



‘We cannot afford outsidersness’

Inclusion, sustainable development and arts education

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Abstract

This article addresses social inclusion/exclusion – specifically the kind of exclusion we describe as *outsiderness* – in relation to sustainable development and arts education. Our idea is to address and discuss this on an individual/micro level and as a topic of social sustainability. Inspired by Irwin and Springgay’s *a/r/tography*, Frank’s dialogical narrative analysis, and different walk-along methods, we also explore alternative formats of the scientific article. In this text, we will thus present what became five threads of inquiry into arts education’s potential contribution to social sustainability. These threads describe our path through this field and relate to 1) the position of the arts in the UN’s Sustainable Development Goal (SDGs), 2) social inclusion in the SDGs, 3) research on the arts and health, 4) social inclusion in the arts, and 5) research on outsidersness. Throughout the article, we also exemplify our

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walk-along discussions through narratives, revealing more of the motivations behind this text. We end the article with a discussion proposing *relational arts education* to help avoid outsidersness and to promote inclusion, care, social sustainability, and diverging voices or what we describe as *counter-voices*, in arts education.

Keywords: sustainable development goals, social sustainability, outsidersness, social inclusion, social exclusion, relational arts education, walk-along, a/r/tography

Introduction

In this article, we encounter the concept and phenomenon of *outsidersness* in relation to the UN's 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). We focus on arts education as a potential vehicle for social sustainability, and, in particular, as a way of avoiding social exclusion, or what we describe as outsidersness. 'Not again!' the readers may be thinking. As music educators, we even find ourselves among those who have been thinking 'don't exaggerate – two hours of music classes a week can't save the world'. However, we will also argue that such thoughts miss the mark. Our world is facing a crisis that forces us to use every tool available, even lessons in the arts, to change the current course and contribute to sustainability (UN, 2015). Sustainability, however, is not just about the economy and the environment. It is about peoples' social competence and actions as well, hence also the topic of outsidersness. The UN's SDG 10, "Reduce inequality within and among countries," addresses this issue in its second target: "By 2030, empower and promote the social, economic, and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status" (2015, pp. 18, 25). The groups exemplified in the target above naturally includes everyone. Thus, exclusion and outsidersness, as we see it, pose a threat to individuals, as well as to groups and societies, and to personal well-being as well as socially cohesive societies.

The term social exclusion was originally coined in 1974 by Lenoir, a former French Secretary of State for Social Action, to refer to the situation of several disadvantaged groups (UN, 2016). Today, it is seen as a multidimensional phenomenon:

Although there is no universally agreed definition or benchmark for social exclusion, lack of participation in society is at the heart of nearly all definitions put forth by scholars, government bodies, non-governmental organizations and others (...). Overall, *social exclusion describes a state in which individuals are unable to participate fully in economic, social, political and cultural life, as well as the process leading to and sustaining such a state.* (UN, 2016, pp. 18, our italics, bold in the original)

The UN, with its global perspective, often works at the macro and group levels, although not exclusively. In this article, we focus on the micro/individual level. Jore defines outsidersness as “inadequate social affiliation with the wider community” (2021, p. 187). Outsidersness thus comes from not feeling included in society, whether that be because of bullying, marginalisation, lack of linguistic or cultural affiliation or other reasons (Jore, 2021).

Psychoanalyst Poland sees outsidersness as “a quality of self-definition, part of one’s sense of self” (2012, p. 934). Hence, the term’s focus is not on those who exclude, but rather, on the excluded. Exclusion too, according to the definition above, describes a state, not only someone’s actions. However, while the term exclusion turns our attention to the actions carried out against someone, outsidersness reminds us – the authors, at least – of the experience of the individual actually facing the exclusionary actions, yet, at the same time, still situated far from the centre of the inclusive circle.

Methodology – Living as a/r/tographers

This article is part of a larger co-project, where the authors explore relational approaches in arts education (e.g. Vist & Holdhus, 2018). When we chose to make threads of inquiry into individual expressions of exclusion and outsidersness, it was partly as a result of the terrorist attacks we experienced in our home country. It became important to us – as researchers – to be transparent about this and related motivations behind our work. Thus, to add an extended methodological layer to the

'We cannot afford outsidersness'

text, we present several narratives revealing the walk-along discussions we shared during our co-project. Here is one of them:

'We cannot afford outsidersness!'³

Torill's intense blue eyes stare firmly at me as we stroll through the Cemetery of Our Saviour in central Oslo. Here, many of the giants of Norwegian culture, politics and arts are buried. We pass the graves of great artists, such as Henrik Ibsen and Edvard Munch. Women who fought for equality, like Anna Rogstad, the first Norwegian woman elected to parliament in 1911, are buried here as well.

Planning to write a journal article on arts education and sustainability, we have decided to go for a walk as part of our methodology. So, wandering and wondering what our idea and contribution could be, I ask:

'But ... outsidersness, isn't that a bit far out?'

'No, no,' Torill argues, glove-clad hands waving in the cold air.

'Outsidersness really kills, and not only the life of the person on the outside! It hampers well-being, belonging and care, it affects people's lives structurally and psychologically. Growing up, not feeling part of the "flock" may lead to a lack of belonging, voice, empathy and responsibility for others and for the world!'

(Kari's narrative, 2022)

As a/r/tographers, we find ourselves most comfortable with a relational epistemology where learning, hence also inquiry, is understood as rhizomatic, nonlinear, dynamic and participatory (Springgay et al., 2008). This influences the article's form as well as our research methodology, as is revealed through the layers of walk-along narratives,

³ The short and bluntly Norwegian 'vi har ikke råd til utenforskap'- ('we cannot afford outsidersness') may better be translated into 'we cannot afford to ignore outsidersness'.

theoretical reviews and discussions. Working with the arts in teacher educations (including early childhood education and care (ECEC)) and living in the interstice between the teacher/researcher/artist roles of a/r/tography, the article is, although mainly theoretical, inspired by narrative inquiry, in particular dialogical narrative inquiry (Frank, 2012). This is most clearly demonstrated in the narratives, which we hope add background, emotionality and transparency about the researchers involved.

The narratives also describe our own reflective walk-along method. "Go-along," as sociologist Kusenbach originally coined it, is an ethnographic research tool that brings to the foreground informants' (or in our case, the researchers') "reflexive aspects of lived experience as grounded in place" (2003, p. 456). Walking as a mode of inquiry is well known in a/r/tography too, then often related to prepositions and the collaborative practice of walking as art, or as part of making art (Illeris et al., 2022; Lasczik et al., 2022; Lee et al., 2019; Triggs et al., 2014). We use the walks to stimulate the researchers' relational presence, reflective processes, and narrative writing. Most of our walks, like the one described above, were also "grounded in place" (Kusenbach, 2003, p. 456), passing the aforementioned cemetery, the Ukrainian embassy, the Nobel Peace Center and the government buildings attacked by the right-wing, lone wolf terrorist Anders Behring Breivik. Others were less grounded in place, like this "cross-country skiing-along:"

'How can this go well?' I shouted at Kari. 'Never before, or not until the last century in the history of mankind, has one individual, or a small group of individuals, had the possibility and means to wipe us all out!'

Cross-country skiing in front of me, Kari slowed down, and left the groomed track to walk alongside me: 'Wow, those were rather dark words in this bright whiteness! Is this fear also your motivation for suggesting our topic?' she asked.

'We cannot afford outsidersness'

'Probably. My claim is that, considering the knowledge acquired by mankind throughout the 20th century – whether that be nuclear, biological or AI – we cannot, in the 21st century, afford, or risk, outsidersness, not even on an individual level. It's too dangerous, hence not sustainable, neither for the planet nor for mankind or the individuals involved!'

For a while, the only sounds came from our skis and poles.

'It does not help much to work towards a sustainable environment if some unstable narcissist in power somewhere puts an end to us all,' I finally added.

Kari changed to double poling:

'You don't leave us much hope, do you!'

(Torill's narrative 2022)

It may be tempting to analyse this narrative as a variation of eco-anxiety (Buzzell & Chalquist, 2023). However, inspired by Frank (2012), we leave the interpretation of the walk-along narratives to the readers.

Seeing inquiry and knowing as processes of walking or going along (Ingold, 2013), this methodological tool implicitly also (in-)formed the text per se. The article became our walk-along narrative into – for us – preliminary but necessary threads of inquiry, laying the groundwork for a larger discussion to come, on what we coined *relational arts education*. As researchers of the 21st century, we could not avoid the topic of sustainable development. We therefore decided that we needed to do our own inquiry into how – or if – the SDGs explicitly take into consideration the arts as a catalyst for sustainable development and how social inclusion is treated in the SDGs. Although inclusion is a core aspiration of *Transforming Our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* (UN, 2015), measuring social exclusion is, according to the UN (2016), challenging. This is due to the topic's multidimensional nature, lack of standard data sources across countries and a number of other issues. Conceptual

'We cannot afford outsidersness'

and analytical work on what constitutes inclusion is therefore needed, something the UN also recommends (2016, p. 17).

Our threads involved a short text analysis of the SDGs (UN, 2015). We further needed to substantiate if and how the arts can work as a catalyst of social sustainable development. Here, we studied research on the potential of the arts for health in general, and social inclusion in particular. Then, closely related to the worries expressed in the narratives, we looked into selected theories on outsidersness, adding an individual and micro level to the topic which we found more or less missing in the perspectives from the UN. We end this article with the beginning of a discussion we consider to be important in terms of the larger project, introducing *relational arts education*, and discussing the importance of *counter-voices*, as inspired by Rancière (2010).

Before we continue, however, we need to elaborate on our position. We are citizens of one of the world's smallest, but also wealthiest, most democratic and gender-equal countries. Being white, middle-aged professors situated in academia, and despite our gender, we cannot claim to have had constitutive experiences of exclusion regarding poverty or marginalisation. Our advantaged position may therefore reveal disadvantages when trying to grasp the core issues of sustainability. The fact that we represent one of the generations that has exploited this planet the most, doesn't help either. Our interest in outsidersness, not to mention our interest in the arts, may seem rather unimportant or "posh" when clean water is lacking, or war is going on.

Threads of inquiry

We had passed the Royal Palace, no fences separating us from the walls of the king's home, only two guardsmen in front of the entrance door. We stopped on Arbin's street, outside the Ukrainian Embassy. The bouquets of flowers adorning the entrance had been there for a while.

'Terrible what that man has done,' Kari commented quietly.

'One single person, too long in power.'

'We cannot afford outsidersness'

I agreed: 'Putin is actually an example of the dangers of outsidersness too.'

Kari turned her head, surprized.

'I mean, if people in power stop listening to their fellow citizens, they cannot keep their health.'

'Counter-voices are so important,' Kari replied. 'There's no democracy without them.'

(Torill's narrative, 2022)

The 17 SDGs included in the 2030 Agenda (UN, 2015) have a wider scope than the Millennium Development Goals (Fehling et al., 2013). The updated goals "balance the three dimensions of sustainable development: the economic, social and environmental" (UN, 2015, p. 3). The Agenda repeatedly stresses that "it sets out a wide range of economic, *social* and environmental objectives. It also aims for more peaceful and *inclusive societies*" (p. 9, our itallics). Pulling the first of the five mentioned threads of inquiry then, we ask how the SDGs take into consideration the arts as a catalyst for sustainable development.⁴

Thread 1: The arts in the SDGs

The term *art* is lacking in – or excluded from – the 17 goals and their 169 targets, even in the full Agenda (UN, 2015). The same goes for more specific terms like *music* or *dance*. The terms *cultural* or *culture* appear 13 times in the targets, but six of them relate to agriculture and one in connection with aquaculture.⁵ Hence, this

⁴ This is due to the journal's call regarding arts education as a sustainable developmental "catalyser".

⁵ Twice as "sustainable tourism that creates jobs and promotes local culture and products" (8.9 and 12.b), once "to protect and safeguard the world's cultural and natural heritage" (in 11.4) and three times in 4.7 ("promotion of a culture of peace" and the "appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development").

'We cannot afford outsidersness'

could infer a missing focus on the aesthetic and artistic parts of human life. As we see it, the SDGs do not seriously consider the arts as a catalyst.

We are sure that others must have implemented such simple text analyses of the Agenda, although we have not found these results written elsewhere. More generally, the downplay of culture is widely critiqued, for instance in the discussions around culture as a "missing pillar" in the SDGs (Shirazi & Keivani, 2019; Soini & Birkeland, 2014). Kagan and Burton (2018) found that eight of the 17 SDGs address social dimensions of sustainable development but claim that sustainability science often neglects *social* science perspectives. In line with this, Shrivastava et al. (2016) write that "the sustainability discourse has largely played out in the domains of natural sciences and technology, with recent contributions from the social and political sciences" (2016, p. 23). They also argue that we can improve commitments to sustainability "by using the arts, art-based methods, and aesthetics to develop passion and emotional connection for sustainable organising and living" (Shrivastava et al., 2016, p. 23). We agree, as the motivational and evocative qualities of the arts are well documented (e.g. Barone & Eisner, 2012; Leavy, 2018). More important to us, Fancourt and Finn, in their report to the World Health Organization (WHO) on the role of the arts as improving health and well-being, describe an "awareness gap" (2019, p. vii) in the existing evidence on the role of the arts in our health and well-being. Nevertheless, they also describe an increasing interest from the arts in health and found that all the SDG goals were relevant in terms of engaging with the arts.

Thread 2: Social inclusion in the SDGs

How, then, is social inclusion treated in the SDGs? Is it taken as seriously as the social, economic, and political inclusion phrasing from target 10.2 indicates? We are tempted to answer yes to this, at least when considering the UN's global commitment. As Kuhn (2020) points out, this is the first time ever that the global community has even agreed upon a goal like SDG 10, to reduce inequality within and among countries. It is against this backdrop of inequalities that the 2030 Agenda's

core message of inclusion, and the commitment to leave no one behind, must be understood (UN, 2016).

A discrepancy between *inequality* and *inclusion* in SDG 10 and its targets has been criticised. Fukuda-Parr claims inequality is undermined and distorted by the targets and indicators which “set an agenda for inclusion rather than for reducing inequalities” (2019, p. 61). The UN defines inclusion as a multidimensional phenomenon and “the process of improving the terms of participation in society, particularly for people who are disadvantaged, through enhancing opportunities, access to resources, voice and respect for rights” (UN, 2016, p. 17). As we see it, this definition emphasises the close relationship between equity and inclusion, covering the individual as well as the meso and macro levels of society. Furthermore, it emphasises the close relationship between inclusion and participation, which we also find in SDG 4, which states that we must “ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all” (p. 19).

SDG 16 is also explicit about inclusion: “Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels” (UN, 2015, p. 28). However, in SDG 16, the terms inclusion and exclusion hardly exist in the targets and indicators. Instead, they are strong reminders of what the global community must deal with, promoting a peaceful and *inclusive* society. We use target 16.2. as an example: “End abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children” (p. 28). To us, such targets are also overwhelming reminders of what kind of outsidersness people – even children– are exposed to, in a global perspective.

DESA – the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs – has a division for social inclusion, and one of its key topics is “Leaving No One Behind” (DESA, n.d.-a; UN, 2016). Similar phrasing is also found in the Agenda (UN, 2015, pp. 5, 6, 11, 15, 36). Hence, the UN system also takes an individual perspective, defining an inclusive society as “a society for all, in which every individual, each with rights and responsibilities, has an active role to play” (DESA, n.d.-b). Such a society “emanates from well-being of each

'We cannot afford outsidersness'

individual, mutual trust, sense of belonging and inter-connectedness" (DESA, n.d.-b). However, studying the 17 SDGs and their 169 targets, we easily lose sight of the individual level, at least regarding care and inclusion. The characteristics and problems related to outsidersness become hidden in a rather unfortunate way, given that all outsiders are referred to together and seen as one group. SDG 1 call for "no poverty," and SDG 2 demands "zero hunger." The saying "No exclusion" is not an SDG. We wish it was.

Thread 3: The arts and health

The Agenda's social dimension and its impact on human health and well-being (UN, 2015) provides us with possibilities to further link this to inclusion and ways in which to avoid outsidersness. We therefore wanted to address the arts' contribution to the improvement of health and well-being in our inquiry. Studying the more specific yet extensive field of the impact that the arts have on such aspects, the absence from the SDGs becomes even more peculiar.

In the 21st century, increased research has been conducted on the effects of the arts on health and well-being (Fancourt & Finn, 2019). In our field of music alone, a wealth of research exists about this (e.g. Balsnes, 2014; Bonde & Theorell, 2018; Clift, 2012; Gouk et al., 2018; Heydon et al., 2020; Stige et al., 2010) In addition, the function of the arts as a catalyst for emotion (e.g. Juslin, 2013; Juslin & Sloboda, 2010; Mennin & Farach, 2007;), and even as a mediating tool for emotion knowledge (Vist, 2009), are well documented elsewhere. Related to this is the entanglement of emotional and social competence (Damasio, 1996; Salovey et al., 2004), also when part of arts experiences (Vist, 2011). Nevertheless, we agree that an awareness gap exists in relation to this research knowledge in certain sustainability discourses. Fancourt and Finn's WHO report "aims to close this awareness gap by mapping the current available evidence in the field of arts and health" (2019, p. vii). In their report, covering 200 review articles of over 3000 studies, in addition to 700 individual studies, they claim the following:

[B]ecause they operate simultaneously on the individual and social, as well as physical and mental, levels, arts-based health interventions are uniquely placed to address the full complexity of the challenges that being healthy and well are increasingly recognized to present. (2019, p. 6)

They conclude that “there is a substantial body of evidence on the health benefits of the arts” (2019, p. 52). To briefly sum up the findings relevant to us, the arts affect social determinants of health (e.g., social cohesion and social inequalities and inequities), they support child development (including bonding) and they encourage health-promoting behaviours (e.g. through their roles in health communication and engaging marginalised groups). Furthermore, the arts help to prevent ill health, support caregiving, help people experiencing mental illness and assist with the management of noncommunicable diseases (Fancourt & Finn, 2019, pp. vii, viii, 6). Unfortunately, there is “variation in the quality of this evidence” according to the authors (p. viii). Likewise, from the field of music, Clift claims the need to be critical regarding research on the effects of singing as he considers such research to be “highlighted by the many unsubstantiated claims about singing and health” (2012, p. 113). We have already mentioned that measuring social exclusion can be challenging (UN, 2016). Still, we see little reason to doubt the general tendency in Fancourt and Finn’s major findings. Proof of the opposite is missing too. Declamations denying or ignoring the arts’ potential for sustainability or avoiding outsidersness are just as irresponsible.

Thread 4: Social inclusion and the arts

Within the above-mentioned references to the arts as catalysts for health, some already specifically contribute to social inclusion and the prevention of outsidersness. According to Fancourt and Finn, “[t]here is a wide literature on the potential evolutionary role of the arts in enhancing social bonding” (2019, p. 9). Additionally, the arts play an important role in early childhood education and care (ECEC), where inclusion is explicitly part of the core (Chapman & O’Gorman, 2022; Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2017; UNESCO, 2015; Young, 2016). Malloch and

Trevarthen's (2009) *Communicative Musicality* documents social bonding but also offers an explanation as to why music, drama, dance and even the visual arts are so important in this bonding – as do Stern's (2010) forms of vitality and affect attunement and Dissanayake's anthropological work on rituals and *Homo Aestheticus* (1999, 2000). More recently, and responding to the SDGs, Chapman and O'Gorman (2022) inquire into the transforming learning environments in ECEC contexts through the arts. They suggest that the languages of the arts can enable children to understand and express issues relating to sustainability more vividly, and to build their agency as global citizens:

[W]e argue that the refocussing and imagination required for a more sustainable world can be supported by early childhood education (...) with a strong arts focus, as the arts provide opportunities for seeing the world in new ways and for imagining different futures. (p. 35)

They also claim that the art[s] encourage learner agency and problem-solving, make ideas visible and provide opportunities for creative expression and communicating beyond the narrow literacy of words and numbers. As we see it, the arts in ECEC could hold a key to preventing outsidersness, at least in societies where most children attend ECEC institutions. In Norway, for example, 93 % of children aged one to five attend "kindergarten" (Statistics Norway, 2023).

Leaving the field of ECEC then, Small's (1998) well-known book *Musicking* affords an aesthetic and educational theory far from work-oriented autonomy, emphasising musical actions as relationships – as does Higgins' *Community Music* (2012). The arts thus foster shared attention, shared motivation and group identity. On a group level, the arts can strengthen social inclusion, and on an individual level, participation in an art-related activity can enhance social consciousness and prosocial behaviour (e.g. Fancourt & Finn, 2019; Ruud, 1997, 2010). Emotional consciousness is known to be important for the development of other emotional competences (Saarni, 1999; Vist, 2009). With the socio-emotional entanglement, this is the case for social

competence as well (Salovey et al., 2004). No wonder, then, that “[t]here are many diverse Government ministries and agencies globally that see the arts in general and music in particular as a key means by which social needs can be addressed” (Welch et al., 2014, p. 1).

From our position in music education, we acknowledge that a considerable amount of research explicitly regarding the potential of music to promote inclusion has already been undertaken, including in a Nordic context (e.g. Dyndahl et al., 2014; Jeppsson & Lindgren, 2018; Kallio, 2021; Karlsen et al., 2023; Knudsen, 2021; Laes & Schmidt, 2016; Lindgren et al., 2016; Lindgren et al., 2021; Nysæther et al., 2021; Rønningen, 2014; Rønningen et al., 2019). The research responds to the idea of music enhancing inclusion/togetherness, but also revealing exclusion/outsiderness.

Whether the context is compulsory primary and secondary education, community schools of music and art or informal education, music education still seems to carry a heavy burden of exclusionary mechanisms related to gender, ethnicity, age, social class, understanding of musicality and more. As Jeppsson and Lindgren put it, the average pupil in the context of their community schools is still “a Swedish-born girl with well-educated parents” (2018, p. 191). Väkevä et al. (2022) call this hidden elitism, and Karlsen et al. (2023) conclude that these schools still reach only a limited selection of children and youths, despite putting considerable effort into developing and executing strategies of inclusion. Historically, the inequity within music education, benefitting primarily classical, Western music and work-oriented aesthetics, may give us a disadvantage, even today (Vist & Holdhus, 2018).

Despite the existence of these critical discussions and findings, the idea of the use of the arts to enhance inclusion/togetherness does seem to be an expanding field (Juan-Morera et al., 2022). However, we have not encountered many Nordic publications in music education that relate to the SDGs or to sustainable development explicitly. One exception is Østergaard (2019), who claims music and sustainability to be an under-researched field, but he does not relate his work to inclusion or outsidersness. Within the visual arts, a direct connection to the SDGs

seems more common, such as with Illeris (2013, 2017), in which she discusses potentials of togetherness and strategies to live our lives in more inclusive and sustainable ways. From our project's theoretical walk-along, we realised that the various parts of arts education contribute very differently – and to a varying degree – to social sustainability and inclusion. While social development is at the core of ECEC music education, some work-oriented tradition in instrumental teaching may put it in the periphery (Vist & Holdhus, 2018). According to Juan-Morera et al. (2022), there is much going on within non-formal education contexts of which research has yet to be conducted. Based on their review, they found a variety of inclusive musical practices for social transformation and inclusion. Unfortunately, their chosen categories favour the well-known Western, classical practices (e.g., orchestra and choir). This again makes us wonder if not only arts education, but also arts education research may reconsider how to avoid contributing to the construction of outsidersness. Furthermore, we must keep in mind the aforementioned SDG target 16.2.: The kind of inclusion, even social inclusion, dealt with in this research hardly ever relates to torture, abuse, exploitation, trafficking and other forms of violence (although some of the research on poverty and “El Sistema” may (Juan-Morera et al., 2022).)

Thread 5: Preventing outsidersness

According to music therapist Ruud (2010, p. 115), when it comes to our social needs, “[o]ne of the single most important factors contributing to health has to do with our social capital, i.e. how well we are integrated into our community (...).” Even the US Department of Health and Human Services confirms that “[r]elationships are important for physical health and psychosocial well-being” (ODPHP, n.d.). DESA writes that, by respecting diversity, a socially cohesive society harness the potential residing in its societal diversity and thus “are less prone to slip into destructive patterns of tension and conflict when different interests collide” (DESA, n.d.-b).

In line with this, and the research presented above, it is possible to argue that social interaction and participation in the arts at least have a potential for reducing

loneliness and the lack of social support. So, what about outsidersness, then, on an individual level? At this point in our walk-along, we felt a need to make a thread of research into outsidersness, to see what nuances that could be added from such perspectives. We chose studies conducted by Jore, from the field of societal security, and Poland, who takes a psychoanalytic approach.

Studying terrorism and radicalisation, Jore points out "one risk factor that receives particular attention: 'outsidersness'" (2021, p. 187). In line with the National Emergency Preparedness Council, Jore explains how outsidersness denotes "inadequate social affiliation with the wider community" (2021, p. 187). She describes this by way of situations in which individuals or groups of people do not feel included in society, which may then lead to outsidersness. We suggest that these situations might further lead to bullying and marginalisation – or these might well be the cause.

In an anthology on Nordic societal security, Jore (2021) documents today's Norwegian counter-terrorism policy, analysing national and municipal guidelines on how to prevent radicalisation. Central to today's Nordic approach in countering terrorism is identifying individuals vulnerable to radicalisation. This approach downplays the political (and rational) aspects of terrorism, instead pointing at the individual as the locus of change and the psychological distress of individuals as the cause of terrorism. Consequently, the "focus on explanations and solutions [is] on the micro level instead of national or international levels (...) seeing potential terrorists as vulnerable individuals that need to be safeguarded by the local environment" (Jore, 2021, p. 191).

This approach represents a radical change, making social factors, local actors and individuals at the community level a form of "first line defence," according to Jore (2021, p. 180). She worries that the responsibility too may pass from the national to the micro/individual level. We support her concerns, but without allowing the macro levels to slacken their degree of responsibility, we acknowledge that this is a concern for everyone, including local municipalities, caregivers and teachers in the arts. As we see it, an individual/micro perspective is *also* necessary. The context of terrorism

'We cannot afford outsidersness'

makes outsidersness deadly for all of us. It may seem a bit extreme, but the motivation towards social sustainability – we hope – does not stop there. The need to involve teachers and caregivers cannot primarily be grounded in the necessary discovery of warning signs and the prevention of radicalisation. If we want to ensure the well-being and good lives of our fellow citizens, we must have empathy enough to acknowledge that outsidersness is too painful to be sustainable, even within one individual.

We want the aim to change and the focus to turn towards children's well-being and individuals' need for bonding, inclusion, communication, meaning and care.

Therefore, we present another perspective on outsidersness. "Outsidersness speaks to a sense of discordance, a lack of harmony between one's sense of self and the world of others," Poland (2012, p. 933) writes. To him, it implies a *feeling* of not fitting in.

Hence, Poland affords a focus from within the individual. An outsider is a person who:

either is not a member of a group or at best is a misfit, an inadequately assimilated member of a group. (...) Thus, *outsidersness*, as I use the term, is a quality of self-definition, part of one's sense of self whether that sense is conscious or unconscious. (Poland, 2012, p. 934)

Eliciting the individual's self-definition and feeling of *not fitting in* also points toward issues surrounding identity – a well-known topic within arts education (e.g. Barrett, 2010; Ruud, 1997).

Poland's psychoanalytic approach also offers interesting knowledge regarding what is called the Moro or startle reflex: A new-born reacts to surprise with what Poland calls "an alarm manifested by pulling back." This Moro or startle reflex is, he continues, "a baby's basic reaction to unexpected stimuli, [and] has the quality of the infant's withdrawal from the world" (Poland, 2012, p. 936). Hence, "[v]ulnerability to the painful feeling of outsidersness, to the sense of a self-definition that is incomplete, always remains," Poland (2012, p. 935) claims.

'We cannot afford outsidersness'

The sense of self as an outsider is from this perspective an inescapable part of human life, "a discomfort lurking in the background that cannot be banished by proclamation" (Poland, 2012, p. 938). We find this to supplement the definition of outsidersness and to even include positive experiences of outsidersness, for instance in artists' creative phases of life, or others acting as *lone wolves*. In the dictionary, we found the definition of lone wolf as a person who "*prefers to work, act, or live alone*" (Merriam-Webster, n.d., our italics). Yet, today, the term is often used in relation to terrorism (e.g. Meloy & Yakeley, 2014). Either way, we question the validity of whether this is down to what one may prefer. Could it, in many cases, turn into a self-defence, or even an enforced choice? Or could, what may start out as a choice, soon become habits that are unwanted but hard to change – without help from the flock – and not sustainable in the long run?

If we acknowledge that to some extent, and *sometimes*, we all experience outsidersness, we may also more easily empathise with those who live with it daily. As we see it, teachers have a responsibility for the whole individual, whether one teaches maths, music or social competence. The "discomfort lurking in the background," we suggest, is already dealt with in arts' practices that allow young children to engage with their own and others' lived experiences (Chapman & O'Gorman, 2022). Could exploring outsidersness in *any* human being afford knowledge, familiarity and empathy which may prevent radicalisation as well as the lack of individual well-being? In Vist (2009), "alone" is the first category of the relational perspective of music experience. Thus, in line with Bakhtin (1984) and Frank (2012), being alone is seen as a way to be together.

Discussion – Towards a relational arts education

Further down the road from the cemetery, the buildings get taller,
standing in the way of the sun.

'This is where he hit the first time, I shudder, peeking to the left, towards a
large building up for rehabilitation. More than ten years after the violent

'We cannot afford outsidersness'

attacks costing 76 innocent Norwegian lives, the area is still under construction.

'Many people and groups live on society's fringe, and after being rejected again and again, they might turn against other people in a violent way. But I think that's the most extreme reaction; most people living with outsidersness just pull away from societal participation.'

'The terrorist Breivik chose differently,' Torill comments.

'Might be dangerous in a more subtle way too,' I reflect.

'I think democracy depends on diversity. So, if groups and people are denied or feel they don't have a voice, it is actually harmful to all of us.'

(Kari's narrative 2022)

The Norwegian approach to countering terrorism changed after Breivik's two terrorist attacks on Utøya and in Oslo on 22 July 2011 (Jore, 2021). The government's increased focus on identifying individuals vulnerable to radicalisation must also be seen in this light. The same could probably be said about the motivation behind our threads of inquiry above, and our interest in outsidersness. In her book, *One of Us*, Seierstad (2015) describes the mentioned massacres, terrorist Breivik's early years, and how his day-care institution as well as his local child welfare authorities discovered the gross neglect he experienced from his parents. Still, little was done. He grew up with his mother in an ordinary local community in Norway. In this social democracy, "to build an inclusive and just society where everyone has the same opportunities to education, work, health, and economic security has now become a part of counterterrorism policy," Jore (2021, p. 187) explains. The same is said about protective factors, such as experiencing a high quality of life, good health and a positive school environment as well as participating in sports and hobbies – hobbies within the arts, we suggest.

Relational arts education

This is where we would like to propose the concept of *relational arts education* as a tool to battle outsidersness, which we believe could also contribute towards social sustainability. The concept grew out of the theoretical and physical walk-alongs presented above, with the seed planted already in our previous work (Vist & Holdhus, 2018). In our 2018 study, we merge principles of relational education (Bingham & Sidorkin, 2004) and relational aesthetics (Bourriaud, 1998/2002; Kester, 2004), also showing that arts education focusing on relations and the education of the whole human being already exist. Terms like *musicking* (Small, 1998), *communicative musicality* (Malloch & Trevarthen, 2009) and *community music* (Higgins, 2012) reveal how widespread this is – and our dependency on the mentioned writers. Yet, we cannot see that the field of arts education has fully comprehended the need for relational arts practices, grounded in a joint contribution towards a socially sustainable world. We realise that work-oriented traditions have some way to go before “teaching a tradition, not a student” (Allsup, 2016, p. 65) is totally left behind. Furthermore, as the lacking dimension of the arts in the SDGs reveals, those working within the UN or other systemic or macro levels of society, have not yet seen the potential of the contributions of (relational) arts educators.

Is the position of the arts in educational discourses any better? The art-related subjects have been marginalised over many years, at least in our part of the world (Holdhus & Espeland, 2018; Vist, 2014; Østrem et al., 2009). This means that large groups of pupils in need of guidance to express themselves, create, collaborate and relate through artistic and bodily expressions have less of a chance to do so. One reason for this exclusion (!) of the arts may lie in the aforementioned work-oriented, Western philosophies of art that have permeated many arts practices, appearing irrelevant to pupils' lifeworld. Something was lost when music became an art form, disentangled from everyday life and separated into its own sphere, Ruud (2008/2015) claims. Pursuing our quest of *excluding* social exclusion, we hope that relational arts education practices can afford meaningful art(s) experiences for a wider public or

group of students, hence also providing a better tool for avoiding outsidersness. To us, any relational approach to arts education has care at its core. Care, then – also among pupils – becomes cardinal in arts education focusing on social inclusion and avoiding outsidersness. Furthermore, we want relational arts education to (re)present democratic ways of socially responsible and sustainable participation and expression – through artistic and educational means.

The full presentation and exploration of relational arts education must be developed in further articles. Following Frank's dialogical narrative analysis, with its aim to increase the "continuing possibilities of listening and of responding to what is heard" (2012, p. 37), we resist a traditional conclusion, offering instead a final thread of inquiry into the necessity of counter-voices.

Counter-voices and diversity

Kari, in one of the narratives above, claims that *democracy depends on diversity*.

Indeed, as Biesta (2015) puts it, plurality is a prerequisite for a functioning democracy. In this final part of the discussion, we will follow up on this idea through Rancière's chapter "The Ethical Turn of Aesthetics and Politics" (Rancière, 2010).

Discussing an ethical turn of aesthetics (and politics), Rancière describes a tendency to consider ethics as a translation of moral and "to submit politics and art to moral judgements about the validity of their principles and the consequences of their practices" (2010, p. 184). Rancière does not support this view, nor does he think this is what is happening: "The reign of ethics is not the reign of moral judgements over the operations of art or of political action" (2010, p. 184). Ethics, in his view, amounts to the dissolution of norm into fact and "is the kind of thinking in which an identity is established between an environment, a way of being and a principle of action" (2010, p. 184). Hence it signifies the relationship between thinking and being, or a thinking lifestyle, we may add. What Rancière describes as the ethical turn today is not a turn towards the norms of morality, but towards the suppression of the division between law and fact. This suppression, he claims, is called consensus:

Consensus is the reduction of these various 'peoples' into a single people identical with the count of a population and its parts, of the interests of a global community and its parts (...) The political community thus tends to be transformed into an *ethical* community, into a community that gathers together a single people in which everyone is supposed to be counted (Rancière, 2010, p. 189).

Then, of course, Rancière becomes of further interest to us when discussing the term "the excluded" in this ethical context. In a political community, the excluded is a conflictual actor who sees him/herself as carrying ideas or rights that are not (yet) recognised. In an ethical community, however, due to consensus, this is no longer an issue since everyone is included. "As a result, there is no status for the excluded in the structuration of the community" (2010, p. 189). In such an ethical community, the excluded is not defined as such, but as the one who needs our help to re-establish the social bonds, or in our terms, to avoid outsidersness and be socially included.

Rancière's writings appeared before the 2011 terror attack in Norway, but still in "our time" when one refers to school massacres, mass violence or terror in other countries. Is it naive to aim for no exclusion or outsidersness? Is it even desirable in a society in need of multiple perspectives to fuel human thinking and reflection? In what Rancière describes as a political community, the excluded becomes the radical other, the one who has new and original perspectives. Not sharing "our" identity is what keeps original thinking alive. Post mortem, by pointing out the dangers of excluding counter-voices, Rancière also provides a powerful argument against dangers of the frequent contemporary practices of *cancel culture*, *woke* and *no platforming*.

With this end to our discussion, we also hope to fuel human thinking and to let the tension between the inevitable disadvantages and benefits of any condition, any position, be our reflective breath in–breath out. Still, we cannot afford to ignore outsidersness that leads to a dramatic lack of empathy, respect or care for other human beings (or ourselves). Writing this, in April 2022, the Russian President Putin has given us yet another example of monstrous outsidersness that we cannot afford:

Torill Vist, Kari Holdhus

'We cannot afford outsidersness'

The lack of counter-voices in his privileged "aboveness" – yet outsidersness – seems the best example of how dangerous outsidersness can become and how many disguises it can take. It reveals how dependent we all are on feedback and counter-voices to help us make our choices in life, and how necessary it is to find a balance in the interstices between them and maybe also in the interstices of what Poland (2012) describes as the feeling of not fitting in and social inclusion for all.

'Look, the side door is open, I think it's into the Nobel shop, the bookstore!'

Coming directly from the Ukrainian embassy, we had not yet reached the well-known front of the Nobel Peace Center. We snuck in, and like two kids discovering candy, we ran towards different shelves. Later, reading from the same shelf, I commented:

'It's weird, how the SDGs switch between terms like inclusion and equity in the same goal and targets, as if they were the same.'

'But they are,' Kari muttered from a book on female philosophers.

'No inclusion of all without equity. By the way, this leads us to social justice education, you know!'

I stretched my legs and carried my stack of verbal candy towards the cash register.

'In the next article, then.'

(Torill's narrative 2022)

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