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Social exclusion and inclusion of young immigrants

Presentation of an analytical framework

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Abstract

Social exclusion is a term which was introduced in the social sciences in the early 1990s in order to extend the focus beyond poverty by focusing on the relation between the individual and the society. During later years, it has been common to speak of a *new* social exclusion perspective, which is better fit to analyze the more heterogeneous, multicultural and complex society (Body-Gendrot, 2002). In this article, I will focus on the social exclusion in different arenas, thus underlining the multi-dimensional aspect of social exclusion. The underlying question is: 'What is it that contributes to social exclusion of young adult immigrants in different social settings?' and 'How do young adult immigrants with different backgrounds experience social exclusion in different social arenas?' I will distinguish between social educational exclusion, labour market exclusion, spatial exclusion, relational exclusion and finally, socio-political exclusion. The combination of information from macro-oriented quantitative research and its focus on structural explanations and micro-oriented qualitative research and its focus on agency together make a holistic picture of social exclusion which underlines its dynamic, complex and multi-dimensional character.

Keywords

social exclusion, social inclusion, immigrants, racism, labour market, education, neighbourhoods, immigration policy

INTRODUCTION

Social exclusion is a term which was introduced in the social sciences at the early 1990s in order to extend the focus beyond poverty by focusing on the relation between the individual and the society. One of the main initiators of this focus in social sciences at that time was Room (1995) known for his concept of multi-dimensional disadvantage, which included aspects such as material and physical surroundings. Much of the research on social exclusion since then has been policy oriented as it grew out of collaboration between the European Union and a research group that developed a set of primary and secondary indicators to measure the phenomenon. Despite these efforts, there are still controversies related to how to define the concept, while some researchers also criticize the implicit moral metanarrative since it is built on the assumption that social inclusion or integration, as the opposite of social exclusion, is inherently good and desirable. As a result, efforts to tackle exclusion can often be led by normative assumptions about how social life should be organized, which ignores the ways in which the terms of inclusion can be problematic, disempowering or inequitable (Hickey and de Toit, 2007).

Of late, it has been common to speak of a *new* social exclusion perspective, which is better fit to analyze the more heterogeneous, multicultural and complex society (Body-Gendrot, 2002). As far as I can see, there have been few totally new focuses in the research on social exclusion during the last couple of decades, except for a much stronger focus on ethnicity and/or migration status compared to the mid 1990s. One example of this is the interactionalist perspective with its stress that instead of focusing on separate variables like education and income, it is more useful to focus on the intersection of variables such as ethnicity, gender and class background (for example, Modood, 2007). The relational and dynamical focus that Room proposed has been further developed within qualitative research. For example, Weil et al. (2005) underline the need to focus on relationships and interactions among and between excluded and included groups and communities, and state that it is important to include changes over time instead of static structural explanations. Another important contribution has been the transnational perspective of Wimmer and Schiller (2003), who criticize the national container focus of the social sciences (and social exclusion research definitely most often fall into this trap as well).

This article is a result of my growing interest during later years to present quantitative and qualitative findings together in order to reveal the complexity of processes of social exclusion and inclusion. Often, it is difficult to create a direct link between these two strands of research, but my argument is that quantitative results can show the more aggregated picture, answering questions like ‘are young people of immigrant background really marginalized?’ whereas the qualitative data can show the young people’s reaction to social exclusion and their strategies in order to avoid it, or their own contribution in creating it. I will discuss social exclusion and inclusion in different arenas, thus underlining the multi-dimensional aspect of social exclusion (Room, 1995).

The underlying question is: 'What is it that contributes to social exclusion of young adult immigrants in different social settings?' and 'How do young adult immigrants with different backgrounds experience social exclusion in different social arenas and how do they react towards it?' I will distinguish between educational exclusion, labour market exclusion, spatial exclusion, relational exclusion and finally, socio-political exclusion. Other forms of exclusion related to arenas such as family, friends, civic society, leisure activities and so on are also important, but the space of this article does not allow me to consider all of them here.¹

METHODOLOGY

The combination of information from macro-oriented quantitative research and its focus on structural explanations and micro-oriented qualitative research and its focus on agency together make a holistic, dynamic and complex picture of social exclusion. In line with this approach, I will combine empirical examples from life story interviews with data from quantitative research.

The qualitative data are primarily derived from EUMARGINS, which is a study of inclusion and exclusion of young adult immigrants in seven European countries (2008–2011), but a couple of examples are also taken from my research on Somali immigrants in Norway during the period 2003–2008 (Fangen, 2008). The life story interviews of the EUMARGINS project are with young adult immigrants (18–25 years) of various countries of origin. This article draws some examples from the first 30 interviews which have been conducted in Oslo, Norway.² The interviews focused on childhood experiences (either from the homeland or from Norway), and experiences after coming to Norway, including issues such as school, jobs, peers, family, religion, and so on. Inclusion and exclusion were underlying topics in all of the interviews. The study of Somalis in Norway consists of 50 lifestory interviews with young adults (the majority are between 18–25 years old, but there are also some older informants in the sample), all except five (who lived in Somaliland) were living in Norway.³

The recruitment strategy in both studies has been to collect *a variety of experiences*, and consciously search for informants with different backgrounds and who are positioned differently in the spheres of society ranging from those who are in so-called high-status education or jobs compared to those who are in low-status jobs, or are job seekers, unemployed or involved in different alternative arenas, ranging from NGOs to youth sub-cultures or criminal gangs.

SOCIAL EXCLUSION

Social exclusion is a complex phenomenon and consequently, it is difficult to reach a joint agreement of how it should be defined. Nevertheless, the common trend is that social exclusion is defined in relation to education and work.

For example, Raaum et al. (2009) define a young person as socially excluded at some moment in time if he or she is currently outside the structured arenas of school and work but also has a high probability of remaining outside in the near future. Atkinson (1998: 14, cited in Raaum et al., 2009) points out that ‘people are excluded not just because they are currently without a job or income, but because they have little prospects for the future’. In our project, however, we use a more multi-dimensional concept, which also includes arenas such as family, peer group, various other social settings, religious or ethnic communities, neighbourhoods or even the national state. Social exclusion is a two-sided process in the sense that it denotes both the instances, when a person is expelled from a community or a place *and* denial of access to ‘outsiders’.

In addition, we include more symbolic forms of exclusion, such as being marked as different (Vestel, 2004: 428). These cases of ‘othering’ can vary from overt racism, to institutionalized ways of treating someone as ‘different’, such as special classes or projects targeted to specific groups of people (even though such strategies are meant as a help). We can distinguish between the *feeling* of exclusion and the more observable exclusion when actually not being allowed access (this can be on a legitimate basis when the person does not fulfil requirements of access or illegitimate as in discrimination) (Fangen 2006a). Either way, it is hard to think of a person being totally outside the society. Even the most marginalized, for example homeless people, trafficking victims or so-called irregular immigrants, are related to the society in several different ways. There are certain NGOs addressing their social programmes towards these groups, and people belonging to these groups can be included in some settings, even though they do not have a strong tie to the more conventional institutions of society.

In order to grasp the complexity of social exclusion, it is important to look for experiences of social inclusion among young people who appear to be marginalized. It is also important to look for experiences of social exclusion among young people who according to conventional standards are integrated (who have a job, who take higher education and who are included in social networks with people from the majority population). For example, some young Muslim women (even when in well-paid, high-status jobs) feel excluded if they are not allowed to pray during the work day or if they are not allowed to wear a hijab.

Traditional assimilationist theories of social exclusion seem to be based on the assumption that young people prefer inclusion to exclusion. But many young persons temporarily choose to stay outside the more institutionalized settings of society (Raaum et al. 2009). This might be related to an opposition to or a feeling of not mastering the behaviour demanded in a regularized school or work setting. For others, it is related to alternative prioritizations, such as the wish to explore the world by travelling to other countries or the fact that they become parents at a young age and therefore feel forced to temporarily stay outside the arenas of school and work.

Exclusion and inclusion are often presented as dichotomous variables, with marginalization as the unstable position in between (Raaum et al. 2009). According to this view, the marginalized person stands in the doorway: either he or she moves out towards exclusion or in towards inclusion. However, a more dynamic perspective that includes different arenas might open up the possibility that exclusion from one arena at the same time is followed by inclusion in another arena. In general, however, marginalization is more severe if a person loses his or her foothold in several different arenas at the same time (Room 1995). Some indicators of social exclusion tend to occur at the same time, such as persistently low income levels (directly linked to having a job or not) and the access to jobs, health, housing and other factors associated with power and status. According to Room (1995: 235), it is important, both for policy and for explanatory purposes, to disentangle different elements of hardship and to identify the interrelationship, for example, between financial poverty and poor housing, between educational failure and lack of skills on the job market, between deprived childhoods and subsequent patterns of health and sickness. Most marginalized are the ones who belong to a plurality of disadvantaged categories.

Generally, gaining access to jobs and education is a critical stage in the lives of young people. In some sectors of the labour market, young immigrants face greater barriers than young people without an immigrant background, due to employers' prejudices or their inadequacies, for instance, lack of language fluency. On the other hand, research shows that young people with immigrant backgrounds often have an extra drive, because they expect that things will be more difficult (Lauglo, 2000). Descendants with certain country backgrounds also perform better than the majority population. An integrated qualitative and quantitative perspective makes it possible to see the ways in which young people act and react on their situation, thus avoiding a 'blame the victim' explanation based on a one-sided focus on their lack of skills (van Dijk, 1992).

In order to reveal the complexity of social exclusion, it is important to consciously search for a variety of backgrounds. It is also important to look for transitions between inclusion and exclusion in an individual's life and analyze what it is that contributes to such transitions. By viewing social exclusion as a process, we do not fix the explanation to an either/or situation. With a life-span focus we can consider the efforts of young immigrants to combat social exclusion, or we can see how in some periods they accept social exclusion and also willingly contribute to it.

In addition, the relational focus makes it important to ask questions like: Who is doing the excluding? Are there some specific people who exclude others? If so, are these other young adults of the same age, as in street racism, or is the exclusion made by the individual's own family as when a Muslim girl who is breaking the codes of proper behaviour is expelled? Or is the exclusion caused by people in positions of power such as employers, teachers, politicians, police or social workers?

EDUCATIONAL EXCLUSION

Quantitative research gives us some of the answers about why some young immigrants are excluded from education. Register data shows that there are almost as many descendants as there are young people without an immigrant background under 25 in education (or in employment) (Olsen, 2009). The same holds for those who migrated as children, whereas for young, first-generation immigrants the level is much lower (*ibid.*). Surprisingly enough, however, length of residence in itself does not have much impact on differences in grades or drop-out rates (Støren 2005). Social background is the main reason why young immigrants and descendants have a higher drop-out rate from upper secondary school than teenagers from the majority population (Brekke and Fekjær, forthcoming). Pupils with non-western background have parents who more often have lower education, lower income and more often are unemployed than parents from western countries (Støren, 2005). If we compare young people with immigrant backgrounds and young people without immigrant backgrounds but with the same social background, we see that the differences in grades are small, and within each social strata there are more young people with immigrant background than without immigrant background who continue with higher education (Støren 2005: 82, 93).

There are vast differences in grades, drop-out rates and length of education between immigrants with different countries of origin. Some perform better than the majority population, whereas others perform worse. The main reason for these differences seems to be the fact that immigrants of different origins have different pre-migration class backgrounds and educational profiles (Modood, 2007). In Norway, Pakistani and Turkish young people more often drop out of school, and more often do not take up higher education, than young people of Indian and Vietnamese origin (despite the same length of residence) (Fekjær 2007). The main reason is found to be class differences among the parents from these different groups, but also significant are the different attitudes towards education. In this way, class and ethnicity (here in the sense of country of origin, which in reality does not always equal ethnicity) *interact* in producing distinct patterns of inclusion and exclusion. Just as attitudes to schooling, to higher education and to financing education by means of loan, are influenced by class, so are they influenced by ethnicity (Fekjær, 2007; Modood, 2007).

Yet, the danger of giving a mean of the performance of immigrants of different countries of origin is that it might reify a picture of each immigrant group. A qualitative study can be used to analyze the experiences of immigrants with one common country of origin but with different class backgrounds, with rural vs. urban backgrounds and with different migration trajectories. In Norway, immigrants from Somalia are more often unemployed and if employed have a low income, combined with having more children than all other immigrant groups in Norway (Henriksen, 2007). However, in my study of Somalis in Norway, I interviewed many young Somalis who took higher education. Common for

all of these was that they had parents who also had taken higher education — either from the homeland or after coming to Norway, *or* their parents had held privileged positions in Somalia. This high level of education or status of their parents might have contributed to these young people having higher aspirations themselves (Fangen 2008). However, statistical data are necessary in order to say something conclusive about the meaning of parent's education for young adult immigrant's educational aspirations and achievements.

There are differences between first-generation immigrants who come as refugees and those coming through family reunion, as well as differences between those coming from war areas and those who do not have such experiences. This is partly a matter of having had any access to schooling before arriving in the host country, partly a matter of the extent to which one has experienced traumas or having or not having someone to relate to when arriving. Qualitative research can show how the migration history affects later educational performance, as well as experiences of inclusion and exclusion. There are vast differences in the experiences of those young immigrants coming from southern Somalia who had never attended school because of the war and some young immigrants from other countries (or other areas of Somalia) who had ordinary access to schooling in the home country before arriving in Norway. After coming to Norway, they were all placed in a reception class for a year, and then directly into the school class of their own age group. For those who were illiterate, the barriers were huge: they had to start learning how to read and write, while their classmates learnt this maybe eight or nine years earlier. For those who had had access to schooling in the home country, it did not take long before they managed to cope. A common experience is that the first year was hard, but after a while they managed better. This was the case with Ahmed from Afghanistan:

I got here July, and started August, so I was lucky. (...) at (...) a reception class for immigrants. It was hard! (...) The first day of school and a language you've never heard before. But it went all right. I improved. I got out of that period, and I eventually could communicate in Norwegian.

In many cases, child migrants learn the new language quicker than their parents, and it is the children who support the parent's learning. Some migrant parents who face barriers to insertion in the labour market also seek comfort in ethnic networks that might be counter-productive to active participation and consequently, they serve as poor role models for their children. Fatoma, a young Somali woman, had a father who lived on the dole and hung around with other men chewing qhat (a green plant with narcotic effects similar to Amphetamine) at the café all day (Fangen, 2008: 64ff). When she was younger she was ashamed of him, and therefore she told her peers that he was an electrician, instead of telling the truth that he was not working at all. By contrast, her mother has always been working. In Somalia she had an important position and after coming to Norway she has been working in a kindergarten. This young woman

views her own mother as a role model. But since her mother had no further schooling than the mandatory years, education appears strange for Fatoma, and she would rather find herself a job. She has many Somali friends like herself who would not go on with higher education, and would thus orient themselves to the lower status positions at the labour market.

Among young men (both with or without immigrant background) who do not master the school setting well and feel stigmatized by the teacher or in general just bored of school, the tough guy, often inspired by the gangster or other sub-cultural images, is an alternative source of respect and status (Fangen 1998: 47; Moshuus 2007; Sernhede 2002; Vestel 2004). A young person who drops out of school and joins a criminal gang or a youth sub-culture instead is excluded from one setting, namely school, but included in another setting, namely the gang or the sub-culture. In Willis' (1977: 113) well-known study of white working-class boys in school, his main argument is that it is not the school that excludes these boys; they exclude themselves through the development of a counter-school culture which prepares them for the future on the shop floor. According to Willis, it is an element of self-domination in the acceptance of subordinate roles. However, this is experienced, paradoxically, as a form of true learning and as a kind of resistance.

But such an attitude towards school does not always appear as a collective reaction. In the *Weight of the world*, Bourdieu (2002: 61) writes about a young Moroccan man who has an illiterate father and a mother who is hardly able to write. Bourdieu argues that: 'Everything suggests that the organizing principle behind his rejection of school and the defiant attitudes that lead him towards, and gradually trap him in, the role of the "tough", is the desire to avoid the humiliation of having to read out loud in front of the other students'. In cases like this, the self-exclusion come about in order to avoid the humiliation of being excluded by others.

The distinct multicultural community of the peer group is for some of our interviewees an alternative setting for inclusion, instead of school which is an arena where they do not feel comfortable. One example is Omar, who was born in Norway of Turkish parents. He quitted school when he was 17. He states that: 'I was tired of school. The worst thing was getting up in the morning and having to sit quietly for many hours. That totally knocked me out'. He went to a school where 95 per cent of the pupils had an immigrant background. Instead of going to school, Omar liked to hang around with his friends, who had many different ethnic backgrounds. When being together they had their own language representing a mixture of all these backgrounds; something totally different from what the majority Norwegian learnt in school.

Another example is Abdulrahim, who during his youth participated in a gang, dressed 'cool' and committed petty crimes (Fangen 2007a, b). He was criticized by elder Somali men and thus he avoided contact with them. As he grew older, he gradually became interested in the Somali community, dropped his gangster style and took more responsibility for others. From excluding himself both from adult Somalis and from the majority society represented by

the school, he entered adult life by joining a Somali organization and giving voluntary aid to other Somalis. In other words, his transition to adulthood meant excluding himself from the gang and including himself in the Somali community. However, he was still not included in majority society in the sense that he did not continue education and he had problems getting stable and well-paid jobs.

All in all, lower class background seems to be the major factor to explain the higher drop-out rate and lower grades of immigrants compared to non-immigrants. This may be related both to the importance of role models, but also to the degree of parental support and motivation. Parents' high expectations are one factor that explains many young immigrants' extra drive to perform well. For some however, the expectation that they will experience discrimination contributes to their lack of motivation to strive for further achievements.

LABOUR MARKET EXCLUSION

When assessing what factors contribute to a harder access to the labour market, there is often an emphasis of what the individual lacks, as regards experience, network, qualifications proficiency in the majority language, knowledge of how the 'system' works and self-confidence. These factors create barriers for young people in general, but for young immigrants, an additional barrier in some cases is employers' reluctance to employ persons with visible minority background (Rogstad, 2000).

However, ethnic stigmatization can influence men and women differently. In some segments of the labour market, it seems that women with immigrant background have better access to jobs than men with the same background. It would therefore be erroneous one-sidedly to speak of a double disadvantage for women with ethnic minority background (Modood, 2007: 61). There is also an element of self-exclusion among young women with immigrant background as regards labour market. Statistical research shows that women with immigrant background have a decline in their employment over time, whereas the opposite is true for women without an immigrant background. One reason is that more women with immigrant background prioritize child rearing to active employment. Therefore, when they start to get children, they choose to work less or not to work at all (Brekke 2008: 61).

Norwegian authorities often seem to equate integration with being employed. It is the labour line ('arbeidslinja') which is the main goal of Norwegian integration policy (Fangen et al., 2010). This policy emphasizes full employment and equal rights for all inhabitants. However, this might be seen as discriminating against immigrants who have difficulties accessing the labour market, as is the case with adult illiterates, and also for young mothers with many children who want to prioritize child rearing and would therefore profit from a part-time introductory programme rather than the full-time offer supported by the authorities.

More than 50 per cent of job recruitments go through informal channels (Hansen 1997). The problem for young immigrants of the first-generation is that they often do not have the network that leads to the right kind of jobs (Wiborg, 2006). Several of our interviewees have achieved temporary, low-status jobs through their contacts with other immigrants of the same origin, but this ethnic network does not give access to stable and well-paid jobs. The consequence for many young immigrants who do not have higher education is that they are drifting between loosely connected engagements. Ahmed, who came to Norway from Afghanistan ten years ago, tells that he has received a lot of temporary jobs through his friends:

I am working in a bakery, cleaning. (...) It's OK, even though people think it's a dull job. (...) I can get myself a job a hundred times better than that, but I like it. That's what important, that you like the job. (...) I do what I want to do, I don't get any commands from others. [I got the job] from a friend of mine. In reality it's not that difficult to get a job around here. Depends on what skills you got. Often you get jobs through friends. Sometimes one works somewhere, and you tell that you're unemployed, and there's a friend who, yes, I got the job that way.

It is important to have in mind that high-status jobs are not necessary in order to feel included and to have a high life-quality. Some young people do not have the ambition of doing a career in this sense. For example, Fatima, a young woman born in Norway of Pakistani parents, narrates that: 'I can for instance say: 7-eleven — it has a young group of people working there, and I like that a lot. So I want to stay there'. However, the problem with many low-status jobs is that they do not pay high salaries and they are often temporary.

Statistical research has shown that education reduces the risk of unemployment and it diminishes the income gap between people with or without immigrant background. Nevertheless, there exists a gap between immigrants and the non-immigrants both as regards income and as regards the risk of being positioned on the margins of the labour market (Evensen 2008: 2). The reluctance to employ young people with visible minority background is more prevalent in some parts of the labour market than in others. Descendants especially educated in diploma professions, after fulfilling their education, are in fact much more exposed to unemployment when compared to descendants educated in many other professions (*ibid.*). Sharif, a young Somali man educated as a diploma economist said that 'in order to get jobs you must have experience, but how do you get experience when you do not get jobs?' (Fangen 2007a: 421–3). He had never succeeded in gaining work in his profession and worked instead as a mother tongue teacher. Register data shows that descendants educated as nurses and teachers have an easier access to jobs (Evensen, 2008). This points to the fact that vocations also point to positions in a hierarchy. It seems that discrimination is worse in high-status vocations, but an additional factor is that there is a greater scarcity of workforce in health and social service vocations than in the economic sector.

There are huge differences between immigrants of different origins when it comes to unemployment. In Norway, Somali and Iraqi immigrants are more often unemployed than immigrants of other origins (Blom and Henriksen 2009). One reason for the differences is the length of residence, since a large percentage of immigrants from Somalia and Iraq arrived in Norway relatively recently (*ibid.*). But even over time some of the differences remain. It takes longer for young people with backgrounds from African countries to get their first job after completing education than for immigrants from other parts of the world or young people of the majority population. There is reason to believe that discrimination is one reason why it is harder for African migrants to get a job (Brekke 2008). Haile (22) from Ethiopia, who had very good grades from school, did not get any of the jobs he applied for:

The job search was really difficult. I applied several places and I went several places for interviews. So they see the language. I didn't want to apply for any more positions. Finally, I know this girl who works at a nursing home. I had to come and ask there. So I went there, and asked. I wrote a very good application, and delivered it. Then I got the job.

Haile managed well once he got a job. For others, it is a problem adapting to an organized work life, even if they should get a job. Young migrants who have experienced war have greater difficulties with this. Living for many years in a society without any infrastructure, including a functioning school-system, gives a person high qualifications, but these are the qualifications of how to survive from day to day (Fangen 2008). These skills are not easily convertible to the skills needed in order to succeed in a regulated labour market. However, for some, like Isir (19), who came from Mogadishu eight years ago, these obstacles are overcome by strong motivation and the need to be a positive example to other Somalis:

Young Somalis (...) must not give up, no matter how hard one has tried; one has applied for jobs 10 times, then just continue until the end. Maybe I could be an example? Or somebody else can be an example. That we take an education, and can show the Norwegians that also we manage. Then nobody would say 'You don't know anything'.

A group of young immigrants who are in a very vulnerable position are the unaccompanied minors. Jimale came to Norway from Somalia on his own when he was 12 years old (Fangen 2006b: 19). He did not manage school, and soon he joined a criminal gang and started to use drugs. Later on, he had a child with a Norwegian girl. She did not want him to see the child because of the lack of structure in his life. This became a huge incentive for him to change his life style. Thus, from actively contributing to his own exclusion, he now tries as hard as he can to succeed. However, it is not easy for him to adapt to the strict structures of working life. He has lost several trial positions because he did not

manage to attend work at the right time. It is also difficult for him to avoid his previous friends who still are into criminality and drugs, as they continue to meet up in the collective where he lives.

This is similar to what Weil et al. (2005) write on the problems of excluded youth adapting to a working identity. Many socially excluded young adults dream of a regular job, or even a job where they can be the boss. This was the case with Omar (19) of Turkish parents, who quitted school as 17 years old and started working as a painter. However, what he dreams is ‘to sit in an office having a lot of money and doing nothing’. According to Weil et al. (2005), typical of many excluded young adults is that they resist authority and attempts by others to tell them what to do. Their dreams about a good job can be understood as part of a wider search for an idealized normality that includes education, work, a traditional family, spouse, children and house. Another example of this is Hassan, a Somali young man, who had had a lot of temporary jobs, but what he wanted from the future was ‘to get a little boy and a little girl and to find love in life. A good job, well-educated, respected man (Fangen, 2007b: 406–8). For those who are marginalized, the wish to achieve this implies a dream that is exactly the opposite of the conditions in which they find themselves (Weil et al., 2005). Factors like unemployment, poor housing conditions and strained relations with family, friends and partners may be dashing these dreams against the rocks daily (ibid.). Weil et al. (2005) see the need for such dreams as a survival strategy. It enables young people to deny a present that might paralyze them altogether.

A factor typical of young adults who manage to avoid further economic and social marginalization and to benefit from the chances an individualized society provides is that they succeed in changing their strategies according to changing situations and circumstances. Young people who manage to alternate between unemployment, work and the educational system prolong the traditional adolescent phase, ‘literally turning their life into an experience of lifelong learning’ (Weil et al., 2005). Trying out possible options might function as a means of improving their competence to survive in ever changing situations (ibid.).

Bourdieu (2002: 62) argues that young marginalized adults with and without immigrant background share every trait except ethnic origin. What some young people have in addition is an ethnic stigma inscribed in their skin or their facial features, as well as in their name, their clothes and their manners. These aspects intensify or radicalize the handicap linked to the lack of certificates and qualifications, itself linked to the lack of cultural and more specific linguistic capital (ibid.).

More than in other spheres, discrimination is a major barrier against young immigrants’ active participation in the labour market. However, it is hard to document how huge this problem is, since it is difficult to control for the effect of all other variables, such as lack of qualifications, and so on. In the next section, I will focus on a sphere that is not so dependent on the individual resources, but rather on the collective ones.

SPATIAL EXCLUSION

One concern of Room's (1995: 238) theory of multiple disadvantages is to widen the focus, by not only focusing on the resources of the individual, but to include also a focus on local communities. He argues that deprivation is caused not only by lack of personal resources but also by unsatisfactory community facilities, such as dilapidated schools, remote shops, poor public transport networks, and so on. Such an environment tends to reinforce and perpetuate household poverty.

Neighbourhoods can thus produce distinct forms of social exclusion. Bourdieu (2002: 124–25) points out that different social spaces are defined by their position relative to other sites. The poor suburbs of Paris that collect the most disadvantaged groups contrast in every respect with areas of Paris where there is a concentration of the rarest goods and their owners. In France, large public housing projects were built in the French *Banlieues* in the 1950s to the 1970s, and the houses were filled with low-income immigrant families. A stigma became attached to these areas because of the fear of a 'cultural clash' and of downward mobility by white working-class families and added to this was the rapid decay of the buildings (Body-Gendrot, 2002: 373). Young ethnic minority men vandalized buildings and public amenities as a protest against the way projects were designed and maintained, as well as against the French state bureaucracy for putting tenants in the same identical mortar and concrete boxes without any sensitivity to ethnic and cultural preferences (*ibid.*).

Riots by young immigrant males have also received a lot of media attention in Sweden and in Norway. In the suburbs of Gothenburg in Sweden, the concentration of immigrants is higher than in the suburbs of Oslo. In the former, 90 per cent of the population are immigrant and more than 50 per cent of the children have unemployed parents, whereas in the Southern or North-Eastern suburbs of Oslo the concentration of immigrants vary from 40–45 per cent (Aalandslid, 2009; Sernhede, 2002). The stigmatization of these suburbs on the one hand contributes to a feeling of collective exclusion, while on the other hand, it can open up for alternative forms of inclusion based on the experienced sameness and common destiny of being foreigners in relation to the national state. The young men studied by Sernhede (2002) in one of Gothenburg's suburbs, did not see themselves as Swedish, but identified instead as 'blackheads', thus reinventing a racist term by making it their own resistant identity. Some of them also identified with the suburb as such. Sernhede sees a relation between these young men's unwillingness to participate in elections or in politics in general, and their experience of not being members of the Swedish society. Their felt powerlessness led to a fascination with violent gang culture and Afro-American hip hop, which again reinforced their hostility towards the dominant culture. Sernhede argues that the welfare state can diminish problems of inequality by different forms of social benefits, but it cannot solve these young people's experience of being outsiders in relation to the Swedish society. The hip hop sub-culture or even the suburb as a separate society within society,

are alternative sources of community for some of these young people. This is similar to what Vestel (2004) found among the young men he studied in one of Oslo's North-Eastern suburbs. There was a 'community of difference', that was built around new practices of greeting rituals, language use, dress and music.

Among those of our interviewees who live in Oslo's suburbs, there are also many (especially those who have high ambitions as regards education) who do *not* identify themselves with the suburb because of its connotation of no future and of criminality and drug use. Abebe, an Ethiopian young man, said he was focused towards the future and he wanted to become a doctor. He felt excluded by the social milieu of the suburb, but also did not want to be included in it. This is also reflected in his music taste, as he likes underground hip hop which he is careful to point out is something different from the hip hop people listen to these days. It is not the idealization of the gangster; but rather a thematization of the need to break with bad environments. Instead of embracing the gangster image, as some of the young hip hop'ers in Vestel's study (2004: 236–9), he rather chose an alternative trajectory marked by high aspirations as regards education and work, combined with an alternative version of hip hop which underlines the need to use your opportunities and break with the past.

Similarly, Mustafa, a young Turkish man who studied law, said that he did not feel any belonging to the suburb, 'I am almost never there. Never liked to be there', he says. He stated that 'there are too many immigrants', and he especially did not like the Pakistanis hanging at the corner of the shopping mall. Different places have different meanings attached to them, and for some ambitious young immigrants the suburb is associated with no future. The result is that some young people live in the suburbs, but spend their time elsewhere. Several of our interviewees explicitly say that they do not want to live a place where there are so many 'foreigners'.

Young people define their own hierarchies between places, which are sometimes the same as the more dominant common sense hierarchies, but sometimes slightly different. For example, Abebe, who we interviewed at the Oslo central station, defined downtown Oslo, meaning the area around the station and the large shopping malls around there, as the best place to be, and the western part of the city as the worst.

Abebe: Besides, we do not go to the Western part of Oslo... (...) If you are together with friends who live there, but it is not a place you like to be.

Katrine: Where do you like to be, then?

Abebe: Downtown (...) It is the only place we know! (laughs) (...) We go back and forth.... Have a kebab...

Downtown is a place where drug addicts are located, but also a place where there are lots of possibilities. Something is always happening there, and a great many people, shops and possible work-places are located there. In Downtown, he can operate freer from negative social ties, but several times he has

experienced that Norwegians ask him if he has some drugs to sell, only because he has a visible African background. He is then placed in a category from which he distances himself. Similarly, Mustafa from Turkey (the law student) feels good at the student café, but in other cafés and discothèques, he has experienced being denied access and he feels marked as an unwanted foreigner. Consequently, some arenas lead to an increase of unwanted identity ascriptions, and thus feed a feeling of non-belonging.

The western part of Oslo is a place where some of our interviewees do not want to go, because they feel 'out of place' (Douglas, 2003). This is similar to what Les Back (2008) calls 'the racialized map of the city'. Thus, different places and different arenas are linked to certain feelings of inclusion and exclusion, and for many young immigrants the high status areas of the city are the sites where they do not feel at home, and as the examples above show, this also appears true for some of those who take high status education. In addition to houses in these areas being too expensive for many immigrants, there is also an element of self-exclusion when young people with visible minority background choose not to spend their time in these areas, and later in life, do not aspire towards owning houses there. The ethnic segregation of the city marks a symbolic barrier against real class mobility of young immigrants.

Downtown Oslo might open up for much more possibilities of inclusion. For many adults, it is tempting to seek inclusion in their own ethnic community, whereas many of the young immigrants prefer multi-ethnic communities, and also communities that are not too dominated by people with an immigrant background. For young people in general, the cities' educational and job opportunities are important pull factors for urban residency. Many of the young immigrants we have interviewed report to have experienced more severe racism in small towns on the countryside than in Oslo. The city is more multicultural and urban dwellers are more used to cultural complexity compared to people in smaller places. We have however also interviewed young immigrants who thought it was good to come to a small place where there were few other immigrants. Then they *had to* learn to know the local people and they learnt Norwegian faster. It seems that what distinguishes these different experiences is how welcoming the local community is. According to our interviews with young immigrants, it seems that people in some small places meet foreigners with interest and inclusion, whereas in other places there are more problems with outright racism and antagonist feelings against immigrants.

Even though most of the young immigrants we have interviewed have experienced some episodes where they have been met with prejudices or even outright racism, it seems that African immigrants in general have more experiences with severe racism. Abdulrahim, who I also quoted earlier in this article, experienced this when he came to Norway as a ten year old, and settled with his family in a small Norwegian town where few other immigrants lived. In the beginning, he experienced people as friendly, but a bit haughty. Later on, all four Somali families in the town were moved to the same area. After this,

some people became more racist, and he experienced racist name-calling on several occasions, especially from the young people of his age (with Norwegian background). The racism grew worse over time, and later on, he and his Somali friends often had to run away in order not to be beaten up by racists. He experienced this as frightening and stressful, and the parents started to follow him and his friends to and from school. Later on, he had more Norwegian friends, and then the racists did not bother him any more. Thus, coming into networks with less excluded young people, made him less excluded as well. Being included in social networks is a form of social capital which sometimes can protect against racism. Also, after moving to the capital city, he did not experience much racism at all. Similar narratives about the difference between the small town and the capital city are seen in many of our interviews.

All in all, spatial exclusion is a complex matter. Neighbourhoods that serve as alternative entities of belonging for some, is at the same time exactly the places where other young people feel deemed to remain in a subordinate position. Thus for the latter, the only way to escape exclusion is also to escape the collective barriers of the neighbourhood.

RELATIONAL EXCLUSION

Ethnic segregation in housing areas and differentiated access to higher education and well-paid, high-status jobs in the labour market are exclusionary mechanisms at the macro level. But there are also many forms of exclusion in face-to-face social interaction, including more indirect forms of exclusion, such as subtle ways of watching, talking or in other ways relating or not relating to others. According to Taylor (1994: 25), our identity is partly shaped by recognition or its absence, and so a person can suffer if others mirror a confining or demeaning picture. The lack of recognition or being associated with categories that one does not identify with can inflict harm and be experienced as a form of oppression, as it imprisons the individual in a false, distorted and reduced form of being.

Some young people adopt such depreciatory images of themselves, so that even if some of the obstacles to their advancement fall away, they may be incapable of taking advantage of their own opportunities (Taylor, 1994). Such processes are sometimes seen among young immigrants, that they adopt the stigma to which their ethnicity is viewed by the majority (Eidheim, 1987; Lewin, 1948). Among our interviewees, many have experienced being ascribed racial categories such as ‘nigger’ or stigmatizing descriptions of their ethnicity such as ‘Turk-mentality’. Some interpret the seemingly reserved attitude of people from the majority population as a sign that foreigners are not welcome in the Norwegian society. Even if it is not interpreted this way, the way of behaving towards each other might feed feelings of being excluded. For example, Ahmed thinks that Norwegians have a different way of behaving towards strangers than what he is used to in Afghanistan:

People were colder than in my homeland. It's typical in our homeland that if you are at a subway, to talk with you 'hey, hey, how are you' etc. We greet people, no matter who they are. We are usually not silent, but here it is different.

Also more defined social rituals can be perceived as excluding, as when the drinking pattern of young non-immigrants tend to exclude young Muslims who follow the prescription of their religion to avoid alcohol. Many of our Muslim interviewees say they have no problem with this, they go to parties without drinking themselves, or some also drink a little bit. For some, however, it is experienced as a burden being with drunken Norwegians, and they prefer spending their time with other Muslim friends.

Some young immigrants are vulnerable to the signals from non-immigrant persons, and misinterpretations occur. As for those persons who tend to ignore the young immigrants this does not need to be an action (or non-action) meant to hurt. Maybe the person not acknowledging the other is shy; or maybe he is just occupied by his own inner thoughts. There might also be norms of ceremonial distance, as Goffman (1967: 63) calls it, that the young immigrant is not aware of. Ceremonial distance is related to class background in the sense that 'the higher the class, the more extensive and elaborated are the taboos against contact'. Goffman describes several examples of non-person treatment, where people of higher status act as if the other was not there at all (*ibid.*: 67). Goffman analyzes the presence of avoidance rituals and presentational rituals in relation to differences of status and class background, but only indirectly touches the issues of ethnicity and racism related to such phenomena. Not to recognize the other through presentational rituals might be an expression of racism, albeit not necessarily on a very conscious level. There might be an attitude that the other is not important, she is not an equal. This might also be linked to a certain form of embarrassment. She is a foreigner, and therefore the person does not know how to approach her. In order not to do anything wrong, he chooses not to recognize the other at all, which in effect might be more hurtful for the other than if he had chosen the wrong greeting ritual.

Norwegians' unwillingness to adjust their language to the immigrants present in a social setting is also interpreted as a form of exclusion by some of our interviewees, like Canadian Chinese Lee:

Language is what I have been discriminated against (...) What I don't appreciate is that some Norwegians want to include you, but then they don't speak any English. (...) I don't think that I have been out-right discriminated against (...) but I think that not knowing the language sort of puts you into a negative club and has some negative consequences.

More outright exclusionary practices in face-to-face relations are various instances of racism. For many of the young immigrants we have interviewed, racialization and racism are important aspects of their experiences of social exclusion. Haile, a young Ethiopian man, experienced being beaten up, being

attacked by motor bikes, being bullied and being called a Negro. He says that, if people like us (me and the other interviewer) call him that, it does not matter, because he knows the term is not meant as something negative, but if it is said with hatred by other youngsters wanting to do him harm, then it is felt as bad.

Several of the young immigrants we have interviewed have adopted strategies to better face racism (Fangen, 2008). One common strategy is to think that a particular instance of racism is conducted by this person on this very day, but this does not mean that everyone in Norway is racist, as Ahmed puts it:

You can't say that based on three racists, all Norwegians are racist. That's not how it is. People are different.

Many authors argue that when analyzing phenomena, such as exclusion, racism and humiliation, one must take into account how it is felt more than the intentions of those imposing it (Fangen, 2006b; Fangen, 2008). Some young people tend to downplay the importance of experiences of exclusion or racism or humiliation or even express understanding of them, while others tend to be oversensitive to such experiences and interpret all barriers as a result of racism or as humiliation (Prieur, 2004). This can be analyzed in relation to their situation in general, their social network, their class position, and so on (Fangen, 2008).

SOCIO-POLITICAL EXCLUSION

Structural or political factors such as restrictive immigration policies, the organization of the welfare system, the integration policies, and so on, are relevant in the search for factors that might lead to exclusion. In a previous article (Fangen, 2006b), I discussed how encounters between Somali immigrants and different public offices in Norway are often experienced as humiliating by the Somali immigrants. They feel that they are met with lack of empathy and of respect in these institutions, and interpret the advice received as 'you must adopt our way of doing things, which again is better than your way of doing things'. This also holds on a more macro level, in immigration policy. For young immigrants, the emphasis on the need for a restrictive immigration policy can be perceived as linked to the message 'you do not belong here'. Of course, the real arguments behind the policy are defined otherwise.

The nation state in itself is built on the distinction between *us* who are inside and *them* who are outside. The distinction between the included and the excluded is an issue of political controversy and debate (Heidar and Semb, 2007: 322). Citizenship is not only a juridical phenomenon, with enormous consequences for immigrants searching for a new start in life, but also a sociological and political phenomenon expressing an ever more complex relation between the individual and the state.

The acquisition (or denial) of citizenship is also a factor that feeds feelings of inclusion or exclusion. Abebe, from Ethiopia, had not achieved Norwegian citizenship yet after seven years of residency. He said that after having received it he would feel Norwegian, but until then he only felt as himself. Although he had access to education and work, he was in some sense still excluded from the national community. At the same time, his belonging to Ethiopia, where he grew up, is weak, because it does not represent any future for him.

However, having received a citizenship does not always equal identification with the country of residency, as the case was with Mustafa, the law student, who was so tired of the discrimination he felt when going out in town. Because he was Alewi and Kurd, he did not identify with being solely Turkish either. His solution was not to define himself according to national borders at all:

My family are not Muslims. We are Kurdish (...) We have already identity problems from the beginning. And if you in addition take being in Norway, then it becomes hard to define. I can say that I have overcome that nationality stuff. I do not think about it anymore. I like to say that I am European.

Most of the young people we have interviewed have mainly positive things to say about how the Norwegian society is organized as a welfare state, and that it is a peaceful country, and so on. Except for hard access to the best jobs and for some also to higher education, it is generally more direct face-to-face contact that feeds feelings of exclusion. As a result of social democratic policies, few people are excluded on economic grounds. However, non-material exclusion is still an important factor, which might lead to stigmatized otherness as well as lack of participation in mainstream society.

Undocumented immigrants and non-returnable refugees are in a special situation, as they are exempted from a number of rights, including social benefits (they only have the right to medical care and so-called emergency benefits). Some young immigrants remain in this situation for years, such as the non-returnable refugees who have received a negative answer to their request for asylum, but do not return because of ongoing conflicts and non-existent opportunities in their homeland. They feel that they have few other opportunities than criminality, since they cannot legally work (Sandberg and Pedersen, 2009).

In some sending countries, like Somalia, help to the sick, poor, unemployed, and so on, goes through the family or clan network, which means close and intimate contacts. By contrast, in the social democratic welfare state, public institutions have an important role in giving aid to the needy. These institutions can be characterized by inaccessibility and complexity, and it is not simple to feel recognition within the framework of these formal institutions (Fangen, 2006a). Nevertheless, some of the young immigrants who came to Norway as children and have attended Norwegian school for the required years say that they know 'the system' here and they know how to manoeuvre with those public offices they have to relate to. Thus, the knowledge of how this 'system' works is one factor that serves to diminish exclusionary processes.

It is important to not only focus on immigrants' integration (or lack of it) in the host society, but also on their access or lack of access to political status, rights and opportunities for political participation (Bauböck et al., 2006: 92). In a previous article, I have analyzed how young Somalis with different class backgrounds take different participatory roles, and some activate themselves in clan-based networks, others in Norwegian politics and yet others in transnational political activity (Fangen, 2007a; Fangen, 2008).

All in all, the emphasis on education in Norway, the welfare system, with all its merits, but also with its creation of social clients and the Norwegian immigration policy are some aspects which shape the form social exclusion of young immigrants takes in the Norwegian setting. Furthermore, immigrants' exclusion and inclusion do not only occur within the borders of the nation-state, and the immigration policy is one out of several macro features that are not a result of national policies alone. In Fangen et al. (2010), we describe how Norwegian immigration policies relate to the general European immigration policies.

CONCLUSION

In this article, I have discussed different aspects of social exclusion in different social settings. With reference to quantitative research, we can find out what factors are most important in contributing to social exclusion in each social setting, while qualitative research provides us with the lived experiences of young immigrants and the interconnections in an individual life story between social inclusion and exclusion over time on different arenas.

But what is the relationship between social exclusion in various settings? Quantitative research has shown that there is an obvious relationship between length of education and access to the labour market, and the general trend is that education diminishes exclusion in the labour market for young people with immigrant background. Young immigrants with no education after secondary upper school are lead towards temporary low-paid jobs (but so are young people without immigrant background). But young immigrants with higher education in some professions also experience hard access to the labour market, and immigrants from Africa have a harder access to the labour market than immigrants from other regions. Part of the explanation of this difference is that different migration trajectories lead to different positions in the host society. More immigrants from Africa than from other continents come as refugees. But discrimination also plays a role and African immigrants seem to be more exposed to prejudices among the majority population.

For first-generation immigrants, lack of fluency in the dominant language and knowledge about the 'system' can contribute to drop out from school and incomplete school certificates which in turn restricts access to higher education. This in turn will direct young immigrants towards lower skilled jobs in a labour market and for some will also lead to a state of welfare dependency.

On the other hand, for child migrants and descendants, school performance, length of education, and so on, equals that of young people without immigrant background.

Although higher education to some extent prevents against social exclusion in face-to-face contact, we see in the narratives of our interviewees that many experiences being marked as different, although they have high-status educations. The general trend in the interviews we have conducted, though, is that those who have a well-developed network including both Norwegian and immigrant friends, and who take higher education or have a good job, are in the best position to not be too vulnerable to the many humiliations in daily life (Fangen, 2006b; Fangen, 2008).

As an individual lives his or her life in many different arenas, analysis must reach beyond the borders of the local community, and the different arenas in which processes of social exclusion occur must be seen together. By not restricting the focus to only education or the labour market, but rather seeing inclusion and exclusion in these arenas together with young people's belonging or non-belonging and participation or non-participation in local communities, in gangs and peer groups, in families, in leisure activities as well as in civic and political organization, we can better understand social exclusion in young people's lives.

Notes

- 1 The research leading to these results has received funding from the European Community's Seventh Framework Programme (FP7/2007–2013) under grant agreement no. 217524.
- 2 These interviews were conducted partly by me, partly by research assistants.
- 3 The research role and other methodological questions of this study are described in more detail elsewhere (Fangen 2007a; 2008).

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