> This program is for people ages 16 to 19 years old, who want to work in a café, restaurant or the food industry. The course is two semesters and combines theory and work experience in our restaurant in Woodbridge. (Mia, teacher, 9E, reads the hand-out for the food management program)

Mia read the note that she had received from the student guidance counsellor. The deadline for secondary school applications had already passed, but the application deadline for this program was extended. It was directed towards students who were not eligible to gain entry into the national programs of upper secondary schooling. Mia explained to class 9E:

> Mia: Work is built on networks. But you have to be interested in working with food if you are going to do this. Right?
>
> Aza: How long is it [the program]?
>
> Mia: Two semesters. You could do it if you are tired of school. You might be tired of school and need a break for a year and then continue. I don't know, but society ought to give you the best possible chances to get work, right? You can find new possibilities and new collaborative projects that can lead to something. It might suit someone. *I personally think you should go on new adventures in the city. Right?* But if anyone is interested you can get a hand-out from me. (Mia, teacher, 9E, Social Studies lesson, my emphasis added)

Mia indicates to the class that the students need to widen their perspectives and not work in Woodbridge as suggested. The food management program is specifically directed towards the Woodbridge school. This is perhaps due to the statistics showing the in 2009 only 40% of the ninth-graders were eligible for the national upper secondary programs. These results are typical for schools in metropolitan areas where a majority of the inhabitants are working class people of colour with immigrant backgrounds. Yet, they are astonishingly low compared to national averages. A majority of the students at Woodbridge could therefore not apply for entry into secondary schooling because of their failure to meet the core subject requirements in Swedish, English and Mathematics. The teacher suggests that this program is directed mainly towards students who are tired of school. "You could do it if you are tired of school", but an alternative solution could be to take a year off. This indirectly infers that low achievement is due to lack of motivation and that academic exhaustion can be cured by taking time off. Even though Mia informs the class about the program and states that it might be suitable for someone, she makes her preference known, "I think you should go on new adventures in the city."

The purpose of the program is not directly negated. Mia answers that work experience is an important part of building a network and making new contacts. Getting a job is

made through contacts emphasises Mia. "Work is built on networks. You have to be interested in working with food if you are going to do this. Right?" said Mia. Its intention to combine theory and practice, build a network and gain work experience, which are viewed as necessary aspects of working life and steps toward future employment.

The issue at stake is the location. The course is situated in Woodbridge. Despite the fact that many students could benefit from work experience, network building and training, it is not viewed as desirable to remain in Woodbridge. Even taking a year off is suggested as an alternative as opposed to working in the same community in which the students live. "You can be tired of school and need a break for a year and then continue," said the teacher. The desired preference, or norm, is life and work outside of Woodbridge. This norm, life and work outside of Woodbridge community, is a reoccurring theme in the discourse, policy and practice.

Compensating for ethnic differences

It is the intention of the school leaders and teachers to minimise the differences between the students of Woodbridge and the society at large. As I have discussed previously, the students and residents of Woodbridge are already dispossessed, positioned figuratively and literally in a place of non-Swedishness. According to this rational, it is viewed as necessary to increase contact with the dominant Swedish population outside of Woodbridge in order to aid integration and acculturation to the mainstream society. As one of the principals said, "They are poorly prepared for life in the Swedish society outside of the Swedish school. They really are in need of that [experience outside of Woodbridge], but finding the right form for this is not easy," (Marie, principal). The following accounts point to the difficulties that occur when attempting to bridge the divide between the students at Woodbridge school and the dominant Swedish society. Life Orientation is a subject [5] that has the intended purpose of reducing the divide by teaching Woodbridge students the correct form of social behaviour.

In the fall 2007, I attended a lesson in Life Orientation with class 5B. The lesson in Life Orientation was a follow-up lesson for 5B's fieldtrip to the movie *Ratatouille* the week before. I had not followed the class on this fieldtrip, but did get the opportunity to observe their behaviour on a fieldtrip to another movie a few weeks later. On that excursion I did not observe any reprehensible behaviour. However, at the movie *Ratatouille* some of the students in class 5B had misbehaved by running in the aisles, talking loudly, throwing popcorn, taking extra soda pop from the dispenser without paying, running to the bathroom and going into other movies. Two teachers, Martin and Ellinor, held a lesson on written and unwritten rules as a follow-up to their field trip to the movie *Ratatouille*. On the board Martin had written, "rules and unwritten rules".

Martin: What are the unwritten rules when you are at the movies?

Yusef: You have to sit still and not run to the bathroom 1000 times.

The students in 5B had behaved badly at the showing of the movie *Ratatouille*. Because of the disturbance some of the other paying customers had left and demanded a refund according to the teacher Martin. As a follow-up to this fieldtrip, the teachers planned a Life Orientation lesson that focused on making implicit social rules explicit. The students had also been threatened with not attending any more movies if their behaviour did not change. Martin the class teacher for 5B provided an example having to do with unwritten rules on limitations of refills. On the board Martin wrote:

> Unwritten rule
> 1 coffee 15 kr.
> 1 refill 5 kr.

The teacher [Martin] then clarified the unwritten rule by explaining to the class:

> An unwritten rule is that everyone has to be quiet before going out on break.
> Is there anyone who knows what a refill (*påtår*) is? If you are at a Café and
> you pay for a cup of coffee or tea and you want some more then you can ask if
> refills are included. If they say `yes´ then it is included, but it usually means
> just one cup. You can't bring a thermos and shout to your friends "Free drink!
> Come and get it!" [Martin, teacher, class 5B, 2007-11-07]

Getting a refill is a key issue. Pointing out the difference between when a refill is charged and when a refill is free is a point that the teacher makes explicit as well as the limitation on how much of a refill is allowed. This lesson was about making implicit social rules explicit. It is assumed that the students lack an understanding of the social rules based on their unruly behaviour. The class was divided into three groups. Their assignment was to write down as many unwritten rules that they could think of. However, the boys in the group I observed came up with ten rules, prohibitions, on social conduct in public places. At this time, the boys knew, or had been made aware that shouting, throwing popcorn and 'stealing' soda pop were not allowed at the movies. Their list contained the following points:

- Do not eat candy in school.
- Do not point your finger in school.
- Do not swear.
- Do not shout in the movie theatre.
- Do not steal soda pop.
- Do not thrown popcorn at other people in the movie theatre.
- Do not take other peoples places at a soccer game.
- Do not ride your bike in the store.
- Do not shout in the library.
- Do not abuse books.
- Do not throw rocks on other people's windowpanes. [Field notes, 2007-11-07, class 5B]

Three points on their list were in direct reference to the field trip to the movies: not shouting, not stealing soda pop and not throwing popcorn. Martin asked a few times initially how Swedish rules can differ from norms in other countries i.e. such as

waiting in line is a Swedish custom. One boy mentioned that standing in line is a Swedish custom. Martin used an analogy of Swedes waiting in line compared to waiting in line in Germany where the rule is 'push your way to the front'. The Swedes are left waiting because they don't apply the same rules as German people when waiting in a cue. The unwritten rules, socially implicit behaviour and conduct, is connected to ethnicity and culture. It is implied that ethnic groups, i.e. Swedish and German, have different social rules. The inference here is that the students in Woodbridge are a separate ethnic group that needs to learn to apply Swedish ways. An implicit target of the lesson being self-management and self-government tactics. The self-management and government techniques are being taught are equated with Swedishness and Swedish nationality.

Martin rounded off the lesson by letting each group listen `quietly´ while each group facilitator read their list aloud. Each group was given an evaluative comment by the teacher, i.e. "I think that `Do not cheat´ is a good rule". The teacher also pointed out the discrepancy between what we ought to do contrary to what people really do and that people don't always abide by social rules. After the lesson I asked Martin if the students know what the unwritten rules are when attending the movies and do not follow them, or if they simply don't know any better. The teacher replied:

> They just don't know any better. Many of the students have never been to the movies before. They had no idea how to behave. (Martin, teacher)

In order to understand what lay behind the students' behaviour, I asked Martin if this was due to non-compliance or with a lack of understanding. The teacher affirmed that it was inexperience and a lack of knowledge, "They just don't know any better." This view affirms the principal's statement that the students at Woodbridge are "extremely ignorant" and inexperienced with life outside of Woodbridge (see Marie, principal, above). The teachers assumed that the students lacked both experience and knowledge of social conduct. The students' inability to demonstrate social skills was viewed as a deficiency that was remediated through the teaching of 'unwritten rules' such as when it is acceptable to get a refill. Lack of social and cultural skills were seen as a deficiency and used as the rational for the students' disruptive behaviour. Furthermore, the Life Orientation lesson associated social skills to ethnicity and cultural differences. Martin, the teacher, makes a distinction between Swedish and German people. It can be inferred that Swedishness refers to an ethnically homogenous group. This example is an over simplified dualism that essentialises notions of ethnic and cultural difference. There is an implicit assumption that the students are not just socially different, but also culturally different. That is to say the students' behaviour is not just bad behaviour, but also ethnically and culturally different from so called ethnic Swedes. This proposition becomes more distinct in the next section with a follow-up conversation with another year 5 teacher Petra. Exhibiting 'cultural difference' is viewed as a provocation by the mainstream when mainstream norms, values, and behaviours are not validated or affirmed (Gruber, 2007).

All of the students were regarded as wanting knowledge of social skills in order to become more socially acceptable. The students' financial situation and lack of access

to movie theatres in Woodbridge were not an issue. The movie *Ratatouille* was viewed at new movie complex in a central part of the city. Tickets to a matinee range from 95 - 125 SEK. The additional costs of snacks can bring the total cost to 150 SEK per person. The new surroundings and new circumstances were not viewed as an issue. Having access and money to buy soda pop and popcorn were not seen as a potential problem. The source of the problem was placed solely on the students and their behaviour. Not knowing how to behave at the movies and not having access to the movies were not viewed as consequences of economic inequality, but related more to students' ignorance of social norms and a deficiency that could be rectified through compensatory pedagogy.

The students were blamed for their lack of social skills and, in turn, this deficiency was related to cultural differences rather than to economic or social disparities that could hinder visits to the movies. Many other reasons may lay behind the students' unwillingness to comply with social norms, such as resistance and opposition to being 'othered'. In other words, the students may, like the lads in Paul Willis' study (Willis, 1977), be reproducing their own exclusion because of their pre-empted [6] exclusion from Swedish society. This can be interpreted as an active 'self-othering'. Yet whether or not 'othering' is self-impose or inflicted by someone else the issue of inclusion and exclusion is still centred around the `other´. and not on the norms that reproduce negative social stereotypes. The question of exclusionary norms and norms related to reproduction of symbolic power are peripheral and not problematised as central to the issues of acculturation, integration and segregation. The next observation illustrates the power of stereotyping in the reproduction of racialised norms.

Blame and shame tactics

The implicit cultural differences and other inferences related to notions of ethnicity became clearer and more decisive in a conversation with another teacher (Petra) in a different fifth grade class at Woodbridge. Petra had also attended the same movies with her class together with Martin and 5B. I spoke to Petra about the subject Life Orientation and the matter of 'written' and 'unwritten rules' that 5B had recently discussed.

Petra: We work with social competency and how to behave such as asking what the rules are or just going ahead until you get a telling off.

ÅM: What did they (the students) say?

Petra: They felt that you should ask first because it would be less embarrassing.

ÅM: Martin brought up the difference between written and unwritten rules with the class.

Petra: We talked about what the rules are when you go to the movies and if you are allowed to take more drinks (from a drink dispenser) or fill up a

container. It can be a bit unclear, but if you are dark haired and people, you know, look and think 'immigrant kid'. There were some kids who said that Swedes also do that, but then people think 'badly brought up kid'. They need to remember that they are *ambassadors* for this area.

ÅM: How did they take that?

Petra: Some thought it was unfair, but that is how it is. They must understand. (Petra, teacher, grade 5, my emphasis added)

It is interesting and hopeful that the students recognised social injustice when confronted with it. In the teacher's words, "some thought it was unfair". The students are made aware of a racialised social order that is both stigmatic and misrepresentative of Woodbridge. The fifth graders learned through epistemic violence [7] that racialised labelling practices are the order of the day. The objective of the lesson was to avoid being labelled 'immigrant' which connotes a deviance from its counterpart `Swedish´. As opposed to contesting the negative social stereotype of people of colour the stereotype of 'immigrant' was reaffirmed and inscribed on the children. The 'immigrant kid' is seen as bringing discrimination upon themselves by not adapting to the social norms. There is a presupposition that it is necessary to act Swedish in order to not irritate racist reactions in Swedes (Gruber, 2007). Attaching a negative stereotype to social identity can affect school performance negatively (cf Phoenix, 2009).

A `dys-conscious racism´ performed in compensatory pedagogy is learning to avoid racist reactions and tacitly accept dominant White norms and privileges (cf King, 2004). There is a subtle, underlying racial stratification that is not brought up. An alternative strategy, possible with fifth graders, would be to openly discuss negative social stereotypes and over simplified dualisms which reaffirm dys-conscious racism and an 'us *versus* them' mentality.

The labelling of the students as 'immigrant kid' and 'badly brought up kid' indicate an implicit racialisation of immigrant children and ethnic Swedish children as socially and culturally different. They are also directly referred to as "ambassadors for this area" which indicates that they are representatives of foreigners. In the example above, the children of Woodbridge can be seen to be subjected to symbolic violence in social and discursive practices that place them in the category 'immigrant kid' and ethnic `other´. . The reproduction of the category 'immigrant kid' is necessary to uphold and maintain the identity of 'Swedish'. By constructing 'otherness', the Swedish identity is also maintained.

In this section, I have discussed some of the difficulties of acculturation to the mainstream. It is the intention of the school leaders and teachers to minimise differences between ethnic Swedes and the students of Woodbridge. The above accounts show how blame and shame are incorporated into compensatory strategies. It is not my objective to ascribe negative intentions and motives to the teachers. Most teachers have good intentions. In this case, the goal is to aid acculturation through biculturalism by providing mainstream experiences. Yet, it is the students that bear the

burden of assimilation and acculturation to mainstream social norms. Blaming is applied through the use of punitive measures such as the threat of withholding future trips to the movies (and popcorn) to make the children comply with social rules. Shaming is done through the association of social identity to a negative social stereotype of immigrants, 'dark haired' people. This can be seen as a form of epistemic violence (Clemente & Higgins, 2008) used to command compliance to mainstream norms. It is implied, directly and indirectly, that the students' lack of social skills is a cultural difference that is viewed as a deficiency that needs remediation. These strategies reveal a dys-consciousness about the negative impact of stereotypes, labelling practices and simplistic ethnic categories. It is believed that when the students have conformed to Swedish normativity they will not be labelled as 'immigrants' and can receive access to the same resources as ethnic Swedish people. Older students are aware of the stigmatisation of Woodbridge and of subjectification (see Phoenix, 2009). However, the younger students in fifth grade, recognise the injustice, but learn that stereotyping is best dealt with through subjugation and adherence to White normativity.

An alternative solution that still addresses desired behaviour, would be to make dominant social norms explicit in the learning activity of 'written and unwritten rules', but not to generalise or dichotomise social differences into binary categories that affirm an 'us versus them' perspective. An explicit teaching of social norms and rules to fifth graders is not wrong. However, a more critical approach would also be to explicitly teach concepts such as stereotypes, racism, sexism and prejudice and how these are related to social norms and racial and or ethnic privileges. However, it is still likely that students will continue to resist compensatory pedagogy strategies when the objective is conformity to dominant social norms in which the students are still viewed as deviant, ignorant or inexperienced.

Conclusion

In this paper I have discussed a lack of critical awareness about race in compensatory pedagogic strategies. Although, the official school policy is an 'intercultural approach' in which difference is viewed as a resource, this resource is also a difference that is subject to compensatory measures.

A dys-consciousness in the conceptualisation of 'immigrant' children inhibits consciousness raising and transformation of social inequalities. Compensatory pedagogy can be understood as a form of knowledge, a specific type of consciousness, reproduced, distributed and valorised in the pedagogic discourse, for a specific social group. It promotes an uncritical consciousness of difference and the myth of social equality. It attempts to compensate for social and cultural differences from a colour-blind perspective that upholds privileging of Whites (Leonardo, 2009). It is a superficial different-but-equal approach that attempts to acknowledge difference without acknowledgement race and racialised differences. When this happens the individual is targeted for remediation and acculturation to dominant social norms. Compensatory strategies can lead to affirmation of a non-Swedish identity and ethnic

`other´. which is deviant and deficient in relation to conceptions of White normativity and homogeneous ethnic Swedish identity.

Critical pedagogy is opposed to compensatory pedagogic strategies. Compensatory strategies can become more equitable by incorporating transformative and critical race concepts to knowledge and knowledge construction. Critical pedagogy, goes beyond mere identity politics and different-but-equal strategies. It challenges the myths of social equality, equal opportunity and "you can if you just try hard enough" mentality. Critical pedagogy examines and highlights stereotyping, dichotomising and symbolic representations in the knowledge construction process in order to challenge, question and shed light on social inequalities and structural racism.

Endnotes

[1] Analytically, emphasis is on `race´ and racialisation. Even though race is foregrounded, the concept of race should not to be read as standing alone but rather as a social position enmeshed and aggregated together with other social identities e.g. class, gender, language etc.

[2] The term `pedagogical discourse´ is Basil Bernstein's concept for analysing the type of knowledges constructed and `transmitted´ through communication processes. However, the concept goes beyond mere communication and identity politics to include symbolic power and formation of consciousness. `Pedagogical discourse´ refers to specific forms of knowledge that are valorised and distributed to specific social groups in order to shape specific forms of consciousness (Frances & Martin, 2007).

[3] Race is used as an analytical concept that specifies race as a social construction related to asymmetries of power. `Race´ is not used here as an essentialist or biological concept, but as a concept that is socially constructed and that has social, economic, material and symbolic power (cf. Bonilla-Silva, 2005; Essed, 1991; Leonardo, 2009). I prefer this concept over ethnicity because ethnicity is neither synonymous with race, but is often misused as such, nor does it imply asymmetries of power to the same extent.

[4] Leonardo asserts that `whiteness´ is an ideology not a verifiable, biological group of people, which confers power and privilege within a racialised social order (cf Bonilla-Silva, 2005; Leonardo, 2009).

[5] Life Orientation is neither an official school subject outlined in the national curriculum, nor is it founded within any academic discipline such as educational sciences. None the less, it has become a subject taught in many schools, but without a definitive content (Carlsson & von Brömssen, 2011, p. 125).

[6] The OED definition of pre-empted is used here in the sense of: "To acquire, lay claim to, or appropriate beforehand."

http://www.oed.com.ezproxy.ub.gu.se/view/Entry/149930?redirectedFrom=pre-
empted#eid28866321

[7] `Epistemic violence´ refers to devaluing the knowledge and experiences of the
`other´ (Foucault, 1980). Also, constructing people as the `other´. is the most blatant of
`epistemic violence´ according to Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (1988). This concept
coincides with Bourdieu and Passerons' (1977) use of symbolic power.

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