

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Feelings of being socially excluded: A matter of education, labour market situation, income, deprivation, or other things?

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Abstract

This article aims (1) to investigate whether immigrants in the Norwegian population and their descendants differ in their feelings of being socially excluded from society compared with others born in Norway ('natives'), and (2) to test empirically whether these differences reflect differences in human and economic capital (i.e., education, work, income, and material deprivation) and factors related to minority/majority issues, such as citizenship. The data were drawn from the Norwegian part of the European Union Statistics on Income and Living Conditions survey. The results show that immigrants—especially from Asia, Africa, Latin America, Oceania, non-EU European countries, and descendants of immigrants—feel more socially excluded than natives. For immigrants from Africa, Asia, et al., and Europe other countries, human and economic capital are linked to these differences. Immigrants from Europe other countries did not differ from natives when adjusting for education and work. Differences between natives and immigrants from Africa, Asia, et al. and descendants of immigrants remained even after controlling for various factors. The study indicates that immigrants from outside the Nordic countries with secondary education feel socially excluded to a higher degree than other immigrants. One reason could be that they may have skills not recognised in the Norwegian labour market. The study also finds that immigrants with Norwegian citizenship feel less excluded from society than other immigrants. Length of stay and social recognition are possible explanations for these results.

KEYWORDS

Norway, EI-SILC, immigration, social exclusion, subjective dimension

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INTRODUCTION

Social exclusion is a topic that has been high on the political and research agenda in recent years, not least in the European Union (EU), which has played an important role in pursuing objectives of counteracting and preventing social exclusion and poverty (Béland, 2007; Burchardt, 2000; Daly, 2006; Gordon, 2007; Levitas et al., 2007; Levitas, 1996, 2005; Silver, 1994, 2007a). In French discussions in the 1970s, which helped put the topic on the agenda, exclusion was particularly worrisome for marginal groups that fell outside the social security system, and was seen to threaten the basis of society (Béland, 2007; Silver & Miller, 2003). More recently, concern has also been expressed for the unemployed, refugees, immigrants, and others who are not included in ordinary working life. Much of the still limited quantitative empirical research in this field has studied income poverty and various ‘objective’ deprivation indicators of social exclusion. Some two decades ago, Böhnke (2001) highlighted the question of whether people feel socially excluded as being a promising field of research: ‘From a methodological point of view, such a dependent variable—perceived social exclusion—offers the possibility to get insight into the structure and the determinants of social exclusion’ (Böhnke, 2001, p. 9; see also Böhnke & Silver, 2014). The importance of studying subjective aspects has also been pointed out in recent migration and integration studies (Paparusso, 2021; Puranen, 2019).

This article responds to these suggestions and aims (1) to investigate whether immigrants in the Norwegian population and their descendants differ in their feelings of being socially excluded from society compared with others born in Norway (‘natives’), and (2) to test empirically whether these differences reflect differences in human and economic capital (i.e., education, work, income, and material deprivation) and factors related to minority/majority issues, such as citizenship.

It is crucial to shed light on this subject for not only academic reasons but also for significant related social policy issues. Similar to other European countries, Norway has changed over the past five decades from being a relatively ethnically homogeneous nation to a heterogeneous one with immigrants from more than 200 countries. Many immigrants, especially coming from Asia, Africa, Latin America and Oceania, and European countries outside the EU/EEA, find themselves outside the labour market or at the bottom of the occupational hierarchy, and a key challenge—not least regarding poverty and integration—has been to integrate immigrants into the labour market. As in the other Nordic countries, the ‘work line,’ on which there has been broad cross-party agreement in Norway since it was introduced in the early 1990s, places great emphasis on the importance of

Practical Implications

1. The importance of work, education, and material and economic conditions for feeling of social exclusion.
2. Welfare and immigration policy and social exclusion.

waged work in preventing poverty and exclusion (Brochmann, 2022; Svallfors et al., 2001; Stjernø & Øverby, 2012). In accordance with Marshall’s (1950) theory of citizenship, the Norwegian policy is that immigrants should achieve the same civil, political, and social rights as those born in Norway (Brochmann, 2022; Brochmann & Hagelund, 2010; Brochmann & Kjeldstadli, 2008). Furthermore, in line with an expanded understanding of the concept of citizenship, emphasis has also been placed on immigrants being able to maintain and safeguard their own cultural identity (‘multiculturalism’). Thus, if people feel socially excluded because of poverty and material deprivation owing to their marginal labour market situation, one solution could be to improve that situation. However, if people feel socially excluded even when such conditions are achieved, other responses will be required. Providing citizenship to immigrants could be one such response.

The empirical basis for the present article is the Norwegian *Level of Living* study from 2018, which forms part of the EU Statistics on Income and Living Conditions (EU-SILC) survey. In contrast to the EU-SILC and many other surveys on living conditions, this study contains a question about the extent to which the informants feel socially excluded from society.

BACKGROUND

The concept of social exclusion

Social exclusion is a controversial concept, and researchers and politicians have interpreted it differently (see Levitas, 1996, 2000, 2005). However, in the academic literature, there appears to be agreement about certain conceptual features (see Atkinson, 1998; Byrne, 2005; Lister, 2021; Silver, 2019; Silver & Miller, 2003). The first is that social exclusion is a multidimensional concept that encompasses economic, social, political, and cultural factors. The second is that it is a relational phenomenon unwillingly experienced by individuals or groups. Social exclusion can be attributable to actions such as discrimination or dismissal from employment, but it can also

concern less visible forces such as society being ill-adapted to people with health problems (cf. Sen, 2000, p. 14). The third is that social exclusion is a dynamic phenomenon, where disadvantages tend to accumulate and lead people into negative spirals from which it is increasingly difficult to escape (Dannefer, 2003; Vandecasteele, 2011). For example, discrimination in the labour market may lead to financial difficulties and problems concerning family, friends, and social participation. Those with the fewest resources are assumed to be most exposed to ending up in such situations (the ‘Matthew principle’), whereby the rich get richer and the poor get poorer (Merton, 1968). The fourth is that the phenomenon is context-dependent. Social exclusion can be about different things, depending on the historical time and place. For example, people without access to the Internet may be excluded from society because institutions such as the social security and education systems increasingly maintain contact with users digitally (Hansen et al., 2018). It was not that long ago that the Internet did not exist.

The concept of social exclusion can easily lead to an excessively categorical picture of society and a perception that the problem affects only a small and marginal group and is a deviation from a fair and harmonious social order (cf. Levitas, 1996). However, the research raises questions about such a description. Few find themselves in extreme situations of total and permanent exclusion from various areas of society (e.g., homelessness, drug addiction, and terminal illness), and among other reasons, individuals who are exposed to income poverty and material deprivation will not necessarily be friendless (Hansen & Horvei, 2023; Lister, 2021). Referring to Simmel’s study of the stranger, Silver (2007b) argues that instead of perceiving social exclusion as leaving people totally outside society, which she perceives as logically impossible, we should consider it a complex and ambivalent situation where a person can be both within and outside different parts of society at the same time (i.e., ‘negative incorporation’ and ‘differential inclusion’).

Theories, previous research, and hypothesis

One key area of empirical research on social exclusion has been the measurement and analysis of the economic dimensions of exclusion, such as unemployment, poverty, low income, and material and social deprivation (Böhnke, 2004; Gallie & Paugam, 2000; Gallie, 2004; Gallie & Paugam, 2004; see also Böhnke & Kohler, 2010; Hansen & Horvei, 2023). Although the unemployment rate in Norway is lower than that in most other countries,

and its welfare state provides reasonably good income security for those covered by the unemployment scheme, unemployment is associated with many well-documented disadvantages. For instance, a study by Statistics Norway showed that the (registered) unemployed struggle hardest to make ends meet. They also come out worst regarding education, health, social support, trust in foreigners, and the political system (Vrålstad & Wiggen, 2017). Furthermore, Norwegian research shows that refugees, and especially immigrants from Asia, Africa, Latin America, and Oceania, are frequently in a more marginal labour market position than are natives and have a poorer material standard of living than the general population (Barstad & Molstad, 2020; Bratsberg et al., 2010; Hansen & Vignes, 2022; Hansen et al., 2014; Hansen & Horvei, 2023; Tronstad et al., 2018; see also Heath & Cheung, 2007). Differences between groups regarding social and material conditions owing to different labour market situations may thus be one explanation, whereas certain groups of immigrants are more likely than natives to experience feelings of being socially excluded. This leads to the hypothesis presented below:

Hypothesis 1. : Immigrants, especially from Asia, Africa, Latin America and Oceania, and European countries outside the EU/EEA—to a greater extent than natives—feel socially excluded from society. Adjusting for differences in human and economic capital and households’ material and economic situations will reduce the difference between the groups.

There are various reasons to question the importance of economic conditions in explaining differences regarding feelings of social exclusion. First, many quantitative studies find that subjective experiences of social exclusion do not reflect various ‘objective’ indicators of social exclusion to the extent one might expect (Böhnke, 2004; Bude & Lantermann, 2006; Popp & Schels, 2008; see also Böhnke & Esche, 2018; Böhnke & Silver, 2014; Heizmann & Böhnke, 2019; Ziller & Heizmann, 2020). Qualitative studies of young people living in poor urban areas also show that despite their precarious living conditions, many do not feel socially excluded (Heikkinen, 2010; MacDonald et al., 2005; Popp & Schels, 2008). The explanation given for such findings is that they have friends and find ways to cope with their many challenges. Note also that a comparative survey study of EU countries and Norway found feelings of being socially excluded from society to be most prevalent in the United Kingdom (20.1%) and least common in Denmark (3.8%) (Heikkilä & Sihvo, 1997). With the equivalent proportion of 17.1%, Norway, together with the United

Kingdom, Finland, and Ireland, belonged to the group of countries where such experiences were most widespread. Thus, while the Scandinavian welfare state in general scores very high on the various welfare indicators, Heikkilä and Sihvo (1997) indicate that the situation may be more complex than previously believed in regard to feelings of social exclusion.

A second reason for questioning the significance of economic conditions in explaining differences regarding feelings of social exclusion lies in the other challenges that minority groups face in their encounters with the majority population. Language, culture, and knowledge of institutional conditions can constitute one barrier, while attitudes and discrimination can represent another. Surveys show that although the attitudes of the Norwegian population have become more favourable to immigration in recent decades, and that about 40% of the Norwegian population believe that immigration is mostly beneficial for Norway, about 30% still believe it is bad (Brekke et al., 2020). Statistics Norway's *Living Conditions* survey of immigrants and their descendants conducted in 2016 shows that many immigrants experience discrimination, especially in connection with the labour market (Barstad & Molstad, 2020; Dalgard, 2018; Midtbøen & Kitterød, 2019; Steinmann, 2019; Vrålstad & Wiggen, 2017). In line with several international studies (e.g., Schaeffer, 2018; Steinmann, 2019), Norwegian experimental studies also show that applicants with ethnic minority profiles are less likely than those with ethnic majority profiles to be called for a job interview (Birkelund et al., 2016; Larsen & Di Stasio, 2021; Midtbøen, 2016). Unfortunately, the data used in this study provide no opportunity to study factors such as language and cultural knowledge, hostility, discrimination, and stigma. However, these data allow the possibility to examine the impact of other factors.

The first is the situation of descendants of immigrants, which is often seen as a test of a country's success regarding integration. Descendants grow up in Norway and speak Norwegian from childhood. They go through the Norwegian education system, and in contrast to many immigrants, they have no problems with employers not recognising their education. Several studies show that descendants are more similar to the majority population than to their immigrant parents in terms of education, income, employment, and receiving social benefits (Bratsberg et al., 2010; Hermansen, 2016, 2017; Midtbøen & Nadim, 2019). Hermansen (2017) suggests that this is related to the ways in which the welfare state and Norwegian labour market work. While many immigrants have problems meeting the requirements for entry into the labour market (e.g., language and education) and often become dependent on the welfare state for income security,

the situation for descendants is that the welfare state, primarily through the education system, offers opportunities to receive an education and find jobs that contribute to high mobility and reasonably high incomes. Despite this situation, there is evidence suggesting that descendants as a group will be more similar to immigrants than to other native-born Norwegians.

Most importantly, there is research suggesting that discrimination and other forms of barriers are a persistent feature of society that confronts visible minorities in society to the same degree, regardless of whether they are immigrants or descendants (for a review, see e.g., Quillian et al., 2017; Midtbøen & Quillian, 2021; Quillian & Midtbøen, 2021). In a survey of identity formation conducted among high school students, Friberg (2021) found that many children of immigrant backgrounds from Asia, Africa, and the Middle East reported that others viewed them as being less Norwegian than they considered themselves to be. Race and religion were considered significant barriers to acceptance and recognition. Despite their lack of acceptance as Norwegians by others, young people from Asian, African, and Middle Eastern backgrounds adopted a national identity as Norwegians faster than those with immigrant parents from Western Europe and North America. Regardless of their parents' background, descendants self-identified with their parental origin. While the situation among descendants (i.e., language skills, cultural and institutional knowledge, education, and the labour market situation) implies that they are in a comparable position to other native-born Norwegians, the literature on discrimination and lack of social recognition suggest that descendants are more likely to be in a situation similar to that of immigrants. In summary, this leads to the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 2. Descendants as a group will report higher rates of feelings of social exclusion than other-born Norwegians will and will report rates of social exclusion similar to immigrants.

Another source of insight into the importance of factors other than work and finances is the importance of education. Classical integration and assimilation theories postulate that structural integration as measured by education, employment, and income assists other forms of integration, such as a sense of belonging and attitudes towards the host community (Alba & Nee, 2018; Zhou, 1997). In contrast to these theories, Norwegian research (Midtbøen & Kitterød, 2019) confirms findings from many international studies (e.g., de Vroome et al., 2014; Steinmann, 2019) that better-educated immigrants perceive more discrimination than do their less-educated counterparts. The explanation

for this ‘paradox of integration’ is that the best-integrated immigrants compare their situation with that of natives with qualifications similar to their own and that they have more harmful or discriminatory experiences because of having greater contact with the majority population. In addition to their first-hand experiences, it is also assumed that they can best recognise discriminatory behaviour by citizens or public institutions. In line with these findings, a Swedish study based on data from the World Values Study found that while most immigrants felt a high sense of belonging to Sweden, this was especially the case among those with no or little education (Puranen, 2019). Viewed in isolation from other conditions, this led to the following somewhat counterintuitive hypothesis:

Hypothesis 3. Immigrants from Asia, Africa, Latin America and Oceania, and European countries outside the EU/EEA with high education will be more prone to feeling socially excluded than individuals from the same countries with low education.

A third source of insight into the importance of factors other than work and finances is citizenship. In the sociological literature on citizenship and immigration, citizenship has been understood to consist of four dimensions: legal status, rights, political engagement, and a sense of belonging (Bloemraad, 2021; Bloemraad et al., 2008). One question in this context is the degree to which there are overlaps between different dimensions. As discussed by Brochmann and Hagelund (2010), the fact that social rights in Norway are based on legal residence and awarded independently of citizenship (‘denizens’), and that the requirements for acquiring Norwegian citizenship are few and vaguely formulated, raises the question of whether citizenship has lost its meaning. Studies show that refugees and family immigrants from Asia and Africa most often take on Norwegian citizenship (Molstad & Naz, 2021). The explanation for this is that citizenship confers the rights to a Norwegian passport and protection by Norwegian authorities abroad, which are especially important for many immigrants from these areas. Furthermore, the requirement that one must have lived in Norway for at least 7 years implies that one will be more established in terms of education, Norwegian language skills, familiarity with Norwegian society, work, and place of residence. For immigrants from EU/European Economic Area (EEA) countries, there have been several practical reasons to apply for Norwegian citizenship. Before 2020, they also had to relinquish their original citizenship, which many found emotionally challenging. If they apply for

Norwegian citizenship, one expects them to have a solid emotional attachment to Norwegian society. Thus, for different reasons, this leads to the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 4. Immigrants that have been credited Norwegian citizenship will feel less excluded from society than other immigrants.

THE NORWEGIAN CONTEXT

Norway is usually classified as belonging to the Scandinavian welfare state regime characterised by a comprehensive social provision that includes a wide range of public services that are free or heavily subsidised (Esping-Andersen, 1999). One-third of the national budget is administered by the Norwegian Labour and Welfare Service and goes to various pensions and benefits, such as unemployment and sickness benefits, as well as pensions. Health expenditure is the second-largest cost, representing 10.5% of the GDP in 2021 (www.ssb.no/en/statbank/table/10721). Like many other European countries, Norway became a multi-ethnic society after the institutional welfare system was established at the end of the 1960s. Recent immigration history has been described as a four-wave process (Halvorsen et al., 2022; also see Brochmann, 2022; Brochmann & Kjeldstadli, 2008). The first wave started during the economic boom of the late 1960s, when labour migrants, especially young men from Pakistan, Turkey, Morocco, and Yugoslavia, came to work in secondary parts of the labour market. The shock of the oil crisis in 1973 led to the immigration of unskilled labour migrants being halted in 1975. The second wave came at the end of the 1970s and concerned reunification between migrant workers and their family members, who were exempt from the immigration freeze. The third wave started in the mid-1980s with an increasing number of asylum seekers from Iran, Chile, Vietnam, Sri Lanka, and the former Yugoslavia. The fourth wave came with the EU's expansion and Norway's inclusion in the EEA and Schengen Area, leading to a sizeable increase in labour migration from Poland, Lithuania, and other former Eastern Bloc countries. Like many other European countries, during the late summer of 2015, there was a sharp increase in the number of asylum seekers coming to Norway, mainly from Syria and Afghanistan (a total of 31,145 in 2015). In the following years, the numbers declined sharply (to 1656 in 2021) before increasing again owing to Russia's invasion of Ukraine (31,430 applications during the first 9 months of 2022). Table 1 shows that immigrants and their descendants in Norway today comprise 18.9% of the total population; in 1970, this figure was 1.5%.

TABLE 1 Immigrants and Norwegians born to immigrant parents by country background, status 1 January 2022.

	Immigrants		Norwegians born to immigrant parents	
	Number	Percent of total population	Number	Percentage of total population
EU/EEA, UK, USA, CA, AU, NZ	370,240	6.8	49,480	0.9
Africa, Asia, Latin America, and Oceania except the EU/EEA/UK	449,116	8.3	156,339	2.9
Total	819,356	15.1	205,819	3.8

Source: Statistics Norway, StatBank source table 13,055.

Norwegian immigration policy lies between the more open Swedish and the more restrictive Danish policies (Brochmann, 2022; Brochmann & Hagelund, 2010). All legal residents of Norway are compulsory members of the National Insurance Scheme, making them eligible for the same social rights as those born in Norway. In addition, foreign citizens with at least 3 years of legal residence are granted the right to vote in municipal elections. To obtain Norwegian citizenship, people must have lived in Norway for 7 of the previous 10 years and must meet other requirements, such as language proficiency. Among other entitlements, Norwegian citizenship includes the right to reside and work in Norway, the opportunity to vote in parliamentary elections and be elected to parliament, and protection against deportation.

METHODS

Data

The empirical basis for this study is the Norwegian *Living Conditions* surveys from 2018, which are included in the annual surveys that Statistics Norway conducts as part of the EU-SILC collaboration. Because questions about social exclusion were only included in the 2018 survey, the analyses are based only on that survey. It included a random sample of 11,716 people over the age of 16 years who lived in Norway outside institutions (for documentation, see Støren & Todorovic, 2019). The data are of high quality and considered to be representative of people living in Norway. The net sample comprises 5981 people. Of these, 323 were no longer in the target group because they had emigrated, lived in an institution, or died. The response rate from the remainder was 52.5%. Statistics Norway has constructed weightings that are used in the analyses to correct for drop-out bias. The number of observations in the tables represents the unweighted material. The sample has been restricted to individuals aged between 20 and 75 years. While many of the younger individuals are still living with their parents and are occupied with their education, the older group forms a small and select group where

individuals in institutions have been excluded. People with missing variables (2%) were excluded from this study.

Measurements

The dependent variable is based on the following question: ‘To what extent do you feel excluded from society?’, to which participants were asked to respond on a scale from 0 (‘not excluded at all’) to 10 (‘completely excluded’). The question is general. The sources of the experiences can thus be linked to various economic and material conditions, as well as work, education, family, friends, neighbourhoods, more general feelings of a lack of recognition, and more general experiences of being outside Norwegian society—what Anderson (2006 [1983]) terms the ‘imagined community.’ Heikkilä and Sihvo (1997), who included a similar question in their comparative survey study, also asked whether they had previously felt excluded and expected the situation to be the same in the future. Norway was one of the countries where the informants were most likely to report that this was the case.

Figure 1 shows that the dependent variable is skewed, with most respondents answering that they did not feel socially excluded at all.

Independent variables

In line with Statistics Norway’s definitions, immigrants are defined as people born abroad to two foreign-born parents. Statistics Norway does not provide information about the specific countries where immigrants come from, but only on the regions of the world that they come from. The classification scheme has been validated by Statistics Norway and is commonly used in their presentation of statistics on immigrants. In addition to the five categories in the scheme, it is also possible to identify descendants in the survey. The group was too small to separate between different regional backgrounds of

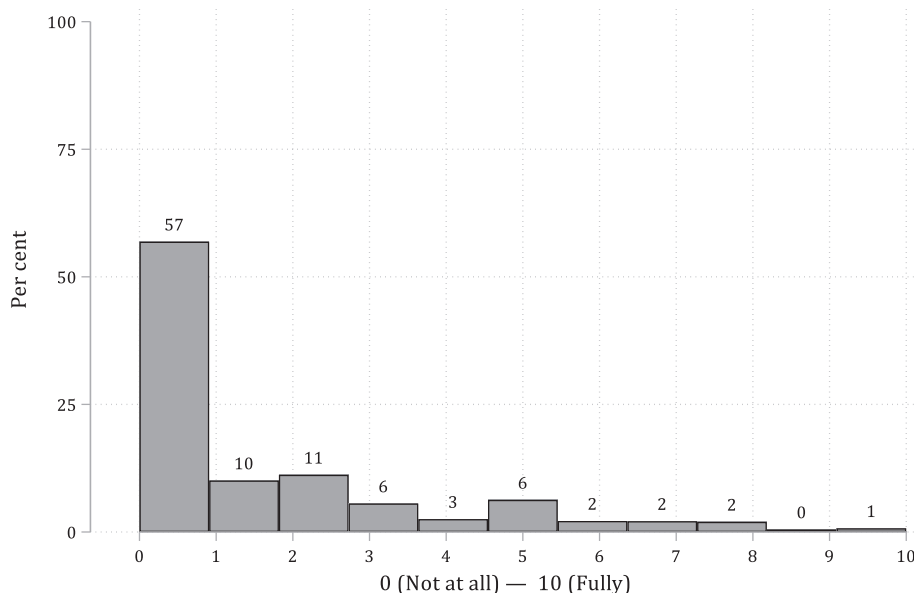


FIGURE 1 Feelings of being excluded from society.

descendants. Including descendants as a separate category implies that the reference group will consist of those born in Norway whose parents were born there ('natives'). The immigrants' backgrounds are classified into six areas as follows:

1. Norway
2. Other Nordic countries
3. EU/EEA, et al. (EU/EEA countries outside the Nordic countries, USA, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand)
4. Europe other (outside the EU/EEA)
5. Africa, Asia, et al. (Africa, Asia, Latin America, and Oceania, except Australia and New Zealand)
6. Descendants (born in Norway to two non-Norwegian-born parents)

Figure 2 presents the dependent variable by region of origin. For all groups, the most common (modal) value is zero, that is, they do not find themselves socially excluded. However, there are significant differences between the six groups. For example, among those who indicated 0 ('not excluded at all') on the scale, the experience of *not being excluded* is most common among those born in Norway (60%) and least common among those who belong to the category Asia, Africa, et al. (33%) and Descendants (35%).

In addition to the birth region, the analyses also include the following independent variables: Material and social deprivation ('deprivation'), education, household income, and main (occupational) activity, and in addition, controls for household situation (civic status, children), health (illness), marginalisation, gender, and age.

Information about education comes from register data showing the highest education (International Standard

Classification of Education) level. In this study, the commonly used three group categorizations are used: (1) *Primary education* (pre-primary, primary, and lower secondary); (2) *Secondary education* (post-secondary non-tertiary), and (3) *higher education* (all higher educational qualifications).

Information about the participants' main economic activities comes from a question where they were asked to place a tick beside their main activity in December of the previous year. The figures were checked against those for other months and responses to a question about the most important activity at the time of the interview. In cases where the variable in question was missing and the other variables mentioned provided information, this information was substituted for the missing variable where possible. Following the classification developed by Burchardt et al. (1999) and an investigation of the differences between groups in terms of feeling socially excluded, a simplified categorization was chosen to distinguish between those who were (1) working (employees/self-employed; full-/part-time), (2) unemployed, (3) on a disability pension, (4) other/non-employed, (5) retired (early/old-age pension), and (6) students (includes secondary school). According to Burchardt et al. (1999), being a student or on a pension is a socially legitimised position, in contrast to being unemployed or on a disability pension. Thus, one would expect that categories (2) and (3) in particular would increase feelings of social exclusion, and given that immigrants from Asia, Africa, et al. group are especially likely to be in such a position, one would also expect these activities to be important for explaining group differences in such feelings.

A central expectation of this study is that material conditions and poverty will be important in explaining

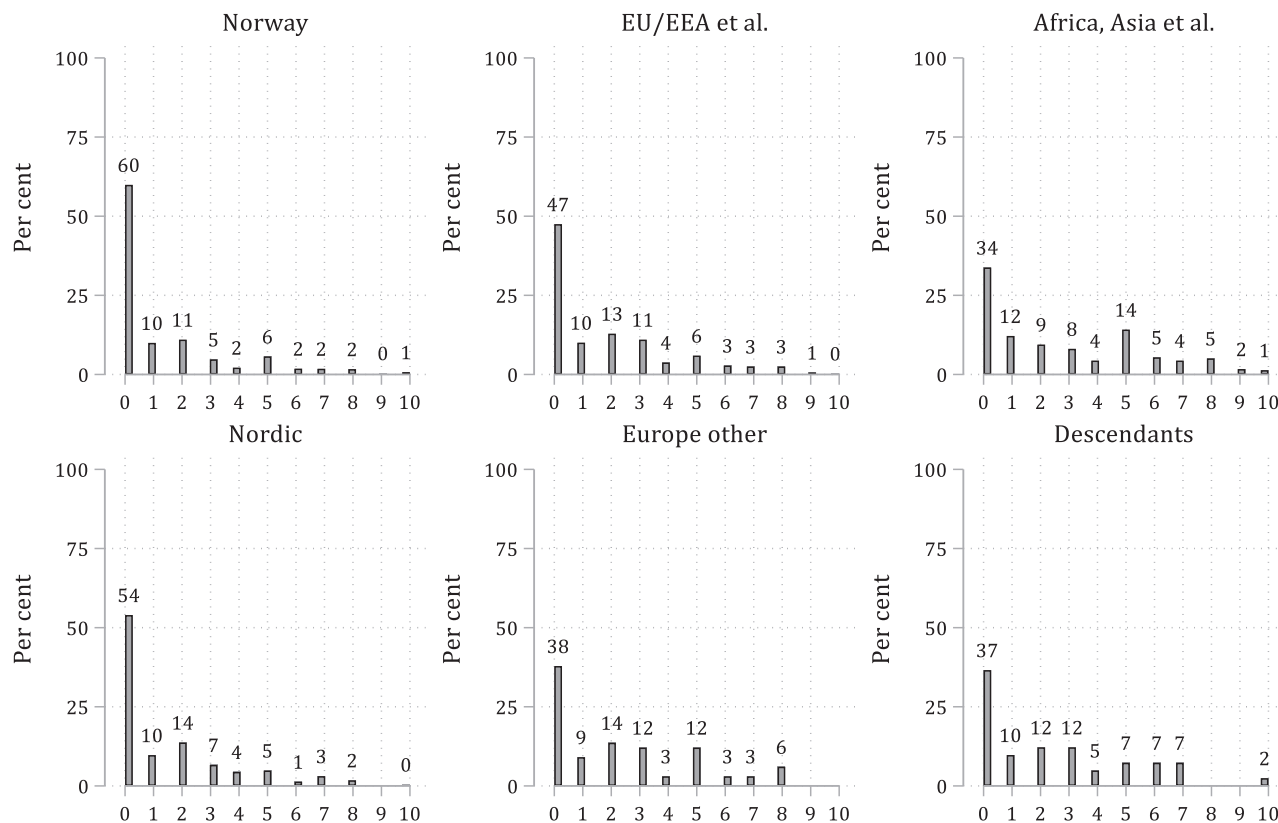


FIGURE 2 Feelings of being excluded from society by region of birth. Percent. Scale from 'not at all' (0) to 'fully excluded' (10).

feelings of social exclusion. This study uses the EU-SILC indicator of the severe material and social deprivation (SMSD) measure, which shows an enforced lack of goods, services, or social activities that are seen as being necessary to lead a good life. The indicator includes the following items: (1) capacity to face unexpected expenses; (2) capacity to afford to pay for a 1-week annual holiday away from home; (3) capacity to be confronted with payment arrears (on mortgage or rental payments, utility bills, hire purchase instalments, or other loan payments); (4) capacity to afford a meal with meat, chicken, fish, or vegetarian equivalent every second day; (5) ability to keep the home adequately warm; (6) access to a car/van for personal use; (7) replacements for worn-out furniture; (8) an Internet connection (included instead of phones, which are excluded from the study); (9) replacements for worn-out clothes with new ones; (10) two pairs of properly fitting shoes (including a pair of all-weather shoes); (11) a small amount of money for personal spending each week; (12) regular leisure activities, and (13) meetings with friends/family for a drink/meal at least once a month. The EU defines those who experience an enforced lack of at least seven of the 13 deprivation items as being under SMSD. In this study, because this was the case for less than 1% of the participants, a less restricted classification has been used defining those who lack two

or more deprivation items as deprived. Given that there was a high correlation between this deprivation indicator and the EU's at-risk-of-poverty measure (tetrachoric $\rho = 0.6128$), the income-based poverty measure was not included. Another study shows that the correlation between this deprivation indicator and other level of living indicators (i.e., illness and housing condition) are larger than that between the EU's at-risk-of-poverty measure (Hansen & Horvei, 2023).

The indicator of material and social deprivation is a measure of household level. Another household-level variable included is that household income. Income information comes from high-quality public registers and applies after tax. It includes capital income, wage income, net income for the self-employed, and transfers from the National Social Security System (social security benefits and pension). Pensionable income was used instead of occupational income because retirees and those on disability benefits have low/no occupational income, but they do have income from other sources such as the social security system. A variable showing how much the interviewee provided to the total household income was constructed but turned out not to be significant and thus was not included.

The analyses also include various control variables. There has been much focus on health in the literature on social exclusion, as both an indicator and explanation of

social exclusion. Health has also been an important topic in research on immigrants (see e.g., Hansen et al., 2014). In this study, we have followed Lahelma et al. (1994) and included 'illness' as a measure of long-standing limiting disease that has been constructed based on the following two yes/no questions: (1) 'Do you have any long-term illnesses or health problems?' and (2) 'Do you have any disabilities or pain because of an injury?' Those who answered 'yes' to at least one of these questions, in addition to the question 'Do these long-term illnesses or health problems/disabilities or pain/any of these limits your ability to perform everyday activities?', were considered to have an illness problem (dummy coded). As Lahelma et al. (1994) point out, this is a functional health measure that addresses the capacity to perform daily social roles (i.e., work and housework) as perceived by people themselves. It includes most of all self-reported illness but ignores the most insignificant conditions. Lahelma et al. cite Baxter, who has argued that 'from a sociological viewpoint self-reported illness has advantages as it describes people's well-being in a developed society better than medically confirmed diseases or death' (Lahelma et al., 1994, p. 518).

Given that it is reasonable to assume that social integration and support differ for groups and also matter for the feeling of social exclusion, three variables on such conditions are included. The first two measure social (interpersonal) integration in a structural sense and include marital status (unmarried, married/partner; divorced/separated/widowed) and having children in the age group 0–16 years (dummy coded). The third variable (marginalisation) comes from questions about whether the participants have someone (1) they can ask for money, food, equipment, or other things they need, and (2) whether they can receive advice, support, or practical help if needed. Those who answered in the affirmative to both questions were classified as being (socially) marginalised (dummy coded).

The study also controls for age (years) and gender (male = 1 and female = 0). Norwegian research shows that the prevalence of material living problems in general decreases as people get older (Barstad, 2016; Hansen & Horvei, 2023). After checks, age squared was not included. Previous research has found no evidence of large gender differences (Barstad 2016; Hansen & Horvei, 2023). In a recent Swedish study of immigrants' feelings of being socially integrated, Puranen (2019) found that female immigrants feel less integrated than male immigrants. According to this finding, it was tested if there was an interaction between gender and birth regions. However, since it was not statistically significant ($F = 1.20$; 6, 5097; $p = 0.3029$), it has not been included in the analysis.

Descriptive statistics for the explanatory variables are provided in Table 2.

Information about Norwegian citizenship was drawn from national registers. Because 92% of descendants of immigrants and all others born in Norway have Norwegian citizenship, a separate analysis of citizenship among immigrants will be provided, where those born in other Nordic countries are used as a reference category.

Statistical methods

Given that the dependent variable in this study is ordinal (an 11-point Likert scale), an ordinal logit model may be an appropriate statistical method. However, a Brand test showed that the assumption of this model that the coefficients are equal across the cut points was not met. Although there are models that allow the coefficients to vary, with 11 cut-points, there is a substantial cost to parsimony with such models. Investigation showed that the results were substantially similar when the data were analysed by ordinal logit model or ordinary least squares (OLS) regression models where the dependent variable was transformed and dichotomized in different ways and analysed by various methods (a linear probability model or logistic regression). Given that the OLS model is known to be robust, that other methods have their challenges, and that the regression coefficients are more intuitive than those in other models, OLS regression was chosen.

RESULTS

Feelings of social exclusion from society

Table 3 includes four models. Model 1 in the first column shows the gross impact of the region of origin, that is, the effect without any controls for other variables. Model 2 adds the control variables adjusting for sources of variability unrelated to those of primary concern to this paper. Model 3 adds education and work. Finally, Model 4 adds income and deprivation to test whether the effect of education and employment is (partly) mediated by household income or material and social deprivation. Together, these four models will address the first four hypotheses.

The first notable point in Table 3 is that the explained variation increases from 3% in Model 1 to 19% in Model 4. Turning to the substantial results, we see from Model 1 that, except for immigrants from other Nordic countries, immigrant groups, and descendants tend to report stronger feelings of social exclusion from society compared with natives. Those who differ most are immigrants from

TABLE 2 Descriptive statistics ($N = 5109$).

	Mean/prop.	Freq.	SD	Min.	Max.
<i>Birth</i>					
Norway	0.81	4162			
Nordic	0.04	226			
EU/EEA, etc. ^a	0.06	318			
Europe other ^b	0.01	66			
Africa, Asia, et al. ^c	0.06	296			
Descendants	0.01	41			
Male (= 1, female = 0)	0.53				
Age (year)	47.53		15.21	20.00	74.00
<i>Education</i>					
Primary	0.16	812			
Secondary	0.41	2088			
Higher	0.43	2209			
<i>Civil status</i>					
Unmarried	0.40	2022			
Married	0.47	2422			
Previously married	0.13	665			
Children < 17 years (Yes = 1, No = 0)	0.28				
Debilitating long-term illness (Yes = 1, No = 0)	0.16				
Marginalisation	0.12				
<i>Main economic activity</i>					
Work	0.71	3608			
Unemployed	0.02	102			
Disability	0.06	306			
Other	0.02	88			
Pension	0.14	697			
Student	0.06	308			
Household income (decile)	5.67		2.92	1.00	10.00
Deprivation	0.11				

^aEU/EEA countries (excluding the Nordic countries), USA, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand.

^bEurope outside the EU/EEA.

^cAfrica, Asia, Latin America, and Oceania, except Australia and New Zealand.

Africa, Asia, et al. group, who score 1.5 points higher compared with others born in Norway. Descendants score 1.2 points higher on the scale, immigrants from other European countries score 0.9 points higher, and immigrants from EU/EEA, et al. 0.4 points higher. These differences are all highly statistically significant; however, they are on a scale from 0 to 10. Comparing the different models, we see that while the difference between natives and immigrants from EU/EEA, et al. and descendants is statistically significant and stable across the models, the situation for the two other groups is that adding more variables reduces the differences. The difference between

natives and those coming from other European countries is no longer significant when we control for education and work in Model 3. The difference between natives and the group from Africa, Asia, et al. is reduced from 1.5 points in Model 1 to 0.7 points in Model 4. According to Model 4, descendants stand out the most from natives.

To further illuminate the results in Table 3, Figure 3 provides the marginal effect of the difference between groups. Figure 4 provides the marginal effect of being socially excluded for all six groups. Concerning these figures, it should be remembered that the dependent variable is a scale from 0 to 10, where most of the variation comes from people

TABLE 3 Regression models of feelings of being excluded: Low (0) to high (10). OLS.

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Variables				
Nordic ^a	0.237 (0.169)	0.230 (0.147)	0.200 (0.141)	0.194 (0.143)
EU/EEA et al.	0.436*** (0.143)	0.405*** (0.144)	0.343** (0.141)	0.312** (0.140)
Europe other	0.891*** (0.311)	0.710** (0.318)	0.295 (0.330)	0.221 (0.340)
Africa, Asia, et al.	1.512*** (0.185)	1.123*** (0.178)	0.763*** (0.176)	0.650*** (0.174)
Descendants	1.239** (0.462)	1.271*** (0.450)	1.181** (0.467)	1.078** (0.456)
Secondary ^b		-0.669*** (0.115)	-0.471*** (0.111)	-0.421*** (0.109)
Higher		-1.040*** (0.109)	-0.760*** (0.105)	-0.682*** (0.105)
Unemployed ^c		1.678*** (0.295)	0.994*** (0.286)	0.807*** (0.283)
Disability		1.758*** (0.196)	1.262*** (0.193)	0.807*** (0.200)
Other		1.033*** (0.290)	0.892*** (0.267)	0.754*** (0.254)
Pension		0.083 (0.101)	-0.021 (0.102)	0.117 (0.122)
Student		0.351*** (0.134)	-0.280* (0.144)	-0.407*** (0.152)
Deprivation? (= 1)			1.377*** (0.142)	1.172*** (0.143)
Income decile			-0.086*** (0.012)	-0.070*** (0.014)
Age (years)				-0.012*** (0.004)
Male (= 1)				0.104 (0.066)
Unmarried (=1) ^d				0.026 (0.084)
Previous married				0.196* (0.118)

TABLE 3 (Continued)

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Child<17 (= 1)				-0.084 (0.080)
Marginalised? (= 1)				0.641*** (0.123)
Illness? (= 1)				0.827*** (0.114)
Constant	1.425*** (0.038)	1.896*** (0.108)	2.152*** (0.131)	2.340*** (0.229)
Observations	5109	5109	5109	5109
R-squared	0.030	0.120	0.169	0.192

Note: Standard errors are in parentheses.

^aNorway = 0.

^bPrimary education = 0.

^cWorking = 0.

^dMarried/partner = 0.

*** $p < 0.01$; ** $p < 0.05$; * $p < 0.1$.

who only feel a low degree of social exclusion. It should also be noted that the y-axis in Figure 4 has been delimited so that the differences between the groups come out better.

Figure 3 illustrates, as shown in Table 3, that there is no difference between natives and those born in the Europe other group when we control for education and work. For the group from Africa, Asia, et al., the difference is smaller when education, work, deprivation, and household income are controlled for, but there is still a difference when we adjust for these factors. Figure 4 shows that the situation is relatively stable for four groups across different models, including natives. The predicted feeling of being excluded from society changes for those in Africa, Asia, et al., and Europe other groups.

Because it has been noted that immigrants with high levels of education most often report that they have experienced discrimination in the labour market, it was tested whether there was an interaction effect between education and region. An F -test provides some evidence that such an interaction exists ($F(10,5099) = 1.88$; $\text{Prob} > F = 0.0426$), and a joint test of the interaction terms also indicates that at least one of the coefficients is different from zero ($p = 0.043$). Given the uncertainty and complexity of the result, the estimated result will be illustrated graphically. As can be seen from Figure 5a, the confidence between the groups overlaps to a large degree. The size of the sample is obviously one important reason for this. Leaving this problem aside, it is interesting to see, as Figure 5b illustrates

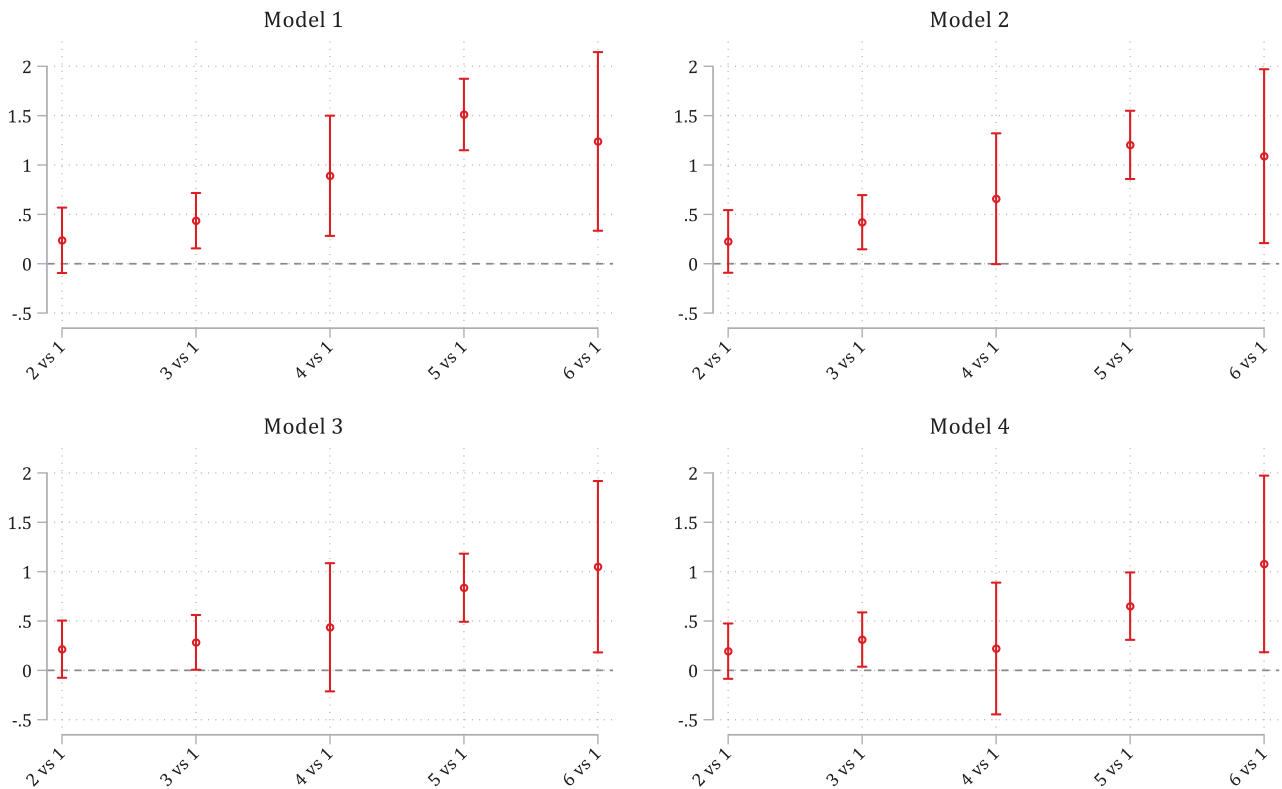


FIGURE 3 Contrast of predicted margin of Norway versus other countries. Models 1–4 (Table 3): 95% confidence intervals. 1 = Norway, 2 = Other Nordic countries, 3 = EU/EEA et al., 4 = Europe other, 5 = Africa, Asia et al., 6 = Descendants.

more clearly, that for natives, descendants, and others from Nordic countries, there seems to be a tendency for the feeling of social exclusion to decrease as education increases, whereas, for the other non-Nordic groups, the tendency is that those with secondary education are most likely to feel socially excluded. Thus, despite some evidence of an interaction between immigrant background and education, the third hypothesis is not supported. There is no evidence that the groups with the highest education differ from those with lower education.

Norwegian citizenship and feelings of social exclusion

This section addresses the question of whether Norwegian citizenship is related to feelings of social exclusion. Because 92% of the descendants of immigrants and all the natives in our sample had Norwegian citizenship, they have been excluded. Moreover, as those from other Nordic countries did not diverge from the natives, this group was used as reference category. Table 4 shows five models. The first model consists of the country of origin, the second controls for Norwegian citizenship, and the third adds education, work, income, and deprivation. The fourth contains the

same variables as in Model 4 in Table 3, and the last model adds citizenship to this model. A test (without other variables) provided no evidence that interaction between birth region and citizenship should be included ($F = 1.52$; 3979; 0.2064).

The first point to note is that the gross difference in Model 1 is similar in magnitude to the result shown in Table 3. This is not unexpected, given that there was no difference between those from other Nordic countries and those born in Norway (except descendants) in Table 3. However, the difference between those from the EU/EEA region and those from other Nordic countries is not statistically significant. This is probably largely about the size of the samples. Second, the results in Models 1 and 2 are quite similar. Thus, adjusting for citizenship does not explain the differences found in Model 1. Model 3 shows that adjusting for other factors, especially economic variables in Model 3, reduces the differences, and only the difference for those from Africa, Asia, et al. is statistically significant. Third, comparing the two last models, one sees that the differences between immigrants from Africa, Asia et al., and other Nordic countries are similar. This indicates that the results in the previous analysis (Table 3) are robust. Furthermore, even though citizenship does not explain group differences, citizenship still matters.

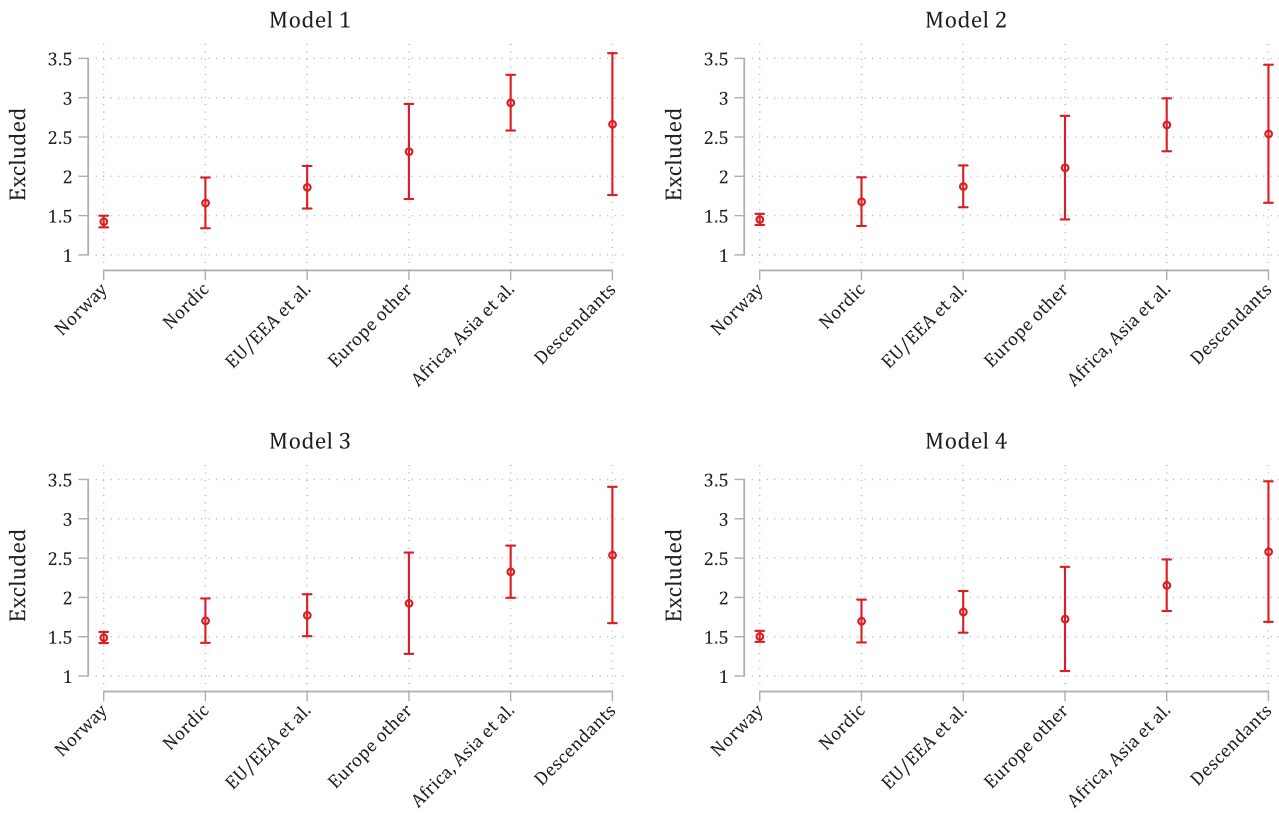


FIGURE 4 Predicted margin of feelings of social exclusion. Models 1–4 (Table 3): 95% confidence intervals.

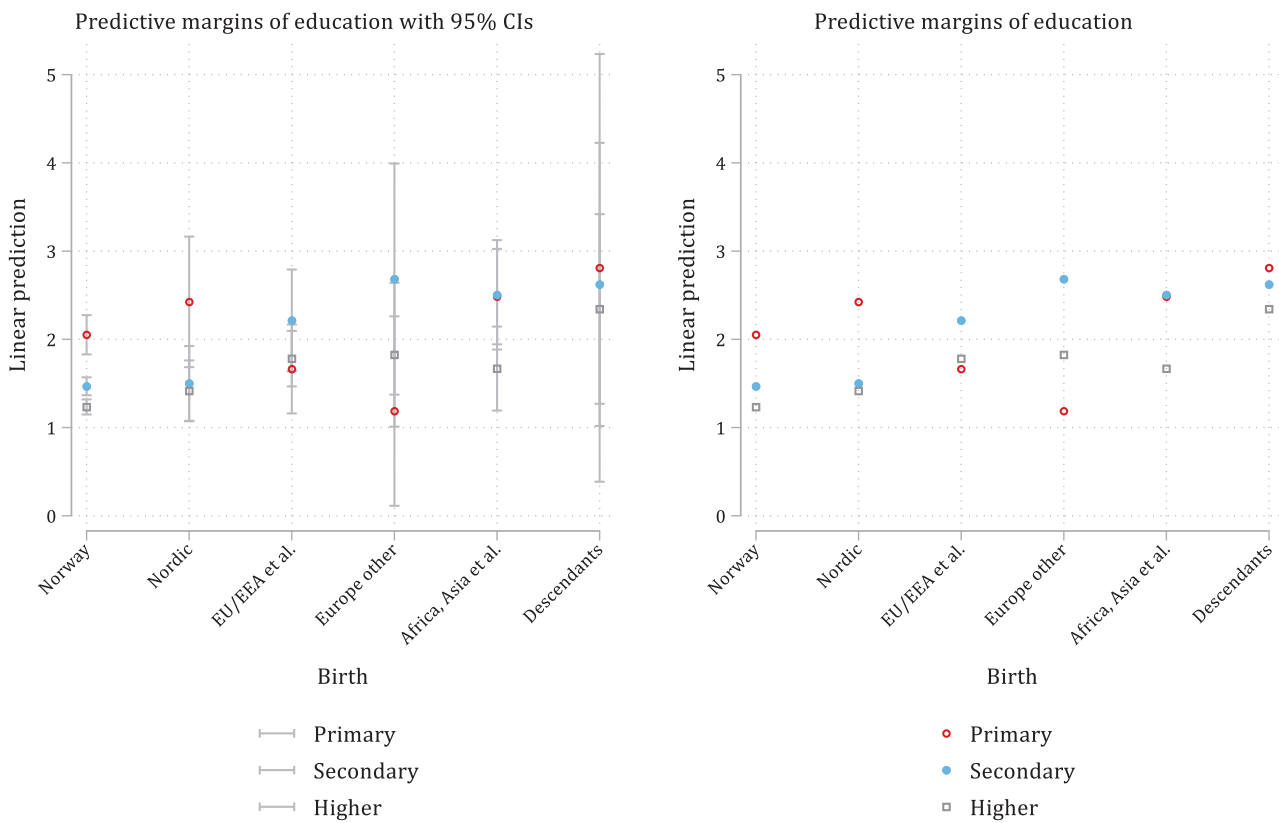


FIGURE 5 Predicted margins. Interaction between education and birth region. Same control variables as in Table 3 Model 4.

TABLE 4 Regression models of feelings of being excluded: Low (0) to high (10). OLS. Sample: Immigrants.

Birth ^a	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3 ^b	Model 4 ^c	Model 5 ^d
EU/EEA et al.	0.300 (0.214)	0.212 (0.215)	0.184 (0.206)	0.175 (0.205)	0.130 (0.206)
Europe other	0.860 * (0.344)	0.849 * (0.343)	0.432 (0.330)	0.309 (0.335)	0.325 (0.334)
Africa, Asia et al.	1.290 *** (0.217)	1.285 *** (0.216)	0.665 ** (0.216)	0.469 * (0.222)	0.502 * (0.222)
Norwegian citizenship		−0.478 ** (0.172)	−0.356 * (0.170)		−0.344 * (0.172)
Observations	906	906	906	906	906
R2	0.045	0.053	0.153	0.170	0.174

^aReference category: Nordic = 0.

^bAdds education, economic activity, income, and deprivation to Model 2.

^cExclude citizenship and adds other control variables (same Model as Model 4 in Table 3).

^dAdds citizenship to Model 4.

*** $p < 0.001$; ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$.

DISCUSSION

This study aimed to investigate (1) whether immigrants in the Norwegian population and their descendants differ in their feelings of being socially excluded from society compared with others born in Norway ('natives'), and (2) to test empirically whether these differences reflect differences in human and economic capital (i.e., education, work, income, and material deprivation) and factors related to minority/majority issues such as citizenship.

The results show that immigrants—especially those from Asia, Africa, et al., other European countries, and descendants of immigrants—feel more socially excluded than do natives without immigrant parents. Thus, evidence has provided support for the first part of Hypothesis 1. Concerning the second part of the hypothesis, the situation is more complex. For all groups, perceived feelings of social exclusion from society were reduced when other factors were adjusted for. Immigrants from the Europe other group of countries did not differ from natives when education and work were adjusted for. For immigrants from Africa, Asia, et al., the difference was reduced but still significant when we adjusted for other factors. It is reasonable to see these results as reflecting that the two groups differ. While immigrants from the European other group primarily consist of labour migrants, migrants from Africa, Asia, et al. are a more diverse group of labour migrants, reunited families, and refugees.

There was support for the second hypothesis that descendants tend to be more like immigrants than natives in regard to their feelings of social exclusion. These results indicate that other factors not included in the analysis, such as minority/majority issues, affect group differences in such feelings. Considering the 'work line' policy and its focus on the importance of paid work in reducing social exclusion, this finding is somewhat surprising. However, studies show that immigrants often face discrimination in the labour market that is related to more than just job applications (Dalgard, 2018; Midtboen & Kitterød, 2019; Steinmann, 2019; Vrålstad & Wiggen, 2017).

The third hypothesis, which stated that immigrants with a high level of education would feel more socially excluded than others, was not supported. There was some evidence of an interaction between immigrant background and education. However, the group that differed most was the one with secondary and not the one with the highest education. One explanation could be that even though individuals with higher education may experience more discrimination than others, they are still more similar to natives than to other immigrants in terms of work and living conditions. In addition, there are some indications that the impact of education varies between groups. For example, immigrants from outside Nordic countries with secondary education tend to feel socially excluded to a higher degree compared with others. One possible explanation that immigrants from outside Nordic countries with secondary education tend to feel socially excluded to a higher degree compared with others could

be that this group has skills that are not recognised in the Norwegian labour market – for example, people with semi-professional qualifications (e.g., plumbers) from their home country who work as unskilled workers in Norway. However, it is essential to note that the labour market is segmented, and skills that immigrants have acquired outside Norway (e.g., medical qualifications) may not be accepted for jobs in Norway.

The fourth hypothesis was supported. Immigrants with Norwegian citizenship feel less excluded than do those without. Given that citizenship requires at least 7 years of residence and specific language and cultural skills, assimilation, cultural knowledge, and bonding with others could be one explanation of the impact of citizenship. However, another cause could be more instrumental. Especially for immigrants from Africa, Asia et al., citizenship provide rights and the possibility of help in various situations. The difference between groups was stable across the two first models in Table 4, and there was no evidence that citizenship had different impacts on different groups (i.e., interactions between citizenship and regional background). This does imply that citizenship has the same meaning for different groups. For non-European immigrants, Norwegian citizenship, among others, provides a right to a passport that makes it easier to travel. For Nordic and EU citizens, Norwegian citizenship is more likely to mean a solid emotional attachment to Norwegian society. Both situations could lessen the feeling of being excluded from society.

Even though this study has provided new evidence in an evolving research field, it has several limitations that should be noted. The first is that this was a 1-year cross-sectional survey that provide evidence from one country—Norway. Given that social exclusion refers to dynamic and multidimensional processes, longitudinal data covering longer is needed to provide more precise descriptions and explanations. Historical data is also required as it is reasonable to think that feeling socially excluded varies depending on historical and contextual conditions. For instance, one hypothesis could be that refugees from Ukraine in recent years will feel less excluded from Norwegian society than refugees coming to Norway in 2015. As illuminated in the study by Heikilä and Sihvo (1997), the situation is also likely to differ between countries. A second limitation is that the data set, as is the case for the EU-SILC more generally, provides limited opportunities to investigate factors, such as language and cultural knowledge, hostility, lack of recognition, discrimination, or stigma. Furthermore, the categorizations of immigrants that the data provided are likely to hide differences between countries and ethnic groups. Finally, there is also the question of the relevance

of the findings to other countries. These issues should be addressed in future research.

Regarding the political implications of the findings, three points can be made. First, even though the differences between groups should not be exaggerated, they are still significant, and not only in statistical terms. For immigrants from Africa, Asia, et al., for whom the results diverge most from those for natives, the difference is 1.5 on the 11-point scale in the unadjusted model. This represents a difference of 16.5 percentage points. Second, although a relatively low percentage report feeling excluded from society, this describes many individuals. For instance, 1% ticked 10 on the given scale (Figure 1), indicating that they feel totally excluded from society. Given that Norway has 5.4 million inhabitants, this represents over 54,000 individuals. All who tick seven or more on the scale represent more than 250,000 people. If one takes these feelings expressed in the survey seriously, these numbers indicate that Norwegian society has problems with not only social exclusion in terms of education and labour force participation but also integration in broader sociological terms. Third, the results show that individuals with immigrant backgrounds are not a homogenous group where problems are likely to have a similar solution. Although reducing poverty and material deprivation and improving the labour market situation could be critical mechanisms in curbing feelings of social exclusion, other responses, such as social recognition and reducing discrimination and stigmatisation, are also likely to be required—the finding that Norwegian citizenship has an impact even when other factors are adjusted for points in this direction.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT

There is no conflict of interest.

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

The data has been provided by the Norwegian Centre for Research Data

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