

What [Some] Students Know and Can Do

A case study of Norway, PISA, and exclusion

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Abstract

In recent years, exclusion rates on PISA have risen in many countries, including a sharper-than-average rise in Norway. This thesis focuses on Norway's experience with exclusion rates in PISA, including an analysis tracking this increase between 2000 and 2015. The research draws on theoretical perspectives highlighting how the globalization of educational governance and assessment has led to increased international competition and pressure for good results. In addition, this thesis explores several ideas that might explain why Norway's exclusion rates have risen.

A qualitative case study has been carried out in a municipality in Norway. The analysis is based on interviews with PISA Norway team members and select Norwegian school leaders. During interviews, school leaders also took part in an exercise to practice applying the PISA exclusion guidelines.

Key findings revealed that there is a distinction between using the terms "exemption" and "exclusion" in Norway. Additionally, although guidelines and training have become clearer over the years, there can be confusion between the exclusion guidelines used in PISA and on national tests. Interviews also revealed a high degree of school leader subjectivity in determining student participation, and that many school leaders made decisions to promote student feelings of mastery and minimize feelings of defeat. Recommendations include ideas for how to change future PISA training sessions for school leaders to address these issues and reduce student exclusion.

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encouraging my lifelong curiosity. In their own ways, my parents and sisters each let me know that they're always there for me, and I'm grateful for their unconditional love.

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A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Leah Aursand".

Leah Aursand

Oslo, April 2018

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Abbreviations

IIES	International Indicators of Educational Systems
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PGB	PISA Governing Board
PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment
PIRLS	Progress in International Reading Literacy Study
TIMSS	Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study
UK	United Kingdom
US	United States of America

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Introduction

1.1 Introduction

“Our education today is our economy tomorrow”

Andreas Schleicher (OECD, 2013b).

Over the past few decades, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) has emerged as an educational leader around the world (Meyer and Benavot, 2013). Moreover, largely through the growth of the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), the OECD has become a key actor defining what education should look like and how it should be measured globally. The OECD markets PISA as an important barometer of educational success and failure (OECD, 2016b) and through such marketing the assessment has continued to grow over time. For example, in PISA 2000, 32 countries participated; that number more than doubled to 72 participants for PISA 2015 (OECD, 2001, 2015) and over 80 countries are scheduled to participate in PISA 2018 (OECD, n.d.b). PISA’s rising participation and influence in national educational debates has led some scholars to deem it “the world’s most important exam” (Coughlan, 2013) and “the main engine in the global accountability juggernaut” (Meyer and Benavot, 2013, p. 9).

1.2 Rationale

There is a large group of academics raising issues with PISA and its validity (Goldstein, 2004; Prais, 2003; Arffman, 2016; Stankov et al., 2017; Sjøberg, 2012; Rutkowski and Rutkowski, 2010, 2013, 2016; Hopfenbeck and Maul, 2011). Rutkowski and Rutkowski (2016)'s research mentions that a number of countries demonstrated high exclusion rates in PISA 2015, which may raise concerns about the representativeness of their samples. Fernandez-Cano (2016) similarly raises a number of methodological concerns with PISA, one of which being how exclusion rates differ between countries, leading to varying coverage of populations. Furthermore, high rates of student exclusion on tests like PISA can also raise concerns about whether the tests represent students with disabilities too. Schuelka (2012) argues that students with disabilities are wrongfully excluded from PISA and other International Large-Scale Assessments; he criticizes how these tests do not offer enough reasonable accommodations for students.

Despite this, there is little to no research examining how exclusion rates on PISA have changed for individual participants from 2000 to 2015. To help better understand why exclusion rates are rising in one country, this thesis will employ a case study design and focus on Norway, a country with some of the most dramatic changes in exclusion rates over the past decade and a half. First, this paper will analyze Norway's exclusion rates on PISA over time—both compared to its own rate in previous years, as well as compared to peer countries. Next, the qualitative component in this thesis will focus on the experiences of the PISA Norway team members, as well as Norwegian school leaders. Both of these groups of individuals are key actors in influencing Norway's exclusion rate. This thesis presents the first time that Norwegian school leaders have been asked to interpret and apply the PISA exclusion criteria in an interview setting. Therefore, this thesis sheds new light into an important area of test sampling and assessment for Norway.

In summary, the contribution of this work is twofold: (1) an analysis of changes in exclusion rates for 31 countries over six cycles of PISA, and (2) a presentation of

how school leaders interpret and apply the PISA exclusion guidelines. This thesis contributes to the field of research available about PISA and exclusion rates, as well as about PISA and Norway, although it cannot be generalized to other countries or other periods in time.

1.3 Background

Developing and administering PISA is a collaboration between the OECD and partner governments. There is a PISA Governing Board (PGB) consisting of representatives of OECD members and PISA associates (OECD, n.d.d). The PGB decides the policy priorities for PISA and ensures that they are upheld in each round of testing. Academics in expert groups work to design and validate the test instruments, with a particular focus on the framework for the major domain (OECD, 2016a). However, in all cycles of PISA so far, all of the experts in these groups have come from OECD countries (Adams and Wu, 2003; OECD, 2004, 2006, 2010, 2013a, 2016a).

Each country also has a national center that is run by country team members and follows PISA's administration rules (OECD, 2016a). PISA prides itself on being an advanced form of testing and the OECD publishes thousands of pages of reports and policy recommendations for each cycle (OECD, 2015, 2016a,b). As described in an undated strategy document titled "Beyond PISA 2015: A Longer-Term Strategy of PISA," PISA is explicitly policy oriented:

[PISA] focuses on providing data and analysis that can help guide decisions on education policy. By linking data on students' learning outcomes with data on key factors that shape learning in and out of school, PISA highlights differences in performance patterns and identifies features common to high-performing students, schools and education systems. (OECD, n.d.a, p. 1)

The OECD boasts that the PISA results are scientifically driven, giving it the au-

thority to create policy recommendations (Meyer, 2014). In recent years, PISA has been used to influence or defend new education policy changes for a number of European countries, including Germany, Sweden, France, Portugal, Scotland, Sweden, and Norway (Grek, 2009; Pons, 2011; Sjøberg, 2012, 2016; Ringarp, 2016). As Grek (2009) describes, although its influence has manifested differently in various countries, there is strong evidence that PISA has affected countries throughout Europe, whether

from the PISA-surprise of Finland, to the PISA-shock of Germany, the PISA-promotion of the UK, and the focus by the European Commission on the possibilities PISA data have created. What is constant is the acceptance of PISA—and the parameters and direction it establishes—along with its incorporation into domestic and European policy-making.
(p. 34)

With such a keen eye towards implication for policy and practice, it is important that the PISA results speak truthfully for the population of students it intends to measure. Through a complex sampling system, a group of students are selected from each country’s population of students aged 15 years, 3 months to 16 years, 2 months and given a two-hour segment of the exam (OECD, 2014b). The test covers three cognitive domains: reading literacy, mathematical literacy, and scientific literacy; in each cycle, one domain is selected as the focus domain, receiving about two-thirds of the testing space (OECD, 2014b). The focus domains rotate each year, as shown in Table 1.1.

Table 1.1: Focus domain for each cycle of PISA, 2000–2015

Reading	Mathematics	Science
2000	2003	2006
2009	2012	2015

After the test, students answer a 35-minute contextual questionnaire containing questions about a student’s background. Topics include gender, socioeconomic status,

language, migration, motivation, and engagement with school (OECD, 2016a). Based on their background information and performance on the section of the test they took, the student receives five plausible scores to model scores for the entire 10-hour test. Analysts then compile this information for all participating students to come up with scores for the country's population, as well as place countries' performance in comparison with each other (OECD, 2014b).

However, there are measures put in place to allow some students to be excluded from the test if they meet specific criteria. Exclusions are allowed at the school level or student level, and are intended to relieve students with severe physical, cognitive/emotional/psychological, or language difficulties from taking the test (OECD, 2001). Some countries also allow for a fourth "other" category to capture other reasons for exclusion (OECD, 2001, 2016a). Each country must report the number of students who are excluded, and exclusion data are published in each PISA cycle's technical report.

The OECD has set a threshold that the test will achieve coverage of at least 95% of the total population (OECD, 2001). In other words, no more than 5% of students in each country should be excluded on the test. As explained in an OECD report about PISA 2000, "the ceiling for population exclusion of 5 per cent ensures that potential bias resulting from exclusion is likely to remain within one standard error of sampling" (Kirsch et al., 2002, p. 86).

Over the past six cycles of PISA, there have been a number of instances where a country's level of student exclusion exceeded the OECD's 5% threshold (See Table 2.4, on page 19). And with each new cycle of PISA, the number of countries excluding more than 5% of students continues to rise (OECD, 2016a). For Norway in particular, this rise has been abnormally sharp: although Norway excluded just 2.67% of students in PISA 2000 (OECD, 2001), by PISA 2015 the rate had increased over 250% (OECD, 2016a). This means that in the most recent round of PISA, 6.75% of Norwegian students were excluded (OECD, 2016a). However, during the same timeframe, exclusion rates on Norway's national tests remained between 0.7–

3.5% for students of a similar age ¹. Although student exclusion rates have increased on Norway's national tests, they still remain well below the OECD's 5% threshold intended for PISA.

Given the fast pace of increasing exclusion as well as the discrepancy between exclusion on national tests and on PISA, there is a need for further research examining student exclusion in Norway more closely. Here, student exclusion is defined as any students from the national population who were initially selected for the exam, but ultimately not given the exam.

1.4 Research focus and purpose

This study has several comparative dimensions. First, the quantitative analysis compares exclusion rates both over time (from 2000 to 2015) and across 31 countries. This study also addresses issues comparing Norway's exclusion rate on PISA and Norway's exclusion rate on national tests. This qualitative research compares how exclusion on PISA is experienced across different groups of stakeholders; both how exclusion is communicated by PISA Norway staff, and how exclusion is understood by school leaders. The research is structured as a case study. This was chosen to narrow the focus sufficiently for the scope of this thesis, while also to allow for the depth required to understand the perspectives of those involved in student exclusion on PISA in Norway.

The research purpose is (1) to further explore the complexity of rising PISA exclusion rates in Norway, (2) understand how exclusion rates are being experienced at the school and national project level, and (3) examine how PISA exclusion rates can be understood in context with national test exclusion rates.

¹According to data available from skoleporten.udir.no, Norway's online portal for education data

In order to understand these various aspects of student exclusion on PISA in Norway, the research questions of this study are the following:

1. How is exclusion communicated to school leaders by the PISA Norway team?
2. How do Norwegian school leaders understand and implement exclusion guidelines on PISA and national tests?
3. What are explicit reasons for excluding and not excluding students in Norway on PISA?

The first two research questions focus on how exclusion is communicated, understood, and undertaken by key Norwegian stakeholders involved in the PISA administration. While the first question aims to better understand the work done by PISA Norway team members, the second questions seeks to discover how select school leaders implement and understand the guidelines on a general level. The third research question explores how school leaders apply the guidelines to real students, including the reasons used to exclude some students and not exclude others in a practical exercise of the PISA test. This is in the hope of seeing if these reasons align with the intentions of the PISA exclusion guidelines.

1.5 Structure of the thesis

This thesis is organized as follows:

Chapter 2 will present relevant background information about PISA, Norway's national tests, and student exclusion. This chapter will also provide quantitative analysis comparing exclusion rates in the 31 countries that participated in all rounds of PISA testing between 2000–2015, as well as extra analysis into Norway's exclusion rates both on PISA and in national tests.

Chapter 3 will present an overview of key literature and theoretical perspectives in this research. This chapter will analyze the OECD's comparative nature and

increasing role in global education, as well as explore how PISA in particular has affected Norwegian discourse and policy. This chapter also provides two possible theories for why Norway's exclusion rates have risen so dramatically on PISA.

Chapter 4 will present the methodology and methods behind this research. This chapter justifies why a qualitative approach was taken and provides information about the research strategy, data collection, and data analysis, among other considerations.

Chapter 5 will present and discuss the findings of the research, organized according to three research questions. This chapter will include an analysis of PISA exclusion guidelines over the years, as well as present the perspectives of school leaders and PISA team members obtained from interviews.

Chapter 6 will conclude by reviewing the main findings of the research, providing recommendations based on these findings, acknowledging the limitations of the research, and suggesting opportunities for future research.

Chapter 2

Background

In the previous chapter, I introduced this thesis’s research problem, purpose, and focus. I also briefly discussed the research gap surrounding PISA’s exclusion rates in Norway, and justified why this research is an important contribution to the field. In this chapter I will first provide background information about PISA and exclusion rates. Then, I will analyze exclusion rate changes in PISA for 31 countries that participated in all rounds of testing from 2000–2015. Finally, I will justify why Norway was chosen as a case study for this research by presenting how Norway’s exclusion rate changes are the most extreme of all 31 countries, as well as by comparing student exclusion in PISA to student exclusion in Norway’s national tests.

2.1 About PISA

PISA is a triennial assessment developed by the OECD that is given to 15-year olds around the world. Although the OECD organizes the PISA administration, the tests are financed by individual country government education ministries, and administered at the local level by country government officials (OECD, n.d.c). PISA seeks to assess students’ skills and compare countries to one another. Tests con-

tain questions covering math, reading, and science knowledge (OECD, n.d.c). The test material is not directly related to specific country curricula, but instead aims to assess students' responses to real-life situations and 21st century skills, like critical thinking and problem solving (OECD, n.d.c). The OECD publishes the PISA data for free alongside with many reports, recommendations, and individual country profiles (OECD, n.d.c).

In 2000, PISA was first administered in 32 countries (OECD, 2001) and the number of participating countries has grown to 72 by the 2015 cycle (OECD, 2015). Table 2.1 shows the number of participating countries for each year of assessment.

Table 2.1: Number of participating countries in PISA, 2000–2015

2000	2003	2006	2009	2012	2015
32	41	57	65	65	72

2.1.1 Exclusion rates in PISA

Since its inception in 2000, PISA has defined its population the same. Each cycle assesses students ranging from 15 years, 3 months to 16 years, 2 months who are enrolled in at least grade 7 (OECD, 2001). The PISA 2000 Technical Report boasts of the tests' coverage, claiming that:

All countries attempted to maximize the coverage of 15 year olds enrolled in education in their national samples, including students enrolled in special education institutions. As a result, PISA 2000 reached standards of population coverage that are unprecedented in international surveys of this kind. (OECD, 2001, p. 231).

Despite this claim, PISA 2000 and all subsequent tests have allowed for exclusions in two different categories: 1) school level exclusions, and 2) within-school exclusions,

also referred to as exclusions at the student level (OECD, 2001, 2005, 2009, 2012, 2014a, 2015). School level exclusions are allowed if a school is “geographically inaccessible” or “where the administration of the PISA assessment was not considered feasible” (OECD, 2001, p. 232); these are called “a-priori exclusions” and are usually not included in the national target population. School level exclusions are also permitted for schools that are in a ‘non-covered’ area of the country, or for schools that only teach students in categories defined under ‘within-school exclusions,’ for example, a school for the blind (OECD, 2001). Within-school exclusions are permissible for four different categories of students; the decision to exclude students is made at the discretion of school officials for:

1. Students with physical disabilities (“functional disabilities”) that prohibit them from completing the tests,
2. Students who are intellectually disabled (“educable mentally retarded”) such that they are unable to complete the tests,
3. Students who are non-native speakers of the assessment language and have had less than one year of instruction in this language,
4. Students with ‘other stipulations’, as decided by qualified staff members (OECD, 2001).

All cycles of PISA have set a goal that the overall exclusion rate should be no higher than 5% in any given country (OECD, 2001, 2005, 2009, 2012, 2014a, 2015). PISA 2000 justified this 5% threshold since it “ensures that the potential bias resulting from exclusions is likely to remain within one standard error of sampling” (OECD, 2001, p. 232). Furthermore, PISA acknowledges in subsequent reports that efforts were undertaken to guarantee that exclusions, if unavoidable, were kept as small as possible (OECD, 2014a). However, the findings of analyzing the exclusion rates show a different story. Different forms of permissible exclusions and the overall exclusion rate goal are summarized in Table 2.2.

Table 2.2: Summary of categories for allowed exclusion in PISA

School level exclusion	Within school exclusion	Overall exclusion rate goal
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Geographic access/limitation of feasibility • “Non-covered” areas of a country • Schools only for students with significant disabilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Functionally disabled • Intellectually disabled • Limited proficiency in test language 	5%

2.2 Exclusion rates in PISA from 2000–2015

2.2.1 Analyzing exclusion rate changes

Examining exclusion rate changes in the 31 countries that participated in all rounds of PISA testing between 2000–2015 provides an interesting story of what has happened in many countries with regards to student participation in PISA. From these findings, Norway emerged as an interesting case study. Although there were 72 countries participating in PISA in 2015 (OECD, 2015), I chose to narrow the focus of this analysis of exclusion rates to countries that had participated in all cycles of PISA, so as to have the maximum amount data available for each country. Despite the fact that there were 32 countries participating in PISA 2000 (OECD, 2001), Lichtenstein did not participate in PISA 2015, so it was excluded (OECD, 2015). From here, I had a list of 31 countries; by reading the Technical Reports for each year, I could find the overall exclusion rate percentage for each country. Technical Reports describe the process by which data is gathered and analyzed, and are usually published several

years after the test is administered.

The following 31 countries' exclusion rates were analyzed in this research:

Australia	Finland	Japan	Poland
Austria	France	Korea	Portugal
Belgium	Germany	Latvia	Russia
Brazil	Greece	Luxembourg	Spain
Canada	Hungary	Mexico	Sweden
Czech	Iceland	Netherlands	Switzerland
Republic	Ireland	New Zealand	United States
Denmark	Italy	Norway	United Kingdom

Thus, the next step was to organize the data using the overall exclusion rate for each country for each PISA cycle between 2000 and 2015. This led to 6 points of data for each country, with exclusion rates obtained for PISA 2000, PISA 2003, PISA 2006, PISA 2009, PISA 2012, and PISA 2015, shown in Table 2.3.

In addition to presenting a full graph with 31 lines of data with six points each (Figure 2.1), a second graph was created showing the trendlines for each country (Figure 2.2). This was done in order to create a more visually appealing graph of the 31 countries that was easier to read.

The data was further analyzed in order to find the number of countries that were above PISA's target 5% threshold for each cycle. In Table 2.4 on page 19, countries above the 5% threshold set by PISA are highlighted in red. The list is ranked from high to low according to the 2015 exclusion rates. For the nine countries that were identified to be above this 5% threshold based on the 2015 exclusion rates, a separate graph was created to focus on their trajectories (Figure 2.3).

Table 2.3: Overall exclusion rate on PISA from 2000–2015 for 31 countries, expressed as a %

	2000	2003	2006	2009	2012	2015	Change (2000–2015)
Australia	2.29	2.15	1.76	4.36	4	5.31	3.02
Austria	0.73	1.62	2.16	0.81	1.33	2.11	1.38
Belgium	2.33	1.53	2.7	2.20	1.4	1.66	-0.67
Brazil	0.69	0.11	0.34	0.72	1.45	2.8	2.11
Canada	4.94	6.83	6.35	6.00	6.38	7.49	2.55
Czech Republic	1.88	1.2	1.06	1.76	1.83	2.44	0.56
Denmark	3.08	5.33	6.07	8.17	6.18	5.04	1.96
Finland	1.88	3.38	4.47	3.40	1.91	2.78	0.9
France	3.45	3.4	3.00	2.66	4.42	4.16	0.71
Germany	1.68	1.89	1.22	1.30	1.54	2.14	0.46
Greece	0.77	3.19	2.00	3.74	3.6	1.89	1.12
Hungary	0.71	3.94	3.69	3.14	2.58	3.31	2.6
Iceland	2.44	2.59	2.37	4.50	3.81	3.62	1.18
Ireland	4.55	4.29	1.76	3.23	4.47	3.11	-1.44
Italy	2.47	1.88	1.70	2.52	3.33	3.8	1.33
Japan	2.34	1.02	1.36	1.93	2.15	2.35	0.01
Korea	0.44	0.87	0.66	0.69	0.82	0.89	0.45
Latvia	3.75	4.89	3.21	8.15	4.02	5.07	1.32
Luxembourg	9.13	1.59	3.92	8.15	8.4	8.16	-0.97
Mexico	0.06	4.3	0.27	0.56	0.74	0.91	0.85
Netherlands	4.37	1.87	0.15	3.46	4.42	3.67	-0.7
New Zealand	5.12	5.07	4.58	4.19	4.61	6.54	1.42
Norway	2.67	3.39	3.51	5.93	6.11	6.75	4.08
Poland	9.7	3.91	2.22	1.88	4.59	2.38	-7.32
Portugal	2.7	2.3	2.05	1.57	1.6	1.29	-1.41
Russia	0.73	1.66	3.19	2.65	2.4	2.28	1.55
Spain	2.68	7.29	3.52	3.88	4.38	3.16	0.48
Sweden	4.73	4.2	4.46	4.75	5.44	5.71	0.98
Switzerland	2.32	4.39	3.38	3.08	4.22	4.35	2.03
United Kingdom	4.87	5.4	3.27	4.62	5.43	8.22	3.35
United States	4.08	7.28	4.28	5.16	5.35	3.31	-0.77

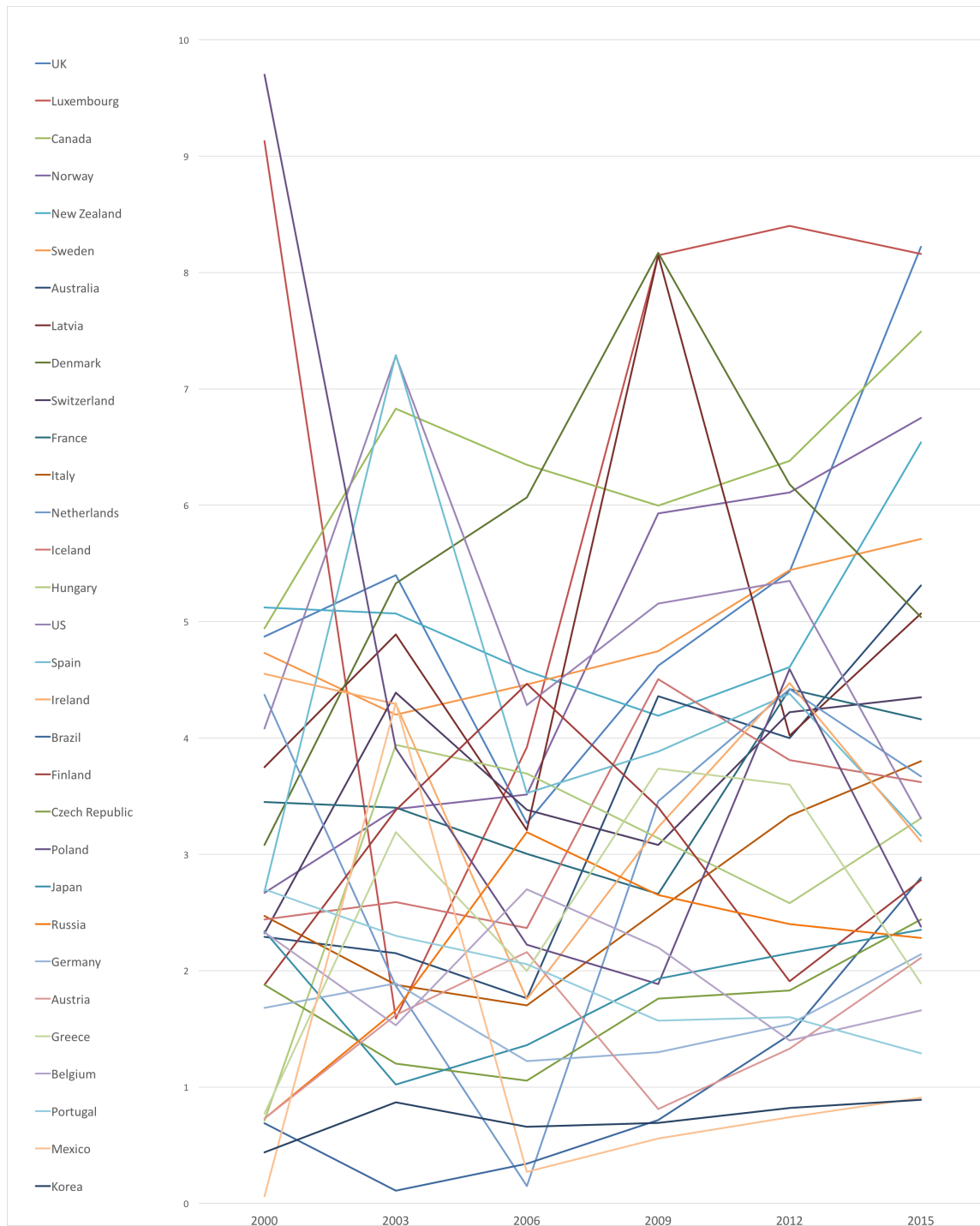


Figure 2.1: Exclusion rates in PISA for 31 countries from 2000–2015, expressed as a %

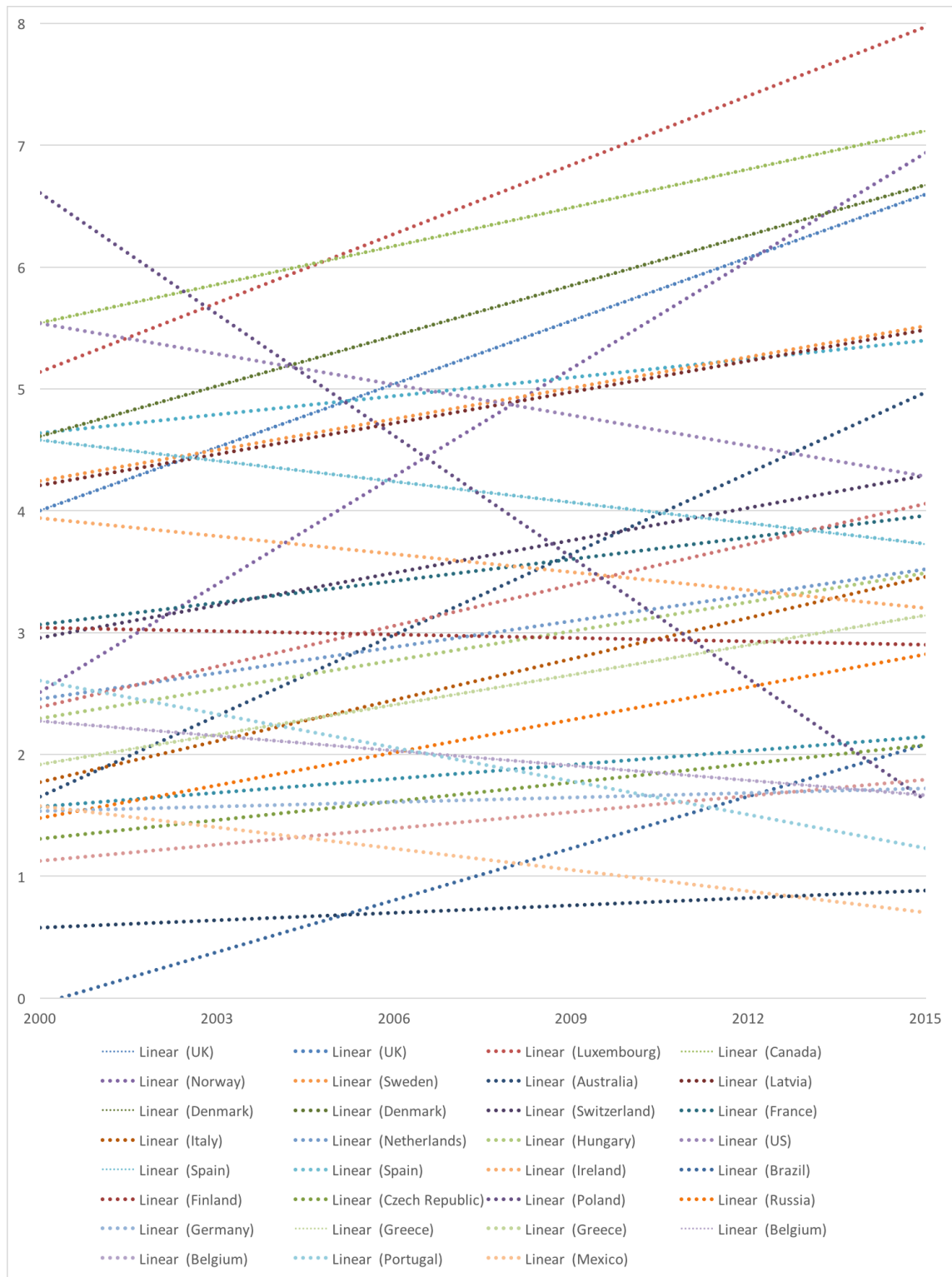


Figure 2.2: Trend lines of changes in exclusion rates in PISA in 31 countries from 2000–2015

Table 2.4: Overall PISA exclusion rate from 2000–2015, expressed as a %, and sorted by 2015 exclusion rate. Exclusion rates over the PISA 5% target threshold are highlighted

	2000	2003	2006	2009	2012	2015
UK	4.87	5.4	3.27	4.62	5.43	8.22
Luxembourg	9.13	1.59	3.92	8.15	8.4	8.16
Canada	4.94	6.83	6.35	6.00	6.38	7.49
Norway	2.67	3.39	3.51	5.93	6.11	6.75
New Zealand	5.12	5.07	4.58	4.19	4.61	6.54
Sweden	4.73	4.2	4.46	4.75	5.44	5.71
Australia	2.29	2.15	1.76	4.36	4	5.31
Latvia	3.75	4.89	3.21	8.15	4.02	5.07
Denmark	3.08	5.33	6.07	8.17	6.18	5.04
Switzerland	2.32	4.39	3.38	3.08	4.22	4.35
France	3.45	3.4	3.00	2.66	4.42	4.16
Italy	2.47	1.88	1.70	2.52	3.33	3.8
Netherlands	4.37	1.87	0.15	3.46	4.42	3.67
Iceland	2.44	2.59	2.37	4.50	3.81	3.62
Hungary	0.71	3.94	3.69	3.14	2.58	3.31
US	4.08	7.28	4.28	5.16	5.35	3.31
Spain	2.68	7.29	3.52	3.88	4.38	3.16
Ireland	4.55	4.29	1.76	3.23	4.47	3.11
Brazil	0.69	0.11	0.34	0.72	1.45	2.8
Finland	1.88	3.38	4.47	3.40	1.91	2.78
Czech Republic	1.88	1.2	1.06	1.76	1.83	2.44
Poland	9.7	3.91	2.22	1.88	4.59	2.38
Japan	2.34	1.02	1.36	1.93	2.15	2.35
Russia	0.73	1.66	3.19	2.65	2.4	2.28
Germany	1.68	1.89	1.22	1.30	1.54	2.14
Austria	0.73	1.62	2.16	0.81	1.33	2.11
Greece	0.77	3.19	2.00	3.74	3.6	1.89
Belgium	2.33	1.53	2.7	2.20	1.4	1.66
Portugal	2.7	2.3	2.05	1.57	1.6	1.29
Mexico	0.06	4.3	0.27	0.56	0.74	0.91
Korea	0.44	0.87	0.66	0.69	0.82	0.89
Number above 5%	3	6	2	6	7	9

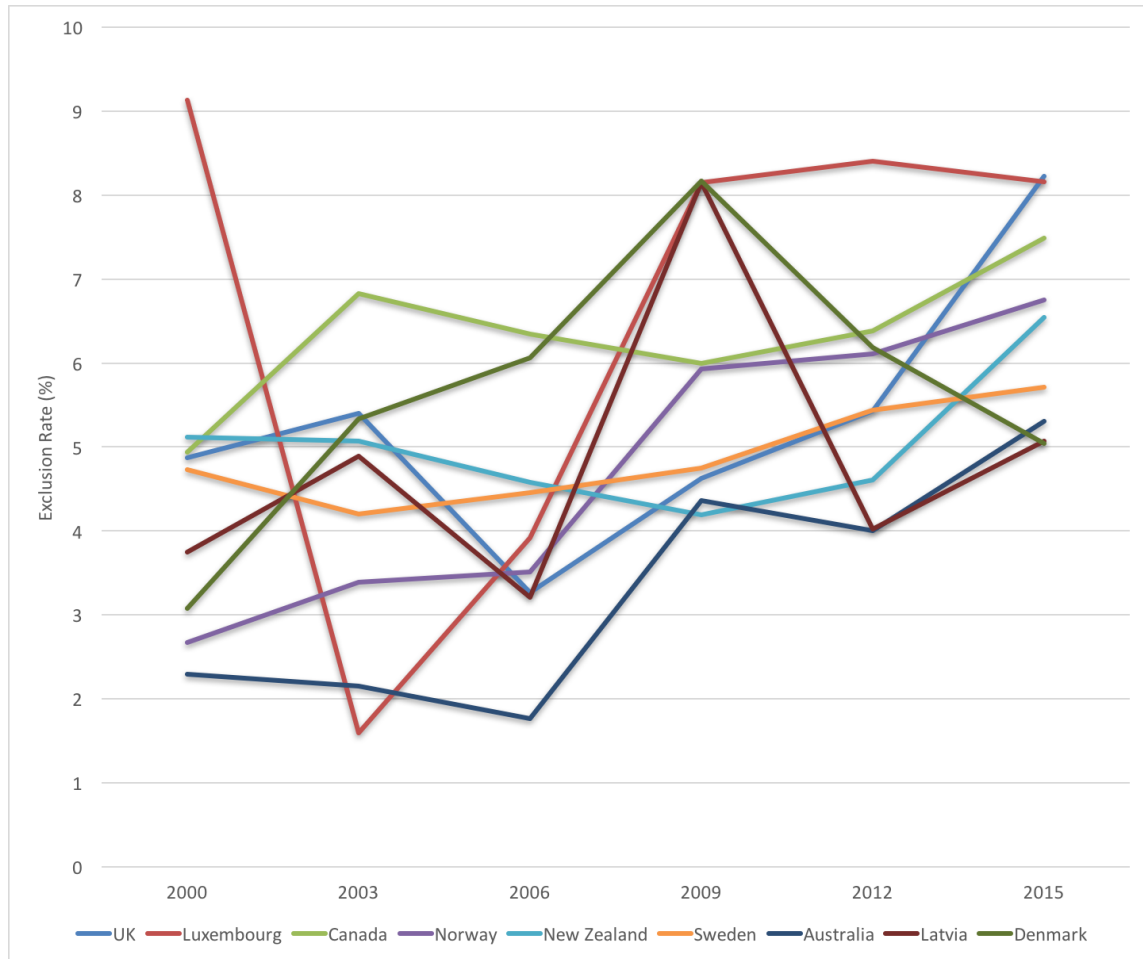


Figure 2.3: Exclusion rates in the top 9 countries with the highest exclusion rates in 2015, graphed from 2000 through 2015

2.2.2 Justification of Norway as a case

In the visual analysis of all 31 countries (Figure 2.1, Figure 2.2), it becomes clear that most had a positive change in exclusion rates from 2000 to 2015. The trendlines graph (Figure 2.2) shows this even more clearly, as 23 countries (74%) had a positive slope and only 8 countries (26%) had a negative slope. This indicates that a large majority of countries did experience an increase in exclusion rates; the list of countries and changes is listed in Table 2.5.

Table 2.5: Countries organized according to positive or negative changes in overall exclusion rate, based on trendlines for exclusion from PISA 2000–2015

Positive change (increase)	Negative change (decrease)
Australia, Austria, Brazil, Canada, Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Japan, Korea, Latvia, Luxembourg, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Russia, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom	Belgium, Finland, Ireland, Mexico, Poland, Portugal, Spain, United States
74%	26%

Furthermore, it is interesting to take a closer look at the number of countries having exclusion rates above 5% (PISA’s self-described target). The number has grown from three countries in PISA 2000 (Luxembourg, New Zealand, and Poland) to nine countries in PISA 2015 (the UK, Luxembourg, Canada, Norway, New Zealand, Sweden, Australia, Latvia, and Denmark; see Table 2.4). When these nine countries from 2015 (referred to herein as the “above 5% excluders”) are graphed (see Figure 2.3 on page 20), we see an interesting visual depiction. With the exception of Luxembourg, these countries have all had substantially high increases in their exclusion rates over the years. Although many began with high exclusion rates and kept increasing each

cycle (UK, Canada, New Zealand, Sweden), there are several countries that began with low exclusion rates that later increased to dramatic levels over the course of the six cycles (Norway, Australia, Latvia, Denmark). Luxembourg's rate did decline slightly between 2000 and 2015, but its exclusion rate was very high in 2000 and has remained high since 2009.

Overall the exclusion rates have increased, both as a whole group of 31 countries and for many countries individually. 23 countries (74%) display a positive change in their exclusion rate from 2000 to 2015 while only 8 countries (26%) show a negative change. Furthermore, of the countries that do have a negative change, most show very slight decreases, while many of the countries with increases have steep changes. Poland shows a dramatic decrease after 2000, which may be attributed to having more 15-year-old students enrolled in grade 7 or higher for later testing cycles, thus making these students eligible for testing, and decreasing their exclusion rate (OECD, 2001). Furthermore, none of the countries with overall declines in their exclusion rates are among the “above 5% excluders” with an exclusion rate of over 5% in PISA 2015. This also means that all of the countries that are among the above 5% excluders have shown increasing exclusion rates over the past 15 years. Although 28 of the 31 countries (90%) in 2000 met PISA's target of having an overall exclusion rate of less than 5%, only 22 countries (71%) in 2015 could say the same.

With an overall increase in exclusion rates of over 4% between 2000 and 2015, Norway jumped from the middle of the group regarding exclusion rates in 2000 to being the 4th highest country in terms of exclusion rates in 2015. This is a change of over 250% of the original 2000 exclusion rate and makes Norway an outlier among the other countries. Norway has had the sharpest increase in exclusion rates of all the 31 countries studied, and it has been above the 5% exclusion threshold since (and including) 2009; see Figure 2.4.

Furthermore, as shown in Figure 2.5, Norway's exclusion rate increase is much steeper than the average exclusion rate of the 31 countries that participated in all cycles of PISA. The average exclusion rate for the group of 31 countries has been between 3–4% for most testing cycles. However, during this time, Norway has gone from being

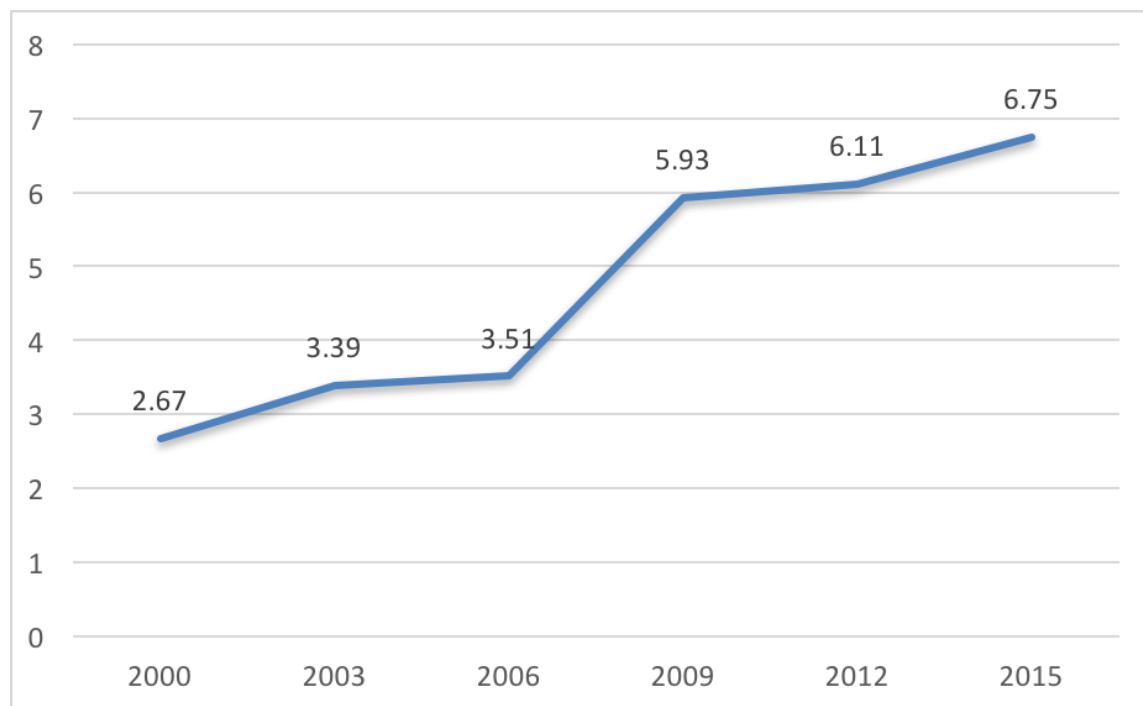


Figure 2.4: Norway's PISA exclusion rate from 2000 to 2015, expressed as a %

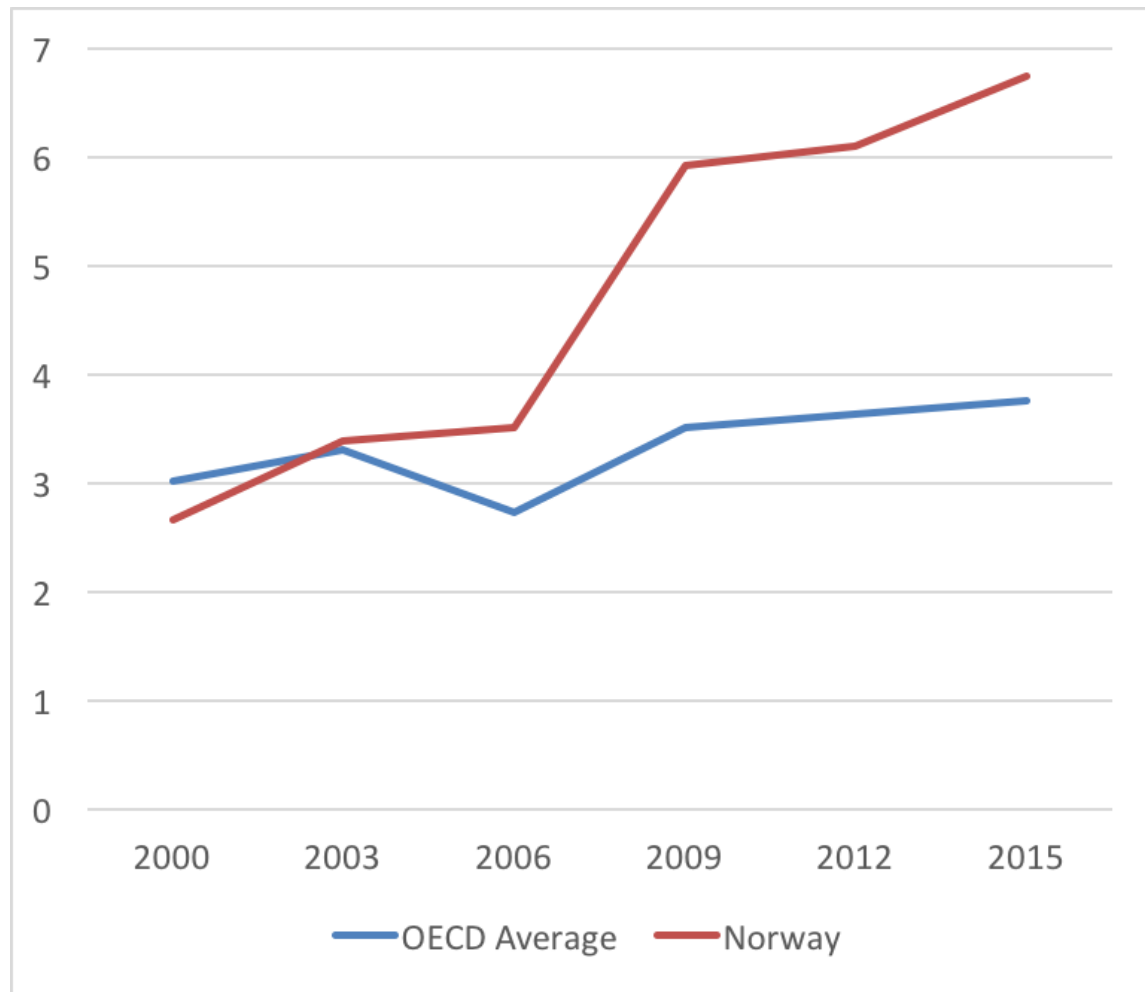


Figure 2.5: Norway's PISA exclusion rate from 2000 to 2015 compared to the average of 31 OECD countries participating in all cycles of PISA

under the average exclusion rate in 2000 to almost double the average exclusion rate by 2015.

Although school-level exclusions have remained relatively stable in Norway, it is the student-level exclusions that have increased the most, as outlined in a 2016 report edited by members of the PISA Norway office, shown in Table 2.6. Norway, like many other Nordic countries, has a low rate of school-level exemptions since Norwegian school policy emphasizes inclusive school environments (Kjærnsli and Jensen, 2016). Countries with more segregated schools would be more likely to have higher school-level exemptions and lower student-level exemptions (Kjærnsli and Jensen, 2016).

Table 2.6: The percentage of students exempted on PISA in Norway during 2000–2015 (Kjærnsli and Jensen, 2016, p. 18)

	School level	Student level	Total
PISA 2000	0.8	1.9	2.7
PISA 2003	0.5	2.9	3.4
PISA 2006	0.7	2.9	3.5
PISA 2009	2.2	3.8	5.9
PISA 2012	1.2	5.9	6.1
PISA 2015	1.3	5.5	6.7

Understanding Norway's national tests and their rules for exclusion is an important part of the context for large assessments in Norway. The next section will provide background about Norway's national test implementation, as well as analysis of how national test exclusion rates have changed from 2007–2016.

2.3 Norway's national tests

National testing was first implemented in the spring of 2004 and the tests were redesigned in the fall of 2007 (Hatch, 2013). Students receive tests in grades 5 and 8

in reading, numeracy, and English, and in grade 9 in reading and numeracy (Udir.no, 2017). The tests are administered digitally and take 60 (English) or 90 (reading and numeracy, each) minutes to complete (Udir.no, 2017). Tests are available in braille and sign language (Udir.no, 2017). The stated purpose of the national tests is for teachers to use the results to adjust instruction, and for municipalities and schools to use the results for quality improvement (Udir.no, 2017).

Students in 8th and 9th grade take the same test so that schools can compare the results. If a school keeps their results from the previous year, they can also track individual students' growth (Udir.no, 2017).

2.3.1 Rules for exemption in national tests

There is a section on exemption (*fritak*) in the “Administering the national tests” report available online (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2017). This report and its referring law articulate that the national tests are obligatory and a right for all students. However, schools can evaluate whether to exempt individual students based on two criteria: (1) for students who receive special education or special language instruction and (2) where it is determined that the results of the national test will not hold meaning for the student's further learning (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2017).

Exempting a student is primarily done at the principal's determination, but the decision should be made in connection with the student's teacher and parents (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2017). Even if the school decides to exempt the student, the student himself and/or his parents can decide if he should take the test anyways; the parent's decision here would override the school's (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2017). In order for a student to be exempted from the test, a formal letter must be written and sent to the student's parents, citing the law and stating the parents' options for complaint (Utdanningsdirektoratet, n.d.). If a student is exempted in one test cycle, she must be re-evaluated before each national test opportunity (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2017).

Schools that provide instruction according to special learning plans can apply to give their students the test for an alternate grade, or to exempt students from the tests (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2011). International schools can also apply for exemption from the national test if they can prove that the national test is unreasonable for their students and irrelevant to their curricula. Private schools are also eligible for individual exemption, based upon the laws governing private school (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2011). Documentation provided to school leaders reinforces that the phrase “can apply for exemption” does not mean a school will automatically be granted exemption (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2011).

2.3.2 Norway’s national test exclusion rates from 2007–2016

Because the tests from before the redesign of 2007 were different, I have only gathered exclusion rate data for the tests from the fall of 2007 to fall 2016 (the most recent data available at the time of this study). 9th grade tests were only administered starting in 2010. All other data is presented in Table 2.7.

Table 2.7: Norway national test exclusion rates (expressed in %), grades 8 and 9, 2007–2016. Retrieved from skoleporten.udir.no

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Reading 8	1.3	1.7	1.9	2.2	2.7	2.7	3	2.8	3	2.9
English 8	0.7	0.8	1.5	1.5	2	1.9	2.3	2.5	2.6	2.9
Numeracy 8	1.2	1.6	1.1	1.4	1.7	1.9	2.2	2.4	2.4	2.7
Reading 9				2.3	2.8	2.9	3.1	2.9	3.2	3.5
Numeracy 9				1.4	1.8	2.1	2.4	2.3	2.7	3.2

As grades 8 and 9 are closest in age to the students from the PISA sample, I will only focus on discussing exclusion rates for these two groups. Over the past decade, national test exclusion rates have risen consistently in both grades 8 and 9. 8th grade exclusion rates hovered around 1% in 2007, but rose to almost 3% by 2016 as seen in

Figure 2.6. Similarly, exclusion rates for 9th grade students in 2007 were 1.4% and 2.3% (in numeracy and reading, respectively) and rose to 3.2% and 3.5% respectively by 2016, as seen in Figure 2.7.

Although it is interesting that exclusion rates have risen significantly in both of these grades, it is perplexing that the national test exclusion rates remain consistently lower than the PISA exclusion rates for each year. In 2012, Norway's exclusion rate on PISA was 6.11%, while national test exclusion rates in 8th and 9th grade ranged from 1.9–2.9% in different subjects and classes. In 2015, Norway's exclusion rate on PISA was 6.75%, while the national test exclusion rates were between 2.6% and 3.2%. In both of these years, the PISA exclusion rate was more than double the national test exclusion rate.

Furthermore, it is interesting to note that Norway's PISA student level exclusion rates began to increase around 2006, which is coincidentally around the same time that Norway's national tests were implemented with their similar, yet more lenient requirements for participation (Kjærnsli and Jensen, 2016, p. 18). Yet despite less strict requirements for excluding students on national tests, the exclusion rate on national tests is much lower than on PISA. If Norway's PISA exclusion rates were at the same level as the national test exclusion rates, Norway would fall well below the 5% threshold set by the OECD. However, given the discrepancy between what is happening with regards to exclusion rates at the national test level and on PISA, there is cause for extra research into why PISA exclusion rates are so high.

2.4 Conclusion

This chapter provided pertinent background information about PISA, Norway's national tests, and exclusion in both tests. By analyzing exclusion rate changes in PISA for 31 countries between 2000–2015, I showed how Norway's exclusion rate has risen more sharply than any other country and is worthy of future study. The next chapter examines current literature available surrounding Norway, the OECD,

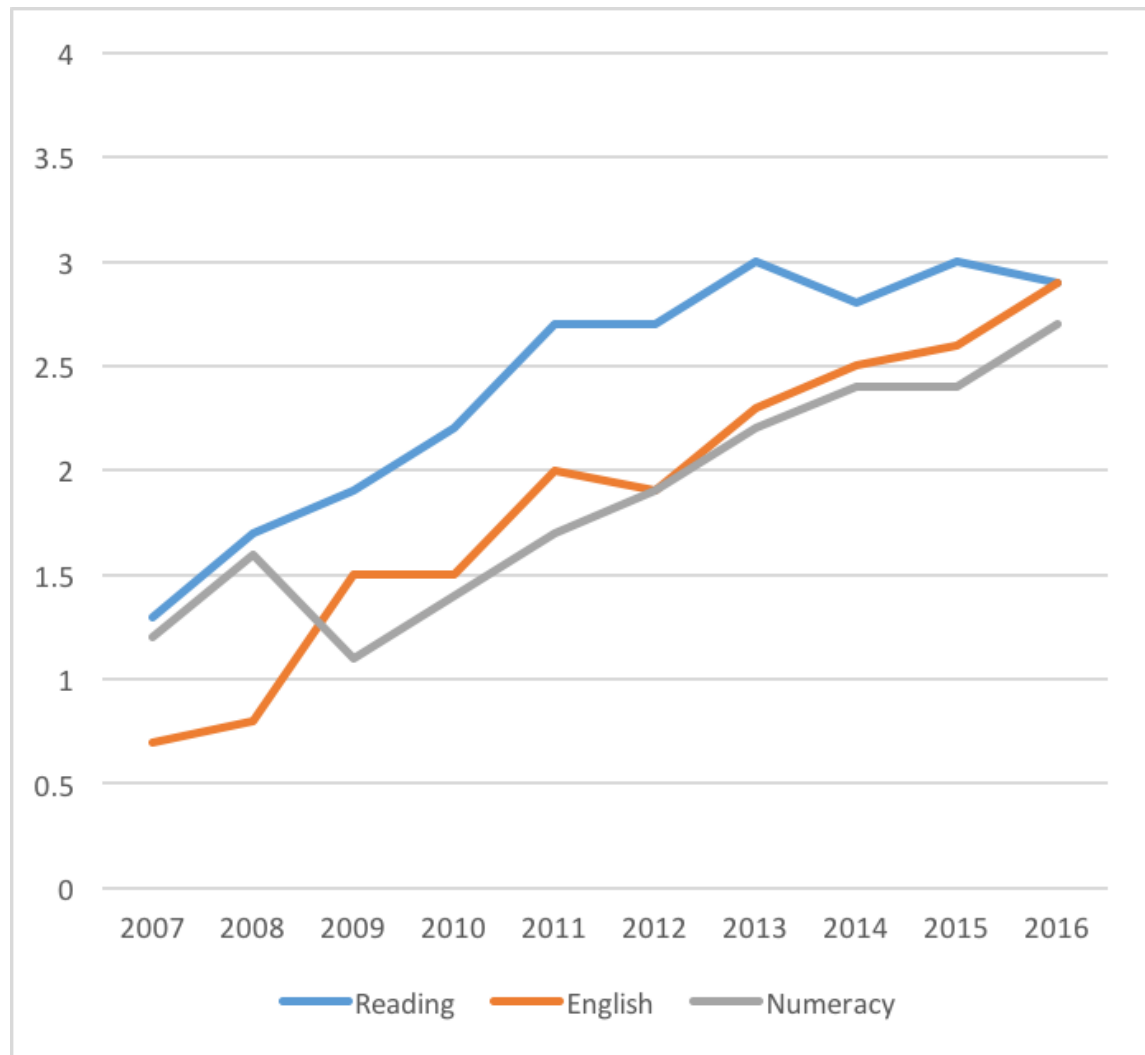


Figure 2.6: National test exclusion rates in Norway in grade 8, 2007–2016

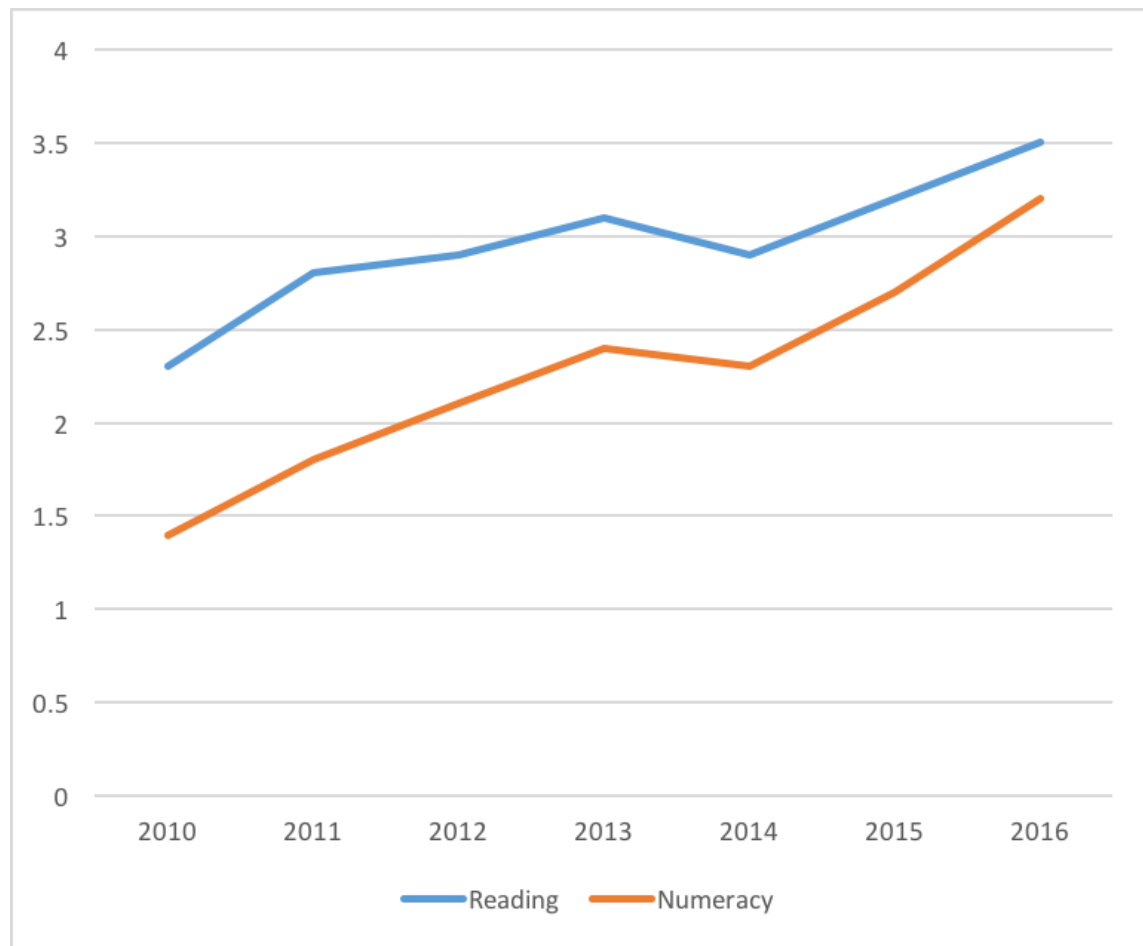


Figure 2.7: National test exclusion rates in Norway in grade 9, 2007–2016

PISA, and exclusion rates. It will discuss how PISA secured the OECD an influential position in global education discourse, as well as how PISA has affected Norway. I will also present two different perspectives that might help to explain why exclusion rates have increased in Norway in recent years.

Chapter 3

Literature Review and Theoretical Perspectives

The previous chapter provided background information about PISA and Norway's national tests. It also set up the case study by analyzing PISA exclusion rate changes in 31 OECD countries from 2000 to 2015, and focusing specifically on Norway's exclusion rate change in PISA and the national tests. This chapter will present current literature that discusses relevant themes about the OECD, exclusion rates, and PISA in Norway. First, I will analyze the OECD's comparative nature and role in international education today, including a discussion of how the OECD became so prominent by developing and spreading PISA. Next, I will discuss how PISA has affected Norway in particular by exploring Norway's reaction to PISA in both policy changes and public perception. Finally, I will outline reasons from the literature that might explain Norway's rising exclusion rates in PISA, while acknowledging that these reasons have not yet been researched in this specific context.

3.1 The OECD’s “comparative turn” in education

In the past few decades, the OECD’s role has expanded from being an organization concerned with economics to one that has vested interests in other areas. Educational development has moved into prominence and has become a new area in which the OECD can become influential (Meyer and Benavot, 2013). Many academics point to PISA as a key tool that secures the OECD’s place in educational governance (Grek, 2009; Meyer and Benavot, 2013; Sellar and Lingard, 2013). Although the OECD has no legal power to require members to adopt specific policies, it holds a large amount of soft power, which goes beyond the original European and western member-states and now extends globally (Grek, 2009). Meyer and Benavot (2013) call this “global education governance” – an era where international organizations hold strong influence in national educational contexts.

According to Martens (2007), the OECD’s education policy has taken a “comparative turn” since the late 1990s, and PISA is one result of this. In 1988, the OECD established the International Indicators of Educational Systems (IIES), a project that publishes annually on certain education indicators measured by OECD countries (Martens, 2007). With the onset of the IIES, the OECD shifted its perspective of education from a topic that fell under local culture and customs to one that could now be standardized, quantified, and measured across countries (Martens, 2007). PISA was developed as a result of this interest in obtaining standardized data — in the late 1990s, analysts at the OECD were not satisfied with existing data sets in education, so they created PISA as a way to obtain their own data set (Martens, 2007).

Although only 32 countries participated in the first cycle of PISA in 2000 (OECD, 2001) participation has expanded rapidly in each subsequent cycle, and there were 72 countries participating in PISA 2015 (OECD, n.d.c). In addition to expanding the number of OECD member countries taking part in PISA, more middle-income and developing countries have also become involved in PISA (OECD, n.d.c). According to Kamens (2013), these countries have joined because they seek the prestige of being

included among more powerful countries in this famous international test.

Morgan and Shahjahan (2014) set forth that the OECD expands its own legitimacy by building upon previous accomplishments, becoming a resource of knowledge for policy transfer, and using its administrative power to further its own agenda. In this way, PISA and the OECD's power is cyclical: the more popular PISA becomes, the stronger the OECD's legitimacy becomes too, which makes PISA even more desirable and popular. This furthers the influence of a global testing regime since countries do not want to be left out. In this way, the OECD has become "the evaluator of choice" (Grek, 2009, p. 27).

As the focus of education shifts from preparing future generations of citizens (a civic responsibility) to preparing future generations of workers (an economic responsibility), Meyer and Benavot (2013) argue that the OECD has expanded the presence and power of PISA with perfect timing. Amid ever-expanding globalization, countries find themselves seeking a competitive advantage, and one way to obtain this is by having the 'best' education system to prepare future generations of citizens (Grek, 2009, p. 27).

With the spread of PISA, we have entered an era that some critics consider a "cult of assessment" (Kamens, 2013, p. 137) or a global testing regime. Here, public opinion has shifted from being cautious of standardized assessment into an age where standardized assessments are highly valued (Kamens, 2013). However, Meyer and Benavot (2013, p. 21) raise issues with PISA's growing power, questioning, "Should we allow a single test to determine our collective standards and expectations of education?"

More than just a test, PISA affords the OECD data to provide policy recommendations for countries. As Grek (2009, p. 33) argues,

PISA data in Europe seem to be a given—the problem appears to be how to deal with them. It is seen as an objective assessment of 'good' or 'bad' performance that currently lacks contextualization and that more 'traditional' European methods, such as European networks and policy

experts, can work on.

The OECD has played an important role in providing standardized and comparative data about education (Martens, 2007). As accountability and evidence-based decision-making become interesting to politicians (Kamens, 2013), PISA holds a special place in international education today. Meyer and Benavot (2013, p. 18) contend that, “win or lose, the PISA results are read as valid and reliable gauges of a country’s educational performance.” Since 2000, many countries have encountered a “PISA shock” when confronted with their students’ performance on PISA, leading to bold rhetoric, policy changes, and a permanent imprint on education policy history (Grek, 2009). Norway is among these countries and has implemented education policy reform in the 21st century in response to PISA (Sjøberg, 2015; Østerud, 2016; Hatch, 2013).

3.2 How PISA influences Norway

PISA has captivated Norwegian politicians and the media over the past few decades (Sjøberg, 2013; Hatch, 2013; Haarvik Sanden, 2010). As Sjøberg (2015) argues, “There is no doubt that the major reforms of Norwegian schools the last decade have been strongly influenced by the OECD, with PISA as the main instrument” (p. 115). In many ways, PISA marked one of the first times that Norwegian students were objectively measured to students around the world. And as the results became clear, Norwegians underwent a “PISA shock” of their own. One reason for this might also be because at the time, Norway did not have its own quality evaluation system, so PISA provided Norway with an early and very highly publicized measurement of its schools (Haarvik Sanden, 2010).

3.2.1 Norway's own PISA shock

Right after PISA 2000 results were published, an article in a leading Norwegian newspaper was titled, “Norway is a school loser: Here is the solid evidence! It is typical Norwegian to be average” (Ramnefjell, 2001, author’s translation). And upon receiving the 2000 results, the then-Minister of Education Kristin Clement was quoted as saying, “this is disappointing, almost like coming home from a winter Olympics without even a single Norwegian medal. And this time, we can’t blame the Finns for using drugs” (as quoted in Ramnefjell, 2001, author’s translation). Here, Clement spoke to her people in the most Norwegian way possible, reaching hearts and minds with a metaphor of skiing. Although Norway’s scores on PISA 2000 and PISA 2003 were actually very close to the OECD average, the media focused on “over-simplified” rankings tables, and made the results seem catastrophic (Sjøberg, 2016, p. 107). Politicians and public opinion alike caught on to this doomsday portrayal without much critical inquiry into PISA (Sjøberg, 2016).

As the years progressed, Norwegian politicians continued to express disappointment with PISA results. In his 2008 New Years speech, Prime Minister Jens Stoltenberg referred to the 2006 PISA results which were distributed just weeks before his speech. Staring into the camera, he sternly reported,

In Norway, we are used to being at the top of international comparisons. But just one month ago, we received an international report on the table that shows that Norwegian schools in important areas are far from the top. In fact, we are below the average. This is a serious warning. The government has received this message. We will go through the school reforms that have been implemented over the past few years thoroughly. (Stoltenberg, 2008, author’s translation)

These quotations provide a sample of the public discourse about PISA and PISA results during the first few rounds of testing. Displeased with the results, these

sentiments from major public officials and publications may have helped lead the way for education reform in the mid 2000s (Sjøberg, 2014, 2015, 2016).

3.2.2 Reforms in the wake of PISA

The PISA shock can be seen as a ‘turning point’ for Norwegian education policy (Østerud, 2016) and there was strong political consensus about the need for improvement. Feeling the pressure of mediocrity, Norway’s response to PISA was to spur neoliberal accountability reforms (Hatch, 2013). The Knowledge Promotion Reform (Kunnskapsløftet) of 2006 was a major turn towards a new focus on testing, measurement, and accountability. As Sjøberg writes, this new national testing regime is directly related to the pressure felt by what was constructed as low performance on PISA.

International rankings, in particular PISA, are seen as the ultimate measure of the total quality of the Norwegian school system, and new reforms were introduced as attempts to meet the perceived challenge. Most reforms on curriculum, national testing, accountability, transparency etc. also follow the policy advice that emerges from the PISA-study. (Sjøberg, 2015, p. 115)

The Knowledge Promotion Reform of 2006 brought new curricula with more rigorous skill development, as well as a new focus on ensuring quality. Now, there was more data collected than ever before: from student surveys, parent surveys, legal inspections, mapping tests of basic skills for students in early grades, and national tests of students in middle-grades (Hatch, 2013). Although initial implementation struggled, the government launched an “Improved Assessment Practices” program in 2007 with reinforced focus on formative assessments both nationally (national tests, teacher-given grades, and external examinations) and internationally (PISA, PIRLS, and TIMSS) as ways of monitoring education (Tveit, 2014).

3.2.3 A commissioned report

As further proof of its trust in the OECD, in 2011 Norway commissioned the OECD to send a team of evaluators to assess aspects of Norwegian education. In a 160-page report, the OECD team stated their purpose as “to explore how systems of evaluation and assessment can be used to improve the quality, equity and efficiency of school education” (Nusche et al., 2011, p. 3). The report focused on many of the accountability measures in the Knowledge Promotion Reform of 2006, and provided a number of direct recommendations in these areas. The report’s authors advocated for Norway to focus more on assessment and evaluation and thereby become more data-driven. Examples include recommendations like “build a comprehensive set of national tools and advice for undertaking school evaluation” (Nusche et al., 2011, p. 137), “optimize the reporting and use of system-level data” (p. 138), and “consider ways to strengthen national measures to monitor improvement” (p. 138). Education reform in Norway appears to have taken many of these OECD recommendations to heart as data, reporting, and accountability have become more important in primary and secondary education across the country.

3.2.4 Public perception of PISA

Although some critics in the leftmost political parties want to end Norway’s participation in PISA, a recent Minister of Education, Torbjørn Røe Isaksen, has come out publicly as a strong supporter of PISA. He calls PISA the “foremost and best school research project in the world, which gives us important and useful information about Norwegian schools” and says that ending Norwegian participation would be “a really bad idea” (UtdanningsNytt.no, 2016, author’s translation). Røe Isaksen cited the PISA 2015 results as evidence of Norwegian school success, saying, “PISA results show that a lot is going well in Norwegian schools” (Regjeringen.no, 2017b, author’s translation). Having now seen improvement in Norway’s ranking position on PISA, it is not unlikely that Norwegian politicians feel pressure to continue to demonstrate strong performance. Given that the conservative government coalition was reelected

in the fall of 2017 (NRK.no, 2017), Norway's participation and faith in PISA testing is most likely going to continue.

Critical academics note that PISA has had a lasting impact on Norwegian schools with the advent of national tests, student surveys, and mapping tests through the Knowledge Promotion Reform in 2006 (Hatch, 2013). Initially, national tests were not well received in Norway and instead were met with high levels of public criticism and skepticism (Tveit, 2014). However, with revisions; better clarification of their purpose, use, and intent (to provide formative information to teachers and schools); and time, they have become more accepted (Tveit, 2014). Today, national and international tests are a core part of the conservative party's educational platform, and right-aisle politicians show no signs of moving away from them (Vinje, 2016).

Hardly a day goes by where PISA is not mentioned in the media, and the results are used and misused by journalists and politicians (Sjøberg, 2014). Although PISA has led some Norwegian policymakers into a state of crisis about not being "the best", there is evidence that PISA data does not tell the entire story (Sjøberg, 2015, p. 123). In fact, the state of education in Norway is not as dire as PISA may indicate. Norway benefits from a strong economy as well as high levels of student motivation, student-teacher relationships, social equity, integrated schools, health, and happiness (Hatch, 2013). By these indicators, many would argue that Norway must be doing something right, despite what one test might argue (Hatch, 2013).

3.3 Explaining exclusion rate changes in Norway

As described in Chapter 2, Norway's exclusion rates in PISA have increased markedly since 2000. Rutkowski and Rutkowski (2016) point out that high exclusion rates are a potentially troubling methodological issue in International Large-Scale Assessments. However, in order to try and lower exclusion rates, it is important to understand why they are rising in the first place. Academics offer a number of potential explanations, although these theories have not been tested explicitly in this particular setting yet.

3.3.1 Increased pressure for good results

The most critical approach assumes that exclusion rates may rise as a way to improve scores. Kamens (2013) argues that an ongoing search for international best practices highlights the ‘winners’ of PISA as superstars. This coupled with the threat of shame imposed upon ‘losers’ of PISA could make doing well on PISA increasingly important to national officials. While a country cannot quickly increase the number of high performers, it can take measures to exclude more of its lower performers, and thus, raise performance overall (Darling-Hammond, 2007). This pressure to perform might lead countries to try and increase their test scores “at all costs” (Darling-Hammond, 2007).

Research has documented that there are various ways to keep low-scoring students off of tests in order to demonstrate achievement gains (Darling-Hammond, 2007; Jacob, 2002; Heilig and Darling-Hammond, 2008); one tactic is by identifying high rates of students as special needs in order to exclude them (Figlio and Getzler, 2002; Allington and McGill-Franzen, 1992). These attempts to keep low-performing students from taking the tests are often referred to as ‘gaming behavior’ and they are not foreign to PISA. In the past few years, concerns have been raised with selective sampling strategies in Malaysia (FMT Reporters, 2016) and China (Sands, 2017) in order to increase their performance on PISA. Critics would argue that is not unthinkable that a similar occurrence would happen—intentionally or not—in Norway as well.

Although there is no literature about exclusion rates in Norway’s national test context, Vestheim and Lyngsnes (2016) studied how national tests are used in Norwegian schools. In their research, the authors alluded to the possibility of increased exemption rates in order to improve scores, although this was not a main finding of their case study. However, this raises the question: could there be some connection between exclusion rates on national tests and exclusion rates on PISA? Why have exclusion rates increased in both national tests and PISA? And why are exclusion rates on the national tests much lower than on PISA?

3.3.2 Perceptions of inclusion and special education in Norway

Another explanation for rising exclusion rates might lie with Norwegian perceptions and experiences of inclusion and special education. As one example, there might be more students receiving special education in Norway who thus would be excluded from tests like PISA. Bliksvær et al. (2017) studied special education instruction in Norway and found that the rates of students in special education services increased in recent years, despite a political commitment to inclusion and adapted instruction. By surveying primary school teachers, Bliksvær et al. discovered a number of possible reasons for the higher rates in students identified for special needs, including an increased focus on student results and testing and more emphasis on student rights and diagnoses. It is possible that these reasons for identifying students as special needs also transfer to identifying students for exclusion on tests like PISA or national tests.

Additionally, Uthaug (2011)'s research into inclusion and segregation in ordinary schools might also be of interest here when considering including or excluding students on tests. By interviewing school leaders, Uthaug found that inclusion is seen as a right for students, but that at the same time, school leaders believe that segregating special education students is sometimes necessary in order to provide a more beneficial learning opportunity for all students. These values might also apply to determining test participation, although the current literature does not explore this.

3.3.3 Conclusion

This chapter has presented a brief overview of key literature discussing themes about the OECD, PISA, and Norway as relating to exclusion rates. First, I presented how the OECD has become more comparative in recent decades, particularly through the creation and popularity of PISA. Then I discussed how Norway reacted to PISA, both politically and in terms of public perception. Finally, I presented two potential

lines of thought explaining why exclusion rates might have risen in Norway. Since there is no current literature testing these theories with school leaders and PISA administration specifically, both ideas are conjectures. Nonetheless, they provide interesting perspectives to consider as I engaged in my fieldwork of interviewing school leaders about PISA and student exclusion. The next chapter will present the methodology and methods behind my research in order to better understand how and why Norway's exclusion rate has increased.

Chapter 4

Methods

In the previous chapter, I discussed one story of how PISA has been influential in global education as well as in Norway specifically. I presented relevant literature in the field discussing themes related to the OECD, PISA, Norway, and exclusion rates. I also provided two possible explanations for why Norway's exclusion rate has risen. In this chapter I will discuss the methodology and methods undertaken in my research. I will outline my qualitative approach, research strategy, sampling strategy, data collection and analysis, judgments of quality, ethical considerations, and limitations.

4.1 A qualitative approach

This thesis adopts a qualitative, interpretivist approach where theory develops out of the research conducted (Bryman, 2012). This research seeks to better understand social and cultural happenings in the world by examining participants in close detail (Bryman, 2012). Although a quantitative study of changes in exclusion rates (Chapter 2) was useful in order to see trends and isolate Norway as an extreme case, as will become evident, this research's qualitative approach will be better equipped to

understand the experiences and perceptions behind the changing exclusion rates in Norway.

4.2 Research strategy

4.2.1 Case study

I chose to use a single-case study research strategy in order to go more in-depth into Norway's unique circumstances surrounding PISA and exclusion rates. According to Yin (2014), there is a twofold definition of a case study. First, a case study "investigates a contemporary phenomenon (the "case") in depth and within its real-world context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context may not be clearly evident" (p. 16). As such, case studies often serve to answer questions like "how" and "why." A case study is an appropriate design since my research questions fit into examining how and why exclusion rates have risen in Norway over the past 15 years. The case can be defined as Norwegian participation in PISA from 2000 through present; by setting bounds to this case study, I am better able to limit the scope of this research.

Second, Yin (2014) articulates that a case study often relies on several sources of evidence and to understand multiple perspectives in the case. My research strategy triangulates data from interviews with various stakeholders involved in the administration of PISA in Norway: two PISA team members, as well as six school leaders from participating schools, in addition to excerpts describing student exclusion from the training manuals used on PISA.

Yin (2014) characterizes case studies as being exploratory, descriptive, explanatory, or a combination. An exploratory case seeks to begin exploring a new topic that has had little prior research conducted. In a descriptive case study, the researcher studies a specific phenomenon in its real-world context. An explanatory case is one where the researcher conducts the case study to explain how or why a certain event

came to happen—why certain events did occur, and other events did not occur. This case study research has elements of being exploratory, descriptive, and explanatory—there is little prior research done on this specific phenomenon, so this research seeks to describe what is currently happening in this particular instance in Norway. At the same time, this research hopes to help explain why and how exclusion rates have risen in Norway on PISA in recent years. This research does not aim to generalize to other countries, time periods, or testing phenomena.

4.2.2 Justification of the case

As presented in Chapter 2, Norway’s rising exclusion rates in PISA are abnormally high compared with other OECD countries. At the same time, these exclusion rates have risen sharply over the past decade, raising the question of whether the rates may continue to rise in the future. Norway has also been over the OECD’s goal of a maximum exclusion rate of 5% since 2009. Although national test exclusion rates have also increased during this time, they are still much lower than exclusion rates on PISA. Together, this evidence justifies further inquiry into Norway’s particular situation from a qualitative perspective.

4.3 Sampling strategy and participation

4.3.1 Finding PISA Norway team members

Two groups of stakeholders were chosen in order to gain perspectives from both PISA team members and school leaders. First, the PISA Norway team was selected to help provide context of the history and logistical operations of PISA, and to understand how exclusion rates are communicated at the national project level. The current PISA team consists of six members; I met with two team members in person a few months before my fieldwork to describe my project and ascertain whether they would be available to participate. Then, I arranged times for private interviews. In

chapter 5, these individuals are referred to as Team Member 1 and Team Member 2. These team members were selected purposively (Bryman, 2012) based on their roles working on the PISA Norway team. This selection may also be considered criterion sampling (Bryman, 2012), as these individuals met the particular criteria of having been involved with PISA Norway implementation and were able to speak directly to these experiences. The PISA team members were interviewed in October and November 2017, which was at the start of the administration for the PISA 2018 cycle.

4.3.2 Finding school leaders

By interviewing PISA team members, we can learn about how student exclusion on PISA is communicated to schools, but by interviewing school leaders, we can better understand how student exclusion is perceived by those determining who participates and who does not participate in PISA testing.

Finding school leaders for my sample was a bit more challenging than finding PISA Norway team members. Here too I chose purposive criterion sampling where I intentionally pursued individuals that met specific criteria (Bryman, 2012). Since I wanted my interviews to get as close to the issue of student participation and exclusion in PISA as possible, I designed my sample to mimic true test conditions as much as I could. As PISA is conducted with 15-year-old students, I set out to find school leaders at middle schools (grades 8–10), since middle school students would fall into the PISA age group. I chose to narrow my interviews down to one metropolitan area in Norway for logistical reasons, and to narrow my case as much as possible. I was open to interviewing school leaders in both 1st–10th grade schools as well as 8th–10th grade schools, but my respondents ended up falling into the latter group alone. I think this may be due to the larger number of 8th–10th grade schools compared to 1st–10th grade schools, or possibly because 8th–10th grade schools have fewer students and thus, the school leaders may have had more time to be interviewed.

Having selected one metropolitan area in Norway, I first sent individual emails to all

principals of middle schools in this area briefly explaining my project and requesting participation. Email addresses and principal names were obtained through the school websites. When this resulted in limited responses, I sent individual emails to every assistant principal (*assistentrektor*), inspector (*inspektør*), and department head with responsibility for the 10th grade (*avdelingsleder med 10. trinn ansvar*) at middle schools in the same metropolitan area. I chose to open up my inquiries to individuals with these titles as these are also likely to be the school leaders who would determine student participation on PISA tests during the real test administration, according to PISA team members.

Additionally, I drew on my professional network to find school leaders that fit the sample criteria. From my emails, five school leaders responded positively and I set up dates and times to meet with them during October 2017. One school leader was also able to refer me to another school leader in the same school, which resulted in a total of six interviews covering leaders at five schools. In chapter 5, these individuals are referred to as School Leader 1, School Leader 2, School Leader 3, School Leader 4, School Leader 5, and School Leader 6. School Leader 2 and School Leader 3 work at the same school. Three school leaders were male and three were female. All communication to school leaders was sent in Norwegian and using a University of Oslo email address.

4.4 Data collection and analysis

4.4.1 Before the interviews

I designed my interview guide in advance of the interviews according to my research purpose and research questions. However, after an informal conversation with one PISA team member, I revised the interview guide for school leaders to include a practice activity about the exclusion criteria (described in more detail in Section 4.4.2). I was given the guidelines shared by the PISA Norway team with school

leaders during the 2017 field trial testing to use during this practice activity (see Appendix G).

One or two days prior to each interview, I sent an email to my interviewee to remind him/her of the time of the interview. In this email, I also asked the school leader to have a class list for their 10th grade students available so we could go through a mock exercise of creating a PISA participation list. The interviews with school leaders occurred before the interviews with PISA team members, so I was able to adjust my interview guide for PISA team members based on additional questions that arose.

4.4.2 During the interviews

Interviews were semi-structured, to allow for a balance between structure and flexibility (Bryman, 2012). Semi-structured interviews provide space for richer, more detailed understanding and thicker descriptions (Bryman, 2012). By using more open-ended questions, the interviews created opportunities for the interviewees to tell their own stories, experiences, and perceptions. At the same time, by following a similar structure of questions across interviews, it is easier to compare responses and experiences.

Interviews took place privately in the interviewee's office and ranged from 35–60 minutes. All interviews were recorded, with the participant's permission. Interviews were conducted in whatever language the respondent was most comfortable: all six interviews with school leaders were conducted in Norwegian; one interview with a PISA team member was conducted in English, and one was conducted in a combination of Norwegian and English.

Interviews with PISA team members focused on questions about PISA administration, documents, communication, and exclusion in particular. Interviews with school leaders focused on themes about student exemption, the purpose and value of PISA and national tests, and prior experiences with PISA. A major component of the in-

Interviews with school leaders was a practice exercise for school leaders to apply the PISA exclusion criteria. During this activity, the school leader was provided with a copy of the exclusion rate guidelines from the PISA 2017 field trial (Appendix G), and asked to review these guidelines, consider their current 10th grade students, and describe to me which students s/he would exempt from PISA if the test were happening this year. After, follow-up questions were asked in order to explore the school leader's understanding of the exercise and guidelines, as well as their thought process during the activity. For the full interview guide, refer to Appendix A.

4.4.3 After the interviews

After the interview, a follow-up email was sent to each interviewee, thanking him/her for their participation and reiterating that they could contact the researcher at any time with questions or comments about the research.

Within a few days after the interview, I listened to each recording, translated and transcribed the interview in English. Although most interviews were conducted in Norwegian, I chose only to transcribe the interview in English. I tried to translate directly as best as possible, but at times I chose to translate responses for best clarity. This meant that sometimes I needed to rearrange the order of words or choose alternate phrases to make sure the responses made sense and flowed well in English.

I was usually able to transcribe each interview before the next interview took place, giving me enough time and space to reflect upon the interview and make small adjustments for the next interview.

4.4.4 Interview data analysis

Each transcription was loaded into NVivo and individual sections (phrases, sentences, answers) were coded according to the topic or topics covered. I followed a strategy of first using open coding where data was examined, broken down, and

grouped into relevant categories (Strauss and Corbin, 1991). I then adopted axial coding, where I drew connections between categories and reorganized codes into larger themes (Strauss and Corbin, 1991). As I coded, I attempted to move from literal interpretations of the data into larger, more abstract ones (Bryman, 2012).

Coding categories were derived from the literature. Interviews for school leaders were coded according to the main categories: exclusion, how PISA is used, national tests, previous PISA experience, why exclusion rates rose, and linguistic nuances. Several categories also had subcategories that further separated the data according to themes; as an example, the category “how PISA is used” had three subcategories: PISA shock, use of PISA today, and reasons to participate in PISA. PISA team member interviews were coded according to their own categories, including sampling logistics, communication, contact with the international testing center, and guidelines. After coding, the findings were sorted and organized according to the three research questions.

I followed a more general qualitative approach to analyzing data that adopted elements of grounded theory and narrative analysis. There were resemblances to grounded theory in that the study was open-ended: I did not start with a pre-conceived hypothesis to test, but instead hoped to generate new concepts from the data (Bryman, 2012). However, given the limited timeframe and sample size, it is difficult to argue that total theoretical saturation was reached. Despite this, the sample size was large enough to uncover new themes and ideas in this previously unstudied area. There were also elements of narrative analysis in the research as I investigated not only how school leaders determined student exclusion in a practice exercise of PISA participation, but also how they “made sense of what happened” in this exercise through reflective follow-up questions (Bryman, 2012, p. 582).

4.4.5 Document analysis

During an interview with PISA team members, several versions of Norway’s PISA administration manuals were referenced. After the interview, these documents or

the relevant excerpts related to student exclusion were provided to the researcher for further analysis. This included information related to student exclusion in PISA 2006, 2009, 2012, 2015, and PISA 2017 field trials. These documents were analyzed for changes related to how student exclusion was described and explained over the years. Each document or excerpt was read carefully in order to analyze how the guidelines for excluding students in PISA were communicated. Documents were studied for words, formatting, and presentation of the information (i.e.: tables, bullet points, etc.). Key excerpts were then translated into English by the author; see Appendix H. The original Norwegian text versions are available in Appendices C, D, E, F and G.

4.5 Judgments of quality

4.5.1 Reliability and validity

In social science research, there have been four ways developed for judging quality: construct validity, internal validity, external validity, and reliability (Yin, 2014). In order to achieve construct validity, I use multiple sources of evidence wherever possible and cross-reference my concepts with appropriate theory. Internal validity is less relevant, as I am not trying to examine a set cause-and-effect relationship with regards to PISA exclusion rates. My research instead seeks to explore why and how PISA exclusion rates may have risen in Norway. External validity is also less relevant since I am not trying to generalize my findings across other studies. And finally, I am attempting to achieve reliability by describing my research methods clearly so that someone else could try and replicate the same study, if desired. However, given that research with human subjects is subjective in nature, qualitative research accepts that there will be some bias in analyzing and interpreting the results (Bryman, 2012). In my research, I assume that the answers from my respondents are valid, and acknowledge that my interpretation of them is subject to my own background, perceptions, and experiences.

4.5.2 Trustworthiness and authenticity

Some qualitative researchers have argued that there should be alternate measures for evaluating qualitative research (Bryman, 2012). Instead of focusing on traditional measures of reliability and validity, researchers like Lincoln and Guba (as cited in Bryman, 2012) argue for focusing on trustworthiness and authenticity. Since there is no single perfect truth in qualitative research, trustworthiness instead looks for factors of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. In my research, I address these factors by using as many sources of data as possible, and having key respondents review the data before publication (credibility), holding individual, in-depth interviews with subjects to obtain thick and rich descriptions (transferability), auditing my own fieldwork and notes as well as having my supervisor review throughout the process (dependability), and conducting my research while acting in “good faith” and trying to minimize my own personal values or opinions (confirmability). Regarding authenticity, I have sought to fairly and truthfully represent the viewpoints of my interviewees (Bryman, 2012).

4.6 Ethical considerations

Before the research began, I received ethical clearance from the Norwegian Center for Research Data (NSD) in order to ensure that my project met professional ethical research guidelines. As part of this approval, I upheld standards for ethical collection and management of personal data. All respondents were given and signed a written informed consent form in the same language as the interview (see Appendix B for the full informed consent documents). Prior to starting each interview, I presented my project verbally and asked the participant if s/he had any questions before we began. I also asked and received permission to record my interviews from each participant, and I informed him/her of how quotations would be used. I limited my interviews to be as brief as possible out of respect for the participant’s time.

Keeping my sources anonymous was a high priority, and I used a scrambling key to

make sure that interview data was kept separate from any identifying information. As advised by NSD and requested by the interviewees, I also shared descriptions and quotations from my interviews with the PISA team members with the interviewees for their approval prior to publication.

Although PISA team members were interested in the findings of this research and helped provide useful documents and context, this research is not funded or administered in any way by PISA, PISA Norway, or the OECD. All school leader interviewees were found independently of the PISA office and integrity in research practices and confidentiality was upheld. However, preliminary findings were shared with a PISA Norway team member in December 2017 to help inform practices for PISA 2018 implementation.

4.7 Limitations

There are a number of limitations with my research. First, I have a relatively small sample size of interviewees, and thus my data is limited. Although I interviewed six school leaders and two members of the PISA Norway team, these individuals represent a small portion of a larger population. It is possible that with a larger sample size of interviewees, different themes and issues would have emerged. However, this study does not intend to be generalizable across the entire population of all school leaders or PISA team members in Norway. Instead, it seeks only to expose and explore some themes and perspectives that emerge, and to serve as a starting point for discussion and future research.

Second, although I speak, read, and write Norwegian at a high level, it is not my native language. In order to try and minimize any errors due to language, I conferred with native speakers at several stages throughout the research process. All of my written documents and communication (emails, interview guides, informed consent letters, etc.) were checked by a native Norwegian speaker prior to use. Furthermore, in recording the interviews, I gave myself the chance to listen to them again carefully

and with additional language resources present. If words arose that I was unsure of, I could confer with a native speaker or dictionary as I transcribed and translated the interviews. Despite these limitations, I advocate the importance of having as many interviews and as much communication conducted in Norwegian as possible, because Norwegian is the language that most participants felt comfortable in. Additionally, using Norwegian allowed cultural and linguistic nuances to come through more clearly and naturally than if interviews had been conducted in English.

4.8 Conclusion

This chapter presented the methodology and methods using in conducting this research. It outlined the qualitative approach undertaken, case study research design, sampling strategy, and data collection and analysis techniques. I also outlined judgments of quality in the research, including a discussion of reliability, validity, trustworthiness, and accountability; as well as ethical consideration in and limitations of the research. The next chapter will present the major findings from the interviews with school leaders and PISA team members, organized according to the three research questions.

Chapter 5

Findings and discussion: student exclusion in PISA Norway

The previous chapter described both the methods and methodology behind the research for this thesis. This chapter will present the main findings of the research, organized according to the three research questions: how PISA exclusion criteria are communicated to school leaders, how Norwegian school leaders understand and implement exclusion guidelines on PISA and national tests, and explicit reasons for excluding and not excluding students on the PISA test.

5.1 How exclusion criteria are communicated to school leaders

The first research question focuses on how exclusion is communicated to school leaders by the PISA Norway team. This is important to examine whether there is something in the PISA Norway team's communication that could be influencing Norway's exclusion rate. This section will explore how the PISA Norway office shares information about student exclusion with school leaders through both written guidelines

and training seminars, as well as future changes being planned for PISA 2018.

5.1.1 Written guidelines

School leaders receive a packet with a variety of information about how to administer the PISA test several weeks before the testing window opens. The OECD international testing office develops this packet, and it is translated at the national level and then approved by the international office. Team Member 2 reported that although individual country teams are allowed to make adaptations to the manual, the international testing office must approve all changes. Some changes, like those made in the script that is read to students or anything related to exclusion criteria, are controlled with very strict scrutiny.

Excerpts from these packets focusing on how to determine student exclusion were analyzed for PISA 2006, 2009, 2012, 2015, and the 2017 field trials, see Figure 5.1. These documents are originally issued in Norwegian, but have been translated into English here. Translations and the originals are provided in the appendix.

To summarize, a number of changes were made to the exclusion guidelines during these years in formatting, emphasis, and explanation. Both team members clarified that most of these changes originated in the international version and were translated into the Norwegian documents in a closely controlled manner. Many of these changes attempt to make the guidelines clearer and easier to understand. The formatting has been simplified so it is easier to interpret the information quickly. Several phrases have also been added to emphasize participation over exclusion. Many of the changes stress including students with special needs and students who may be excluded on national tests. In the latest version, the criteria for inclusion are also now presented before the criteria for exclusion.

	2006	2009	2012	2015	2017 field trial
Formatting of exclusion criteria	Box with tightly wrapped text arranged in bullet points	Three-column table comparing "students who should be exempted" and "students who nevertheless should participate"	Same as 2009	Same as 2009	Three-column table comparing "students who should participate" and "students who can be exempted"
Extra words/phrases in bold	"If you are in doubt, let the student participate" above the table	Some extra phrases like "NOT" and "ALL" in the table descriptions	Same as 2009	Same as 2009	"Let as many students with special needs as possible take the PISA test" above the table in larger font.
Other changes from the prior version		Wording is more concise; the three criteria listed under "limited Norwegian skills" are separated into bullet points; exempting students for low language skills has been described as exempting students who "do not have Norwegian as a mother tongue and have limited Norwegian skills"	In the second category of exclusion, the word "cognitive" is added; "BUP" has been added as an evaluatory agency; "such that they are not able to participate in the test" has been replaced by "are not able to understand and follow instructions in the survey"	Two extra paragraphs are included: the first clarifies exemption and mentions that exemption criteria are uniform across countries. The second emphasizes participation when possible in a number of scenarios. Includes examples of how the criteria could be considered with hypothetical students	Sentences stating that some students are perhaps unable to participate in the survey; and that the criteria for exemption are uniform across countries have been removed. The directions are broken down into two steps. Examples of hypothetical students have been assigned names.

Figure 5.1: Analysis of changes in PISA Norway written exclusion guidelines 2006–2017

Explaining the changes

During interviews, PISA team members mentioned trying to minimize the amount of additional changes made to the guidelines, beyond what the international office dictated. Interviewees expressed only making changes that would help improve understanding for school contacts. Team Member 2 reported working hard to make the Norwegian version simpler and less complicated than the English version, while still including the required points. Displaying information in tables was one way of making the guidelines easier to understand. Team Member 2 acknowledged adding the extra sentence about how students who are excluded on national tests can participate in PISA. Explaining that this was done to reduce confusion, the interviewee said:

We thought it was because of the national tests that exemptions [on PISA] increased...so we said that you should be stricter in PISA with exemptions than in the national tests. So that's why we have had that sentence. It's not clear that it has helped, but at least we've tried.

Team Member 1 noted that, after observing that student exclusion was increasing the most in the second category (cognitive, psychological, and/or emotional handicaps), the team chose to add or highlight certain phrases to help increase participation. Team Member 1 reported,

We wanted to make it clearer—if you're in one of these categories, you can still take the test. You can meet the criteria and still take PISA if you can. You don't necessarily need to be excluded if you meet the criteria—only if you meet them and there's a good reason why you can't take the test. So we maybe added like half a sentence to make this a bit clearer.

Overall, interviews revealed that all changes were accepted by the PISA international office, and that any changes were done to increase clarity and minimize room

for interpretation in the exemption guidelines. As Team Member 2 reflected, “[the guidelines and written communication] haven’t become less strict; in fact, it’s becoming stricter—‘include as many as possible.’” However, student exclusion rates continued to rise in spite of increased stringency in the guidelines. This raises the question of how school leaders were interpreting these guidelines, which will be explored in Section 5.2.

Exclusion vs. exemption, for PISA team members

One final note regarding how the guidelines are written concerns the choice of including the term “exempted” (“*frita*”) versus “excluded” (“*utelukke*” or “*ekskludere*”). Although all PISA reports published in English use the term “exclude,” the Norwegian manuals overwhelmingly prefer the term “exempt.” “Exclude” is only used occasionally in the Norwegian texts over the years. Both team members reported choosing the word “exempted” because that is what the national tests used, and reported having used “exempted” consistently from the very beginning of PISA 2000. However, both PISA team members also acknowledged that there is a difference in the connotation of the words “exempt” and “exclude.” Team Member 1 expressed that “exclusion sounds much more negative than exemption” and Team Member 2 agreed that, “exclusion sounds so much harder—we consciously chose to use ‘exemption.’” Thus, since the terms have different connotations, there might also be a difference in how each term is received by school leaders, which might affect how school leaders choose to determine exclusion. In Section 5.2.2, I will present the school leaders’ interpretations of the written guidelines, including their perceptions of the words used in them.

5.1.2 Training and other communication

In addition to providing a packet with written guidelines, PISA team members reported working hard to create other ways to communicate with their school contacts.

Both team members acknowledged that improving communication could help reduce the exclusion rate, since ultimately it is the school leaders who determine the list of students to be excluded. As Team Member 1 said,

I think the most important thing we can do to improve the exclusion rate is the contact we have with the schools. Then we talk with them and we can go through these [exclusion] criteria. In the end, it's up to the principals and teachers to make the decision—they know the students.

Starting in 2006, the PISA Norway team has organized a number of training sessions for school leaders in different cities around the country. In PISA 2000 and 2003, trainings were held over the phone with each school. Team Member 1 reported that participation in in-person trainings has been high, and that “we can't make these seminars mandatory, but we can try and make them as interesting as possible.” Team Member 2 explained that “the first years we didn't have gatherings—we thought schools wouldn't have time to come, but they've been really popular!” According to Team Member 2, the PISA team called most school leaders that could not attend the training and asked if they had questions. Team Member 1 reported planning to continue this initiative in the PISA 2018 administration.

Seminars contain information about the manual and the logistics of administering the test, as well as a session about PISA and its use. Both team members referred to these seminars very positively, describing them as “fun” and having “interesting discussions,” and that “it's always much easier for [the school leaders] after we've gone through this.” Team members mentioned explicitly going through student exclusion and the criteria during these trainings.

During interviews, both team members reported planning a change in the 2018 PISA test in the hopes of lowering student exclusion. In the 2018 PISA administration in Norway, the seminars will include an exercise where school leaders can practice applying the exclusion criteria to hypothetical students. This activity was recently implemented in the field trial testing in spring 2017 and Team Member 1 reported that the exercise appeared useful for those who participated. However, despite adding

this activity, Team Member 1 acknowledged that the overall exclusion rate in the field trial was still high.

Throughout the interviews, both PISA team members expressed a commitment to using training and communication to reduce student exclusion. When asked what could be done to lower Norway's exclusion rate, Team Member 2 shared, "I think it's information...we hope that all strategies like gatherings, calling schools, emphasizing how important this is will help as many as possible participate. We can't give up."

5.1.3 Summary and discussion, research question 1

Student exclusion has risen over recent PISA cycles, despite a number of strategies undertaken by the PISA Norway team in both the written guidelines and the training seminars. As discussed, the PISA Norway team has worked to make the guidelines stricter and clearer. Through all of these changes, the intention was to make the written guidelines clearer for school contacts in the hope of lowering exclusion and urging school leaders to favor inclusion.

Unfortunately, regardless of changes, exclusion rates have risen. If revising the guidelines in these ways did not help lower exclusion rates, then it begs the question: what else could help school leaders exclude fewer students? Section 5.2.2 will explore how school leaders understand these guidelines, presenting a previously unexplored look into how the individuals receiving and using these guidelines interpret and apply them.

As the interviews and document analysis have shown, there are multiple opportunities for sharing information about how to determine student exclusion with school contacts. From the interview discussions, PISA Norway team members appear to be committed to providing the best communication possible. However, there has been little investigation done into how this communication is received by the school leaders involved. Section 5.2 will next explore how select school leaders interpret PISA and the PISA guidelines to see if the intentions of the PISA team align with the

experiences of these school leaders. A disconnect between the experiences of these two groups could help explain Norway's high exclusion rate.

5.2 How Norwegian school leaders understand and implement exclusion guidelines on PISA and national tests

The second research question focuses on how select school leaders understand and implement exclusion guidelines on PISA and national tests. This is important because school leaders' beliefs and perceptions about PISA and exclusion may influence how they determine student participation on the test. This section will focus on how select school leaders explained their experiences with PISA, as well as how they completed the practice exercise of applying the PISA exclusion guidelines. It will also compare interviewed school leaders' thoughts about exclusion on PISA with exclusion on the Norwegian national tests.

5.2.1 How PISA is experienced by select school leaders

Historic experience with PISA: the PISA shock

All school leaders interviewed expressed familiarity with PISA; three had also been previously involved in various cycles of PISA ranging from PISA 2000 to PISA 2015. One school leader mentioned that their school was selected to participate in PISA 2018. Many interviewed school leaders referred to the "PISA shock" resulting from when PISA 2000 results were published and admitted that PISA has been influential in affecting education policy. School Leader 1 reported, "Norwegian schools have changed for sure since the PISA shock...we were all involved in the consequences of the research and PISA data," and cited the Knowledge Promotion Reform. School Leader 6 argued that PISA opened Norwegian discourse around schools, bursting the

bubble of perfection that many Norwegians assumed previously:

Before PISA came, Norway thought we had the world's best schools. We often think we are the best—the nicest and smartest and most peaceful and so on—and then the reports came out and there was a lot of 'oh shit, we're not the best! Why aren't we the best?' and so it became very open. PISA has done a lot for discussions about Norwegian schools.

This aligns with findings from the literature and media reports about how early PISA results were shocking to Norway (Sjøberg, 2014; Ramnefjell, 2001; Haarvik Sanden, 2010) and how the Knowledge Promotion Reform was formed as a response to PISA (Hatch, 2013; Sjøberg, 2016).

The purpose of PISA

Respondents were asked about how they experience PISA in their daily lives, as well as what purpose they see in PISA. Several interviewees noted that information about PISA comes in waves, aligning with when results are released. School Leader 3 laughed, “when the results are presented, the media is just full of it in the 14 days right afterwards!” Several interviewed school leaders reported hearing about recent PISA results in further education courses or professional development opportunities. School Leader 1 mentioned discussing PISA results in a regional collaborative group with other school leaders, and School Leader 3 reported reviewing the results with staff in their own school, calling it “super interesting.” School Leader 4 reported using PISA as a foundation for “pedagogic debate,” and School Leader 1 told of using PISA “to confirm or refute our own development.” However, leaders acknowledged that PISA was mostly encountered on an overview level more than at the individual school level. Some guessed that this might also be because PISA does not provide individual student results, like the national tests.

Overall, interviewees spoke positively of PISA. Many found PISA to be a worthwhile exercise for bringing different perspectives in to Norway. School Leader 6 called it

“sensible” to compare across countries, saying that it is good for Norway to be challenged by other countries’ higher performance. School Leader 2 expressed similar ideas, saying “it doesn’t help if Norwegian schools just dig in and say, ‘it’s good enough for us.’ It’s good to have international perspectives.” School Leader 4 cited the vast resources that Norway spends on education as an argument for using international tests to ensure quality, saying, “it’s important that we compare our school system to other countries...we’re a very rich country and we should have a fantastic school system.” Thus, many interviewed school leaders looked favorably upon PISA as one international test that could help Norway compare its education system globally.

Limitations of PISA

Interviewees often expressed nuanced views of the purpose of PISA, highlighting both its strengths and also limitations in the same sentence. Interviewees commonly used the word “important” to describe PISA, while also following this up with a qualifier. For example, School Leader 2 voiced that “education is becoming more international. It’s important that we know what is happening in other lands, even if we can’t always compare it directly.” Here, the interviewee expresses both the importance of PISA and also its limitation in not allowing for direct comparison in the same sentence.

When describing the purpose of PISA, School Leader 3 said,

It is important for us to get feedback about what Norwegian students can do—how math and science are compared with other countries. It gives a picture of Norwegian schools, and even if it’s a picture that we can discuss whether it is correct...yes, it is important that we’re in these studies to get feedback.

This quotation presents an interesting juxtaposition between the “importance” of getting feedback from PISA results, while also questioning whether this feedback is

“correct” or valid. Several interviewees mentioned feeling that PISA’s results do not accurately reflect the values behind a country’s education system. As School Leader 4 expressed,

Maybe we can tolerate that we don’t come out on top in these tests because we have made other choices about what we think is important to spend time on in school—raising students socially, building democratic skills, and becoming a critically thinking person.

Several interviewees wished that Norwegian performance was only examined in comparison with peer countries like Sweden, Denmark, or Finland because of the large contextual differences separating a country like Norway from a country like China. This is also found in the literature—Østerud (2016)’s conclusion is that high performance on PISA cannot be understood without also understanding a country’s culture and local context. Sjøberg (2014) also writes that it is impossible for a test to be completely culture neutral, so PISA may favor students from certain cultural backgrounds.

Respondents placed value on tests that can incorporate the individual circumstances of their students. School Leader 1 noted that PISA seems “a little far away from the students we have, with the homes, backgrounds, and previous experiences they can bring.” Two school leaders called out the ranking tables as problematic, mentioning that sometimes organizing and listing which countries are the “best” or “worst” minimizes meaningful discussion which then “work[s] against its [PISA’s] intentions.” These critiques are mirrored in the literature as researchers like Sellar et al. (2017) and Kamens (2013) have also argued against drawing conclusions from the PISA rankings lists and “quick fix bullets” alone. To summarize, in the words of School Leader 4, “we need to take PISA for what it is.”

PISA and politics

Many interviewees saw a close connection between PISA and politics; School Leader 6 reported that, “I think politicians think they need PISA and these other studies to substantiate the changes and reforms they want to make.” School Leader 3 described PISA as an “important management document for politicians, first and foremost.” Several interviewed school leaders noted the connection between PISA and the OECD; School Leader 1 described Norway’s participation in PISA as an “obligation” because of its status as an OECD member country. This school leader also questioned the OECD’s role in Norwegian school politics:

We can discuss politically whether we should have an international standard making an assessment that guides our students, if we’re having serious instruction as a result of this, and what it is that we think our students need to learn.

This correlates with academic findings describing the connection between the OECD, PISA, and an increased global governance of education (Meyer and Benavot, 2013; Grek, 2009; Sellar and Lingard, 2013; Morgan and Shahjahan, 2014), as well as the close relationship between PISA and policy recommendations (Breakspear, 2012; Sjøberg, 2014). Thus, interviewed school leaders raised many of the same issues and perceptions that key scholars in the field discuss.

5.2.2 Exclusion in PISA

The guidelines

When presented with the PISA guidelines for exclusion, most school leaders interviewed stated that they were easy to interpret. Multiple interviewees described them as “clear,” and several pointed to the tables and phrases in bold as particularly helpful. Phrases that stood out to interviewed school leaders included “let as many

students as possible with special needs take the PISA test” and “some students who are exempted from the national tests can participate in this test anyways.” School Leader 5 reported being confused by the line “who are not able to participate and follow instructions on the test” (which is a condition for exempting students under the ‘cognitive, psychological, and/or emotional difficulties’ criteria). This school leader questioned, “I’m unsure about this line...does it mean the student could answer all the exercises without help? To what extent of understanding and following?” Because of this uncertainty, School Leader 5 reported having difficulty deciding whether certain students should be excluded or not.

Most school leaders interviewed praised the guidelines for their clarity and strictness. School Leader 1 mentioned that “there are some students with such significant challenges that it’s not fair to include them. There needs to be very clear guidelines, and this here helps.” From these interviews, it appears that overall, the guidelines do not confuse most interviewed school leaders. Thus, the written guidelines alone probably cannot explain Norway’s high exclusion rate.

School Leader 4 admitted that although the guidelines were clear, they did not agree with them because of the condition of students having less than one year of Norwegian instruction to be exempted for language proficiency. School Leader 4 stated,

That’s really quite little. The tests have such advanced vocabulary and expressions, so I would have thought that some of these students, even though they’ve had more than one year of instruction, just won’t have enough language skills here to be able to understand.

Therefore, there are examples where the criteria in the guidelines do not always match up with the experiences of the school leaders. This discrepancy might allow for dissatisfaction with the guidelines and a tendency for some school leaders to stretch their limits.

Exclusion vs. exemption, for school leaders

During the interviews, all respondents used the word “exempt” (*frita*) instead of “exclude” (*ekskudere*) to describe the process of removing a student from the participation list. School Leader 1 even specifically called out the interviewer for mixing up the terms during the conversation: “we don’t use the word ‘exclude’; we use ‘exempt.’” When asked why, interviewees saw a clear distinction between the two terms. All respondents saw exclusion as much harsher than exemption. School Leader 1 described the difference as: “Exclude is to say, ‘you can’t be with us, you’re outside,’ while exemption is a right you have. It’s more like, ‘if you want, you can be free because you deserve it.’” Similarly, School Leader 3 compared the terms to social situations, saying, “exclusion is used to shut someone out. That’s why we use exemption.” School Leader 5 explained, “for me, exempt is a more positive word—you don’t need to. But exclude means you aren’t allowed.”

This follows suit with how the PISA team members understood the two words and the decision to use “exempt” in the written guidelines throughout the years. All national test exclusion guidelines also use the word “exempt” exclusively. This reveals an interesting cultural nuance that is similar to what was brought up in PISA team member interviews. By choosing to use the softer, more positive term of “exempt”, the discussion focuses on the rights of the students. Instead of seeing exclusion as a punishment, exemption is seen as more of a choice (i.e.: “you don’t need to”). To the interviewed school leaders, exempting a student is a gentler approach than excluding a student. This distinction might make the consequences of exemption seem less severe to a Norwegian than the consequences of exclusion might be to someone of a different background.

The process of exclusion

After receiving the guidelines, most interviewees took only a few minutes to look through them and begin making decisions based on their current class lists. Several interviewees mentioned that they would make a first guess themselves, but would also

consult other teachers, guidance counselors, and resource staff before determining the final participation list. All interviewees reported not having a maximum number or percent in their minds for how many students they would exclude, but instead chose to review their current cohort and make decisions accordingly.

During the exercise, some school leaders interviewed thought aloud through the process of exclusion. School Leader 5 revealed an internal struggle as they considered their students: “I have one student in this class who I’m not sure can...but...since he...no, no exemption here.” School Leader 1 also reported changing their mind about which students to exclude during the process: “I’d exclude four because of the low cognitive difficulties...no, five...no, four students.”

School Leader 6 read through the criteria and acknowledged the subjectivity in making decisions about students: “When I think about cognitive, psychological difficulties, I think it’s a little hard to evaluate. I have one student who has a special plan, but I think regardless, he is capable of taking the test.” By admitting that “it’s a little hard to evaluate,” School Leader 6 communicates that excluding students is not an objective science. Instead, it relies on school leaders to use their own discretion (“I think”) as they make these judgement calls.

These decisions are not always easy; as School Leader 4 considered the criteria, they voiced their disagreement openly: “there are many more that I wish I could have plucked out, but they [don’t meet the criteria]...but I’m very loyal to what I’m asked to do, so I would follow what I’m told.” Interestingly, the same school leader later admitted that they would exclude one student who did not meet the guidelines. During the PISA test administration, the school leader is the only one to check over the participation list and determine student exclusion; there is no supervision from PISA Norway that double checks this process. Instead, even though it technically is not allowed, school leaders do have the opportunity to exclude students outside of the guidelines.

The six interviews at five different schools presented the following results. Note that while School Leader 2 and School Leader 3 work at the same school and discussed

the same students, they came up with different exclusion lists, as shown in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1: Reported exclusion rates from the exclusion exercise in interviews with six school leaders

School Leader #	Number of students in 10th grade	% of students to exclude on PISA
1	50–75	8.1
2	100–125	6.0
3	100–125	0.9–4.3
4	75–100	15.1
5	100–125	0.0
6	50–75	0.0

Here, the results varied widely. Exact numbers of students enrolled in the 10th grade and students chosen for exclusion are hidden to protect anonymity. Instead, they have been replaced with ranges and percentages. Two school leaders chose not to exclude any students in their schools, while four leaders reported varying levels of exclusion ranging from 0.9% to 15.1%. Although this is a small sample and the results varied, they still average out to around the Norwegian average exclusion rate. Interestingly, two school leaders evaluating the same group of students came up with different results. School Leader 2 chose to exclude 6% of the group, while School Leader 3 decided to exclude somewhere between 0.9–4.3% of the same group. School Leader 3 came up with a range instead of an exact number of students to exclude, as there was interest in consulting with other teachers first.

School Leader 1 and School Leader 4 used the word “only” when describing their exclusion number (i.e.: “I would only exclude X students”). This shows that some school leaders might not be familiar with the consequences of participation coverage for validity. If School 1, for example, was used as the entire population of the test,

8% would be a high enough exclusion rate that it would limit how representative the sample was, and thus, threaten the validity of the results. However, to the average person, 8% might not sound very high. If every school leader thinks that their individual school's exclusion rate is not so high, they may not consider the part they play in the country's overall exclusion rate. Training for school leaders could reinforce how important each individual student exclusion is for the test being representative of all of Norway, and thus, the validity of the PISA assessment.

5.2.3 Exclusion on national tests

In addition to exploring select school leaders' views about exclusion in PISA, the interviews also asked school leaders about their understandings of exclusion on national tests. After completing the practice exercise in applying the PISA exclusion guidelines to their group of students, each school leader was asked to compare the PISA participation list they had just created with a hypothetical national test participation list. Interviews presented the results shown in Table 5.2.

Table 5.2: Reported comparison between PISA exclusion and national test exclusion in interviews with six school leaders

School Leader #	On which test would more students be excluded?
1	National tests
2	Equal or national tests
3	National tests
4	PISA
5	National tests
6	Equal

The results from this mock exercise contradict what has happened in real life, where

exclusion rates on Norway's national tests remain much lower than on PISA (See Section 2.3.2 on page 27). In the interviews, only one school leader reported excluding more students on PISA than on the national test. School Leader 4 explained wanting to exclude more students on PISA by saying "I'm very strict with the national test participation because it's important that we get the information about what students can do so we can help create their learning plans." This reflects how, to this school leader, PISA was seen as less relevant than the national tests. If PISA is perceived as less useful, it may be easier for some school leaders to justify excluding larger numbers of students on PISA.

All interviewed school leaders spoke very highly of the use and relevance of the national tests in their daily work. Interviewed school leaders characterized the national tests as "wonderful," "used actively" and providing "very detailed, useful information to us." Interviewees also reported that the national tests have improved over the years and that they are a helpful tool for analysis. In the interviews, school leaders reported that because of this, the national tests were much closer to their daily practice than PISA is. If this is the case, then why would a majority of interviewed school leaders report excluding more students on the national tests than on PISA, and thus, accumulating less of this helpful information?

When comparing the exclusion guidelines for the two tests, it becomes evident that the national test guidelines allow for an extra criterion of exclusion than PISA does. The national tests dictate that a student may be excluded if two conditions are met: (1) the student has a special education or special language plan and (2) it is determined that the results of the national test will not hold meaning for the student's future learning (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2017). This second clause does not exist in PISA, since the purpose of the test is not to provide feedback about any specific student's learning progress. PISA is used only on an aggregate level whereas national tests can also be used at the individual level. Therefore, some interviewed school leaders mentioned that it was easier to exclude students on the national tests. Using this particular national test exclusion condition, select school leaders could argue that the test did not have meaning for the student.

Since school leaders encounter national test guidelines every year and only encounter PISA guidelines (at most) once every three years, it might be possible that the national test guidelines for exclusion are fresher in their minds. Although interviewees described the PISA guidelines as “clearer and more objective” than the national test guidelines, there are a number of similarities between PISA and national test exclusion guidelines and it is possible that school leaders may get confused between the two tests. Section 5.3 will discuss this confusion further when analyzing what reasons school leaders used to justify excluding students in the PISA practice exercise.

5.2.4 Summary and discussion, research question 2

Overall, most interviewed school leaders felt positively about PISA, although many also voiced PISA’s limitations. All interviewees reported being familiar with PISA, whether from a professional or a personal standpoint. The PISA shock and PISA’s influence on Norwegian education policy came up in several interviews. Interviewees explained seeing a number of uses for PISA and felt it was important for Norway to participate, as long as PISA’s limitations were also considered.

Many interviewed school leaders praised the PISA guidelines for their clarity and strictness, and appreciated the formatting changes that highlighted key phrases and presented key information in tables and bullets. Several interviews revealed that although reading and understanding the guidelines was not a problem for school leaders interviewed, the challenge presented in actually applying the guidelines.

A language discrepancy between ‘exemption’ and ‘exclusion’ arose during the interviews with school leaders. School leaders described this discrepancy the same way that PISA team members did—exclusion was seen as a harsher term, while exemption was kinder. Interviews also revealed that a majority of school leaders preferred to exclude more students on the national tests than on PISA, something that contradicts Norway’s actual exclusion rates on these two assessments over recent years. Therefore, the interviews raised a number of interesting ideas when discussing school

leaders' perceptions of PISA, exclusion, and national tests. Section 5.3 will explore the concrete reasons given by school leaders when asked to apply PISA and national test exclusion guidelines in a practical example with their real students. It will outline both the reasons given by select school leaders to exclude certain students, as well as the reasons given not to exclude other students. This brings an important perspective to the research by delving into the mindsets of six school leaders in a key position to influence Norway's overall PISA exclusion rate.

5.3 Reasons to exclude and not exclude students on PISA

5.3.1 Reasons to exclude students on PISA

During interviews, four of the six school leaders reported wanting to exclude some students in their cohort on the hypothetical PISA exercise. The reasons given for choosing to exclude students will be explored in this section. First, the reasons will be explored according to the three exclusion categories defined on PISA: physical difficulties, emotional/psychological/cognitive difficulties, and limited language proficiency. Then, two additional reasons given by interviewed school leaders will be presented: relevance for the student, and avoiding a feeling of failure in the student.

Physical difficulties

Several interviewed school leaders mentioned that if they had students with significant physical handicaps, they would have considered whether these students were eligible for exclusion. However, all six school leaders reported not having any students eligible for exclusion based on these criteria.

Emotional/psychological/cognitive difficulties

Many school leaders interviewed spent time considering PISA's second category of exclusion, describing that they too had students "with special needs." School leaders interviewed reported understanding that students in this category must also have been evaluated by professional services. However, School Leader 4 decided to exclude a student who did not meet this criterion:

There's one more student I would want to exclude—she doesn't have a special plan and she hasn't been assessed, but at the same time, she would do so poorly psychologically that she just wouldn't be able to handle it.

Here the interviewer reminded the school leader that the official guidelines require the student to have been assessed by professional services. Despite this, the school leader acknowledged that even though it was not formally allowed, they would exclude this specific student under the emotional/psychological/cognitive difficulties category anyways. School Leader 4 explained this by saying, "it should be the experience of the student that determines whether we should exclude him or not." Here the school leader prioritizes the experience of the individual student over than the conditions set by the test, opening up for a more subjective evaluation. This goes against the intention of the official guidelines and the PISA Norway office who are trying to make the rules for exclusion as clear and standard as possible. If some school leaders do not understand the reasoning behind having uniform guidelines across all countries, they might feel more ownership in bending the rules for their cohort of students.

Limited language proficiency

Many interviewed school leaders reported that it was easiest to apply the criteria for exclusion for limited language proficiency. These criteria are (1) that students do not have Norwegian as a mother tongue, (2) have limited Norwegian skills, and (3) have had less than one year with instruction in Norwegian. As School Leader

2 described, “we have one student who meets the three criteria for language, so he should be excluded.” School Leader 3 echoed the same feelings, highlighting the third criterion as particularly objective: “that’s a great rule to have because it’s so rigid.” However, this third criterion where a student must have had less than one year with instruction in Norwegian was initially skipped over by two school leaders at schools that offered reception classes.

Reception classes are special integration classes provided for students who arrive to Norway between grades 3–10 but do not speak Norwegian proficiently (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2016). According to the law, students are entitled to up to two years of special instruction in reception classes to gain proficiency (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2016). However, after two years of instruction, students must be placed in a mainstream classroom environment (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2016). Therefore, some students in reception classes have had less than one year of Norwegian instruction, while others have had more than one year. In each municipality, only some schools may offer reception classes.

Four school leaders interviewed worked at schools offering reception classes. When reviewing their lists, two of these school leaders initially expressed that they would exclude all students enrolled in the reception classes because of low language skills. However, some of these students had received more than one year of Norwegian instruction. In one of these interviews, the researcher reminded the school leader of the third criterion, and the school leader revised the exclusion list to only omit the students with less than one year of Norwegian instruction.

Therefore, this research revealed that although some school leaders felt that the criteria for exclusion based on language proficiency was objective and clear, leaders working at schools with reception classes were more likely to struggle with these criteria. This might be because of the considerable overlap between PISA exclusion guidelines and national test exclusion guidelines. The guidelines for exclusion on Norway’s national tests are more generous in allowing school leaders to exclude students receiving special language instruction. Since many but not all students in reception classes are eligible for exclusion on PISA, it is important that leaders in

schools offering reception classes spend extra time focusing on the third criterion when deciding which students to exclude on PISA.

Relevance for the student

During interviews with school leaders, two additional themes emerged as reasons to exclude students. In the first, two school leaders justified excluding students on PISA by referring to a condition from the national test exclusion guidelines: that the test must also have meaning for students.

School Leader 3 reported that “some students should be exempted. The reason is that if these students took the test, it would have been just meaningless for them.” School Leader 4 used similar language, explaining “We need to make sure that it [PISA] is meaningful for the student.” Here, both school leaders are mixing up the national test guidelines and the PISA guidelines, and applying a condition from exclusion in the national tests onto PISA. PISA does not allow for a student to be excluded if the results won’t be meaningful to him, but Norway’s national tests explicitly do.

The national tests hold a much stronger focus on the individual student, since a key objective is to provide feedback about a given student’s abilities. Therefore, if the test will not have meaning for the student, a school leader can choose to exclude the student on the national test. Yet PISA has a different objective: PISA does not seek to provide feedback on the individual level, so school leaders will not receive meaningful feedback about any particular student that takes PISA. Instead, PISA’s usefulness is derived from its ability to speak about a whole population of students as an aggregate. Students who may receive little meaningful feedback from a test like the national tests still need to be included on PISA.

However, since school leaders encounter the national test exclusion guidelines much more frequently than they encounter the PISA guidelines, it is highly possible that they would become confused about small nuances like these. If there are many school leaders mistakenly applying a looser criterion from the national test guidelines to

PISA, it could provide one explanation for Norway's high exclusion rate on PISA. This theory is supported by the timing: Norway's national tests in their current form became prominent in 2007-8, and Norway's PISA exclusion rate increased most sharply between PISA 2006 (3.5%) and PISA 2009 (5.9%).

Avoiding experiences of failure: the Stakkars Deg Syndrome

Another theme emerged from the interviews as select school leaders justified why they would exclude certain students. Many interviewed school leaders expressed similar ideas of concern and compassion for students who would find PISA challenging. This phenomenon will be called the "Stakkars Deg Syndrome" in this thesis. *Stakkars deg* translates to "poor you" in Norwegian, and is a colloquial phrase used in a situation where one feels sorry for someone else.

School Leader 2 inspired this term by describing an experience in a prior building where teachers were too gentle towards their students: "they are part of the 'poor you' generation—a generation of teachers that are like mother hens to their students. The problem with this is that students are too sheltered and receive too few challenges." School Leader 2 further explained, "Norwegians have a tendency to think that when something gets hard and you have to work a lot with it, it's mean [to make you stay in that environment]."

These quotations summarize what the researcher found to be happening during many interviews: out of concern for certain students, school leaders chose to exclude them from PISA. The Norwegian school leaders that were interviewed reported caring deeply about their students and interviews revealed that decisions to exclude were made out of compassion and an attempt to shelter their students from hardship. School Leader 1 reported choosing to exclude "the students who won't be able to understand that which is presented to them. They are such low performing students that there's no purpose, and it'll be harmful for them. It'll give them a feeling of failure." Here, the school leader expresses concern for what might be a "harmful" experience for students and excludes students in order to protect them.

Furthermore, the phrases “failure” (*nederlag*) or “feeling of failure” (*nederlagsfølelse*) were used by many interviewed school leaders to express a sense of defeat that they did not want their students to experience. When asked why so many students (15.1%) would be excluded in the hypothetical PISA exercise, School Leader 4 was quick to clarify intent:

It's not that I want our school to look better! It's just that it's going to be a really difficult exercise for them, and they have failure after failure after failure...it's just not right that they have to be forced in to this test and experience one more failure.

This desire to avoid making individual students feel failure appeared in almost every interview, even from a school leader who did not exclude any students in the hypothetical exercise. School Leader 6 described the current values and beliefs of Norwegian school leaders by saying: “there’s a high focus on a student’s individual subjective perception of their own school experience, independent of what everyone else around them sees, and that often becomes a steering tool.” In this case, this “steering tool” affects PISA participation, but it is possible it has other implications for Norwegian schools.

School Leader 3 reported that this Stakkars Deg Syndrome and an emphasis on student mastery is not isolated to PISA, but occurs during Norway’s national test exclusion as well:

In some schools, there’s a culture that individual students should feel mastery, and if the test is going to be too difficult, then they [school leaders] take this as an opportunity to exempt the student. If there’s a student with poor content knowledge who really should be included according to the criteria, then one might choose ‘well, there’s no point that he takes this because he won’t understand, he won’t get it, he’ll start to cry’...out of consideration to the student, there’s a lot of exemption on national tests and PISA.

During interviews, select Norwegian school leaders reported knowing their students well and spoke compassionately about students with extra difficulties. The desire to exclude students on PISA comes from a place of love. This aligns with the nuances reported in using the term “exempt” instead of “exclude,” outlined on page 61: interviewed school leaders use the word “exempt” because it is a gentler term that protects the rights of the student. Similarly, exempting students who might find PISA to be a difficult exercise is seen as a gift to the individual student. By framing exemption in this affirmative light and focusing on the individual rights of the student, it makes sense that school leaders might exclude higher numbers of students. If exemption is seen as positive, there might be less incentive to reduce it.

5.3.2 Reasons to not exclude students on PISA

In addition to hearing reasons why school leaders would exclude some students on PISA, it was also interesting to understand the reasons given by select school leaders for not excluding students. Two school leaders reported not excluding any students on the practice PISA exercise. However, several other interviewed school leaders voiced ideological support for trying to minimize the number of student exclusions as much as possible. A number of reasons were provided ranging from practical to ideological.

Strictness of the criteria

School Leader 3 saw practical reasons for minimizing the number of students that were excluded: “these criteria are so strict that there should be very few who are excluded.” School Leader 5 echoed this sentiment as they argued that no students at their school could be excluded, according to the guidelines. School Leader 5 reported that there were many they wished they could exclude for a variety of reasons, but that these students did not meet all of the requirements for exclusion, and thus needed to be included. School Leader 5 described:

I have some kids that struggle with dreading school, child welfare issues, high absence, those kinds of things. And there's one that has very, very poor Norwegian skills—but he has had Norwegian instruction for at least a year. But I know he'd really struggle with understanding the Norwegian on the test. So, I think that he'd sit there for a few hours and would understand very little...but according to these criteria, I can't exempt them.

This shows that when some school leaders interpret the rules as strictly as they are intended by the PISA team, it reduces the opportunity for exclusion. Despite School Leader 5 wanting to exclude students who would struggle on the test, the rules did not allow this, and thus, no students were excluded.

Inclusivity

Several interviewed school leaders saw the emotional value of including as many students as possible on PISA. School Leader 6 remarked,

I think all students should participate in the test, regardless. Simply because hearing the message 'you shouldn't participate in this test' can do something to that student's view of himself...plus, that they can be part of the group, sit in the room and do the same thing that everyone else does—it's not positive that some students get the message that they can't be with everyone else.

School Leader 6 emphasizes the value of inclusiveness, particularly so that a student does not see that he is treated differently than his classmates. Inclusion is also seen as an important value in Norwegian school system, where a core principle is the *enhetsskole* or a school for all students (Imsen and Volckmar, 2014). Norway's history has emphasized bringing all students together into the same school, regardless of ability (Imsen and Volckmar, 2014; Telhaug, 1994). This means that instead of

isolating students with special needs in separate programs, the Norwegian system of education is designed in a way to bring everyone together.

School Leader 6 rationalized not excluding students to protect a student's "view of himself," or self-esteem. Although School Leader 4 chose to exclude students in the hypothetical PISA exercise, they too shared a past experience where excluding a student on a national test was damaging to that student's self-esteem. School Leader 4 recalled how the student cried because he "wanted to be included too," and that although "he couldn't understand anything, it was better for him to sit in the room and pretend to write than to be excluded entirely." This provides another example of how if a student knows he is excluded, it can work against inclusivity and lead to a student feeling separate and defeated.

However, unlike the national tests, it is likely that a student who was excluded on PISA will never know that he was excluded. While the national tests include everyone, most schools that are selected for PISA will only have a subset of students chosen to participate. Therefore, students can be excluded on PISA and it may not be obvious that they were ever initially on the participation list. This perceived anonymity may be one contributing reason to why exclusion rates on PISA are higher than on national tests.

Representativeness

Several interviewed school leaders reported that including all students on PISA tests was important to ensure that the tests are representative. School Leader 1 explained: "if PISA is meant to reflect the skills and competencies of middle school students, we need to take everyone...otherwise, it gives a slanted picture." Despite choosing to exclude certain students on the practice exercise, School Leader 1 acknowledged that there also could be justification for not allowing any students to be excluded. This raises the idea that the PISA test itself is so important that it could supersede the needs of individual students.

School Leader 6 also emphasized how the representativeness of the test outweighs

the individual needs of students:

We have a lot of students with anxiety, you could say, yes, she's going to get stressed out, she's going to have trouble completing this, it might be a negative experience for her, but then I think: this is going to give a picture of a student group! And that picture is going to be completely distorted if you apply all of these exemption criteria.

Here, School Leader 6 used similar language as many of their peers who chose to exclude students: "it might be a negative experience for her." However, School Leader 6 differs from their colleagues by choosing to include students who might struggle because their scores are important for the overall "picture of a student group." School Leader 6 repeated the need for PISA to be representative at other points during the interview:

I think it's unfortunate if we exclude students from this test because then we're going to get a slanted picture of this group. If you aren't included in the statistics, then you aren't included! You don't count, we don't see you.

These reflections provide another perspective about inclusivity and representativeness. In addition to wanting students to see themselves as included in a larger group by sitting in the test room with their peers, School Leader 1 and School Leader 6 acknowledge that it is also important for these students' responses to be incorporated in the data. It is only by including the results from students with difficulties that the PISA test can speak truthfully about all Norwegian students. This aligns with Schuelka (2012) and Rutkowski and Rutkowski (2016)'s concerns about selective sampling and how it hides the performance of the omitted group of students. Schuelka (2012) argues that this has dire consequences when high-stakes assessments are used to influence policies that affect all students. Therefore, two school leaders—both one who chose to exclude and one who refused to exclude students—see the ideo-

logical value in ensuring that PISA tests are representative. Perhaps this argument resonates with other school leaders too.

5.3.3 School leader hypotheses about increasing exclusion

In addition to reviewing the reasons explicitly given for excluding or not excluding students during the practice activity, the researcher also asked each school leader to guess why Norway's student exclusion on PISA had risen in recent years. Some respondents were more reluctant to speculate than others, but most were able to list a number of possible reasons. Some of the theories provided had innocent intentions while others were more malicious. It is interesting to compare the reasons hypothesized by the school leaders interviewed in the abstract with the ones actually given during the concrete practice exercise to see if the perceptions of school leaders align with their actual practice.

Among the more innocuous reasons were school leaders' thoughts that exclusion rates have risen as more students have become part of special populations. Several interviewees reported that more of today's students struggle with psychological issues than in the past, so this might lead to higher exclusion rates under the category for psychological, cognitive, and emotional difficulties. School Leader 1 explained these thoughts by saying: "In 2000, we had a broader definition of what was 'normal'—now we've made this definition so narrow that more and more students are classified as outside of the norm." This is supported by Bliksvær et al. (2017)'s findings that rates of students identified for special education have increased in Norway in recent years.

Additionally, two interviewees, School Leader 2 and School Leader 4, suspected that exclusion rates have risen as Norway has welcomed higher numbers of immigrants, and thus, more students have limited language proficiency. This research did not track trends in rates of students receiving extra language instruction; it might be interesting, however, to see if these anecdotal experiences of school leaders are also mirrored by evidence.

At the more conniving end of the spectrum, half of the interviewees thought that higher exclusion rates may be a form of cheating. As School Leader 6 explained,

I think we've been affected by having done poorly on PISA and we don't want that. People want to show off what is good, and if we're just mediocre then, 'oh, does he really need to be in the test? or oh, poor her, who is going to not understand anything" and then, we find 'good reasons' for exempting students.

This is supported by Figlio and Getzler (2002)'s findings that identifying students as having special needs is one tactic used on high-stakes tests to exclude low-performers and thus, demonstrate achievement gains. This quotation from School Leader 6 also reflects the Stakkars Deg Syndrome outlined in section 5.3.1. Although the impetus for seeking exclusion (i.e.: pressure to show off high results) does not match with the experiences voiced by interviewed school leaders, the way of thinking about the student does. The characterization of "oh, does he really need to be in the test?" and "oh, poor her" reflect elements of the Stakkars Deg Syndrome. School Leader 6 argues that school leaders try to find "good reasons" for exempting students, partly out of concern for the individual student.

School Leader 3 was surprised at Norway's high exclusion rate and blamed the media attention on high performance:

I could speculate possibly that schools sit and think, we represent Norway, we need to get a good result, so that's maybe why more students are drawn in to the exemption criteria, with the thought of getting a good result on PISA, since there is so much media attention on PISA.

This aligns with Kamens (2013) argument that PISA highlights some countries as 'winners' and thus, superstars, while other countries face shame for having poor performance. Media attention surrounding PISA has been well documented, and a number of public officials and media articles portrayed Norway as a 'loser' based on

early PISA performance (Sjøberg, 2013; Haarvik Sanden, 2010; Ramnefjell, 2001). It is possible that many school leaders have been influenced by these portrayals as well. This aligns with the findings from the interviews that all school leaders were familiar with PISA and many referred to the PISA shock or media portrayals specifically.

School Leader 2 speculated that there might be a temptation towards cheating because of the connection between PISA and politics. School Leader 2 acknowledged, “there is a clear gain here, particularly with the comparisons of Nordic countries and our politics. [Political figures want to say] ‘in our conservative government it was better’ or ‘in our liberal government it was better.’” This mirrors the findings where many school leaders interviewed pointed to PISA’s political implications and connections to education policy.

These hypotheses are supported by the literature exploring how high-stakes assessments create high-pressure situations to increase test scores at all costs (Darling-Hammond, 2007). They also align with suspicions that other countries like Malaysia and China have chosen selective sampling strategies to improve their scores (FMT Reporters, 2016; Sands, 2017). However, the speculations proposed by school leaders did not match the responses given during the interviews. Although many school leaders guessed that pressure for good results motivated higher exclusion, not a single interview revealed this in the practice activity.

5.3.4 Summary and discussion, research question 3

During the exercise, interviewed school leaders voiced a number of reasons for wanting to exclude students on PISA. Some of these reasons aligned with the official PISA guidelines, showing that some school leaders have good understanding of the guidelines. However, when asked to make decisions about concrete students, some school leaders interviewed deviated from the guidelines—both intentionally and mistakenly.

Many of the hypotheses from interviewed school leaders suspect that high exclusion is a form of cheating; this aligns with findings from the literature. However, the

actual experiences of these school leaders do not concur, as not a single interviewee reported trying to exclude more students to improve Norway's achievement on PISA. In fact, due to the way PISA is reported, individual school leaders are not concerned that PISA results will be traced back to their students and that they will be punished or rewarded based on the performance. School Leader 4 even rebutted this comment directly, saying "It's not that I want our school to look better." Therefore, although even though some interviewed school leaders acknowledged it could be happening, it is probably not likely that Norway's exclusion rates have risen due to school leaders' intentional manipulation to promote higher scores.

This section provides an interesting juxtaposition between what some school leaders suspect and what they actually experience. This helps to explain that excluding students is complicated, subjective, and highly personal. Some school leaders are torn between making decisions that protect the best interests of individual students or the best interests of the entire population of students, and striking a balance is difficult.

5.4 Conclusion

This chapter presented the main findings from the research. It discussed how the PISA Norway team communicates exclusion to school leaders, how school leaders understand and implement exclusion guidelines on PISA and national tests, and some explicit reasons given by select school leaders for excluding and not excluding students on the PISA test. The next chapter will conclude the thesis by summarizing the main themes of this research, presenting recommendations for the PISA Norway team based on the research, discussing the limitations of this research, and suggesting opportunities for future research.

Chapter 6

Conclusion

6.1 Summary

This thesis presented the research about exclusion, PISA, and Norway from interviews with six school leaders and two PISA team members. Chapter 1 presented the rationale, focus, and purpose of this thesis, as well as highlighted the three guiding research questions:

1. How is exclusion communicated to school leaders by the PISA Norway team?
2. How do Norwegian school leaders understand and implement exclusion guidelines on PISA and national tests?
3. What are explicit reasons for excluding and not excluding students in Norway on PISA?

Chapter 1 also justified why this thesis fills an important research gap, since there is very little literature currently available studying changes in exclusion rates on PISA, and in Norway in particular. Chapter 2 introduced pertinent background information about PISA, Norway's national tests, and exclusion. It also analyzed how exclusion

rates have increased in many countries between PISA 2000 and PISA 2015. The analysis showed how Norway's student exclusion rates have risen extremely quickly during this timeframe, further justifying why this research is highly relevant.

Chapter 3 shared an overview of key literature and theoretical perspectives. It presented how the OECD has assumed a more prominent and comparative role in global education over the past few decades. PISA has been a key tool in this global governance, and the effects of PISA have spread from the OECD's reports to Norwegian policy and practice. This chapter outlined two possible theories for why Norway's PISA exclusion rates have risen: increased pressure for good results, and perceptions of inclusion and special education in Norway.

Chapter 4 presented the methods and methodology guiding the research. It justified why a qualitative approach was taken and outlined why a case study was chosen as the research strategy. Chapter 4 also shared how data was collected and analyzed, as well as how ethical considerations were incorporated into the research.

Chapter 5 presented the main findings from the research, as well as discussed the relevance and implications of the findings. The findings answered the three research questions. In what follows, I will present six key themes from the research, provide recommendations for the PISA team based on these findings, discuss the limitations of this research, and suggest opportunities for future research.

6.2 Key findings

6.2.1 Exemption instead of exclusion

The interviewed PISA Norway team members and school leaders consistently used the term "exemption" instead of "exclusion"—both in the written guidelines, but also during the interviews. Although the PISA English technical reports describe this phenomenon as "exclusion" (OECD, 2001, 2005, 2009, 2012, 2014a, 2016a), the Norwegian team has deviated by using the softer term "exemption."

If language accurately reflects culture, then it shows that there may also be a gentler perception of exempting students in Norway compared to the perception of excluding students in other countries. This lowers the stakes of exempting a student, as it is seen as gracious, not punitive. Since the act of exemption is seen as benevolent and not exclusionary, exempting students might be perceived as a good thing to Norwegian school leaders. This might be one reason contributing to a high exclusion rate in Norway.

This is not to say that the Norwegian discourse should be changed to mirror the international standard of “exclusion,” but instead to stress the importance of discussing the difference between “exemption” and “exclusion.” In talking about what the two words mean, biases can be acknowledged and worked against.

6.2.2 Clearer guidelines and training

The PISA Norway guidelines for exclusion changed between 2006–2017 in order to emphasize inclusion over exclusion and improve clarity. However, despite these changes, exclusion rates continued to rise. One reason is probably not that the guidelines are too difficult for school leaders to understand. In fact, the opposite was revealed in interviews with select school leaders. This suggests that the efforts made by the PISA Norway team to improve clarity in the guidelines have been well-received by school leaders.

Interviewed PISA Norway team members also saw the in-person trainings as important opportunities to explain test administration to school leaders, and there are plans to emphasize contact with school leaders in the future. The PISA Norway office reported continuing strong efforts to include all school leaders in the future, whether through webinars or by proactively reaching out to school leaders. It will be interesting to see if this helps.

Interviewed PISA team members also reported recently adding new information in the PISA training seminars. A recent change implemented in the 2017 field trials

included an activity giving school leaders practice in applying the guidelines to students. Despite this new strategy, exclusion rates in the field trial remained high. This means that perhaps the trouble is not in applying guidelines to hypothetical students, but something that happens when school leaders are faced with making decisions about their real, living, breathing students. It might be harder to apply the guidelines as strictly when school leaders consider the students they know and care about personally.

6.2.3 School leader positivity towards PISA

Given how critical the Union of Education Norway has been towards PISA (Brusegard, 2016; Handal, 2016), it is surprising that the school leaders interviewed were generally positive about PISA. If school leaders have negative feelings about PISA, it would be reasonable to conclude that they might exclude more students because they see little value in the test. However, many school leaders reported seeing PISA as a valuable and useful exercise. Capturing this goodwill towards PISA could be a useful technique in trainings to stress how important it is to minimize student exclusion in the future.

6.2.4 PISA exclusion vs. national test exclusion

Some interviewed school leaders were confused about areas where the PISA exclusion guidelines differ from the national test exclusion guidelines. In several scenarios, interviewed school leaders accidentally excluded too many students on the PISA exercise because of this confusion. For example, select school leaders working at schools that offered reception classes for new immigrants were more likely to be confused about which students could be excluded in the limited language proficiency category. Therefore, school leaders need more information about specific places where PISA guidelines are stricter than the national test guidelines. School leaders at schools offering reception classes might need extra guidance, given that they have

larger numbers of students with low language abilities.

Several interviewed school leaders also reported that the national test exclusion guidelines were less strict than the PISA guidelines, so it was easier to exclude more students. However, this contradicts the exclusion rate statistics over the past few years where the national tests have consistently had lower exclusion rates than PISA (see Section 2.3.2 on page 27). Interviewed school leaders stated that national tests had more concrete, applicable uses for them than PISA did, since they receive national test data at the student level. This might make school leaders less likely to exclude students on the national tests so that they receive the student's individual results.

Furthermore, the interviews revealed evidence that some interviewed school leaders did not think the numbers of students they were excluding on PISA was significant. Two school leaders reported they were “only” excluding 8% and 15% of students. Although these numbers of excluded students might seem low to school leaders, it could lead to Norway having a high exclusion rate if all school leaders feel the same way. Therefore, it might be useful to help school leaders understand how it is important to have high rates of participation on PISA to improve the validity of the test for the entire country. Some interviewed school leaders voiced concern about PISA's representativeness because of high rates of exclusion, and the implications that this has when PISA is used to justify policy decisions. PISA Norway training sessions could focus on these ideas and help school leaders see the value in having as many students as possible included.

6.2.5 School leader subjectivity

Most interviewed school leaders spent time thinking through how the guidelines fit each of their students, which calls for a very personal and subjective approach at times. In one school, two school leaders applied the same guidelines for the same group of students differently. This confirms that there can be personal bias in using these guidelines with actual students. It would be difficult for a school leader to

make decisions about PISA participation for a group of students that s/he did not know well. In knowing the students, feelings are introduced. This can complicate school leaders' abilities to apply rigid guidelines in a fair and objective manner.

One school leader also voiced disapproval of the PISA guidelines and admitted to excluding a student who did not meet the guidelines. This shows that the PISA guidelines can be written in clear language and displayed neatly, but it does not help when school leaders struggle to apply them objectively to real students. This level of human subjectivity should to be considered as a possible explanation for Norway's high exclusion rates as Norwegian school leaders struggle to apply strict guidelines to complex students.

6.2.6 An emphasis on individuality and mastery

During interviews, most school leaders focused more on the consequences of the test for the individual student than for the school or country as a whole. By choosing to exclude students, Norwegian school leaders are prioritizing a situation where the individual student will not face a potentially difficult experience. However, this comes at a cost for the validity of the results overall, as the test then omits the abilities of a group of Norwegian 15-year-olds.

One reason for the prioritizing the individual student's needs might be because of a new emphasis on student mastery and self-efficacy in Norwegian school politics. The government has recently adopted a new section of principles for basic education that specifically highlight the importance of building mastery and self-efficacy in students (Regjeringen.no, 2017a). This has created a perception where school leaders see any experience that creates a feeling of failure as detrimental to the development of self-efficacy. Therefore, it makes sense that school leaders might shy away from subjecting students to challenging exercises (like PISA) that could negatively affect their feelings of mastery.

Ironically, school leaders seeking to shelter students from challenging experiences may

actually work against the development of mastery. Research has shown that students need to face and overcome appropriate challenges to develop their own feelings of self-efficacy (Csikszentmihalyi, 1975). By isolating students from potentially difficult activities like PISA, school leaders might be prematurely reducing a student's opportunity to engage in meaningfully challenging work. This limits the student's ability to experience that some challenges can be met, and thus, develop self-efficacy.

Furthermore, interviewed school leaders also acknowledged that if a student becomes aware that he is excluded from an activity, it might actually create a feeling of failure and work against the development of self-efficacy. Since exclusion is less apparent in PISA (where 30 students in a school are chosen randomly) than on national tests (where every student is selected to participate), some school leaders might presume that there is more anonymity in exclusion on PISA. If an excluded student will never know that he was excluded, it might be easier for school leaders to exclude more students on PISA than on the national tests.

However, there are plans for PISA to go into multistage testing as early as PISA 2018 (ETS, 2016). In multistage testing, the test adjusts to test takers based on their performance (Mead, 2006). For example, if a student answers several questions incorrectly, the next questions will become easier and more adapted to the student's level. If implemented, this multistage testing might be able to help students experience fewer feelings of failure during the PISA test administration. Instead of feeling defeated for not knowing the answers, multistage testing can help students experience mastery at their own level. Thus, multistage testing might be a crucial tool to help Norwegian school leaders include more students and offset the tendencies of the Stakkars Deg syndrome.

6.3 Recommendations

Based on the findings in this research, a number of recommendations are suggested for future PISA cycles in Norway. These recommendations were shared with the

PISA Norway team in December 2017 and it is possible that some strategies will be implemented in the PISA 2018 test administration in Norway.

During future training sessions with school leaders, PISA Norway team members can:

1. Discuss openly the difference between “exemption” and “exclusion” and how these words might affect school leader actions.
2. Discuss candidly with school leaders the tendencies of the Stakkars Deg syndrome where school leaders seek to protect students from challenges.
3. Explain to school leaders how multistage testing works and how it can help students avoid feelings of failure during the PISA test.
4. Highlight the differences in PISA exclusion criteria and national test exclusion criteria, emphasizing that the “if it does not have meaning for the student” criterion in the national tests does not apply in PISA.
5. Have targeted outreach to school leaders at schools with reception classes and emphasize that students excluded for language proficiency must have less than one year of Norwegian instruction.
6. Discuss numbers and sampling to help school leaders see that only excluding a few students can have significant consequences for the representativeness of the whole test.

6.4 Limitations

There are a number of limitations to this research. The research relied on a small sample size, using interviews from six school leaders and two PISA team members. Additionally, this case study only researched perspectives of exclusion in one metropolitan area in Norway in one specific period of time. A broader and larger sample might

provide other ideas or perspectives. Furthermore, the activity used in the interviews was a mock simulation of how school leaders determine exclusion; although there were many similarities to what happens in real PISA test administration, this activity was only practice. Finally, much of the research (both through documents and interviews) happened in Norwegian, which is not the researcher's native language.

6.5 Future research

Future research could focus on the Norwegian student population, and track how rates of students diagnosed with special needs or numbers of immigrant students have changed over the past few decades. It could then compare the changes in exclusion on PISA with these statistics to see if changing student populations mirrors the increase in Norway's exclusion rates.

It would also be interesting to examine what terms other countries' national manuals use and if Norway is alone in changing the term "exclusion" to a softer one.

Another area that could be explored is to conduct similar research with a larger population of Norwegian school leaders. In particular, future research could follow school leaders around the country as they complete the PISA 2018 or PISA 2021 test administration process. Instead of giving school leaders a mock exercise, future research could sit with them as they apply the exclusion guidelines to the actual selected group of students. In this way, interviews could capture how Norwegian school leaders make real—not hypothetical—decisions that determine which students do and do not participate in PISA.

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Appendix **A**

Interview guide

Sample 1: PISA Norway Team Members

Role, Background

- What is your role in the PISA team?
- How did you come into this role?
- How long have you worked with PISA?
- Which cycles of PISA have you been involved with?

Actual Technique/Practice:

- How do you get in contact with the right school leaders, once a school is chosen for PISA? What title(s) do these leaders usually have?
- How does replacement work? Who determines those lists? When do the kids get those tests? What if a student is excluded in the replacement round?

The Guidelines:

- Who came up with this packet? How is it distributed to school leaders?
- Tell me about this attachment that you give to schools: is there anything you updated or emphasized differently in this version compared to other years?
- I see certain phrases are in bold. Was this something you did explicitly? Why these phrases?
- Why did you choose to use the word 'frita' instead of 'ekskludere'? What is the difference to you?
- Read through this packet and imagine you're a school leader. Do any parts of this strike you as potentially unclear or confusing?
- Can I include this as part of the appendix in my paper?

Communication to Schools

- Can you tell me about how you train school leaders for creating their school samples?
 - Has this training been the same in all of the cycles of PISA you've worked with?
 - What, if any, lessons did you learn from year to year as you did this?
- Have you talked with school leaders explicitly about excluding students?
 - If so, how?

Exclusion Rates

- What guidance/training do you get from the OECD about sampling in PISA and exclusion rates?
- What, if anything, has the OECD communicated to you about exclusion rates in general?
- Has the OECD contacted you specifically regarding Norway's exclusion rate of 5% and greater? How so?
- When did you notice that Norway's exclusion rates were higher than the OECD's recommended 5%?
- In seeing that Norway's PISA exclusion rates have risen over the past few cycles, are you planning anything differently for future cycles?
 - Can you share with me any of these plans?
- What do you think will help in lowering exclusion rates?

Exclusion Rates, Values

- Some people say that *all* students should be included in PISA tests—what do you think?
- Should there be a maximum limit for how many students could be excluded?
- Why do you think exclusion rates on PISA in Norway have risen over the past decade?
- Why do you think that exclusion rates in PISA might be different than on Norway's national tests?
- In your opinion, are the exclusion rates important?
- Do you think we should worry about reducing Norway's exclusion rate? Why/why not?
- Should PISA be adapted for students with special needs?

PISA and Value

- Why do you think Norwegian schools participate in PISA?
- Do you think that PISA holds valuable information for individual schools/school leaders?

Sample 2: School Leaders

Role, Background

- Hva er jobbtittelen din?
- Hvor lenge har du jobbet på denne skolen?

PISA

- Har du/skolen din deltatt i PISA før?
 - Hvis så, i hvilket år?
- Før jeg kontaktet deg, har du hørt om PISA-prøven før? Hvordan? Hvilke inntrykk hadde du av PISA?

Exclusion in PISA

- Her er retningslinjene fra PISA kontoret om hvordan å bestemme hvilke studenter som skal delta i PISA.
- Hva synes du når du får dokumentet? Et det tydelig å tolke?
- Tenk over elevene som du har i 10. trinn nå, og la oss late som om PISA skjer i morgen. La oss ta de første 30 som er på listen din. Hvis jeg spør deg om hvem du skal inkludere eller frita i PISA prøven ...
 - Hva slags elever kommer du til å frita fra PISA-prøven og hvorfor (beskriv dem til meg—ikke gi meg navnene). Hvorfor?
 - Når du velger hvem du skal frita, har du et maksimum tall eller prosent av elevene som du ekskluderer?
 - For elevene som du har fritatt: hvis du var ansvarlig for å lage deltakelseslisten for nasjonale prøven—kommer du til å inkludere eller frita disse elevene i den nasjonale prøven? Hvorfor?
- Kommer du til å snakke med andre når du bestemmer over deltakelseslisten? Hvem da?

National Tests

- Er du også ansvarlig for å bestemme nasjonale prøven deltagelse i skolen din?
 - Hvis ja: kan du se for deg et scenario der du kommer til å inkludere en elev på nasjonale prøven, men ikke på PISA prøven?
 - Hvorfor?
 - Hvis nei: Kommer du til å snakke med hvem har dette ansvaret når du skaper PISA deltagelseslisten?
- Hvordan er prosessen om å frita en elev fra nasjonale prøven?

Values, Purpose

- Hvorfor tror du at norske skoler deltar i PISA prøvene?
- Synes du at PISA gir nyttig informasjon til skolen din? /*Hvordan bruker dere PISA?*
 - Hvordan? (eller hvorfor ikke)?
- Synes du at nasjonale prøvene gir nyttig informasjon til skolen din? /*Hvordan bruker dere de nasjonale prøvene?*
 - Hvordan? (eller hvorfor ikke)?
- Synes du at det er viktig for norske skoler å delta i PISA? Hvorfor/hvorfor ikke?

- Noen synes at vi bør fritta elevene med lav ytelse på PISA prøven, så scorene våre blir høyere. Hva mener du om det?
- Noen synes at vi ikke bør fritta noen fra PISA og at all elevene bør gis prøven. Hva mener du om det?

- Bør PISA prøven bli tilrettelagt for elevene med spesielle behov? Hvorfor/hvorfor ikke?
- Hva kan PISA gjøre for å hjelpe dere å fritta færre elever?
- Tallene av elevene som har blitt fritatt fra PISA har steget opp mye i Norge siden 2000—hvorfor tror du at det har skjedd?

Catch All:

- Er det noe mer som du vil dele med meg om dette som jeg ikke har spurt om?

Appendix **B**

Informed consent

Request for participation in research project Exclusion Rates in PISA and Norway

Background and Purpose

This research is being conducted for a master's project at the University of Oslo. PISA is an international test given by the OECD every three years to 15-year-old students around the world. Recently, the number of students being excluded from these tests ("exclusion rates") has increased in many countries. Norway is one of the countries with the sharpest increase in exclusion rates.

The purpose of the study is to better understand how these exclusion rates are being perceived at the school and national office level, as well as to examine how the PISA exclusion rates can be understood in context with Norway's national text exclusion rates.

You have been requested to participate based on your affiliation with the PISA Norway team and your experience working with PISA tests over the past few years.

What does participation in the project imply?

By participating in the project, you will be interviewed individually for approximately one hour. With your consent, this interview's audio will be recorded (but there will be no video recording), and your responses will be transcribed for analysis. Questions will concern your experiences in your position relating to PISA administration, and your understandings and communications of exclusion rates among other topics.

What will happen to the information about you?

All personal data will be treated confidentially. Only the project leader (Leah) and supervisor (David) will have access to personal data and recordings. All personal data and recordings will be stored securely in a way that protects confidentiality—i.e.: your name will be stored separately from any information that you said.

In the publication, you will not be recognizable. Your information will be anonymized (for example, "one PISA Norway team member said..."). However, given the limited size of your team, it might still be possible to trace information back to you. I will ask you how you would like to be identified, and if you would like to approve your quotes before I publish.

The project is scheduled for completion no later than December 31, 2018. After this point, personal data and recordings will be destroyed.

Voluntary participation

It is voluntary to participate in the project, and you can at any time choose to withdraw your consent without stating any reason. If you decide to withdraw, all your personal data will be made anonymous.

If you would like to participate or if you have any questions concerning the project, please contact Leah Aursand (student and project leader) at XX XX XX XX or David Rutkowski (supervisor, Centre for Educational Measurement at University of Oslo) at XX XX XX XX.

The study has been notified to the Data Protection Official for Research, NSD - Norwegian Centre for Research Data.

Consent for participation in the study

I have received information about the project "Exclusion Rates in PISA and Norway" conducted by Leah Aursand and am willing to participate.

I **would** like to preview any quotes from myself that will be included in the written report

I **would not** like to preview any quotes from myself that will be included in the written report

(Participant, date, place)

Forespørsel om deltakelse i forskningsprosjekt Exclusion Rates in PISA and Norway/ Fritak i PISA og Norge

Bakgrunn og Hensikt

Forskningen er for en masteroppgave hos Universitet i Oslo. PISA er en internasjonale prøve som er laget av OECD hver 3 år, og gitt til 15-åringer verden rundt. Nylig har tallet av elevene som har fått fritak fra prøven økt i mange land, inkludert Norge.

Hensikten av forskningen er for å bedre forstå hvordan PISA-retningslinjer om fritak er tolket av skoleledere og PISA sine nasjonale prosjektledere.

Du har blitt kontaktet om å delta basert på din rolle som en skoleleder ved en ungdomskole i dette området.

Hva betyr deltakelse i prosjektet?

Du kommer til å bli intervjuet i ca. 1 time. Med ditt samtykke kommer intervjuet til å bli tatt opp (bare lyd, ikke film), og dine svar vil bli transkribert for analyse. Spørsmålene handler om PISA-prøven.

Hva kommer til å skje med din informasjon?

Alle personlige data blir behandlet konfidensielt. Bare prosjektleder (Leah) og veileder (David) skal ha tilgang til personlige data og innspillinger. Alle personlige data og innspillinger blir lagret på en måte som beskytter konfidensialitet—f.eks., navnet ditt blir lagret adskilt fra sitatene dine.

I rapporten blir du ikke gjenkjennelig. Informasjonen din blir anonymisert (f.eks., "en skoleleder sa at...")

Prosjektet blir ferdig ikke senere enn 31. Desember, 2018. Etter dette tidspunkt blir personlige data og innspillinger blir ødelagt.

Frivillig deltakelse

Det er helt frivillig å delta i prosjektet, og du kan trekke samtykket når som helst.

Hvis du har noe spørsmål om prosjektet, gjerne kontakte Leah Aursand (student og prosjektleder) på XX XX XX XX eller David Rutkowski (veileder, Centre for Educational Measurement på Universitet i Oslo) på XX XX XX XX.

Studien er varslet til Personvernombudet for forskning, NSD - Norsk senter for forskningsdata.

Samtykke til deltakelse i studien

Jeg har mottatt informasjon om prosjektet "Exclusion Rates in PISA and Norway/Fritak i PISA og Norge " ledet av Leah Aursand og jeg er villig til å delta.

(Navn, dato, sted)

Appendix **C**

PISA 2006 manual

PISA 2006: Forberedelser til undersøkelsen

1.1 Regionale samlinger

Alle skolekontaktene blir invitert til å delta på et seminar, se mer informasjon i eget brev. Det er viktig at du leser denne veiledningen på forhånd og tar den med til samlingen.

1.2 Tidspunkt for gjennomføring

Gjennomføringen skal foregå i perioden 27. mars – 5. mai. Skolen velger selv dag innenfor denne perioden. De fleste har allerede sendt inn et tidspunkt.

En person engasjert av det internasjonale PISA-senteret vil besøke noen uttrukne skoler for å se hvordan gjennomføringen går og sjekke at det nasjonale senteret har fulgt alle prosedyrene de er pålagt å gjøre i forhold til skolene. **Det er derfor viktig at det nasjonale senteret (punkt 1.1) informeres med en gang tidspunkt for gjennomføringen endres, da vi igjen må melde alle endringer til dem som skal besøke skolene.** Det nasjonale senteret vet ikke hvilke skoler som skal besøkes.

1.3 Sende liste med elever

Skolene er i eget brev bedt om å sende inn lister over alle elever som går på 10. klassetrinn samt eventuelle elever på 9. trinn som er født i 1990. Disse listene med opplysninger om klassetrinn, elevens fornavn (evt. initialer eller nummer), kjønn, fødselsmåned og –år, gir grunnlaget for uttrekking av de elevene som skal delta i undersøkelsen. Uttrekkingen foregår ved hjelp av et eget program. Listene blir sendt tilbake til skolene med informasjon om hvilke elever som er trukket ut til å delta.

1.4 Elever som ikke kan delta på prøven

Skolene vil få tilbake listene med elever (se punkt 2.2) der det er krysset av hvilke elever som er trukket ut til å delta. Noen av disse elevene er kanskje ikke i stand til å delta i undersøkelsen. Kriteriene for å kunne fritas fra deltakelse er bestemt internasjonalt. Det er viktig at disse blir fulgt så nøyaktig som mulig for at resultatene skal være sammenliknbare mellom land. Prinsippet er at undersøkelsen skal være så inkluderende som mulig, men følgende elever kan vurderes for fritak:

- **Elever med fysisk funksjonshemming.** Dette gjelder bare elever med en type fysisk handikap som kan hindre dem i å gjennomføre prøven. De som er i stand til det skal delta.
- **Elever med psykisk og/eller emosjonell funksjonshemming.** Dette er elever som er vurdert av PP-tjenesten eller andre fagpersoner som psykisk eller emosjonelt funksjonshemmet. Disse skal bare utelukkes hvis de er uskikket til å forstå og følge instruksjonene i undersøkelsen. *Elever må ikke utelukkes bare fordi de presterer dårlig på skolen eller har generelle disiplinproblemer.*
- **Elever med begrensede norskkunnskaper.** Dette er elever som ikke er i stand til å lese norsk, og som derfor vil få problemer med å forstå språket i oppgavene, og som har hatt mindre enn ett års undervisning i norsk.

Elever som blir vurdert til å ikke kunne delta, skal **ikke** informeres om at de er trukket ut til å delta i undersøkelsen. Informasjon om hvordan dette eventuelt skal registreres, er gitt i 2.6.

Dersom du er i tvil, la eleven delta.

1.5 Elevmaterieill

Alt materieill vil bli sendt til skolene i løpet av uke 11. Skolene bør ha mottatt det senest 24. mars, hvis ikke ta kontakt med oss. Når du har mottatt sendingen, ber vi deg kontrollere at den inneholder følgende:

- Elevmaterieill: En konvolutt med et oppgavehefte og et spørreskjema til hver elev. Konvoluttene er forseglet og skal først åpnes av den enkelte elev.
- Ekstra oppgavehefter: En konvolutt med ekstra oppgavehefter, i tilfelle det skulle vise seg å mangle oppgavehefte til en eller flere av elevene. Denne konvolutt skal heller ikke åpnes på forhånd.
- Ekstra elevspørreskjema
- Elevskjema, der ulike koder for deltakelse, fritak og eventuelle fravær skal merkes av.
- Rapporteringsskjema

Hvis det er noe som mangler, er det viktig at du tar kontakt med det nasjonale senteret så fort som mulig.

Du er ansvarlig for at alt materieill blir behandlet konfidensielt, og at **alt** blir sendt tilbake etter gjennomføringen, også de ekstra heftene og konvoluttene som ikke har vært brukt. Du og andre ved skolen kan gjerne se gjennom de ekstra oppgaveheftene **etter** at elevene er ferdige, men **oppgavene må ikke kopieres**, fordi mange av dem skal brukes ved senere undersøkelser. Spørreskjemaene er ikke konfidensielle.

1.6 Elevskjemaet

I sendingen med alt oppgavematerieillet vil det følge med et eget skjema der de elevene som er trukket ut til å delta, er ført opp. Dette skjemaet vil i det følgende bli referert til som *elevskjemaet*.

Mange av kolonnene i elevskjemaet vil allerede være fylt ut av oss, men enkelte kolonner skal fylles ut av skolen. Nedenfor er det gitt en kort beskrivelse av hvilke koder som skal brukes i

ulike kolonner. Nærmere forklaring og eksempler finner du i vedlegg 5 – 7. Dette vil også bli gjennomgått på samlingen dere inviteres til.

Kolonnene 1 – 7 og 10 er allerede fylt ut av oss. I kolonne 10 står det hvilket heftenummer eleven har, og dette blir det tatt hensyn til når vi pakker konvoluttene.

Kolonne 8 skal fylles ut før selve prøvedagen og gjelder elever med spesielle behov. Denne kolonnen skal brukes både når eleven skal fritas etter kriteriene gitt i punkt 2.4, og når det er elever som har spesielle behov, men som likevel kan delta. For de fleste elevene skal imidlertid denne kolonnen ikke fylles ut.

Følgende koder skal brukes for elever med spesielle behov:

- 1 = elever med fysisk funksjonshemming
- 2 = elever med psykisk funksjonshemming
- 3 = elever med begrensede norskkunnskaper

I **kolonne 9a og 9b** skal det fylles inn koder som forklarer hvorfor en elev eventuelt ikke deltar. Elever som har så spesielle behov at de **ikke** kan delta, skal markeres med kode 3. Det kan også være andre grunner til at en elev ikke kan delta som for eksempel at eleven ikke lenger går på skolen. Kolonne 9a og 9b kan fylles ut på forhånd, men informasjon om elever som bare delvis deltar eller nekter å delta, må fylles inn på selve prøvedagen.

Koder som kan brukes i kolonne 9a og 9b er følgende:

- 1 = Deltar delvis
- 2 = Deltar ikke, nektet
- 3 = Deltar ikke, fritatt på grunn av spesielle behov (se kolonne 8)
- 4 = Deltar ikke, flyttet til en annen skole
- 5 = Deltar ikke, ikke lenger på skolen, nytt sted ukjent

1.7 Skolespørreskjema

Skolespørreskjemaet blir sendt sammen med alt materiell til elevene. Hensikten med dette spørreskjemaet er å samle informasjon om skolen som blant annet størrelse, ansatte, undervisning og organisering. Vi ber om at dette fylles ut av rektor eller en annen i ledelsen. Det er en fordel om det er ferdig besvart før prøven gjennomføres, slik at det kan sendes tilbake sammen med det øvrige materialet. Om nødvendig kan det ettersendes.

1.8 Informasjon til elever og foresatte

Vedlagt finner du et forslag til brev som kan deles ut til de uttrukne elevene og deres foresatte. Du står imidlertid fritt til å informere på den måten som passer best på din skole.

Vi ber deg gjøre ditt beste for at så mange elever som mulig deltar i undersøkelsen. Det er svært viktig for påliteligheten av undersøkelsen at fraværsprosenten er lav. Internasjonalt er det sterkt anbefalt at det arrangeres en ny prøvedag for elever som er fraværende på prøvedagen, hvis dette gjelder flere enn *fem*. Vi synes det er urimelig å be skolene om å gjøre dette, men derfor er det enda viktigere at det legges arbeid i å få alle elevene til å delta.

Elevene bør ha med noe å skrive med, linjal og kalkulator. Videre kan de oppfordres til å ta med noe å lese på eller lekser de kan gjøre dersom de blir ferdige før tiden er ute. Det er også fint om skolen har annet lesestoff i beredskap.

Elevene kan med fordel også oppfordres til å ha med noe å drikke og spise.

2 Gjennomføring av undersøkelsen

2.1 Selve dagen for undersøkelsen

Hvis du selv ikke skal administrere prøven, er det viktig at den som skal gjøre det, har med følgende materiell til gjennomføringen:

- heftet *Veiledning for gjennomføringen* inkludert rapporteringsskjema
- elevskjemaet
- konvoluttene som skal deles ut til elevene
- konvolutt med ekstra oppgavehefter
- ekstra elevspørreskjema
- en klokke som viser tiden nøyaktig
- ekstra kalkulator og linjaler

Elevene blir bedt om å fylle ut dato (DD/MM/ÅÅ) på forsiden av heftet. Det er fint hvis dette eventuelt kan skrives på tavla.

Hvis noen elever ikke kommer, kan de ikke erstattes av andre elever.

Appendix **D**

PISA 2009 manual

2.4.2 Elever som ikke er i stand til å delta i undersøkelsen

Skolene får tilbake listene med elever der det er markert hvilke elever som er trukket ut til å delta. Noen av disse elevene er kanskje ikke i stand til å delta i undersøkelsen. Det er viktig at disse elevene **ikke** blir informert om at de er trukket ut.

Kriteriene for å kunne fritas fra deltakelse er felles for alle land og gjengitt i tabell 5 i neste avsnitt.

2.4.3 Utfylling av Elevskjemaet

De fleste kolonnene i *Elevskjemaet* er allerede fylt ut av oss. I dette skjemaet skal skolekontakten kun markere elever som har spesielle behov og elever som skal fritas enten pga spesielle behov eller av andre grunner. Nedenfor er det gitt korte beskrivelser av de ulike kolonnene og av hvilke koder som eventuelt skal brukes i kolonne 10 og 11. Nærmere forklaring og eksempler på *Elevskjemaet* finner du i vedlegg 1 og 2. Retningslinjene for utfylling av *Elevskjemaet* blir også gjennomgått nøye på PISA-samlingen.

Kolonne 1-9

Kolonnene 1-9 er ferdig utfylt fra ILS.

Kolonne 10

Kolonne 10 skal kun brukes for elever som har spesielle behov. I de tilfellene der det er aktuelt, skal det markeres med en såkalt SEN-kode (Special Educational Need). Kodene er beskrevet i tabell 4. **Noen elever som er markert med en SEN-kode, kan likevel delta i undersøkelsen.** Eksempel på utfylling av kolonne 10 er gitt i vedlegg 1.

Tabell 4: Koder for elever med spesielle behov som skal brukes i kolonne 10

Beskrivelse	Kode
Fysisk funksjonshemming - Eleven har en type fysisk funksjonshemming.	1
Psykisk og/eller emosjonell funksjonshemming - Eleven er vurdert av PP-tjenesten eller andre fagpersoner som psykisk eller emosjonelt funksjonshemmet.	2
Begrensede norskkunnskaper – Eleven har ikke norsk som morsmål og har begrensede norskkunnskaper.	3

Kolonne 11

I tabell 5 er det gitt retningslinjer for hvilke SEN-kode-markerte elever som skal kunne fritas og hvilke som likevel skal delta. Elever som skal fritas, skal markeres med kode 3 i kolonne 11 uavhengig av hvilke spesielle behov eleven er markert med i kolonne 10.

Tabell 5: Retningslinjer for elever med spesielle behov som kan fritas fra prøven

SEN-kode	Elever som skal fritas	Elever som likevel skal delta
Fysisk funksjonshemming	Elever med en type fysisk funksjonshemming som hindrer dem i å gjennomføre prøven. <i>Kode 3 i kolonne 11</i>	De som er i stand til det, skal delta. <i>Ingen kode i kolonne 11</i>
Psykisk og/eller emosjonell funksjonshemming	Elever som er vurdert av PP-tjenesten eller andre fagpersoner som psykisk eller emosjonelt funksjonshemmet slik at de ikke er i stand til å delta på prøven . De er uskikket til å forstå og følge instruksjonene i undersøkelsen. <i>Kode 3 i kolonne 11</i>	Elever skal IKKE utelukkes bare fordi de presterer dårlig på skolen eller har disiplinproblemer. Slike elever skal delta. <i>Ingen kode i kolonne 11</i>
Begrensede norskkunnskaper	Eleven må oppfylle ALLE disse kriteriene: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • har ikke norsk som morsmål • har begrensede norskkunnskaper, og • har hatt mindre enn ett år med undervisning i norsk <i>Kode 3 i kolonne 11</i>	De som IKKE oppfyller ALLE tre kriteriene, skal delta . <i>Ingen kode i kolonne 11</i>

Elever som man på forhånd vet ikke skal delta av ulike grunner, skal markeres i kolonne 11. Hvilke koder som kan brukes er beskrevet nedenfor. Hvis man er i tvil om hvilken kode som skal brukes, kan man la feltet i kolonnen være tomt og skrive en kommentar i kolonnen for «Kommentarer». Elever som ikke deltar av andre grunner enn dem som er nevnt nedenfor, som for eksempel er syke på prøvedagen, skal kun oppføres i *Deltakerskjemaet*.

Kode 2 – Foreldre som nekter

- Hvis noen foreldre ikke tillater at deres barn deltar i undersøkelsen, skal det markeres med kode «2» for denne eleven i kolonne 11.

Kode 3 – Elever med spesielle behov

- Hvis noen av elevene som har spesielle behov, markert i kolonne 10, skal fritas fra undersøkelsen, skal det markeres med kode «3» for denne eleven i kolonne 11.

Kode 4 og 5 – Elever som er flyttet til en annen skole eller har sluttet på skolen

Hvis en elev har flyttet til en annen skole, skal det markeres med kode «4» for denne eleven i kolonne 11.

Hvis en elev har sluttet på skolen og nytt sted er ukjent, skal det markeres med kode «5» i kolonne 11.

Tabell 6 gir en oversikt over koder for elever som man på forhånd vet at ikke skal delta og som skal markeres i kolonne 11. Det er viktig å huske på at det kan være elever som er markert med SEN-kode i kolonne 10, som likevel skal delta.

Appendix **E**

PISA 2012 manual

<input type="checkbox"/>	Skjemaet for returmateriell. Fylles ut og legges ved returmateriellet.	1
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NB:

- Fordi oppgavene vil bli brukt senere, er det viktig at **alt** elevmateriell blir behandlet konfidensielt.
- Du og andre ved skolen kan under ditt nærvær gjerne se gjennom de ekstra oppgaveheftene etter prøven.
- **IKKE KOPIER** noen av oppgavene.

2.3.1 Informasjon til elever og lærere

Vi ber deg gjøre ditt beste for at så mange elever som mulig deltar i undersøkelsen. Det er svært viktig for undersøkelsens pålitelighet at fraværsprosenten er lav. Internasjonalt anbefales det sterkt at det arrangeres en ny prøvedag for elever som er fraværende på prøvedagen dersom det gjelder flere enn fem. Hvis det viser seg vanskelig for skolen å arrangere en ny prøvedag, ber vi skolen om å orientere ILS så snart som mulig, for om mulig å finne en løsning på problemet.

Elevene bør ha med seg skrivesaker, linjal og kalkulator. Det er fint å ha ekstra kalkulatorer og linjaler tilgjengelig i tilfelle noen elever har glemt å ta med dette. Videre kan elevene oppfordres til å ta med noe å lese på eller lekser de kan gjøre i tilfelle de blir ferdige før tiden er ute. Det er også fint om skolen har annet lesestoff i beredskap.

Elevene kan med fordel oppfordres til å ha med noe å drikke og spise.

På vår hjemmeside blir det lagt ut et forslag til brev som kan deles ut til de uttrukne elevene og deres foresatte, www.pisa.no. Skolen velger selv om og eventuelt hvordan en informerer foreldrene.

2.3.2 Skolespørreskjema (elektronisk)

Det er et elektronisk skolespørreskjema som skal besvares av skolens rektor eller en annen i skolens ledelse. Sørg for at denne personen får innloggingsskjemaet.

2.4 Utvalg av elever

2.4.1 Prosedyren for utvalg av elever

Skolene er i et eget brev bedt om å sende inn lister over alle elever på 9. og 10. trinn som er født i 1996. Disse listene danner grunnlag for uttrekking av elever som skal delta i undersøkelsen.

Elevene trekkes ved hjelp av standardiserte prosedyrer som er like for alle deltakerlandene. **30 elever** blir trukket fra hver skole. På skoler med færre enn 30 elever blir alle elevene med.

Utvalget til den elektroniske prøven (CBA) er **18 elever**. Disse elevene vil bli trukket fra den elevgruppen som allerede er trukket ut til å være med på den papirbaserte prøven.

2.4.2 Elever som ikke er i stand til å delta i undersøkelsen

Skolene får tilbake listene med elever der det er markert hvilke elever som er trukket ut til å delta. Noen av disse elevene er kanskje ikke i stand til å delta i undersøkelsen. Det er viktig at disse elevene **ikke** blir informert om at de er trukket ut.

Kriteriene for å kunne fritas fra deltakelse er felles for alle land og gjengitt i tabell 5 i neste avsnitt.

2.4.3 Utfylling av Elevskjemaet

De fleste kolonnene i *Elevskjemaet* er allerede fylt ut av oss. I dette skjemaet skal skolekontakten kun markere elever som har spesielle behov og elever som skal fritas enten pga spesielle behov eller av andre grunner. Nedenfor er det gitt korte beskrivelser av de ulike kolonnene og av hvilke koder som eventuelt skal brukes i kolonne 10 og 11. Nærmere forklaring og eksempler på *Elevskjemaet* finner du i vedlegg 1 og 2. Retningslinjene for utfylling av *Elevskjemaet* blir også gjennomgått nøye på PISA-samlingen.

Kolonne 1 – 9

Kolonnene 1 – 9 er ferdig utfylt fra ILS.

Kolonne 10

Kolonne 10 skal kun brukes for elever som har spesielle behov. I de tilfellene der det er aktuelt, skal det markeres med en såkalt SEN-kode (Special Educational Need). Kodene er beskrevet i tabell 4. **Noen elever som er markert med en SEN-kode, kan likevel delta i undersøkelsen.** Eksempel på utfylling av kolonne 10 er gitt i vedlegg 1.

Tabell 4: Koder som skal brukes i kolonne 10 for elever med spesielle behov

Beskrivelse	Kode
Fysisk funksjonshemming - Eleven har en type fysisk funksjonshemming.	1
Kognitive, psykiske og/eller emosjonelle vansker – Eleven er vurdert av PP-tjenesten, BUP eller andre faginstanser og er ikke i stand til å gjennomføre prøven.	2
Begrensede norskkunnskaper – Eleven har ikke norsk som morsmål og har begrensede norskkunnskaper.	3

Kolonne 11

I tabell 5 er det gitt retningslinjer for hvilke SEN-kode-markerte elever som skal kunne fritas og hvilke som likevel skal delta. Elever som skal fritas, skal markeres med kode 3 i kolonne 11 uavhengig av hvilke spesielle behov eleven er markert med i kolonne 10.

Tabell 5: Retningslinjer for elever med spesielle behov som kan fritas fra prøven

SEN-kode	Elever som skal fritas	Elever som likevel skal delta
Fysisk funksjonshemming	Elever med en type fysisk funksjonshemming som hindrer dem i å gjennomføre prøven. <i>Kode 3 i kolonne 11</i>	De som er i stand til det, skal delta. <i>Ingen kode i kolonne 11</i>
Kognitive, psykiske og/eller emosjonelle vansker	Elever som PP-tjenesten, BUP eller andre faginstanser har vurdert, og som ikke er i stand til å forstå og følge instruksjonen i undersøkelsen. <i>Kode 3 i kolonne 11</i>	Elever skal IKKE utelukkes bare fordi de presterer dårlig på skolen eller har disiplinproblemer. Slike elever skal delta. <i>Ingen kode i kolonne 11</i>
Begrensede norskkunnskaper	Eleven må oppfylle ALLE disse kriteriene: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • har ikke norsk som morsmål • har begrensede norskkunnskaper, og • har hatt mindre enn ett år med undervisning i norsk <i>Kode 3 i kolonne 11</i>	De som IKKE oppfyller ALLE tre kriteriene, skal delta. <i>Ingen kode i kolonne 11</i>

Elever som man på forhånd vet ikke skal delta av ulike grunner, skal markeres i kolonne 11. Hvilke koder som kan brukes, er beskrevet nedenfor. Hvis man er i tvil om hvilken kode som skal brukes, kan man la feltet i kolonnen være tomt og skrive en kommentar i kolonnen for «Kommentarer». Elever som ikke deltar av andre grunner enn dem som er nevnt nedenfor, som for eksempel er syke på prøvedagen, skal kun oppføres i *Deltakerskjemaet*.

Kode 2 – Foreldre som nekter

- Hvis noen foreldre ikke tillater at deres barn deltar i undersøkelsen, skal det markeres med kode «2» for denne eleven i kolonne 11.

Kode 3 – Elever med spesielle behov

- Hvis noen av elevene som har spesielle behov, markert i kolonne 10, skal fritas fra undersøkelsen, skal det markeres med kode «3» for denne eleven i kolonne 11.

Kode 4 og 5 – Elever som er flyttet til en annen skole eller har sluttet på skolen

Hvis en elev har flyttet til en annen skole, skal det markeres med kode «4» for denne eleven i kolonne 11.

Hvis en elev har sluttet på skolen og nytt sted er ukjent, skal det markeres med kode «5» i kolonne 11.

Tabell 6 gir en oversikt over koder for elever som man på forhånd vet ikke skal delta og som skal markeres i kolonne 11. Det er viktig å huske på at det kan være elever som er markert med SEN-kode i kolonne 10, som likevel skal delta.

Appendix **F**

PISA 2015 manual

2.8. Utfylling av *Elevskjemaet* og fritak fra prøven

På det tilsendte *Elevskjemaet* er alle elevene som er trukket ut til å delta, listet opp. Skolen har også fått tilbake elevlisten som ble sendt til oss, der de samme elevene er markert. Denne listen er bare ment som en hjelp i tilfelle det er vanskelig å finne tilbake til de elevene som er listet opp på *Elevskjemaet*.

Noen av elevene er kanskje ikke i stand til å delta i undersøkelsen. Disse elevene skal **ikke** bli informert om at de er trukket ut. Kriteriene for å kunne fritas fra deltakelse er felles for alle land og gjengitt i tabell 6. Eventuelt fritak skal noteres i *Elevskjemaet* i kolonne 11. I kolonne 10 skal det markeres for elever som har spesielle behov, enten de kan delta eller ikke. For alle de andre elevene, skal det ikke fylles ut noe.

Det er viktig at så mange elever som mulig, deltar. Hvis du er i tvil om en elev skal fritas eller ikke, la eleven delta. Noen elever som fritas i nasjonale prøver, kan likevel delta i denne undersøkelsen.

Kolonne 10: Her skal det markeres hvilke elever som har spesielle behov. Det er tre koder som kan brukes, se beskrivelse i tabell 5. Hvis du er i tvil om hvilken kode som skal brukes, kan du skrive en kommentar. Det kan være noen elever som er markert i denne kolonnen, som likevel kan delta i PISA-undersøkelsen. Se eksempler som er beskrevet i vedlegg 2.

Tabell 1. Koder som skal brukes i kolonne 10 for elever med spesielle behov

Beskrivelse	Kode
Fysisk funksjonshemming - Eleven har en type fysisk funksjonshemming.	1
Kognitive, psykiske og/eller emosjonelle vansker – Eleven er vurdert av PP-tjenesten, BUP eller andre faginstanser.	2
Begrensede norskkunnskaper – Eleven har ikke norsk som morsmål og har begrensede norskkunnskaper.	3

Kolonne 11: Her skal det markeres hvilke elever som skal fritas fra undersøkelsen, enten pga. spesielle behov eller av andre grunner. Nedenfor er det gitt korte beskrivelser av hvilke koder som eventuelt skal brukes i kolonne 11. Nærmere forklaring og eksempler på hvordan kodene skal brukes, er gitt i vedlegg 1 og 2.

Kolonne 11 skal bare brukes for elever som man på forhånd vet ikke skal delta. Blir en elev syk eller forhindret av andre grunner, skal dette føres opp i deltakerskjemaet.

Kode 2 – Foreldre som nekter

- Hvis noen foreldre ikke tillater at deres barn deltar i undersøkelsen, skal det markeres med kode «2» for denne eleven i kolonne 11.

Kode 3 – Elever med spesielle behov

- Hvis noen av elevene som har spesielle behov, markert i kolonne 10, skal fritas fra undersøkelsen, skal det markeres med kode «3» for denne eleven i kolonne 11.

Kode 4 – Elever som er flyttet til en annen skole

Hvis en elev har flyttet til en annen skole, skal det markeres med kode «4» for denne eleven i kolonne 11.

Kode 5 – Elever som har sluttet på skolen

Hvis en elev har sluttet på skolen og nytt sted er ukjent, skal det markeres med kode «5» for denne eleven i kolonne 11.

Kode n – Hvis en elev ikke er født i 1999

Tabell 2. Retningslinjer for elever med spesielle behov som kan fritas fra prøven

	Elever som skal fritas	Elever som likevel skal delta
Fysisk funksjonshemming	Elever med en type fysisk funksjonshemming som hindrer dem i å gjennomføre prøven. <i>Kode 3 i kolonne 11</i>	De som er i stand til det, skal delta.
Kognitive, psykiske og/eller emosjonelle vansker	Elever som PP-tjenesten, BUP eller andre faginstanser har vurdert, og som ikke er i stand til å forstå og følge instruksjonen i undersøkelsen. <i>Kode 3 i kolonne 11</i>	Elever skal IKKE utelukkes bare fordi de presterer dårlig på skolen eller har disiplinproblemer. Slike elever skal delta.
Begrensede norskkunnskaper	Eleven må oppfylle ALLE disse kriteriene: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • har ikke norsk som morsmål • har begrensede norskkunnskaper, og • har hatt mindre enn ett år med undervisning i norsk <i>Kode 3 i kolonne 11</i>	De som IKKE oppfyller ALLE tre kriteriene, skal delta.

Tabell 3. Koder for ikke-deltakelse, markeres i kolonne 11

Grunn til ikke-deltakelse	Kode
Foreldre nekter	2
Fritak pga spesielle behov (SEN)	3
Flyttet til en annen skole	4
Ikke lenger på skolen, nytt sted ukjent	5
Oppfyller ikke alderskriteriet for PISA, eleven er ikke født i 1999	n

Det er bare elever som ikke er markert i kolonne 11 i elevskjemaet, som skal delta. Ingen elever skal erstattes av andre elever.

Vedlegg 1: Eksempler på koder for elever med spesielle behov

I kolonne 10 i *Elevskjema* skal det markeres koder for elever med spesielle behov, såkalt SEN-koder. Nedenfor er det gitt eksempler på elever som kan markeres med en kode. Hvilke koder som kan brukes, er beskrevet i tabell 5 i veiledningen og i tabellen nedenfor. Noen elever som er markert med en SEN-kode, skal likevel delta i undersøkelsen. I figuren på neste side er det vist hvordan SEN-koder skal fylles inn.

- **Elev 5** har ikke norsk som morsmål og har mindre enn ett års undervisning i norsk. Han skal derfor ha kode "3" i kolonne 10.
- **Elev 6** har ikke norsk som morsmål. Selv om han har hatt mer enn ett års undervisning i norsk, har han fremdeles noen problemer med språket og får ekstra undervisning. Det er derfor også markert med kode "3" i kolonne 10.
- **Elev 7** er blind, og det er markert med kode "1" i kolonne 10.
- **Elev 10** er fysisk funksjonshemmet, og det er markert med kode "1" i kolonne 10.
- **Elev 12** har fått diagnosen psykisk utviklingshemmet, og det er markert med kode "2" i kolonne 10.

For de fleste elevene vil det imidlertid ikke være aktuelt å markere noe i kolonne 10.

Tabell 4. Koder for elever med spesielle behov, markeres i kolonne 10

Beskrivelse	Kode
Fysisk funksjonshemming – Eleven har en type fysisk funksjonshemming	1
Kognitive, psykiske og/eller emosjonelle vansker – Eleven er vurdert av PP-tjenesten, BUP eller andre faginstanser og er ikke i stand til å gjennomføre prøven.	2
Begrensede norskkunnskaper – Eleven har ikke norsk som morsmål og har begrensede norskkunnskaper	3

PISA 2015 ELEVSKJEMA - Eksempel på utfylling

Skolens navn: _____

Skolekontakt: _____

Testadministrator: _____

Utfyllt av ILS.
Sjekkes av skolekontaktenFullføres av skole-
kontaktenFor skolekontakten,
hvis nødvendig.

Koder som skal brukes i kolonne 10:

- 1 – Fysisk funksjonshemming
- 2 – Kognitive, psykiske og/eller emosjonelle vansker
- 3 – Begrensede norskkunnskaper

Koder som skal brukes i kolonne 11:

- 2 – Foreldre nekter
- 3 – Fritak pga spesielle behov (SEN)
- 4 – Flyttet til en annen skole
- 5 – Ikke lenger på skolen, nytt sted ukjent
- n – Oppfyller ikke alderskriteriet for PISA, eleven er ikke født i 1999.

(0)	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)
Region	Stratum-ID	Skole-ID	Elev-ID	Linje-nummer	Elevens navn	Klasse	Kjønn (F=1; M=2)	Født (MM-ÅÅÅÅ)			Skal ikke delta	Kommentarer
00	01	010	00004	00003	Elev 1	10	2	12 1999	1			
00	01	010	00009	00008	Elev 2	9	2	11 1999	1			
00	01	010	00005	00012	Elev 3	10	1	12 1999	1			
00	01	010	00002	00016	Elev 4	10	1	05 1999	1			
00	01	010	00014	00020	Elev 5	10	2	04 1999	1	3		
00	01	010	00008	00024	Elev 6	10	2	09 1999	1	3		
00	01	010	00011	00028	Elev 7	10	2	07 1999	1	1		
00	01	010	00013	00033	Elev 8	9	1	04 1999	1			
00	01	010	00001	00037	Elev 9	10	1	07 1999	1			
00	01	010	00007	00041	Elev 10	10	2	10 1999	1	1		
00	01	010	00020	00019	Elev 11	10	1	12 1999/97	1			
00	01	010	00006	00022	Elev 12	10	1	08 1999	1	2		

Vedlegg 2: Eksempler på koder for elever som ikke skal delta

Elever som man på forhånd vet ikke skal delta, skal markeres i **kolonne 11**. Nedenfor er det gitt eksempler. Alle koder som kan brukes, er gitt i tabellen nedenfor, se også veiledningen punkt 2.8. Hvis man er i tvil om hvilken kode som skal brukes, kan man la feltet i kolonne 11 være tomt og skrive en kommentar i kolonnen for "kommentarer". Elever som ikke deltar av andre grunner enn det som er nevnt nedenfor, skal ikke markeres i kolonne 11.

Eksempler:

- **Elev 2** har nylig flyttet til en annen skole. Det er markert med kode "4" i kolonne 11.
- **Elev 5** har fått kode "3" i kolonne 10. Eleven har fått undervisning i norsk i mindre enn ett år, og lærerne mener at han ikke er i stand til å delta i undersøkelsen. Det skal markeres med "3" i kolonne 11.
- **Elev 6** har fått **undervisning i norsk** i mer enn ett år. Selv om hans **norskkunnskaper** er begrensede, så oppfyller han ikke kriteriene for fritak. (Se retningslinjer i tabellen nedenfor.) Kolonne 11 er derfor ikke fylt ut, og **elev 6** skal delta i undersøkelsen.
- **Elev 7** er blind, og det er markert med kode "1" i kolonne 10. PISA gis ikke i blindeskrift, og derfor kan eleven ikke delta. Det er markert med kode "3" i kolonne 11.
- Selv om **Elev 10** er fysisk funksjonshemmet, så har det ingen innvirkning på elevens evne til å delta. Derfor er det markert med kode "1" i kolonne 10, mens kolonne 11 ikke er fylt ut.
- **Elev 11** er født i 1998 og skulle ikke vært med i utvalget. Eleven er derfor kommet med på lista ved en feiltakelse, og det skal markeres med "n" i kolonne 11.
- **Elev 12** har fått diagnosen psykisk funksjonshemmet. Dette er markert med kode "2" i kolonne 10. Eleven skal ikke delta i, og dette er markert med kode "3" i kolonne 11.
- Alle de andre elevene skal delta i undersøkelsen. Derfor er kolonne 11 ikke fylt ut.

Tabell 5. Koder for ikke-deltakelse, markeres i kolonne 11

Grunn til ikke-deltakelse	Kode
Foreldre nekter	2
Fritak pga. spesielle behov (SEN)	3
Flyttet til en annen skole	4
Ikke lenger på skolen, nytt sted ukjent	5
Oppfyller ikke alderskriteriet for PISA, eleven er ikke født i 1999	n

PISA 2015 ELEVSKJEMA - Eksempel på utfylling

Skolens navn: _____

Skolekontakt: _____

Testadministrator: _____

Koder som skal brukes i kolonne 10:

- 1 – Fysisk funksjonshemming
- 2 – Kognitive, psykiske og/eller emosjonelle vansker
- 3 – Begrensede norskkunnskaper

Koder som skal brukes i kolonne 11:

- 2 – Foreldre nekter
- 3 – Fritak pga spesielle behov (SEN)
- 4 – Flyttet til en annen skole
- 5 – Ikke lenger på skolen, nytt sted ukjent
- n – Oppfyller ikke alderskriteriet for PISA, eleven er ikke født i 1999.

Utfyllt av ILS.
Sjekkes av skolekontakten

Fullføres av skole-
kontakten

For skolekontakten,
hvis nødvendig.

(0)	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)
Region	Stratum-ID	Skole-ID	Elev-ID	Linje-nummer	Elevens navn	Klasse	Kjønn (F=1; M=2)	Født (MM-ÅÅÅÅ)			Skal ikke delta	Kommentarer
00	01	010	00004	00003	Elev 1	10	2	12 1999	1			
00	01	010	00009	00008	Elev 2	9	2	11 1999	1		4	
00	01	010	00005	00012	Elev 3	10	1	12 1999	1			
00	01	010	00002	00016	Elev 4	10	1	05 1999	1			
00	01	010	00014	00020	Elev 5	10	2	04 1999	1	3	3	
00	01	010	00008	00024	Elev 6	10	2	09 1999	1	3		
00	01	010	00011	00028	Elev 7	10	2	07 1999	1	1	3	
00	01	010	00013	00033	Elev 8	9	1	04 1999	1			
00	01	010	00001	00037	Elev 9	10	1	07 1999	1			
00	01	010	00007	00041	Elev 10	10	2	10 1999	1	1		
00	01	010	00020	00019	Elev 11	10	1	12 1999/97	1		n	
00	01	010	00006	00022	Elev 12	10	1	08 1999	1	2	3	

Appendix **G**

PISA 2017 field trial manual

Vedlegg: Utfylling av Elevskjemaet og eventuelt fritak fra prøven

På det tilsendte *Elevskjemaet* er alle elevene som er trukket ut til å delta, listet opp. Skolen har også fått tilbake elevlisten som ble sendt til oss, der de samme elevene er markert. Denne listen er bare ment som en hjelp i tilfelle det er vanskelig å finne tilbake til de elevene som er listet opp på *Elevskjemaet*.

Steg 1: Kontrollerer informasjonen

Kontroller informasjonen i kolonnene «Elevens navn», «Klasse», «Kjønn» og «Født». Rett eventuelle feil og fyll ut informasjon som eventuelt mangler. Du må gjøre de samme rettingene også i Deltakerskjemaet (se 3.3).

Steg 2: Identifiser elever som ikke kan delta på undersøkelsen

Kolonnen «N/P» brukes til å markere elever som ikke kan delta på undersøkelsen. De ulike kodene som kan benyttes i denne kolonnen, er listet opp i Tabell 5. I utgangspunktet skal flest mulig av elevene som er trukket ut, delta.

Kolonnen «N/P» skal ikke brukes til å registrere vanlig fravær, det vil si fravær som er planlagt på forhånd (eleven har fått fri til å reise på ferie, delta i en konkurranse e.l.), eller fravær som skyldes at eleven blir forhindret på prøvedagen (på grunn av sykdom eller andre grunner). Vanlig fravær føres opp i Deltakerskjemaet. Elever som er borte på prøvedagen, kan delta på prøven på en ny prøvedag, dersom dette er aktuelt (se 3.6).

Tabell 5. Koder for elever som ikke kan delta på prøven

<p>Kode 2 – Foreldre som nekter</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hvis noen foreldre ikke tillater at deres barn deltar i undersøkelsen, skal det markeres med <u>kode «2» for denne eleven i N/P-kolonnen.</u>
<p>Kode 3 – Elever med spesielle behov</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tabell 7 inneholder retningslinjer for å vurdere om elever med spesielle behov kan bli fritatt eller skal delta. Hvis noen av elevene med spesielle behov som er markert i SEN-kolonnen, skal fritas fra undersøkelsen, skal det markeres med <u>kode «3» for denne eleven i N/P-kolonnen.</u>
<p>Kode 4 – Elever som er flyttet til en annen skole</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hvis en elev har flyttet til en annen skole, skal det markeres med <u>kode «4» for denne eleven i N/P-kolonnen.</u>
<p>Kode 5 – Elever som har sluttet på skolen</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hvis en elev har sluttet på skolen og nytt sted er ukjent, skal det markeres med <u>kode «5» for denne eleven i N/P-kolonnen.</u>
<p>Kode n – Hvis en elev ikke er født i 2001, eller hvis eleven går på 8. trinn eller lavere, skal det markeres med kode «n» for denne eleven i N/P-kolonnen.</p>

Dersom du er i tvil om hvilken kode du skal bruke, la kolonnen være blank og skriv en kort beskrivelse i kommentarfeltet, eller kontakt ILS.

Elever som skal fritas fra prøven, skal ikke bli informert om at de er trukket ut til å delta. Pass på å legge påloggingsskjemaene til disse elevene til side før prøvedagen, og marker at de ikke skal delta i Deltakerskjemaet (se 3.3).

La flest mulig av elevene med spesielle behov ta PISA-prøven

Mange av de elevene som er markert med SEN-kode, vil kunne delta på prøven. Det er viktig at så mange elever som mulig, deltar. Hvis du er i tvil om en elev skal fritas eller ikke, la eleven delta. Noen elever som fritas fra nasjonale prøver, kan likevel delta i denne undersøkelsen.

Tabell 6. Koder som skal brukes i SEN-kolonne for elever med spesielle behov

Beskrivelse	Kode
Fysisk funksjonshemming – Eleven har en type fysisk funksjonshemming.	1
Kognitive, psykiske og/eller emosjonelle vansker – Eleven er vurdert av PP-tjenesten, BUP eller andre faginstanser.	2
Begrensede norskkunnskaper – Eleven har ikke norsk som morsmål og har begrensede norskkunnskaper.	3

Tabell 7. Retningslinjer for elever med spesielle behov.

	Elever som skal delta	Elever som kan fritas
Fysisk funksjonshemming	Elever som er i stand til det, skal delta. <i>Kode 1 i SEN-kolonnen.</i> <i>La N/P-kolonnen være blank.</i>	Elever med en type fysisk funksjonshemming som hindrer dem i å gjennomføre prøven. <i>Kode 1 i SEN-kolonnen.</i> <i>Kode 3 i N/P-kolonnen.</i>
Kognitive, psykiske og/eller emosjonelle vansker	Elever som kan ta prøven, skal delta. Elever skal IKKE utelukkes bare fordi de presterer dårlig på skolen eller har disiplinproblemer. Slike elever skal delta. <i>Kode 2 i SEN-kolonnen.</i> <i>La N/P-kolonnen være blank.</i>	Elever som PP-tjenesten, BUP eller andre faginstanser har vurdert, og som ikke er i stand til å forstå og følge instruksjonen i undersøkelsen. <i>Kode 2 i SEN-kolonnen.</i> <i>Kode 3 i N/P-kolonnen.</i>
Begrensede norskkunnskaper	Elever som IKKE oppfyller ALLE de tre kriteriene, skal delta. <i>Kode 3 i SEN-kolonnen.</i> <i>La N/P-kolonnen være blank</i>	Eleven må oppfylle ALLE disse kriteriene: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • har ikke norsk som morsmål • har svært begrensede norskkunnskaper, og • har hatt mindre enn ett år med undervisning i norsk <i>Kode 3 i SEN-kolonnen.</i> <i>Kode 3 i N/P-kolonnen.</i>

Eksempler på hvordan kodene skal brukes

Disse eksemplene er ført opp i Figur 2:

- Nani har fått kode **3** i SEN-kolonnen. Hun har ikke norsk som morsmål, har fått undervisning i norsk i mindre enn ett år, og har så begrensede norskkunnskaper at hun ikke har mulighet til å forstå og følge instruksjonen i undersøkelsen. Derfor er hun markert med «**3**» også i N/P-kolonnen.
- Markus har nylig flyttet til en annen skole. Derfor er han markert med kode «**4**» i N/P-kolonnen.
- Ahmed har fått undervisning i norsk i mer enn ett år. Selv om hans norskkunnskaper er begrensede, så oppfyller han ikke kriteriene for fritak. (Se retningslinjer i Tabell 7.) N/P-kolonnen er derfor ikke fylt ut, og Ahmed skal delta i undersøkelsen.
- Alf er blind, og det er markert med kode «**1**» i SEN-kolonnen. PISA gis ikke i blindeskrift, og derfor kan eleven ikke delta. Det er markert med kode «**3**» i N/P-kolonnen.
- Selv om Oscar er fysisk funksjonshemmet, har det ingen innvirkning på hans evne til å delta. Derfor er det markert med kode «**1**» i SEN-kolonnen, mens N/P-kolonnen ikke er fylt ut.
- De følgende to elevene er ikke i målgruppen for PISA-undersøkelsen. Fordi feil bakgrunnsinformasjon ble fylt inn i elevlisten som ble sendt til det nasjonale senteret, ble disse elevene likevel trukket ut til å delta. Feilen ble oppdaget i Elevskjemaet og rettet:
 - Tina går på 8. trinn og fikk derfor koden «**n**» i N/P-kolonnen.
 - Marit er ikke født i 2001 og fikk derfor koden «**n**» i N/P-kolonnen.
- Vera har fått diagnosen psykisk funksjonshemmet. Dette er markert med kode «**2**» i SEN-kolonnen. Hun er ikke er i stand til å forstå og følge instruksjonen i undersøkelsen. Eleven skal derfor ikke delta i undersøkelsen, og dette er markert med kode «**3**» i N/P-kolonnen.

Det er viktig at kun elever som er trukket ut til å delta på prøven, deltar. Det er ikke anledning til å la andre elever ved skolen, som ikke er trukket ut, delta istedenfor en elev som er trukket ut.

Figur 2. PISA generalprøve 2017 – Elevskjema (eksempel på utfylling)

Skolens navn: Granbakken skole Skolekontakt: Ole Gran**Koder som skal brukes i SEN-kolonnen:**

1 – Fysisk funksjonshemming
 2 – Kognitive, psykiske og/eller emosjonelle vansker
 3 – Begrensede norskkunnskaper

Koder som skal brukes i N/P-kolonnen:

2 – Foreldre nekter
 3 – Fritak pga spesielle behov (SEN)
 4 – Flyttet til en annen skole
 5 – Ikke lenger på skolen, nytt sted ukjent
 n – Oppfyller ikke alderskravene for PISA, eleven er ikke født i 2001

Region	Stratum ID	Skole-ID	Elev-ID	Linje-nummer	Elevens navn	Klasse	Kjønn (J=1; G=2)	Utfylt av ILS		Progra m	SEN	N/P	Kommentarer
								Født (MM-AAAA)	Kontrolleres av skolekontakten				
00	01	010	00004	00003	Eline	10	1	12	2001	1			
00	01	010	00009	00004	Nani	9	1	05	2001	1	3	3	
00	01	010	00005	00001	Ole S	10	2	12	2001	1			
00	01	010	00002	00010	Markus	10	2	10	2001	1		4	
00	01	010	00014	00005	Ahmed	10	2	04	2001	1	3		
00	01	010	00008	00007	Alf	10	2	07	2001	1	1	3	
00	01	010	00011	00009	Jeanette	10	1	07	2001	1			
00	01	010	00013	00013	Tina	9 8	1	09	2001	1		n	
00	01	010	00001	00008	Sara	10	1	04	2001	1			
00	01	010	00007	00002	Oscar	10	2	11	2001	1	1		
00	01	010	00020	00011	Marit	10	1	12	2001 2000	1		n	
00	01	010	00006	00006	Tim	10	2	09	2001	1			
00	01	010	00022	00012	Vera	10	1	08	2001	1	2	3	

Appendix **H**

PISA 2006–2017 manual English
translations

PISA 2006:

- **Students with physical handicaps.** This applies only to students with a type of physical handicap that would prohibit them from completing the test. Those who are able to, should participate.
- **Students with psychological and/or emotional handicaps.** These are students who are evaluated by the PP-service or other specialized staff as having psychological or emotional handicaps. These should only be excluded if they are unsure to understand and follow instructions in the survey. *Students should not be excluded just because they perform poorly in school or have general discipline problems.*
- **Students with limited Norwegian skills.** These are students who are not able to read Norwegian, and who therefore will have problems to understand the language in the activities, and who have had less than one year of instruction in Norwegian.

PISA 2009:

SEN code	Students who should be exempted	Students who nevertheless should participate
Physical handicap	Students with a type of physical handicap that prevents them from completing the test.	Those who are able, should participate.
Psychological and/or emotional handicap	Students who are evaluated by the PP-service or other specialized staff as psychologically or emotionally handicapped such that they are not able to participate in the test. They are unsure to understand and follow instructions in the survey.	Students should NOT be excluded just because they perform poorly in school or have discipline problems. These students should participate.
Limited Norwegian skills	Students must fulfill ALL OF these criteria: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • do not have Norwegian as a mother tongue • have limited Norwegian skills, and • have had less than one year with instruction in Norwegian 	Those who do NOT fulfill ALL three criteria should participate.

PISA 2012 and PISA 2015:

SEN code	Students who should be exempted	Students who nevertheless should participate
Physical handicap	Students with a type of physical handicap that prevents them from completing the test.	Those who are able, should participate.
Cognitive, psychological and/or emotional handicap	Students whom the PP-service, BUP, or other specialized agencies have evaluated, and are not able to understand and follow instructions in the survey.	Students should NOT be excluded just because they perform poorly in school or have discipline problems. These students should participate.
Limited Norwegian skills	Students must fulfill ALL OF these criteria: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> do not have Norwegian as a mother tongue have limited Norwegian skills, and have had less than one year with instruction in Norwegian 	Those who do NOT fulfill ALL three criteria should participate.

PISA 2017 field trial:

	Students who should participate	Students who can be exempted
Physical handicap	Those who are able, should participate.	Students with a type of physical handicap that prevents them from completing the test.
Cognitive, psychological and/or emotional handicap	Students who can take the test, should participate. Students should NOT be excluded just because they perform poorly in school or have discipline problems. These students should participate.	Students whom the PP-service, BUP, or other specialized agencies have evaluated, and are not able to understand and follow instructions in the survey.
Limited Norwegian skills	Those who do NOT fulfill ALL three criteria should participate.	Students must fulfill ALL OF these criteria: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> do not have Norwegian as a mother tongue have limited Norwegian skills, and have had less than one year with instruction in Norwegian