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Chapter 12: Youth at the Margins

Reflections on Diversities and Similarities Using Intersectionality as a Lens

12.1 Introduction

In this book we focus on youth at the margins by drawing on the views of young research participants whom we met in six locations in three countries. Differences between the three countries – Finland, Norway and South Africa – were described through statistical snapshots (Chapter 3), while the differences between the localities were reflected in each of the related case study chapters. In South Africa we heard participants comment on the general socio-economic environment in an urban setting: "Eish! It is tough living here" (Chapter 6), and when they referred to the perceived apathy among some of their peers in a rural location, they described them as persons "waiting for the sunset" (Chapter 10). We noticed a perception of exclusion and hopelessness that seemed widespread in particular localities. In other cases, such as the one from Oslo, young people may have felt excluded, but still hoped that they could access "a network that they can use to get a job" (Chapter 7). By focusing on some of these observations in the case study chapters, the aim of this chapter is to reflect on various hues of diversity and similarity within and across the case studies.

In analysing and comparing these contexts, intersectionality was chosen as a heuristic tool to highlight diverse, but also similar, reported experiences of participants from the different case studies. Using intersectionality to compare case studies from South Africa and two Nordic countries, we have to remark on the varied categories of diversity that are at play in these contexts. For example, while the apartheid racial categories remain important identity markers to this day, and are closely linked with socio-economic status in South Africa today (Chapter 3), the term "race" sits uneasily in the Nordic countries. However, some Nordic researchers argue that a "new racism" or "neo-racism" focusing on culture and religion – and on "immigrants" and Islam in particular – rather than on biological markers of difference has emerged over the last few decades (Bangstad & Døving: 2015; Gullestad: 2002; Gullestad: 2004). We will elaborate on such differences below.

The triad of race, gender and class has generally been seen as the most relevant constructs in intersectionality studies, but many theorists argue that other aspects

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such as disabilities, sexual orientation and religion are also relevant, depending on the context (Anthias: 2013, 126; Dhamoon: 2011, 234; Levine-Rasky: 2011, 240). From our case studies it emerged that place of residence (or lack thereof), citizenship status, race, gender, class (although difficult to define across vastly different societies) and religion are of particular importance. In addition, age was crucial as it informed the way in which we sampled potential research participants for this study. The discussion of the NEET concept and the statistical snapshots in Chapters 2 and 3 have already highlighted the focus on youth, and hence also the importance of age as a marker of identity and indicator of inequality in the research project. However, "youth" included people from 16 to 24 years in the case studies (in exceptional cases slightly older people were also interviewed), and already within this age category we noted differences based on the reported experiences of older and younger participants.

In order to provide orientation to our focus on diversities and similarities, we present the term "intersectionality" as a heuristic tool in the next section. We then utilise insights derived from this perspective to offer a deeper analysis of the preceding case study chapters. We proceed with reflections on our intersectional positions as researchers and conclude with recommendations for future research.

12.2 Intersectionality as a Heuristic Tool

Kimberlé Crenshaw brought the term intersectionality into vogue when analysing how race and gender intersect in the lives of black women in the United States of America (USA). She used detailed examples to demonstrate that if the single axis of gender is used, the focus is invariably on white women, and in the case of race, the focus is on black men (Crenshaw: 1991, 1244; see also Anthias: 2013, 125; Dhamoon: 2011, 231). Intersectionality thus contributed to an articulation of multiple forms of oppression faced by black women in the USA and highlighted how their plight is easily overlooked if a single classification of either gender or race is employed. Crenshaw developed the premise of intersectionality by focusing on how structural, political and representational intersectionality shape(d) the lives of women of colour in the USA, although she did not regard intersectionality "as some new, totalizing theory of identity" (Crenshaw: 1991, 1244).

Intersectionality is not the only concept aiming to better understand how different forms of inequalities impact simultaneously on specific people; various terms such as interlocking systems of oppression, simultaneous oppressions, multiple jeopardy, the matrix of domination and triple oppression were all used in different contexts to achieve the same goal (Anthias: 2013, 126; Collins & Bilge: 2016, 64f, 76; Dhamoon: 2011, 231–232). In South Africa the triple oppression of black women in terms of race, gender and class was repeatedly highlighted, especially during the

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apartheid years. However, the triple oppression discourse was increasingly regarded as limiting, since although it aimed to understand the combined effect of systems of oppression, there was at times still an underlying intention to gauge which is the most oppressive (De la Rey: 1997, 7), a tendency that was also described in other parts of the world (Hancock: 2011; Gouws: 2017). An intersectionality perspective aims to overcome this limitation by highlighting how people experience specific forms of hardship based on their unique positions and showing that the experience of such disadvantages is more than just adding up the different forms of discrimination (Anthias: 2013, 126). In this regard, Levine-Rasky (2011, 240) argues that intersectionality is not a model encompassing different levels of oppression,[1] but a way to create a deeper understanding of the complexities in lived realities – an aim we set for ourselves in this chapter and in the project by focusing on the qualitative data.

Three decades after the seminal Crenshaw article, the scope of intersectionality has widened considerably. When not only the marginalised are considered from an intersectionality perspective, but also the privileged, then richer understandings of inequality develop (Dhamoon: 2011; Levine-Rasky: 2011). Following this line of thinking, the complexities of different constructed status rankings in specific contexts can be brought to the fore, as can be seen in an article on formerly incarcerated women, where an intersectionality approach reveals how being white in a South African prison can complicate an inmate's power relations with black warders. In this context it was argued that privilege, social positions and power relations are not fixed but continuously negotiated (Agboola & Rabe: 2018). Such dynamic nuances in various studies have led to a distinction being made between "social position" and "social positioning" when employing the concept of intersectionality. The former refers to a person's "identity and access to symbolic and material resources", whereas social positioning is a process where "different groups define, negotiate, and challenge their positions" (Anthias in Levine-Rasky: 2011, 242). The latter is a more active process in identity formation, illuminating an individual's (or a group's) agency, and below we highlight such attempts by certain participants of this study (see Section 12.3 and further).

In Finland, Karkulehto and her fellow authors (2012) argued for a close observation of the workings of intersectionality in people's lives and social inequalities at the same time. In their view, recognising different intersectionalities is not enough, since inequalities should be specifically focused on as well. They used the term "performative intersectionality" to integrate intersectionalities and inequalities. In

1 This tendency of adding up different systems of oppression has been referred to as "Oppression Olympics" by Martinez in a magazine article, a term that exposes the desire to cast a particular category of people as the "most oppressed" (Hancock: 2011, 3). This tendency is in fact contrary to the aims of intersectionality theory.

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the Nordic countries, migrants can to some extent be excluded or marginalised on the basis of their citizenship and residence status (e.g. asylum seekers), which has implications for their welfare rights. Moreover, migrants and their descendants also face exclusion based on their names, physical appearance, accents when speaking, or choice of clothing. For example, Arnfinn Midtbøen (2016) sent pairs of equivalent résumés and cover letters – one with a Pakistani name and one with a Norwegian name – in job applications in the Oslo area. His results indicate that applicants with Norwegian names are 25 per cent more likely to receive a call back for a job interview than equally qualified applicants with Pakistani names.

In South Africa, more recently, various activist elements have also been analysed through an intersectional lens. Activism embodied in youthful movements such as the 2015 to 2016 #FeesMustFall student protests in South Africa[2] that called for "free higher education" and "decolonising universities" has, for example, been analysed through the lens of intersectionality, again showing the links between gender and race in everyday experiences (Gouws: 2017). In our reflections on youth at the margins who were not part of these social movements in South Africa, because the protesters were students at higher education institutions and our focus was on NEET young people, we wanted to consider the different, but also similar, ways in which young people are excluded in the various case study contexts. We also wanted to compare the effect these contexts have on the lived experiences of the research participants.

An aspect that is seldom probed in intersectionality approaches, but of importance for our study, is religion. An exception is the theologian Ninna Edgardh, who has included religion as part of a systematic intersectional approach to the research area we may term "welfare and religion", though in a more indicative way than a comprehensive analysis (Edgardh Beckman: 2007; Edgardh: 2010). Edgardh (2010, 211–212) highlighted the fruitfulness of an intersectionality perspective in a study of religion as a social practice, which was born out of religious responses to what was perceived as marginalisation and oppression. She finds it a problem that, generally, feminist theorists have shown little interest in religion in their studies of intersectionality, as has also been the case internationally (Reimer-Kirkham & Sharma: 2011; Weber: 2015). In the Nordic context, the first to include religion in a reflection on intersectionality was Erica Appelros (2005), who argued for the inclusion of religion as a "variable" in intersectional analyses and developed a way of dealing with this variable in such analyses (cf. Edgardh: 2010, 212). The concept of intersectionality has since been applied in a number of such studies, noticeably on Muslim women in Nordic and other European countries (e.g. Halrynjo & Jonker: 2016; Skjeie & Langvasbråten: 2009; Thun: 2012; Walseth: 2015).

2 An ongoing activist movement.

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Intersectionality is thus applied in different contexts and it has even been contended that it is one the most important theoretical contributions from women's studies toward understanding inequality (Levine-Rasky: 2011, 240). However, it has also been argued that intersectionality has become a popular buzzword that is advancing neither feminist scholarship nor activism (Knapp in Anthias: 2013, 125; Meer & Müller: 2017, 3). In fact, the concept has been so severely criticised from various quarters that this response has been described as an "intersectionality critique industry" (Gouws: 2017, 22).

Despite these criticisms, we agree with Collins and Bilge (2016, 7) that the core dimension of intersectionality is power relations (see also Karkulehto et al.: 2012) and that "power relations are about people's lives, how people relate to one another, and who is advantaged or disadvantaged within social interactions." In order to use the concept of intersectionality as a heuristic tool, we understand it as fundamentally relational. We thus refer to how systems of division based on race, citizenship status, class and so forth are interconnected and often reinforce one another. Since intersectionality makes no sense outside of the specific social context of power relations, our aim is to highlight specific case studies in order to show how power relations are operating in diverse contexts. Our hope is that by uncovering such power relations as they operate in the lives of individuals, we will understand social inequality better and move towards a more socially just dispensation (cf. Collins & Bilge: 2016, 194–202). Moreover, we have also indicated that religion has not received due attention in intersectionality approaches. As such, we attempt to incorporate religious affiliation in this analysis, although there is a far more in-depth analysis of religion and faith in the ensuing two chapters. By focusing on agency when illuminating intersectionality, we want to pre-empt and refute the criticism that it simply reiterates victimhood status. In contrast, we see intersectionality as a form of critical praxis. This is to the extent that social movements and academic inquiry may even meet each other through intersectionality as a tool to bring about change, thereby rejecting an artificial division between theory and practice (cf. Collins & Bilge: 2016, 129; Gqola: 2001, 11; Lozano: 2017, 97f).

We wanted to use the life worlds of our research participants as our starting point, and it was clear that their physical locations formed an important part of their social contexts. Hence location became an important part of our analytical focus. We return to the issue of physical location after we have considered below how religion and gender are embedded within the participants' experiences.

12.3 Religious Affiliation as a Node of Intersecting Experience

Many, but not all, religious people are affiliated to Christian churches in South Africa and the Nordic countries. A minority of people in these countries have

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a religious affiliation to Islam, and this minority tends to be active in attending mosques and associated places of worship (Chapter 3).

In the case study contexts from Norway and Finland, religion, specifically as it related to the praxis of churches and mosques, played a pivotal role. The Oslo case study took place in a diverse city district where the youth work in the local churches and mosques mostly focused on what the different FBOs saw as "their" youth. Because the main purpose of the FBOs' engagement with the youth was to pass on religious beliefs, values and identities, the (presumed) religious background or belonging of young people was important in determining which FBOs engaged with them. In Lammi, some of the young people living in the immigrant reception centre would have liked to participate in their own faith communities, if there had been such an FBO nearby. One of the Muslim young men had visited a mosque in another town, but only on occasions when he was nearby for other reasons. For some of the youths in these case studies, in other words, the nearby FBOs did not seem to facilitate the religious practice in which they wished to engage.

In Oslo and Lammi, the parishes of the Lutheran national churches similarly saw the rite of confirmation as an opportunity to reach out to young people. On the national level, 85.6 per cent of 15-year-olds in Finland and 64 per cent in Norway were confirmed in the Lutheran national churches in 2012 (Chapter 3), just a few years prior to the research for the case studies in this book. The confirmation preparations and rituals thus brought together the majority of Finnish and Norwegian youths in similar experiences shared across parishes. In other words, the experiences were shared by the majority of youth at the national level and may have contributed to a sense of sameness among this majority (cf. Gullestad: 2002; Chapter 7). However, the share of young people who participated in the confirmation preparations and rituals varied between different localities in the two countries, as for instance reflected in the differences between the case studies from rural Lammi and suburban Søndre Nordstrand in Oslo. In rural Lammi, where a majority of the youths participated in the confirmation preparations and rituals, participants in the case study narrated experiences associated with social cohesion, especially experiences of togetherness, in connection with confirmation training and the confirmation ritual. However, the youths also described confirmation in negative terms, since participating in it was experienced as an obligation. In addition, one had to "resign" from the church if one did not want to be a member, which included paying church taxes. Resigning from the church would mean that a "church wedding", another rite that some of the participants highlighted as an important future prospect, would not be possible. In this way, some young people problematised the central social role of the Lutheran Church in this case study (Lammi). Furthermore, and for obvious reasons, the young people who were brought together by confirmation preparation and the confirmation ritual were Christians or came from families with a Christian background. In rural Lammi this was an overwhelming majority of the

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youths, and confirmation did not apply to youths from other religious backgrounds in the immigrant reception centre. In suburban Oslo, confirmation likewise did not apply to the many youths who were from other religious backgrounds. However, as the Oslo case study showed, mosques provided different activities and services to Muslim youths. This was not the case to the same extent in Lammi where there were only Christian FBOs. Generally, the rural areas in the Nordic countries have more homogeneous populations than the big cities and a narrower range of religious and other organisations. As we reiterate below, location is an important factor influencing the experiences of young people, especially as it intersects with religious belonging and affiliation but also class and race.

In the case study from Oslo there was also talk about "street youths" who gathered outdoors. Street youths were mostly seen as "others" in the FBOs. In one of the Church of Norway parishes both the adult representative and young people spoke of the street youths in terms that evoked ethnic differences and hierarchies of belonging. Religion was not mentioned explicitly in this context, although street youths and marginalised youths in the suburbs of Oslo more generally are often associated with Islam in Norwegian public discourse (Holte: 2018b, 3–4). One of the mosques reached out to the street youths to integrate them into the organisation and help them get off the streets. In this way this FBO acted to bridge a social divide between "us" and "them", but the activities did not aim to reach beyond the borders of their religious community: the youth group members in this mosque said that they only targeted and "talk[ed] to people we know have Muslim background" (Chapter 7). Although exceptions could be found, family and social background were dominant factors in determining the youths' religious engagement, and also which FBOs approached which youths with the aim of recruiting or helping them.

The Oslo case study showed how Christian and Muslim FBOs dealt with stereotypes about their respective religions, although the stereotypes were different. The youths suggested that being a religious person might be easier in a diverse city district such as Søndre Nordstrand than in more homogeneous Norwegian and Nordic localities, and some youths thought that being a Muslim was more broadly accepted in Oslo compared to being a Christian. On the other hand, the Muslim FBOs in the Oslo case study faced negative stereotypes. Commenting on the same case study findings, Holte (2018b, 78) notes that the Muslim FBO that reached out to "street youths" attracted negative media attention, which may be understood in terms of how Islamophobic discourses have been mainstreamed in Norway, the Nordic countries and in Europe more broadly (Bangstad: 2014). The different positions and relative privileges of the different religions thus appeared to be complex in the Oslo case study. In Lammi, in comparison, the Lutheran national church was conspicuously more dominant as there were far fewer other FBOs around and no FBOs that were not Christian. As there were also fewer people belonging to minority religions in general and Islam in particular, it was harder to assess the

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position of minority religions, such as Islam, in this case study. Across the two Nordic case studies, the distribution of privileges among religions – and more specifically between Christianity and Islam – varied between affiliates and organisations, and they may have depended on intersections with other factors such as age and location.

Also, belonging to a minority religion such as Islam did not seem to add a layer of oppression or advantage to youths' social position in South Africa as it seems to have done in Oslo, since the context is again very different. In Chapter 3 we illuminated the high percentage of people describing themselves as belonging to the Christian faith in South Africa. Unlike the Nordic countries, South Africa is characterised by the presence of multiple Christian churches, as was explained in the South African case studies. It was thus not surprising that the majority of our participants identified themselves as Christians, although the presence of Muslim communities was clearly evident in various ways, for example, through old and new mosques in Riverlea, Emakhazeni and Pretoria Central. Yet, belonging to churches had different meanings for research participants.

The Riverlea case study showed how the church contributed to some young people's ability to overcome adverse conditions. However, it was also shown how churches could marginalise young people further if moral terms dictated social norms. Similarly, participants in the Emakhazeni case study expressed a wish to be respected by the church instead of being judged. An example from the Pretoria case study also illustrated such judging when Solly and Joyce were labelled as "*nyaope* people" (referring to people who use the illegal addictive substance – Chapter 6) by church members and therefore prevented from accessing resources they desperately needed.

"Franschhoek is an overwhelmingly Christian town" (Chapter 9). As such, mainly participants with experiences related to the Christian faith were sampled in Franschhoek. The manner in which marginality was described along with racial, class and spatial dynamics in the experience of the youth participants in the Franschhoek case study was not affected by their religious affiliation. In other words, while religious affiliation, and in particular affiliation to a church, was reported by all but two of the research participants in Franschhoek, their experience of marginality did not appear to be determined by this affiliation.

From specific examples in Pretoria, in contrast, it became clear that certain young people were far more able to direct their lives, if they were able to forge relations that revolved around religious affiliation and especially religious activities within specific contexts. Since sampling in the YOMA project focused on potential participants associated with NEET categories, it was thus not surprising that none of the Pretoria participants were formally employed. Although some participants had some form of training or were in school, they did not have good prospects for further studies or stable employment. However, in rare cases sponsors or FBOs were seeking to change

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this dynamic. For example, a few of the female participants who were linked with a particular FBO were studying part-time at institutions of higher learning (tertiary education). The participants in this case study, similar to most of the participants in the South African case studies, were all young black people living in a country with an oversupply of unemployed people with only basic skills (Chapter 2; cf. Ferguson: 2015). These circumstances on their own already created very limited opportunities. Specific age,[3] skills level and lack of access to networks or people with resources were intensifying their experiences of marginalisation. Moving from a place such as Emakhazeni or Franschhoek to a city, such as Pretoria, in no way guaranteed employment opportunities, and in some cases people's circumstances may have even worsened (cf. Rabe et al: 2019). However, a subsample of women in the Pretoria case study lived in foster homes for young women (with a "house mother") for a number of years. These housing initiatives were sponsored by a local FBO. Some of these women moved to Pretoria when they were young, in some cases because their parents could not look after them any longer (cf. Rabe: 2018). What is distinctive about these women is that although they were not employed, they were often studying part-time and immersed in community and church initiatives and volunteering for projects. The continued involvement and dedication by an FBO thus created some stability in the lives of these women.

In the Nordic case studies there were some examples of how FBOs complemented the public welfare services. The Buddhist organisation in the Oslo case study included young people with mental problems in their activities, and a boy who participated in a focus group interview in a mosque spoke of how the mosque had been important in helping him deal with unemployment, being "on the streets" and what he described as being "depressed". In Lammi, in turn, diaconal work in the parish of the Lutheran Church and the free churches helped those who were financially poor by, for instance, delivering clothes and food.

Thus, the importance of different FBOs was evident in the lives of many research participants in all the case studies, even if in different ways. What is particularly noteworthy is the way that the FBOs could play a positive or negative role depending on how they related to other ascribed identity markers such as (presumed) religious background or membership, "street youths" (in Oslo; Chapter 7) or illicit drug-related labels (in Pretoria; Chapter 6). Although some FBOs held influential positions in at least certain sectors within some of the specific localities, their presence did not necessarily benefit all young people at the margins. FBOs were thus acting as institutions of power where benefits and resources could be made available (or not), depending on how people were generally perceived. In everyday life some

3 Only caregivers of people younger than 18 years can qualify for the targeted state-sponsored child grant in South Africa (Ngubane & Maharaj: 2018).

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of our participants thus had to present themselves as people "worthy" of access to resources based on criteria set by FBOs. In the specific spaces where the FBOs were situated, power relations were based on the relationships between members and non-members – the latter often being young people at the margins, although their marginal positions were not a direct consequence of not being member of an FBO.

We briefly considered the relation between religion and its unique intersections with other identities or positions above; in the next section we highlight how gender dynamics intersected with other forms of power dynamics in complicated ways in the case study contexts.

12.4 Gendered Experiences through an Intersectional Lens

Collins and Bilge (2016, 103) argue that intersectionality studies are still usually associated with women and gender studies but, as mentioned above, the adoption of the concept of intersectionality in other work is increasing. Here, we focus on how the different positions associated with different genders, not only women, intersect with other areas of life. In the case studies from South Africa, we found that women were most likely to cite pregnancy and men the importance of being a breadwinner as their main concerns. As Cindy from the Riverlea case study candidly explained: "You know, the girls fall pregnant, the guys have to go get a job to look after the kids." These blunt gendered expectations expressed in South Africa were absent in the Nordic case studies. This absence in the Nordic case studies could partly be explained by the support available when living in a welfare state (Chapter 3), but gender still influenced youths' experiences. Some of the female participants in Oslo and Lammi specifically mentioned having to endure sexist remarks in public spaces that signalled a lack of respect for them and also made them feel insecure. In the Oslo case study, the participants linked the negative comments with male "refugees" and not with young "Norwegian" men. Here, the "us" and "them" narrative was thus not straightforward masculine or feminine constructions, but was based on the intersection of ethnicity, (assumed) citizenship status and gender – thus underscoring the importance of social context.

The street youths focused on in the Oslo case study were generally also seen as "immigrant" boys (Chapter 7). In this case study, young immigrant men in NEET situations on the streets emerged as hyper-visible in the sense that it is unclear whether they existed as individuals or whether they were rather a construction of other people's social positioning, a point we will return to below.[4] The absence of

4 The question implied here is whether the youths visible on the streets were in NEET situations, or whether the street youths and the NEET youths were discrete groups. Other studies in Oslo have

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women in marginal situations in this case study reflects how some marginalised youths attract disproportionate attention, while others go almost unnoticed. The hyper-visibility of the implicitly male, immigrant and NEET street youths entailed the invisibility of other NEET young people, including NEET young women. NEET young women were not interviewed and rarely mentioned in the interviews for the Oslo case study. NEET young men, such as Martin, who did not have an immigrant background and was not on the streets, but lived a quiet life doing "nothing" and spending time online on his computer, were similarly rather invisible (Chapter 7). We hasten to note that visibility in this context can be an advantage, if it means that resources are allocated and initiatives enacted, but also a disadvantage, if it leads to stigmatisation.

Gender appeared to be particularly consequential in the experience of young women participants in the Franschhoek case study, as they bore a larger burden of care because of single parenthood. This affected participants' capacity to both remain in education as well as to find and hold employment, although this did not necessarily apply only to women. One young father also mentioned being forced to choose between the responsibilities of being an employee and a father, and since he chose the latter, he was unemployed. In Franschhoek, rurality without a public transport infrastructure and other amenities served to compound the problems of this young man's access to employment opportunities when faced with the demands of parenthood. The absence of social services in this town was linked to the rural location characterised by weaker infrastructure. Gender as a construct on its own signals different experiences, but once we focused on gender within a specific social context, an even more varied picture emerged for women and men. Beyond care responsibilities, both young men and women experienced a lack of education, employment and training opportunities which appeared to combine with their spatial, racial and class position and positioning. Location is therefore not only associated with the historical legacy of spatial planning during the apartheid era, but also with the current nature of social service provision in Franschhoek.

In Emakhazeni the child support grant from the state was mentioned by some participants, but with the awareness that the grant was not enough to cover basic needs.[5] Apart from the grant, the wider implications of sexual health repeatedly came to the fore in this case study because of the large number of people living with HIV (PLWHIV) in the area. Participants also mentioned related aspects such

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problematised the way that street youths are assumed to be young immigrant men in NEET situations (e.g. Bydel Grorud: 2016, 11–13).

5 The value of the child support grant was R420 per month from April 2019, less than US$30. Although it is believed by some that poor South African women get pregnant in order to obtain the child support grant, research does not support this perception (Makiwane et al.: 2006; Ngubane & Maharaj: 2018).

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as men having sexual relations with several different women at the same time. This finding resonates with other studies in South Africa showing how men with access to financial resources are often sought after by women (Shefer & Strebel: 2012). This gives rise to very unequal power relations between some men and women, often referred to as the "sugar daddy phenomenon". Although such relationships leave women vulnerable, this does not necessarily imply that they are only victims. Women may also actively seek such relationships on the basis of a desire for material commodities, status and emotional investments (Shefer & Strebel: 2012). For young people and others at the margins, "relations of dependence" may represent an improvement in their situation (Ferguson: 2015, 141–164).

Worthiness of support by FBOs was highlighted in a focus group in Pretoria Central, held with women living on a temporary basis (usually three months) in a shelter run by an FBO. Many of these women lived there with their small children. At the time there was no such shelter catering for adult men and hence many of the participants lived permanently on the street. The women in this case study who lived permanently on the street were drug dependent and/or foreigners, again signalling the importance of not focusing on gender on its own. In these cases the female participants living permanently on the street were not able to forge social relationships that could provide them with better opportunities. Services for pregnant women and women with small children (provided the women were not users of illegal drug substances) were more readily available than for other people living permanently on the street. To illustrate, the couple mentioned above, Solly and Joyce, were stuck in Pretoria and their situation deteriorated rapidly. Joyce then became pregnant and, based on this status, there were social structures in place to help them. In the case of the male participants, some in the Pretoria case study felt enormous pressure to provide for family members, even though they were barely able to support themselves. In one case Luke was tempted to take part in an armed robbery in order to help his family financially. Complicated gendered experiences thus manifested themselves where being a parent or becoming a parent played an important role, albeit that this was experienced differently by men and women. Women were most likely to have their reproductive health needs met and to receive help when they had to take care of small children, while men highlighted the financial support that they felt they should provide to their family members (Chapter 6).

From our findings, and not surprisingly, the social constructions of gender were embedded in specific contexts. More surprising was how certain participants in the South African case studies said that relations with FBOs were more easily available for those experiencing potentially heightened vulnerability, for example, by being pregnant, very young or more visibly in need. The FBOs thus seemed to uphold ideas of the deserving and undeserving poor, particularly the idea that working-age

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and able-bodied men (and women) should be able to provide for themselves (cf. Ferguson: 2015).

12.5 Location, Location, Location

From an intersectionality perspective, there are different forms of inequality that prevail simultaneously and have combined effects on individuals' lives, since they reinforce each other. In this section we thus analyse location in relation to other social positions.

Spatial separation goes hand in hand with economic separation, but this is especially true in the case of South Africa with its extreme levels of economic inequality (Chapter 3). From the South African case study research presented in this book, it is almost self-evident that space reinforces inequality. It was, for example, clear that lack of employment was fuelled by aspects such as poor education and skills training (Chapter 2) compounded by seasonally limited employment opportunities in an area such as Franschhoek. This, in turn, could be seen as largely the result of years of racial segregation whereby young people were (and often still are) physically removed and spatially separated from educational, training and employment opportunities. Space and race continue to be a critical intersection that contributes to the way that we may understand and analyse the lived experiences of young people in South Africa. This is well demonstrated in the sample selection of the Franschhoek case study – intentionally sampling NEET youth, none of the participants was either white or residing in the "affluent" centre of Franschhoek. As such, these participants found themselves in a town separated along racial and spatial lines, with much higher population densities and lower incomes in the areas where predominantly coloured and black people lived (Chapter 9).

Similarly, Riverlea was established in terms of the policy of forced removals of the National Party government during apartheid. Moreover, unemployment and crime, including illegal drug sales and abuse, were prevalent in Riverlea, as they were in Franschhoek. As one young woman, Lerato, responded to a question about living in Riverlea with an understated comment: "it's not an ideal place" (Chapter 8).

Equally in the Emakhazeni case, the research participants were also situated away from the economic hubs. In addition, unemployment and PLWHIV are rife in these areas. Here young people had to compete for limited positions as waiters and cleaners in the tourism industry, since they had only basic skills and limited access to arable land. Previous employment opportunities in the area were diminishing as a result of the scaling down of mining activities and hence images of youths without agency or hope were reported in this case study (Chapter 10).

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The majority of young people in these three case study contexts thus grew up in a space where there were almost no economic opportunities and their chances of finding or creating such opportunities were slim. These close-up pictures from the case studies resonate with representative quantitative panel studies in South Africa (National Income Dynamics Studies – NIDS), which indicate that persistently poor households "are about twice as reliant on social grants as households in other classes, and much less reliant on income from the labour market." Moreover, the majority of such households are black, situated in rural areas, excluded from the labour market, and the household heads have a low formal education (Zizzamia et al.: 2019, 24).

Intergenerational cycles of poverty are thus perpetuated by spatial separateness, which implies that the political changes in South Africa have not brought about economic changes for specific sectors of people in South Africa. This effect of spatial division is common knowledge in South Africa and in trying to bridge this separateness and access opportunities more easily, many young people in South Africa move to cities, such as Pretoria and Johannesburg (Hall et al.: 2015; Rabe et al.: 2019). This movement of young people clearly demonstrates agency on the part of the youths (which is not to imply that non-migrants are not demonstrating agency in one way or another). It would appear at first as if the urban participants had more access to opportunities and to amenities such as health and transport compared to rural participants. Yet, the pervasive presence of illegal drugs, living apart from family members and a general lack of economic opportunities in Pretoria Central made it extremely difficult for young people to find gainful employment.

Unlike the other three South African case studies, Pretoria does not necessarily seem to be an area "stuck" in residential racial segregation. However, on closer inspection, residential racial separation has not disappeared entirely, despite the more fluid nature of movement and migration. In the Pretoria Central case study, two profiles in particular manifested among the research participants, namely young people who lived with family members in the city and young people who moved to the city on their own. Those young participants who migrated came from various places ranging from nearby towns (within the Gauteng province), other provinces and other African countries. In the Pretoria sample, those who lived with family members were often younger than 18 years and the most likely to attend school or some form of training facility. Such participants were thus not strictly within the NEET category, but these participants were included as they were at great risk of becoming part of the NEET category (Chapter 2). Most of the migrants had come to Pretoria with the expectation of better economic opportunities compared to their place of origin. For example, Benjamin, a young male participant who grew up in Pretoria but finished school in a different province of South Africa, returned to Pretoria. He worked for periods as a builder under short-term contract agreements, but he had been unemployed for some time at the time of the interview. Benjamin did not only refer to himself as an unemployed person, but painted a picture of

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general unemployment in the area by referring to his unemployed friends as well. Unlike the rural areas, we thus found more cases in Pretoria of people who fall in and out of absolute poverty; they were employed at times, but not continuously.

Among the migrant participants in Pretoria, there were two subsidiary profiles. Firstly, there were participants who, after they had migrated to the city, could not find meaningful opportunities, and became stuck and lost their optimism. As one participant stated: "Ah, I don't have any hope … It is just I am giving up" (Chapter 6). These participants usually lived on the streets permanently and in some cases they became dependent on illegal substances. The older the participants were and the longer they had lived on the streets, the bleaker they would portray their future. Secondly, those migrants who made meaningful connections with individuals or FBOs were either engaged in informal economic activities or studied further with sponsorship. The research participants in this latter group had managed to forge informal networks in the city with both strong and weak ties (cf. Granovetter: 1973). This latter group consisted mostly of women who moved to the city at a young age and were therefore more likely to have been helped by support agencies, including formal FBOs, as discussed above.

People from various countries also cross borders to Nordic countries in search of better opportunities (Chapter 3). They not only shift their locations, but also their legal status, at least until they obtain a new citizenship, which can take a long time. Many of the research participants in Oslo and Lammi were immigrants or the children of immigrants.[6] In both contexts young people from immigrant families were subject to certain forms of labelling. In the Oslo case study young people who did not themselves have an immigrant background in one of the Church of Norway parishes used the term "refugees" to describe the "street youth" in their community, as we mentioned above. This term implies that the street youths came from somewhere else; it implies that they were immigrants and not fully "Norwegian" – at least not in the ethnic sense. The street youths were also more generally identified in media and public discourse as "immigrant youths" – a term that is normally understood to include the children and even grandchildren of immigrants, as well as youths who have migrated to Norway themselves (cf. Holte: 2018b, 3–4). This reflects a process of social positioning, where young people and other research participants distanced themselves from positions seen as problematic, such as "street youth" and "NEET". One result was stigmatisation of youths with immigrant backgrounds.

6 Labour migrants from other EU/EEA countries, who constitute the majority of immigrants in both Norway and Finland, did not feature in these case studies. The immigrants who featured in the case studies were mostly from the Middle East and Africa, and many of them migrated as asylum seekers, refugees, or to be with family members who were already in Norway.

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Similar processes of social positioning were seen in the case study from Lammi. Unlike in Oslo, where migrant families have been arriving from outside Europe since the late 1960s and some are now in their third and fourth generation in Norway, ethnicity intersects with being a refugee or an asylum seeker in Lammi. In fact, without reception centres for asylum seekers, Lammi would have been an almost mono-ethnic community. By referring to themselves as "ethnic Finns", participants who were not asylum seekers or refugees were positioning themselves by drawing distinctions between immigrants and themselves. The analogous idea of "ethnic Norwegians" was evoked in the Oslo case study. When they used the concept of ethnicity in this way, research participants implied that their claim to belonging and citizenship was stronger than the claims of immigrants and their descendants' claims to belong in Norway, even when they had residence permits or had become citizens.[7] As Gullestad (2002) noted two decades ago, immigrants are sometimes referred to as "guests" in Norway. Evoking the ideas of Finnish or Norwegian ethnicity thus entailed a process whereby the research participants were consciously redefining social positions and positioning themselves in hierarchies of belonging where the implied hosts belonged while the guests did not.

Generally, in all the case studies, the research participants were acutely aware of their vulnerabilities and the little economic power they had. Yet many of them believed they could improve their socio-economic position by moving to other locations, sometimes other countries. However, as the case studies from Lammi, Oslo and Pretoria illustrate, the realities of the new spaces seldom entailed rosy opportunities and exposed young people to power dynamics with regards to belonging and citizenship status. This was especially the case for international migration as location intersected with citizenship and ethnic categories (cf. Malkki: 1992). The relevance of social context, power relations and social positioning from an intersectional perspective were thus all demonstrated here. A comparative view of the case studies in this book shows how physical location was important in determining young people's opportunities for education, training and employment. At the same time, moving between locations – or even being born to parents who had moved between locations – exposed young people to power relations and processes of social positioning that could ultimately limit their ability to realise the opportunities available where they found themselves. Their gender, age, race

7 This restrictive idea of belonging and citizenship is echoed, to some extent, in the Finnish and Norwegian nationality laws, which are based on the legal principle of *jus sanguinis* (right of blood). Citizenship of these countries is primarily based on the citizenship of a child's parents. There are exceptions, such as naturalisation, but birth in Finland or Norway does not, in itself, confer citizenship to these countries. The South African nationality law, in contrast, is based on the principle of *jus soli* (right of soil). A person born in South Africa to South African citizens or permanent residents is automatically granted South African citizenship.

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or ethnicity, and possibly religious background all played a role in shaping the opportunities available to individual young people in given locations.

12.6 Intersectional Reflections on the Researchers

An intersectional lens applied to the researchers who formed part of this study is also of importance, since qualitative research is a dynamic process that requires reflexivity. First, none of the researchers could be classified as NEET, since they were employed or participating as students in research for this book. Age was important, since all the researchers were older than the research participants, although the age differences varied. In Norway, a good number of the youth participants came from Asian and African immigrant families, but the researchers were all Europeans; while some participants identified as Muslims, none of the researchers in Norway did. Furthermore, three of the four researchers in the Oslo case study lived in more privileged areas in western Oslo, while Søndre Nordstrand is part of the poorer eastern part of Oslo (cf. Holte: 2018b). Similarly, none of the Finnish researchers lived in Lammi, and some of the research participants were asylum-seeking youths without their families whose experiences were very different from those of the researchers. While all the case study researchers were affiliated with the Evangelical Lutheran Church, and this was also true of most of the youths interviewed for the Lammi case study, some of the youths were Muslims or had resigned their church membership, and one belonged to an African traditional religion. Furthermore, all the researchers in Finland were female, while both men and women were represented among the research participants.

The youths interviewed for the South African case studies were affiliated with Christianity or religiously unaffiliated, and the South African researchers were all, with the exception of one Muslim-affiliated female researcher, affiliated with Christianity. Furthermore, race was paramount in the case studies from South Africa where the salient apartheid racial categories still presented important markers for identity formation. All the research participants were black or coloured, yet the majority of the researchers in this study were white; three of the researchers were coloured and none were black. Initially, there were two black researchers who came from migrant communities, but they exited the research project early on for personal reasons. Black students were identified who could potentially be part of the research team, but they also fell by the wayside over time. Such difficulties in retaining black researchers may be indicative of a scarcity of black researchers in the country, but perhaps also of different life trajectories of black people in South Africa in general that does not facilitate a long-term commitment to a research project of this nature, even amongst the educated. As the racial divisions in South Africa

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gradually change over time, hopefully such skewness will become less pronounced in future.

Of course, being from the same racial category does not automatically imply shared identities or experiences in South Africa (or elsewhere), but belonging to different racial categories immediately implies having very different experiences. Being white is associated with privilege in South Africa and research participants from NEET categories would almost unavoidably associate white researchers with positions of privilege. This may to some extent be the case in the Nordic countries as well, where coming from an immigrant family from Asia or Africa can be associated with being underprivileged, while travelling from western to eastern Oslo to conduct research signifies privilege.

Regardless of the added complication of race, the power dynamics between researchers and participants are always difficult to manage (cf. Burawoy et al: 1991; Myrdal: 1969), especially in cases where there are huge divisions between the participants and the researchers. In the Franschhoek case study researchers tried to overcome this difficulty to an extent by ensuring that all data were gathered on the "turf" of the participants. In Lammi and Oslo, younger researchers did most of the interviews with the young people, and in Riverlea, Emakhazeni and Pretoria Central some of the researchers were more invested in the communities because of long-term associations. In Pretoria the dynamics were different because the one researcher with decades of investment in the community would still not know many of the participants, because the community is large and fluid. In cases where he would know the participants, it was decided that he would not do the interviews, since they may then feel more pressured to give answers that they would deem socially acceptable.

In short, this research was mainly done by outsiders and hence the findings should be interpreted in the light of this. This does not necessarily make the research less valid, as outsiders reveal aspects that are different from those that insiders highlight. One of the biggest disadvantages of being a researcher from outside is that limited or only specific information is shared by participants because of a lack of trust (Lofland & Lofland: 1995). As a specific case in point, the problems encountered with recruiting NEET young people for interviews in the Oslo case study may to some extent reflect a perception of the researchers as outsiders in the city district who could not be fully trusted. Yet, being an "insider" or an "outsider" is a fluid status, and in the journey towards becoming more of an insider (by spending time with participants), the way one is treated by participants is of importance (Rabe: 2003). Across many of the case studies we have seen the desperation and frustration of certain research participants, but also a certain appreciation of our interest in their lives. A certain optimism among some participants could be detected, exactly because outsiders were interested in their lives and hence they could discuss specific frustrations openly without fear of repercussions. In the Oslo case study,

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for instance, the researchers were able to interview representatives from a mosque generally known for avoiding researchers and the media, because the representatives believed that an international research project would produce more thorough analyses and avoid sensationalist headlines that would attract negative attention to their work. Furthermore, the religious dimension of our research project and its strong base in theological departments may have contributed towards granting the researchers a certain insider status in churches, mosques and other FBOs, regardless of the religious affiliation of the individual researchers. Although the information uncovered may be limited, there is a frankness in some of the findings that we believe to be an important contribution to understanding the lives of youth at the margins and the role of FBOs in their lives across the countries and locations of the case studies.

As mentioned above, when not only the marginalised but also the privileged are considered, inequality can sometimes be better understood (Dhamoon: 2011; Levine-Rasky: 2011). In a research setting social positions and power relations are continuously negotiated, and it is impossible to deny the researchers' access to material resources, especially compared to poor participants. Some participants wanted to engage the researchers beyond the research setting with the aim of gaining a possible link to material and symbolic resources. In other cases participants wished to explain their position of being unemployed in different terms (social positioning), such as a young man in the Pretoria case study who had completed his schooling and described himself as being on a "gap year". As researchers we did not consider in advance a label such as a gap year as a possibility for our participants, perhaps revealing our own class bias. It is as if young people at the margins are expected to work and if they do not, they are typecast as unemployed or NEET and part of the "unemployment problem". Yet we accept the term gap year for young people from wealthy families without necessarily linking those young people to the NEET category. As Ferguson (2015, 22) reminds us, the rich are often "idle non-workers" who receive generous cash incomes from various sources, which can include their parents. Young people are therefore easily placed in a position of economic vulnerability and even marginalised as a result of inequality and not unemployment per se.

In a similar vein, when analysing the dreams and hopes of our participants, a similar pattern of middle-class stereotypical gendered pictures emerged from all the case studies. Their dreams and hopes included owning a house, being providers to family members, being married, being good parents and eventually watching their children and even grandchildren, grow up. These dreams can of course be read as longing for stable lives free from economic hardships. But, they can also be interpreted as reflecting a desire to be accepted in mainstream society after having faced various forms of rejection and humiliation in their lives. Moreover, the dreams and hopes our participants shared with us indicated ambitions of a

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heterosexual lifestyle, and possibly all of them had heterosexual identities. Although we did not specifically set out to find young people from LGBTIQA+ categories, it was striking that none of our research participants said they identified with such categories, since queer activism is growing rapidly (Shefer: 2019). It may be difficult for participants who seemingly wish to blend in with the hegemonic norms of their communities to declare a non-hegemonic sexual identity such as gay or lesbian. This may be particularly true for those in South Africa agreeing to participate in a research project in which religion is one of the focus areas. This must be understood within the context of certain South African churches promoting heteronormative nuclear families in their sermons and marketing material.

Our social positions as researchers thus brought particular dynamics to the research process and the research should be read accordingly. It is our hope that more "insider" research (although the fluidity of this status cannot be denied) will follow our research to compensate for the gaps and shortcomings its approach necessarily entailed.

12.7 Conclusion

We have focused in this chapter on religious affiliation, gender and locality as critical entry points in understanding the life-worlds of youths at the margins. We have unearthed both positive and negative power relations between FBOs and youths at the margins. Furthermore, focusing on gender in relation to specific contexts demonstrated the complexities of parenting, structural unemployment, weak infrastructure and social services, religious affiliation and degrees of visibility. Physical location and movement within and between localities were linked with agency and the ability to redefine one's social standing within communities (social positioning).

By using an intersectional lens, this chapter highlighted such relational aspects of social positioning together with the centrality of power relations that were evident in the multiple positions that people construct and reconstruct in their daily lives (cf. Dhamoon: 2011, 230). This nuanced reflection on the case studies was placed within a broader picture in South Africa, where the after-effects of apartheid and colonialism, as well as the failings of the post-apartheid government, are central to the marginalisation of young people. In the case of Norway and Finland, NEET categories were evident among specified immigrant groupings, such as the asylum seekers in Lammi. Yet, both immigrant and non-immigrant youths engaged in processes of social positioning in which they distanced themselves from the NEET category. NEET was thus not only fluid in terms of external criteria, but also to the extent to which the youth participants accepted it as part of their own identity.

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From our discussion above it is clear that location, displacement and exclusion feed into each other. Many of the research participants, especially in the South African case studies, were not able to make a living in areas far removed from the economic hubs and engaged in different forms of migration, both nationally and transnationally. Yet migrant participants also experienced exclusionary practices in cities and immigration reception centres, as was reflected in the case studies from Oslo, Lammi and Pretoria. Although some participants found that basic health and shelter needs may be met, others had no such luck. Beyond such needs, only young, abused and pregnant women seemed to be able to find further care from the state. Without specific skills, young people were thus mostly focused on a daily struggle for survival. Welfare states, such as Finland and Norway, provide more services to those in need, and problems such as homelessness were not reported in the case studies from Lammi and Oslo. However, the researchers of these case studies found other forms of exclusion, notably from educational, training and employment opportunities and through processes of social positioning in general.

The intersectional lens applied in this chapter revealed far more than just an intersection between race and gender. Applying this lens has shown that preconceived ideas of gender, vulnerability and parenting may be misleading and that youths' religious background, affiliation and belonging can either enhance or limit their advantages or disadvantages, depending on how they intersect with other factors. Furthermore, related to the former insight, the intersectional perspective applied in this chapter has shown how well-placed FBOs could be instrumental in changing the life course of young people at the margins, but also reinforce exclusionary processes that sustain young people's marginal position. Lastly, our intersectional lens has underscored how disempowering a NEET status can be, but it has also shed light on the agency of certain young people. Although many interviewed young people were despondent about their situation and future prospects, some were rejecting the social position associated with a NEET category. When young people undertake a process of social positioning as agents with dreams that they believe in, we as researchers and communities at large should do the same and assist them in realising those dreams on their terms.

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