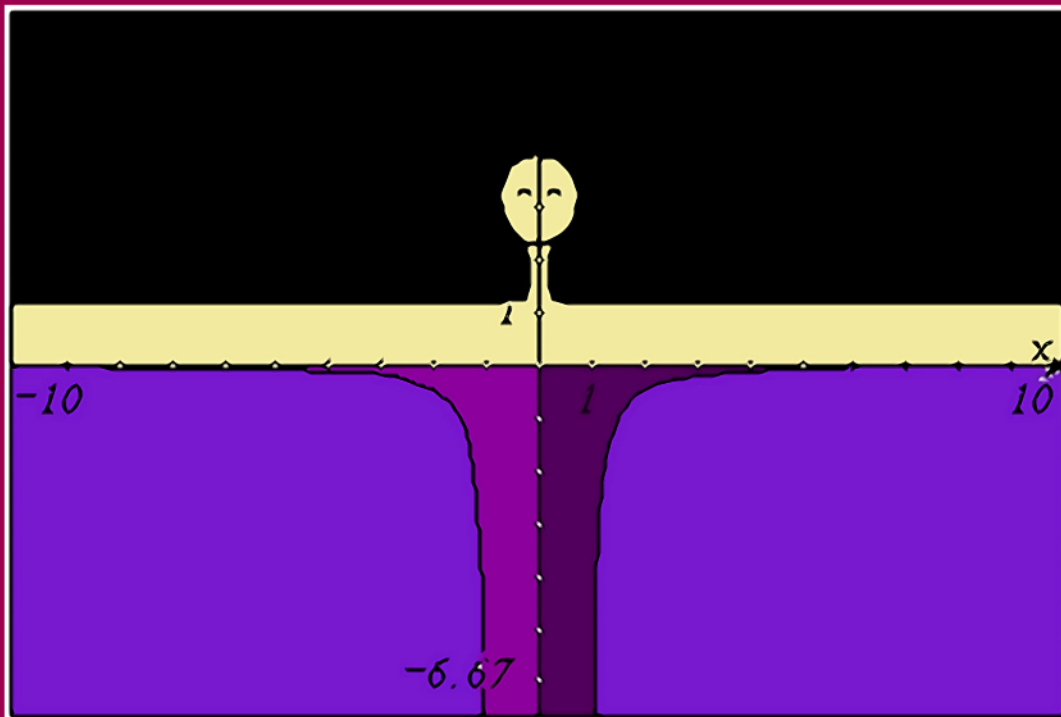


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Rethinking Research and Professional Practices
in Terms of Relationality, Subjectivity and Power

NORMALIZATION AND "OUTSIDERHOOD" Feminist Readings of A Neoliberal Welfare State



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ABOUT THE E-BOOK

This volume presents an illuminating analysis of the ways in which normalization processes and practices operate in a welfare state in an age of neoliberalism. This informative book problematizes the meaning of the phrase ‘normalization processes and practices’, that for an Anglophone audience may smack of functionalism. The historical context of the deliberate adoption of normalization processes and practices in Sweden in the post-World War II era was, in the first instance, an expression of the inclusivity designed to decrease inequalities and to achieve social justice. However all the contributors to this volume, show very clearly how notions of normalcy, of normalization, in a neoliberal time operate not only to create an integrating and equalizing context but also, and much more critically, to exclude certain groups of people, and produce a structural inequality that in recent years has been discussed under the term of ‘utanförskap’ or outsiderhood.

Critiquing these interventions, the contributors to this volume show how diverse groups of people - immigrants, families considered ‘at risk’ by social services, pregnant women, young girls – are variously the objects of context-specific normalization processes and practices that make any resistance to such interventions difficult, if not impossible. What people ‘normally do’, cloaks that ‘normal doing’ with a fog of invisibilization that suffocates any form of protest. Normalization thus takes on specific forms of repression in particular circumstances, for instance through the ethnocentric imposition of norms of behaviour on migrants where that ethnocentricity is neither made evident nor acknowledged. This system of normalization also operates in schools, resulting in the reproduction of inequalities and discrimination from an early age. In such normalization processes ‘the normal’ or ‘the usual’ becomes a means for re-interpreting structural inequalities in terms of individual choice, and for displacing the responsibilities for change onto those positioned as outsiders. The individual chapters highlight how the operations of normalizing processes work to obscure their functioning, thus making any critique of both the underlying assumptions and their operationalization almost impossible.

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