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Included as excluded and excluded as included: minority language pupils in Norwegian inclusion policy

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This article offers an analysis of four Norwegian policy documents on inclusion of minority language pupils. The main concepts of this policy will be reconstructed and re-described, applying Niklas Luhmann's systems theory at different levels of the analysis. Luhmann's theory about society as a conglomerate of self-referential social systems investigates how these systems construct meaning and what consequences these constructions have for inclusion and exclusion processes. This article will focus on the Norwegian educational policy towards minority language pupils, defined by the policy as pupils who have a different mother tongue than Norwegian and Sami language. It is argued that this inclusion policy is excluding in its social form, and that it exhibits an increased emphasis on education when it comes to inclusion in society. Re-descriptions based on logic of forms will show how binary distinctions such as 'inclusion/ exclusion', 'majority language pupil/minority language pupil' and 'early intervention/wait and see' emerge in the timespan of 2004–2012. Based on this, it is claimed that descriptions of inclusion and exclusion are mutually constituted in the policy, thus giving rise to the question of whether the policy goal – 'full' inclusion in society – is realisable. A paradox will be uncovered: minority language pupils are being *included as excluded* as well as *excluded as included* in the documents, displaying how inclusion and exclusion are two sides of the same coin. The strategy *early intervention* is introduced to remedy exclusions, thus converting the problem of inclusion into a problem of time.

Keywords: inclusive education; politics of education; education policy

Introduction

Since 1994, inclusion has been an important conception in the educational debate of most countries in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (Fasting 2013). How to promote an inclusive society and offer everyone the prospect of lifelong learning has been one of the main concerns of governments across Europe. As economic prosperity is considered increasingly dependent on the skills and abilities of the population, educational exclusions come with higher expenses both for society and individuals.

In Norway, as in Scandinavia in general, the strategy of work orientation has been a leading concept in the policy of inclusion since the 1990s (Engebrigtsen 2007),

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somewhat similar to the strategy of 'welfare to work' in the USA. The ambition is to reduce the state's welfare spending by including more citizens in the labour market, as along with increasing requirements for work-related activity for those who receive welfare benefits (MW 2012). However, as the labour market is currently perceived as increasingly knowledge intensive, the conception of inclusion as being more dependent on participation and success in the educational system emerges.

Thus, it can be argued that the policy has shifted from a focus on work orientation to a stronger focus on inclusion and achievements in education. Norway is the OECD state with the lowest percentage of the working force in jobs consisting of simple and unvarying tasks that do not require education (OECD in MER 2009, 12). Due to these circumstances, participation in lifelong learning has become crucial for inclusion in society. According to the Norwegian Government, *education* is now the answer to the challenges facing the welfare society – resulting in a new policy approach, namely the 'Education strategy' (MER 2009).

The policy of inclusion has an inherently positive value (Vlachou 2004). To be against it could be perceived as morally suspect or elitist, as it might promote the idea of an exclusive society or of resignation on the part of the disadvantaged. However, these self-evident notions should be questioned by going beyond an either/or perspective. In this article, the Norwegian inclusion policy towards a specific group called 'minority language pupils' will be reconstructed and re-described. Through a document analysis, this paper will focus on the usage of important policy concepts and their relations in four important documents from the Norwegian Government: *Diversity through Inclusion and Participation* from 2004, *Early Intervention for Lifelong Learning* from 2006, *Diversity and Coping* from 2010 and *An Overall Policy of Integration* from 2012.

After reconstructing this policy, the descriptions will be re-described, applying the logic of forms as it is understood in the latest writings of the sociologist Luhmann (1927–1998). Thus, with the help of systems theory, we will go beyond the either/or focus and illuminate the inherent logic of 'full inclusion', a logic that considers inclusion as limitless and aims at eradicating exclusions. The article will show how systems theory can contribute to research in the field of social inclusion in educational policy.

Systems theory and the field of educational policy and inclusion/exclusion

Recently, attempts at analysing issues related to educational policy and inclusion/exclusion have followed a broad range of fruitful approaches (Popkewitz 2001; Liasidou 2008; Lumby 2009; Miles and Singal 2010; Slee 2001; Schuelka 2013), but no research on inclusion and exclusion in education policy based on systems theory has been done. In a review article of this field, Popkewitz and Lindblad (2000, 6) argue that policy research in education often seems to accept policy discourses with its categories and problem definitions as starting points and governing structures for research. They further call for knowledge produced through critical analysis and intellectual scrutiny rather than recapitulation of given systems of reference (6).

This difference between recapitulation and critical analysis of policy can, respectively, be conceptualised as first- and second-order observations in systems theory. In Luhmann's opinion, first-order observations are embedded in *one* particular logic or way of observing. Thus, they are too simple to allow an understanding of social phenomena in modern society: 'Observations of the first order use distinctions as a schema but do not yet create a contingency for the observer himself' (Luhmann 1998, 47). If instead one observes social phenomena from a 'second-order perspective', that is, observing

observations as observations, the researcher provides grounds for including contingency in meaning and the possibility of reflecting it conceptually (46–50). Second-order observations therefore allow complex and reflective descriptions.

Popkewitz and Lindblad (2000) further explore the organisation of educational problems and policy pertaining to social inclusion/exclusion through two analytical categories, 'the equity problematic' and the 'problematic of knowledge'. 'The equity problematic', they argue, focuses on the representation and access of individuals and groups to educational practices. Governance, from this perspective, is understood as policies that make inclusion possible and try to eliminate exclusion of targeted groups (6). The alternative category, 'problematic of knowledge', focuses on the systems of reason that are embodied in educational policy and pedagogical reforms. Exclusion, from this point of view, is something that is inseparable from the notion of inclusion; hence, exclusion is *not* something that can be eliminated through governance (7).

Although Popkewitz and Lindblad (2000, 7) recognise that there is an overlap between the 'equity problematic' and the 'problematic of knowledge', exemplified by Ball (1994), they argue that these analytical categories are important to understand the need for a bridging of the equity and knowledge problematics through rethinking the conceptual ways that research is organised within the field of inclusion and exclusion. They do not mean joining the problematics in an additive way, but rather suggest new ways of organising research on governance and inclusion/exclusion (34).

This article suggests systems theory as a new way of organising research on governance and inclusion/exclusion. Inclusion is, according to Luhmann (1997a, 2002a), defined as being addressed by a system. Thus, the premises of inclusion are dependent on how the given society differentiates systems. In Luhmann's terminology, 'the equity problematic' would account for theories embedded in an 'old-European semantic', the remnants of earlier societies based on stratification (top-down) as the main organisational principle. In these societies, the individual was either fully included in a stratum or class, or completely left out (Luhmann 1997b; Braeckman 2006).

According to Luhmann, the society of today is a *singular* society and a *world society*, an all-encompassing system of communication. This world society, however, is totally differentiated into partial systems, each of which serves a function for the overall society. Function systems, such as education, economy and politics, all operate worldwide. The systems are autopoietic (Greek: self-production), self-referring and operationally closed. Exchange of information between systems is possible, however, through what (Luhmann 1995, 1997b) calls structural couplings.

Individual participation and inclusion, in contrast to earlier, is now partial and not 'full' (Jønhill 2012a). We are in principle welcomed to every one of the function systems, but the systems exclude persons who do not meet their requirements, and we do not belong to any single one of them fully (Luhmann 1997b). Thus, the premises of inclusion and exclusion are now structured and described in different ways, following the function systems.

This article investigates how inclusion and exclusion for minority language pupils is structured and described in the Norwegian educational policy. From a systems theoretical perspective, we are localised within the framework of the Norwegian state organisation coupled to the global functional systems of politics and education. The policy documents are primarily aimed at making collectively binding decisions, and are consequently seen as political communication (Luhmann 2000). Nevertheless, the documents represent communication about educability, concerning the educational system and a category in this system, *minority language pupils* (Luhmann 2006).

In accordance with Beck and Paulsen (2008, 68), it is argued that such structural couplings between politics and education can be analysed as *semantics*. The term semantics refer to meaning stabilised over time, a supply of possible themes, which makes it possible for systems to disturb each other reciprocally (Luhmann 1995; Beck and Paulsen 2008). This paper will focus on how inclusion and exclusion of minority language pupils are being conceptualised in the political semantic, and will question whether this conceptualisation is including or excluding given a systems theoretical perspective.

Clearly, systems theory has more in common with Popkewitz and Lindblad's category 'problematic of knowledge', although there are also several differences. Luhmann offers an alternative to hegemonic educational discourse approaches, offering fruitful distinctions between systems, such as the distinction between education and politics. Given the understanding of a changed society, analysis and descriptions of educational governance and inclusion/exclusion are in need of a new terminology. Although the systems theoretical concepts might at first seem unnecessarily complex, they are a requisite to generate new descriptions of educational policy.

Methodological reflections

This article is based on a qualitative document analysis (Lyngaard 2010). However, Luhmann does not offer an explicit method of analysis. His work is primarily based on readings of a wide range of texts, from sociology, literature and philosophy to biology and physics. Thus, to be able to apply systems theory, I have both extracted information about analytical issues in the systems theoretical canon and also found methodological support elsewhere.

To apply systems theory in a deductive manner would not be in accordance with the epistemological reflections in Luhmann and Schorr's (2000, 28) work. If we look at analyses on a continuum from pure analytical-inductive to pure hypothetical-deductive (Lyngaard 2010), this procedure was initially closest to the analytical-inductive, or as Luhmann and Schorr (2000, 28) calls it: 'an inductive manner that is guided by theory'. Some broad categories were used in the beginning of the analysis, but these categories changed and were specified as the analysis progressed. Even the research question evolved during the reading: *How is the inclusion policy concerning minority language pupils conceptualised in the policy-literature from 2004 to 2012 and on which logical premises does this description rest upon?*

Thus, the aim of the analysis was to study the conceptualisation of the inclusion policy and the stabilisation and variation of meaning over the mentioned period of time, *semantics* in Luhmann's terminology (1995, 59). Semantics are unfolded in three meaning dimensions: The factual dimension ('what') indicates themes of meaningful communication (76). The social dimension ('who') denotes those who are constituted as persons ('addressees') by the system (80). The temporal dimension ('when') indicates the horizon of time, constituted by the difference of past/future (78). These dimensions are mirrored in the structure of this article. However, despite the fact that they are analysed separately, the dimensions do not appear in isolation (86).

At the core of Luhmann's (1995) theory is the thesis that communication is a selective process of information, utterances and understanding. Accordingly, all texts, including policy documents, are utterances, containing information that is understood by a receiver and which, precisely by his/her understanding, constitutes the text as communication. Thus, the reader is what constitutes the text as communication. Following
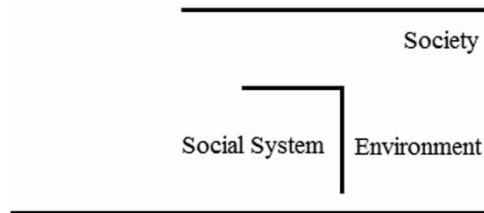
Figure 1.　The elementary form of social systems.

this premise, a representational logic is of no relevance for a reading inspired by Luhmann. Scientific research is also seen as a communicative occurrence. This does not entail a methodological relativism; some elementary principles will have to be followed, such as the distinction between *first-* and *second-order observations* (Luhmann 1994, 2007, 1998).

Second-order research distinguishes itself from first-order ideological posited theories (Luhmann 2006, 217). However, the second-order analysis cannot underestimate the observable first-order opinions, and confine truth claims to its own theory. According to Luhmann (2006, 218), this complex relation can be conceptualised as 're-descriptions', emphasising that one has to do with something that is already described. Accordingly, to make the distinction between first- and second-order transparent, reconstructions and re-descriptions will be presented in different sections of this article.

After a reconstruction of the meaning dimensions in the policy descriptions, these descriptions will be re-described, applying Luhmann's *logic of forms* (Åkerstrøm Andersen 1999; Luhmann 2002b; Jønhill 2012b) developed from the British logician Spencer Brown (Originally1969). According to the logic of forms, a form consists of two sides, the marked and the unmarked side, as well as a distinction. An angle, called a cross or a mark, is used to show the limit or distinction between the marked and the unmarked side. The elementary form of social systems can be illustrated as in Figure 1.

An observation always indicates something, in this case *social system*, but can only be indicated by drawing a limit to something else, in this case *environment*. While the marked side indicates what is being observed, the unmarked side, always present, indicates what it is separated from (Luhmann 1998, 33; 2007, 65–87). This kind of abstraction will enable us to discover the inherent logic in the policy of inclusion.

In the following section, I will go more into detail on the four documents selected and give a short description of the Norwegian context.

The Norwegian case: background and selection of documents

The population in Norway was fairly homogeneous until the 1970s, consisting to a high degree of what some would call 'ethnic Norwegians', as well as a smaller group of native Sámi people. From the 1970s and up until the present, the rate of immigration has increased with each decade, making the population more and more multicultural (Kjeldstadli 2006). According to the definition of Statistics Norway (SSB) (2013), the immigrant population in Norway consists of immigrants who have migrated to Norway as well as those who are born in Norway of two parents born in a foreign

country. As of January 2013, these two groups amount to 14 % of the Norwegian population.

The Norwegian school system is almost entirely public. Only a few private schools are allowed to operate, and these schools are based on religious or pedagogical alternatives. From year one in primary school up to and including third year of upper secondary school (in all 13 years), education is based on right and is free of charge. In this unitary school system, a central principle is the inclusion of all pupils, regardless of capabilities and heritage, and the goal of inclusion has been closely related to the issue of social equalisation (Nilsen 2010).

Four central Norwegian policy documents, three White Papers and one Official Norwegian Report, have been chosen as analytical objects. *White Papers* are written by bureaucrats in the Ministry, responsible for the policy area. They are expressions of the Government's opinion and include recommendations for future policy in the area. Furthermore, they provide foundations for future legislation. *Official Norwegian Reports* are commissioned by the Government with the mandate to review a certain policy area, and they provide the basis for White Papers. Although they are the end products of the work of appointed committees consisting of representatives from unions, municipalities, universities, the bureaucracy and other associations, the work is regulated by a political mandate and task.

- *The White Paper Diversity through Inclusion and Participation* from 2004 (hereafter D04). The author is The Norwegian Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development, referred to as MGD. This White Paper explicates the Government's overall strategy towards the now more diversified population in what the paper calls 'the new Norway'.
- *The White Paper Early Intervention for Lifelong Learning* from 2006 (hereafter D06). The author is The Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research, referred to as MER. This White Paper explicates the Government's strategy to reduce the differences in society through the educational system.
- *The Official Norwegian Report (NOU) Diversity and Coping* from 2010 (hereafter D10). The author is MER, but the work was done by a government-appointed committee. The Report assesses the participation of pupils and students with minority language in the Norwegian educational system.
- *The White Paper An Overall Policy of Integration* from 2012 (hereafter D12). The author is The Norwegian Ministry of Children, Equality and Social inclusion, referred to as MCES. This White Paper presents principles and a framework for future policy concerning diversity and community.

It should be noted that D04 was published under a rightist/centrist coalition government and D06, D10 and D12 under a leftist/centrist ('red-green') coalition. Also, D04 was published before the most recent school reform in Norway, D06 in the same year, and D10 and D12 subsequent to the reform. This 'Knowledge promotion reform' was implemented from year one in primary school up to and including upper secondary school. The rationale for choosing these documents will be presented as a part of the analytical procedure in the next section.

The analytical procedure

The reading of the policy documents was structured in four phases, which can be described as followed:

1st phase: A vast amount of policy documents were read. The reading was inspired by the 'Snowball method' (Torfing 2004), following references in the documents to be able to select 'mother-documents' covering a certain timeframe. This method was combined with a thematic analysis. Also the status of the documents was assessed. Simultaneous with the document selection, I was able to develop a research question, which further evolved into three sub-questions, addressed in the following phases.

2nd phase: This reading was aimed at illuminating the first research question: *What are the primary, as well as the secondary concepts and categories used in the documents?* For this purpose, I used a conceptual analysis which resulted in an overview of the main concepts in the inclusion policy.

3rd phase: This reading aimed at answering the second research question: *How is the meaning of the main concepts constituted in the texts?* As the primary interest was *the usage* of the concepts, they were not extracted from the text: all the text passages were read in context. In this reading, Luhmann's conceptualisation of semantics in the temporal, factual and social dimensions served as an analytical frame to structure the findings. Thus, the meaning dimension of the policy was reconstructed.

4th phase: The third and final research question was addressed in this reading: *What are the relations between the concepts and thus the inherent logic of the policy?* Now the reconstructed meaning dimension was re-described in a systems theoretical way. The logic of forms served as a tool when once again the reconstructed primary and secondary concepts were analysed, focusing also on the relations between them. The analysis of forms as binary schemes, and the relations between the meaning dimensions, illuminates the inherent logic of the inclusion policy.

The policy of inclusion: to be included as excluded and excluded as included

I will now present the *reconstruction* of the political semantic with its conceptual structure. This reconstruction is presented in three dimensions of meaning offered by Luhmann, the factual, social and temporal. After each dimension, I will *re-describe* these descriptions applying the logic of forms. The starting point is the factual dimension. According to a systems theory perspective, communication is always based on themes of meaningful communication, and the factual dimension is therefore the 'what' of the communication.

Reconstruction

The theme of these documents is inclusion in general, and eventually inclusion of children and young people with immigrant background, also known as 'minority language pupils'. In D04, inclusion is presented as a key concept and defined as follows:

> Inclusion is a concept used partially as a substitute for 'integration', partially as opposite to exclusion. One who encourages inclusion is indirectly saying that someone is responsible for making it happen. Somebody has to open up and invite in. The Government thinks that responsibility normally rests on the majority, or those who have the power to shut people out or bring them in. (MGD, 30)[1]

The definition is consistent throughout the four documents. Inclusion and exclusion are understood as opposite to each other, and inclusion concerns the relationship between the majority and those who are not yet a part of the majority: 'Somebody has to open up and invite in' (MGD, 30). Further:

> As a goal, being included is closely related to the goal of participation: in work life, neighbourhoods, associations, politics, etc. Active inclusion can be a supplement to formally equal rights, in recognition that equal rights do not necessarily give the desired results. (. . .) At the same time, inclusion presupposes the willingness to participate. (MGD, 30)

Inclusion and participation are used interchangeably in the documents. As we can see from the quote, inclusion is understood as closely related to social equalisation. In addition to the responsibility on the side of the majority, inclusion presupposes willingness on the part of the not-yet-included. Thus inclusion is understood as reciprocal. Further, the goal of inclusion is described as related to participation in many areas: work life, neighbourhoods, associations, sports, culture, education and family life.

Even though inclusion is differentiated into the mentioned areas, inclusion in *society* or *societal life as such* seems to be the overall goal in the four documents, a situation wherein exclusions are non-existent. As explained in D04: 'The goal of the Government is an inclusive society without social exclusion, marginalisation and unequal opportunities' (MGD, 30). Thus, the relationship between inclusion and exclusion is a relationship of opposites, and inclusion is seen as potentially limitless. Exclusion as a concept, however, is rarely mentioned in the documents. Concepts such as marginalisation (primarily economic), dropping out of education (primarily upper secondary school), exclusion from higher education and getting expelled from the workforce is mentioned here and there, but not systematically. Exclusion *as such* is not explicated. Rather, cases of exclusion are mentioned insofar as they can be re-included by political efforts.

If we look more closely at how the documents describe inclusion of children and young people who are immigrants or descendants of immigrants, (aka 'minority language pupils') there seems to be a shift in the political documents during the time-span targeted by the analysis. In D04, the responsibility for inclusion is primarily a parental responsibility (MGD, 10). The *first* focus point of the White paper is described as follows: 'The Government thinks that parents who have immigrated have an independent responsibility to promote their children's opportunities in Norwegian society' (11). The importance of education is emphasised in 2004 as well, but as a *second* focus area (11). Hence, inclusion is understood as a reciprocal relationship between immigrant families and authorities (MGD, 18).

In D06, D10 and D12, however, the responsibility for inclusion of children and young people with immigrant background is placed more explicitly on the educational system. Even though good cooperation between the schools and the homes is emphasised, and the problem of social control in immigrant families as a possible obstacle to inclusion is mentioned a few times in D12 (MCES, 8), the educational system becomes the most important reference for the inclusion policy (MER 2006, 86; MCES 2012, 10). The ability to participate in society is now considered to be dependent on efforts to promote positive learning at every level of the educational system. Contrarily, a negative developmental spiral with poor learning outcome and drop out from school will lead to low-skilled jobs, or unemployment and dependence on social security benefits (MER 2006, 10–11).

Re-description

For Luhmann, inclusion simply means that a person is relevant to the social system in play (2002a). However, there is inclusion only if exclusion is possible. Inclusion is a two-sided *form:* a distinction between inclusion on the one side, and exclusion on the other side (Luhmann 1997a; Farzin 2006). The form inclusion can be illustrated as in Figure 2.

Inclusion is the indicated side or *marked space*, while exclusion is the *unmarked space* of the distinction. Consequently, the form inclusion consists of both inclusion and exclusion. They constitute each other (Luhmann 1997a, 2002a).

Contrary to this, we saw how inclusion is understood as opposite to exclusion in the reconstruction (MGD 2004, 30). Inclusion and exclusion were presented as mutually exclusive: if inclusion is present, than exclusion is not, and if exclusion is present, then inclusion is not. Exclusions, though, were rarely mentioned, and only insofar as they could be controlled by re-including efforts. The quote from D04 displays this understanding: 'The goal of the Government is an inclusive society without social exclusion, marginalisation and unequal opportunities' (MGD30). Even though inclusion is considered potentially limitless, the distinction between inclusion and exclusion is reflected. This distinction, however, is asymmetrical and normatively biased: inclusion is the preferred side of the distinction.

If we apply a system theoretical concept of inclusion, it may be questioned whether inclusion and exclusion are mere opposites. In the reconstruction, exclusions were incorporated on the side of inclusions: re- including cases of exclusion. For example, as the policy expresses deep concern with minority language pupil's dropout rate, several remedial measures are suggested: homework help, summer schools and introductory classes for minority language pupils exclusively (MER 2006, 14). In form-analytical terms, these observations can be conceptualised as a 'crossing' (Luhmann 1995): the outside (exclusion) turns into the inside (inclusion). The outside becomes the theme of the communication, such as marginalisation, poverty and drop out. But the outside, exclusion, is the theme of communication only insofar as it is relevant for inclusion: the not-yet-included or excluded are (eventually) to be included. Thus, exclusions are not legitimate without inclusion. As Stichweh (2009) points out, one could say that exclusion is a special case (German: *sondernform*) of inclusion.

Exclusion*,* though scarcely mentioned in the documents, is understood as marginalisation (especially economic), dropping out of school and exclusion from working life. These instances of exclusions are targets for the inclusion policy and are constitutive for the policy. Inclusion and exclusion processes are, respectively, conceptualised as positive chains of learning experiences versus negative developmental spirals
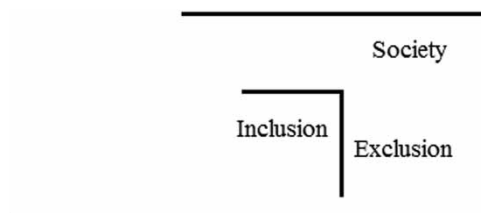

Figure 2.   The form inclusion.

(MER 2006, 10–11). Even though the inclusion policy reproduces the indicated side of the form (inclusion), inclusion is not logically possible without exclusions.

In the reconstructed policy, inclusion is perceived as reciprocal, concerning the relationship between majority and minority. From a systems theoretical perspective, however, inclusion has to do with whether and how one is being addressed by the system. A re-description shows how the difference between inclusion and exclusion in the policy documents is made internal: First, minority language pupils are addressed as excluded, *included as excluded*. Second, they are addressed as included, but *excluded as included*. This point will be elaborated further in the re-description of the social dimension. However, as a preliminary conclusion, this re-description displays a paradox in the inclusion policy (Luhmann 1994, 28).

Conclusively, inclusion and exclusion cannot be seen as antonyms. Inclusions follow inclusions in a recursive network, and exclusions are relevant as far as the excluded can be included. This poses the question as to whether 'full' inclusion in modern society is achievable. How can full inclusion be achieved when exclusion processes are an internal part of inclusion processes? Actually, Luhmann (1997a, 626) calls the notion of full inclusion 'a totalitarian logic', a logic that aims at eradicating its opposite with demands of unity and equality. The totalitarian logic does not recognise that exclusion and inclusion are actually two sides of the same coin, thus it is blind to the socially produced cases of exclusion in modern society.

But how do we understand the change of reference from *family* to *education* in the inclusion policy? According to Luhmann (2006, 65), one of the primary functions of the global educational system is to make human beings into persons, that is, to increase individuals' abilities to connect to the different function systems of society. This may explain the increased political efforts towards the educational system: the system has a special role when it comes to the facilitation of inclusion in society. Traditionally, socialisation was taken care of by the family. In the modern society, however, more and more emphasis is put on organisations that are specialised for the purpose of education: schools (182). Re-including efforts towards minority language pupils should accordingly be taken care of by specialised organisations within the educational system, and not be left to the unsystematic socialisation that takes place in families. This leads us to the question: Who are the addressees of the inclusion policy?

The addressees of inclusion: minority language pupils

In this section, the 'who' of the documents will be presented. The efforts to include a specific group in the policy: 'minority language pupils' will be reconstructed and re-described.

Reconstruction

The policy defines minority language pupils as those who have a different mother tongue than Norwegian and Sami language, that is, the mother tongues of the language majority (MER 2010, 24). Thus, minority language pupils are defined as opposite to majority language pupils. The concept of pupils with minority language is mentioned in the earliest documents, D04, but the addressee of this document is more frequently children and young people with immigrant background or just immigrant/descendant of immigrants. This can be due to the fact that this particular document is an overall White Paper, concerned with the inclusion policy for society as such. Interestingly though, in

D12, also a general White Paper, the group of pupils with minority language is a frequent addressee for political decisions and actions. To explain this, we have to observe what happens during the time period between the publication of D04 and D12.

In D06, pupils with minority language are pointed out as a group at particular risk of exclusion and marginalisation in society. The group of minority language pupils, and especially boys (MER, 46) and immigrants (45), especially from non-Western countries (45), are at risk. The risk factors are school dropout, poor learning outcomes and eventually marginalisation, unemployment, poverty and crime (9, 35, 51, 55).

The understanding in D06 of minority language pupils as a group at risk is amplified in D10. D10 is commissioned by the Government with the mandate to review the education offered to *children, young people and adults with minority language*. Now the addressees of the inclusion policy are crystallised and made explicit, and they are even addressed in a separate document. The subject of the report is *into* language minorities, more specifically children, young people and adults from language minorities in the educational system.

The challenges associated with minority language pupils are threefold: lower participation in kindergarten, poorer learning outcome in the elementary school, as well as dropouts from secondary school. These are mentioned in D06 and are the centre of focus in D10. The primary variables that explain school dropouts are family background (parents' education) and lower grades from primary school, while the primary variables that explain poorer achievements and basic skills are language and social background (MER 2010, 44–45, 190).

Crucially, the documents observe each other and link to one another; for example, D10 is observed and used as a knowledge resource for further political decisions in D12. Both D10 (116) and D12 (48) express special concern about *newly arrived* minority language pupils. This group has been mentioned in the earlier documents as well, but not as frequently and comprehensively as in D10 and D12.

Re-description

In Luhmann's systems theory, a person is an addressee for communication, distinguished from the individual who is situated outside the systems (2002a). Accordingly, to be included equals being addressed and thereby being a *person* for the system at issue. In function systems, this personification is actualised and completed through *roles*. General role expectations make it possible for *everyone* to participate in the function systems of society, either through performance roles, such as teacher, or through complementary roles, such as pupils (Luhmann and Schorr 2000, 35).

In the reconstruction, we observed the emergence of the group of pupils with minority language in the inclusion policy from 2006 onwards. The emergence of this group coincides with the change in policy as described in the previous section: the educational system becomes the most important reference concerning the inclusion policy. Thus, pupils with minority language, a version of the role pupil within the system of education, become a frequent addressee for political efforts. This may illustrate a tightening of the structural coupling between education and politics.

In the policy, a language minority pupil is defined as opposite to language majority pupil. They are seen as mutually exclusive: either you are part of the majority language or a minority language. This coincides with the logic of inclusion: either you are included as majority language pupil or you are actually or potentially excluded, as minority language pupil. From a systems theoretical perspective, however, language

majority pupil can be seen as a form, consisting of the marked space language majority pupil and the unmarked space language minority pupil, illustrated as in Figure 3.

Majority language is understood as a part of the order of inclusion, and the distinction in the policy is normatively biased. Majority language pupils are ranked above minority language pupils. However, from a system theoretical perspective, the re-including efforts turn the outside into the inside, again a 'crossing' in form-analytical terms (Luhmann 1994). Minority language pupils are made relevant for re-including policy efforts, and the addressee is further specified as: *Immigrant*, *non-Western*, *boy* and *newly arrived*.

As previously seen, forms are constituted by distinctions such as: immigrant – descendant, non-Western – Western, boy – girl and newly arrived – settled. We see how these forms emerge from each other, a continuous emergence of personifications, making the targets of political decisions increasingly differentiated and specific.

If we were to define exclusion as the opposite of inclusion, as in the policy, exclusion would simply mean that these persons were not being addressed, thus an absence of role expectations. This does not seem to be the case. Minority language pupils are to be re-included, either through special efforts within the ordinary school system, or in schools and classes particularly aimed at including this group. Thus, they are made relevant as excluded – *included as excluded*. However, this personification does not offer what might be called ordinary inclusion roles. Minority language pupils can never be actual majority language pupils. Hence, the group is being *excluded as included*: particular exclusion roles are produced and made available on the side of inclusion. From a system theoretical perspective, we are witnessing duplication or 're-entry' of the form in the form (Luhmann 1994). Thus, we are able to separate inclusion roles: e.g. Western girl with majority language, from exclusion roles: non-Western boy with immigrant background and minority language, this time both on the side of inclusion. Consequently, these documents might be seen as excluding in their social form. The distinction between inclusion and exclusion is made internal.

Minority language pupils are just one example of target groups being addressed for including efforts. Actually, the target for inclusion in each of the function systems is potentially 'everyone'. Luhmann explains how the extensiveness of the functional systems of society is due to this kind of generalisation of addressees (Stichweh 2009, 35):

Each and everyone of us is in principle welcomed to every function system, as payer, voter, pupil, patient or subject of law. Consequently, cases of exclusion are only legitimate insofar as they can be re-included, and an ever increasing number of problem areas and groups come into focus (37).
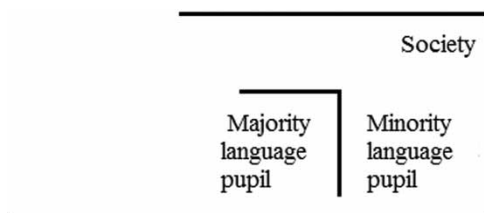

Figure 3.   The form majority language pupil.

By constituting the group of minority language pupils through what might be considered a lack of competence (having a minority language), and by selecting correlations between group characteristics and poor learning outcome and dropout trends, as observed in the reconstruction, the group is defined as a problem and an object for political, remedial measures. These explanatory variables are observed *characteristics* of the group, and not the educational system in which they participate in or leave. From a system theoretical perspective, this shows the paradoxical situation for the function systems: because everyone in principle is welcomed to every function system in society, the renunciation of these possibilities must be attributed to individuals. At this point, Luhmann would actually be more in accordance with what Graham and Jahnukainen (2011, 264, 282) refer to as 'the original intent of the inclusive education movement': to fix our sights on social barriers rather than 'special educational needs' in individuals. Thus, by attributing the causes of exclusion to individuals, one avoids recognising exclusion as socially structured phenomena (Luhmann 1997a, 1997b, 625).

Why are the systems producing exclusions as a part of their inclusion processes? According to Luhmann, the difference between inclusion and exclusion has to do with the distinction between a system and its environment: the self- and other-reference of the system. Educational communication is for example coded educable/not educable (Luhmann 2006), meaning it includes everything and everyone that can be coded as educable, and excludes its opposite. Consequently, it is not the pupil's minority language or social background itself that causes their educational exclusion, but rather how language and background are perceived as a challenge for educational communication, and consequently how these pupils are addressed as a group associated with educational failure and drop out. As the extensiveness of the educational system is dependent on the generalisation of addressees, minority language pupils are re-included and given exclusion roles within the educational system.

These exclusions may come with high expenses. According to Luhmann (2002a), society is loosely integrated on the side of inclusion, but tightly integrated on the side of exclusion. Being included in one function system, does not automatically make you relevant to another system, but being excluded in one function system seems to increase the possibility of being equally excluded in another system. For minority language pupils, this domino effect is conceptualised in the policy as well: school dropout, poor learning outcomes and eventually marginalisation, unemployment, poverty and crime (MER 2006, 9, 35, 51, 55). Distribution of educational exclusion roles caused by the conceived lack of educability may have consequences for participation in other systems as well. Especially since the educational system has the important function of making human beings into persons and thereby increase their ability to connect to other systems (Luhmann 2006). Considering this, the 'education strategy' with its emphasis on educational inclusion is apposite. Educational exclusion comes with high expenses for individuals. Nevertheless, new inclusive interventions will not necessarily have the intended effect. Rather it is necessary to focus on the exclusion side of the distinction, and increase the awareness of how boundary-making in educational policy itself may have excluding effects.

The problem of time: early intervention

In this section, the analysis will focus more closely on the temporal dimension, the 'when' of the policy.

Reconstruction

In D06, D10 and D12, the concept of *early intervention* is introduced and emphasised. It had not been mentioned at all in D04. 'Early intervention for lifelong learning' is the main slogan of D06 and is defined as follows: 'Early intervention should be understood as effort at an early stage in a child's life, as well as intervention when problems arise or are unveiled during pre-school, basic education or adulthood'[2] (MER, 10).

When introduced, early intervention is observed as the opposite of an attitude among teachers in the Norwegian schools called 'wait and see' (MER 2006, 27): '(. . .) there has been a tendency in the Norwegian school to "wait and see" instead of intervening at an early stage in children's development and learning' (27). D06 claims that problems may grow bigger and more complex if effort is not made at early stages. Early intervention, according to the Government, will reduce problems and costs at *later* developmental stages. For minority language pupils, this is expressed through a policy effort aimed at participation in kindergarten, as well as an early assessment of language skills. The alternative, minority language children staying at home with their family, is associated with risk (MER 2006, 11).

In D12 early intervention is given particular importance for *newly arrived* pupils with minority language (MCES, 56).

Re-description

Time, in a systems theoretical perspective, is the interpretation of reality in light of the difference between past and future (Luhmann 1995, 78; Moe 2010). Social systems, such as the system of politics, create their own time horizons, that is, their own past and future.

The form of time enables the system to make selections of its operations on the basis of a prospective, future condition, both by trying to achieve a certain situation, and to avoid one (Luhmann 1990, 4). The goal of the political system is full inclusion through the educational system, and early intervention is introduced as a strategy that will help the system achieve such a state. Thus, we observe an increased understanding of inclusion as connected to learning processes and development in the documents from 2006 onwards, and inclusion is recommended to occur as early as possible.

In the reconstruction, we saw how early intervention was seen as opposite to the wait-and-see attitude. Thus, the political problem of inclusion concerning education seems to be a choice between two mutually exclusive strategies: either a teacher can wait and see or she/he can intervene early. The strategy early intervention is mentioned a lot of times in the policy documents, while the wait-and-see attitude is rarely mentioned. The policy distinction is normatively biased and asymmetrical: Early intervention is ranked above *wait and see*, the latter is associated with risk.

From a systems theoretical perspective, however, wait and see is what makes the form early intervention meaningful for the system of politics. The form early intervention then consists of both early intervention and wait and see, illustrated in logic of forms as in Figure 4.

When the political system observes through this form of meaning, early intervention is the marked side, while wait and see is the unmarked side. When the latter is mentioned, it is always in relation to early intervention. Thus, wait and see is relevant insofar as it can be dealt with and eliminated by the strategy of early intervention.
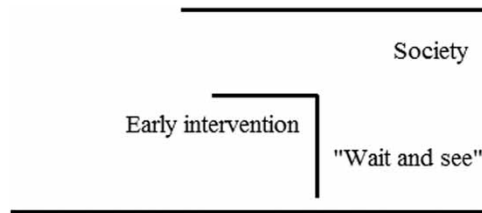
Figure 4.   The form early intervention.

Nevertheless, early intervention is meaningless in the absence of wait and see. They mutually constitute each other.

Still, even though this distinction seems inevitable and natural in the policy, the form is contingent. Different distinctions could have been made: early intervention could, for example, be presented as opposed to 'later intervention', 'more resources to the schools' or 'restructure the school system'. This would give the form a quite different meaning.

In an educational context, the wait-and-see attitude might be plausible in an attempt to see if the pupil's development 'catches up' with that of the other pupils rather than stigmatising low achievers by intervention. But in a political context aimed at making collectively binding decisions, it seems obvious that early intervention is preferred to the wait-and-see stance. The wait-and-see attitude is associated with neglect and risk for the future society, while early intervention will help the system achieve the goal of full inclusion. *Before* wait and see was the prime strategy, but *hereafter* the strategy of 'early intervention' will be a head.

We have earlier seen how 'full inclusion' became the goal of the policy, a totalising logic intolerant to exclusions. However, actual differences in learning outcomes, dropouts from school and poor participation in kindergarten cannot be ignored by the political system. Thus, one has to realise that 'full inclusion' is not achieved. This result in a temporal relocation of the problem: 'full inclusion' will be achieved with the help of time. The logic of an all-encompassing inclusion itself is not questioned in the policy. Instead exclusion is understood as a residual problem (Cf. Luhmann 1997a, 626). The question for the policy is then: when full inclusion is not achieved in the present, how can it be achieved in the future?

This analysis of the temporal dimension exhibits the last piece of the puzzle in the logic of inclusion. A relocation in the temporal dimension adds to the communicative strategies which obstruct the political system to reflect on exclusion as a phenomenon that is socially structured by social systems themselves.

Conclusion

I have now reconstructed the political descriptions of inclusion of minority language pupils, conceptualised as semantics in a structural coupling between the function systems of politics and education in the Norwegian state organisation. Semantics are structured in three dimensions: the factual, social and temporal, constituted by forms of meaning based on distinctions such as inclusion/exclusion, majority language pupil/minority language pupil and early intervention/wait and see. Applying the logic of forms, I have re-described the reconstructed descriptions and uncovered the

inherent logic of the policy of inclusion, questioning the understanding of a *prima facie* unambiguously positive and self-evident inclusion policy.

The goal of the analysed inclusion policy is 'full inclusion', a situation where exclusions are non-existent. This conception of inclusion is similar to 'the equity problematic' described by Popkewitz and Lindblad. The policy is directed towards the elimination of exclusion and enhancement of inclusion. Contrary to this, we have seen how inclusions and exclusions are parts of the same self-describing logic of the systems, having more in common with Popkewitz's and Lindblad's second category, 'the problematic of knowledge'. Our analysis has shown how Luhmann's theory may be suitable for rethinking the conceptual organisation of research in the field of social inclusion and exclusion without a recapitulation of given systems of reference, as called for by Popkewitz and Lindblad.

First, it has been argued that the policy documents indicate a stronger dependence on the educational system for the inclusion of individuals from 2006 onwards. This can be observed through the frequent policy efforts addressing minority language pupils, as well as the emphasis on the strategy of early intervention. I suggested this change to be conceptualised as a tighter structural coupling between the function systems of politics and – education.

Second, it has been argued that the inclusion policy is excluding (*including exclusion*) in its social form. This should, however, not be understood as a critique of inclusion per se. Inclusion is a necessary condition for communication and the extensiveness of function systems. Rather, one could say that in the first place, inclusion has exclusion as a side effect (Luhmann 2002a), but in the second place, exclusion becomes a special case of inclusion (Stichweh 2009). Thus, inclusions and exclusions are both part of the *autopoiesis* (self-production) of the systems. According to Luhmann (1997a, 1997b, 2002a), this makes it especially difficult to observe the phenomena of exclusion in the modern society, obscuring grievous effects for individuals. As also Hansen (2012) points out, it is now crucial to focus on the exclusion side of the distinction.

These reflections have consequences for educational practice and policy as well. Both inclusion and exclusion processes are necessary in order to draw distinctions between a system and its environment, in the case of politics and education as well as other systems. After all, it is not the minority language in itself that is the problem, but how the lack of a common language challenges the extensiveness of educational communication. The risk of a domino effect of exclusions makes it necessary to be aware of the individual expenses of stabilising exclusion roles. However, this problem will not necessarily be solved by new inclusive interventions. Rather this article calls for political and educational awareness of the double sidedness of inclusion, as well as how boundary-making takes place in different functional contexts.

Notes

1. The political documents are originally in Norwegian. Some of them include an English summary. The quotations have been translated by the author from Norwegian into English. If a central concept is translated in the English summary, I have used the Government's preferred term.
2. 'Early intervention' is the Government's own translation of the concept. From the previous quote, we see that 'early effort' might have been a more accurate translation for the Norwegian term 'tidlig innsats'. The concept can be understood both as *effort* at early stages, such as the language-testing of (all) children and participation in kindergarten, as well as actual *intervention* when problems arise, for example, when a child is diagnosed with a learning

disorder. Thus, the usage of the concept in the documents seems to be more general than the translated term 'early intervention' indicates. 'Early intervention' is the Government's preferred term.

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