Chapter 13
"I'll Have Security, I'll Go to School, I'll Live My Life" – Unaccompanied Minors on School, Education and Racism

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> [T]he education's really good. Looking at it that way, you're really good here […] Opportunities in terms of school and education. Otherwise, there's nothing. I promise, there's nothing, nothing except for education, nothing at all. No love, there's nothing, nothing. I'm losing myself over the Swedes' I swear, I lose myself. […] When I first got to Europe, I thought that I'll have security, I'll go to school, I'll live my life. (Interview with Javad)
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> A Facebook clip shows Hama's classmates in Sweden. The setting is Hama's old classroom. The friends (about 15 of them, both boys and girls) say how much they miss him and form their hands into hearts. Hama looks sad, but also emotionally touched as he shows it to us. He hasn't met his friends face-to-face for half a year. (Observation note with Hama, autumn 2019)

Going to school and getting an education can both be important and tenuous for young people who, because they are refugees, are experiencing a precarious and fragile life. As Javad puts it, going to school and getting his education are what keeps him going. It is the only thing that has been good for him in Sweden. He is 20 years old, born in Afghanistan, and arrived as an unaccompanied minor to Sweden from Pakistan. Javad was affected by the Dublin rules, stating that you need to search for asylum in the first EU country you arrive in, or more exactly, where the authorities first take your fingerprints. For Javad, this meant he was not allowed to stay in Sweden, but had to return to Germany. However, he chose to stay and hide from the authorities. Before turning 18, he once again applied for a permit to stay, and this time he got it. He was then finally able to attend high school and feel safe. This does not, however, apply to everyone. Another participant, Hama, is 18 years old and lives as an irregular migrant in a small Italian city. His time in the Swedish

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school was brutally disrupted when he, after more than 3 years in Sweden, received his final decision from the Swedish Board of Migration, stating that the Swedish state had decided not to give him permission to stay. He told us he really "loves" his school, teachers and friends in his class; he is depressed that he can no longer be there.

Javad and Hama are only two examples of young people arriving to Sweden unaccompanied, that is, without parents or legal guardians. Between 2011 and 2015, approximately 50,000 unaccompanied minors arrived in Sweden. For those young individuals, a period of navigation begins, a period that often includes going to school, learning Swedish and getting an education. This chapter is based on two ethnographic research projects focusing on these young people. The first project focuses on minors who arrived in Sweden before 2015, when it was easier to obtain a residence permit because the migration policy was more generous. The second project includes young people who came in the autumn of 2015 and afterwards, and who had to confront a tougher migration policy.[1] The participants, all between 15 and 22 years old, represent to general patterns of migration to Sweden at the time. People originating from Afghanistan and Somalia were nationally overrepresented, but some participants came from Ethiopia, Pakistan, Iran, and Syria. In terms of gender, three girls participated, which corresponds to the proportion of girls arriving as "unaccompanied minor" to Sweden at the time our projects started.

In total, 20 young people participated between 2015 and 2017 in the first project and 56 asylum seekers between 2018 and 2020 in the second project. The material consists of interviews, informal talks, and observations, including interactions and reflections of interacting with family members, friends, authorities, and schools. The observations made it possible to consider aspects of everyday life otherwise unmentioned by the young people, possible to return to in later talks and interviews. The material was then analyzed thematically (Silverman, 2015), focusing on what the young people themselves brought about as important, in this case different aspects of going to school and getting an education.

Going to school and getting an education is often argued to be of special importance to refugee children and young people. It is considered an effective catalyst both for integration and for future success in life (Lahdenperä & Sundgren, 2017) and as a possible safe haven for the young people during a troubled time characterized by great uncertainty and unrest (Ascher et al., 2010). At the same time, schooling and education aimed at newly arrived refugee children and young people are rife with challenges. For instance, Nihad Bunar (2010) emphasizes the fact that these young people have recently immigrated to Sweden and are as such beginners in the Swedish school system. They have also not arrived in a socio-cultural vacuum, as also pointed out by Bunar, but rather in an institution that is historically and socially rooted in its own dynamics, frequently far from political and ideological proclamations of equivalence (Eklund, 2003). It has also been stated that the educational

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system in Sweden has had structural issues with integrating immigrant students (Sawyer & Kamali, 2006), one example being how the focus of schools seems to be on language barriers and issues perceived to be related to the students' cultural background rather than on their abilities and knowledges (Bunar, 2010; Eklund et al., 2013). Johanna Sixtensson (2018) shows the tension between the school environment being important to safety and identification among the young foreign-born women in her study, on the one hand, and many of them being sent to schools constructed as intended for "foreign students," on the other. The school is being adapted to this constructed homogenic group of people, creating a social stratification between "Swedish schools" and "foreign schools." These constructions seem to affect school results as well (cf. Bunar, 2010).

How the young people act in, react to, and reflect on their education and schools are also greatly affected by how young immigrants are perceived and treated by society at large. Being categorized as an unaccompanied minor or youth means being in the public eye. For many, this means being under the constant scrutiny of society, media, people and politics. Being exposed to such 'a situation of questioning' forces people to provide answers or defend themselves (Wernesjö, 2014). Another aspect affecting these young people is how they, as young migrants arriving without parents or a legal guardian, also enter a categorization process that involves becoming an "unaccompanied minor" (Herz & Lalander, 2017). Although sometimes providing the young people with specific rights connected with children, these processes also tend to function in a dehumanizing manner, and many of the young people we have met themselves question these acts of categorization (Herz & Lalander, 2019). Finally, it is also a question of whether or not they will be allowed to stay in Sweden and how tenuous their situation in school is. These young people tend to live in a state of deportability, that is, they constantly risk being expelled from or not being accepted as part of Sweden.

Being labelled, questioned and rejected can be considered elements of *administrative violence*. Administrative violence is based on institutionalized barriers, which can be upheld by categorization and questioning, but also by using legal tools to create differences between those considered worthy of help or support and those deemed not worthy enough (Rousseau et al., 2001; Tørrisplass, 2020). This type of violence is not officially recognized as such, instead it appears in the form of objective, neutral facts and procedures. Administrative violence can include both symbolic violence – how meaning is created or what concepts are used – and systemic violence – politics, policies, economy and other structural systems affecting people's lives (Žižek, 2008). This can be evident in how concepts such as migrant, immigrant, and unaccompanied, and the use of, for instance, "preparatory" classes in schools are affecting the lives of young people with a migratory background, but also through migration politics and policies in Sweden and Europe, such as the above-mentioned Dublin regulation, stating that you must apply for asylum in the first European country you set your foot in upon entering the European Union (European Commission, 2020). In practice, this has created a situation in which young people might be pulled out of their everyday life and safety or in which some young people keep bouncing back and forth between countries (cf. Djampour, 2018).

Another related form of violence affecting these young people is racist violence, both physical violence and the possible violence expressed through institutions, such as schools and the Swedish Migration Board. Stuart Hall (1980) defined racism as the different economic, political and ideological practices through which dominant groups exercise hegemony over subordinated groups. Philomena Essed (1991) further defined it as a process, as politics and ideology cannot exist beyond the everyday actions through which they are constructed and reconstructed. In its simplified form, racism requires, constructs and maintains the idea of differences between collectives of people based on biology, religion, culture, gender, ethnicity, and physical appearance, among other things. If racism is embedded in the logic of institutions, such as schools, it may be difficult to put up resistance.

In this chapter, we will use ethnographic data to investigate how young unaccompanied people talk about school and school life in relation to racism and administrative violence. Like Philippe Bourgois (1995/2003), we argue that ethnography is suitable to studying how oppressive structures penetrate people's everyday life, including their emotional life. We will first address how the young people themselves talk about the value of school and education. Going to school, however, is affected by specific terms and conditions, creating obstacles related to their position as unaccompanied young students. This is first discussed in general terms, before we delve into four themes related to such obstacles and challenges: family, religion, racism, as well as expectations and adaptations. The chapter ends with a summary discussion of what we consider precarious schooling.

"You Feel Safe in School"

Being able to go to school after having fled from war, poverty and violence can provide feelings of safety and a meaningful social context. Amir is one example; he was born in Afghanistan but fled Iran where he was working. For him, being able to go to school and to finally feel safe are connected to his image of Sweden.

> Amir: I go to school, get money from the social services and the Swedish National Board of Student Aid (CSN). It's quite good; it's a great country Sweden. You can be free. You can go to school and you feel safe in school… yes, it's good. I like Sweden a lot.

For some of the young people, the opportunity to go to school has been limited due to their previous living conditions and their flight through Europe. Like most other people, these young people present different life plans – plans that are adapted over time (Herz & Lalander, 2019). What these plans often seems to have in common is the goal of getting an education, getting a job, and finally being able to feel safe and secure one's future.

> I believe I finally have what I want now. So, I'm really happy about that. I'm going to school, the school's good, good classmates […] it's really good, I am satisfied.

Saleh is also from Afghanistan. He struggled during his first year in Sweden, but then moved to a foster family that he now considers his own. The move was a huge change for him, and he has since been able to focus on getting an education and a job.

Both Amir and Saleh seem to have taken an *end-of-the-line* approach to their education, which has allowed them to finally feel able to focus on their education as well as their present and possible future. This approach, however, seldom appears during the young people's first encounter with the Swedish educational system. Some started off in special introduction classes or language classes, others attended school despite lacking the right to stay in Sweden. Yousuf is one example; he was undocumented and attended school:

> A lot of things were different from now. You were kind of, you felt like an outsider somehow. Like the food card. You had no picture on the food card, since you were not registered as a student. So, there were a lot of things that differed between them and us kind of, like you were afraid, worried and ashamed […]

These precarious situations seem to create a duality. On the one hand, it is possible to understand Yousuf's time as an undocumented student as a chance to keep up with his educational level and have somewhere he could go and feel welcome. On the other hand, this welcoming seems to create its own limits. Yousuf is only a student to a certain degree, and being at school is a situation in which he is afraid of being exposed. The symbolic value of being photographed for the food card symbolizes a difference between other students and Yousuf – between the insiders and the outsiders.

As an undocumented migrant, you can attend elementary school, and if you have attended high school before turning 18, you can keep studying at that level as well. However, as with Yousuf above, this does not mean that your time in school is equal to that of peers born in Sweden or those who were lucky enough to receive a permit to stay in Sweden. Getting grades and other feedback is one problem schools try to solve in different ways by creating challenges for young students living without a permit (Skolverket, 2015). Another challenge occurs when the student is hiding from the authorities but still attending school. Javad is one example of this.

> When I first arrived in Sweden everything was good. At first, I wanted to fight, then as time passed things happened. I became undocumented and I was afraid all the time. That was the reality, I was afraid all the time. So, I didn't go to school as much, I skipped school, was careless. I used to sleep a lot, be asocial. And as a result, I became depressed. When you become [depressed] you can't do anything. In my class, my ex-class, when I was there, everybody used to say, "You're really good, why don't you study more", and I showed them. They told me all the time "If you want, we can help you, study together and stuff, because you are really good. You waste your talent". […] No one knew I was hidden, except for [name] who also was hidden. We knew about each other (laughs).

His emotional status, one of constant fear, had a major effect on his ability to succeed in school. It is also obvious how his tenuous position in Sweden as an irregular refugee makes him feel different. Both Yousuf's and Javad's school experiences are greatly affected by their legal and social status, placing them in a precarious everyday life where their position as students/pupils can be described as *an exception within the school*. Their everyday life, including at school, is greatly

affected by their tenuous position in Sweden, by the fear of being taken into custody and being expelled from the country. One young man affected by this is Hama.

We met Hama in November 2019 in a small Italian city. He had fled from Sweden 3 months earlier after receiving the third and final refusal of his application for a residence permit. He fled because he was afraid of being placed in custody and later deported. He had just finished his second year of high school. He tells us how much he liked his school and his schoolmates, although he felt his life differed from theirs because he was considered deportable (Sager, 2011). When he received the final negative decision, he had been waiting for almost 4 years. Still, even when in Italy, he talks warmly about his classmates who continued their third and final years in high school, while he had to live in a limbo of waiting for decisions from the Italian migration office. He still hopes he will someday be able to finish his third year of high school. The destiny of Hama tells us about the application of tougher Swedish migration legislation and the severe consequences this has had for many young people. This is a particularly brutal example of merciless administrative violence, but unfortunately, it is far from uncommon. In the wake of the large number of migrants who sought asylum in Sweden 2015–16, and the forcefully applied migration legislation, people like Yousuf, Javad and Hama suffered, but still considered school an important institution to be in, to develop in, to make friends in. They have experienced and navigated through what we like to call *precarious schooling*, due to their insecure position as young unaccompanied refugees.

Terms and Conditions May Apply

For young unaccompanied refugees, their education and time in school are surrounded by specific targeted rules, terms and conditions affecting their experiences of going to school. Some terms are set by the teachers, the school, or the education system, others by the specific conditions of having migrant experiences. In this section, we will focus in particular on the terms and conditions at school that are related to the young people's experiences of going to school. We will do this, first, in general terms related to going to school and getting an education, before we specifically discuss four themes the young people have talked to us about that also seem to affect their time at school and their education: family, religion, racism, as well as expectations and adaptations.

> I don't think it's that good, we have no teacher in Swedish or math, we study together with the oldies and they've lived in Sweden for 5-6 years. They know a lot of Swedish. They have a book in social studies that they've read almost all of. I can't read as [well as] them, I've read half the book […]

Adel lived in a small municipality, and the class he attended was mixed in terms of both age and how long the students had lived in Sweden, regardless of their mastery of the Swedish language. This became challenging for Adel, who could not keep up with the class. He tried to change schools, but although this was an option,

it would have forced him to move from his home to another part of southern Sweden. Because he did not want to move, he had to stay in the class.

Another example is Halid, who attends a high school level vocational class aimed at newly arrived immigrants. His school has a shortage of teachers and too many students. As a result, the school has chosen to introduce self-education at home.

> Halid: We're 35 students and only two teachers. They can't keep up. That's why we have two days in school. Now we have two days theoretical classes we attend. It's not mandatory to be in school […] self-education they call it. You can be at home. […]

The conditions at school affect both Halid's education and his own patience for learning. Instead of providing an education as promised, the school choses to introduce self-education at home, and because there is a shortage of teachers on site when the students are at school, teacher-student interactions are also insufficient. Halid explains that this situation caused everyone who had grown tired of running after the teacher to stop doing it. "When no one's there and you think about something, you forget about it," as Halid puts it.

Halid and Adel exemplify how specific terms and conditions at school affect their opportunities and ability to learn. We want to point to two things here in particular: First, how education and schools can add to *a feeling of distance* by not being able to respond to the students' ambitions, requirements, and knowledge. This is the case for Adel. Second, *the schools risk (re-)creating borders* by using specific rules or organizations targeting newly arrived immigrants or "unaccompanied minors." Sara Ahmed (2006) talks about *being stopped*, both when certain bodies are hindered from crossing borders and when the same bodies are directed somewhere else. Placing Adel in a class with people with different knowledge of Swedish and different abilities to learn stops him from getting an education and attending a school that is tailored to his needs. Similarly, when the school cannot provide enough teachers, Halid is being stopped from getting the help he needs, and he finally "choses" not to ask for any help at all.

Family and Reunification

What happens inside schools is not the only thing affecting these young people's learning and approach to school, as for all of us, this is also affected by their own life situation, experiences and needs. For these young people, such experiences can be closely related to their migration experiences and the fact that they have had to leave their family and friends.

One clear example is if, and when, families can reunite after a time apart and the effect of reunion (or no reunion) on school. Let us return to Adel, who after some time in Sweden was able to reunite with his family, forcing him to shift his focus away from school.

> Adel: [School's] alright, sometimes. No, it's honestly not that good. My teacher, I had a meeting with my teacher, my guardian, and counselor, they all told me I'm not as good at

> Swedish as I used to be. They told me I can't go to high school, for maybe two years. But it's hard to concentrate on school, you know I have a lot to do. I have no time to study. I didn't answer when you called or texted because I have no time. I always need to fix things, at the tax agency, at the social services office, at the pre-school and for my mother and father's municipal adult education. It's not easy, no one's helping me.

All the meetings with different authorities take time and energy. With his family arriving, this intensifies to the point that he can no longer focus on learning Swedish and staying in school. All of his available time is spent dealing with other authorities. The period during and after a family reunification is often when the young people need more support, but instead they tend to lose support (Tørrisplass, 2020). The entire apparatus of authorities involved in family reunifications, and the young people often being the only one in the family with some knowledge of the language and system, can result in them assuming responsibility for the process and becoming their family members' "mediators" (de Block & Buckingham, 2007; Orellana, 2001). As such, school can be difficult to focus on.

For those not able to reunite, families can still affect their ability to learn and go to school. Some tell us how they constantly worry about the family they left behind. For instance, Andy told us how he, upon hearing about bombings in Afghanistan, hoped his parents and siblings were not among the victims. Bella, another participant, told us how she had lost contact with her mother, the person she saw as most valuable in her life, saying she thought constantly about finding her mother. The precarious situation of the family left behind can have a major effect on people's emotional situation in Sweden and, thus, on their ability to focus on school.

This precariousness needs to be linked to national and international politics. As Maja Sager (2011, p. 128f) puts it, "[P]olitical right also link labour market policies, migration policies and asylum rights […] The restrictions of family reunification […] are an example of this development." To qualify for the right to reunite with your family, you must have employment, sufficient funds and adequate accommodations (Sager, 2011). On a global scale, the bordering of Europe can be mentioned, as it creates challenges and obstacles to people's ability to get to Europe in the first place (Andersson, 2014), sometimes requiring that families have the funds and ability to travel to an embassy (Tørrisplass, 2020).

If you want to apply for family reunification, you must deal not only with school and your own everyday life, but with a massive bureaucracy and demands that tend to put these young people in a precarious position, in that they are forced to quickly come up with money, work and accommodations. As Tørrisplass (2020) points out, these young people are being pulled between two different political logics. For children, the best interest of the child, which is based on international conventions, is activated; this includes getting an education and being able to reunite with your parents. For immigrants, the increasingly restrictive European immigration policies are instead activated, focusing on limiting the flow of migrants entering Europe. As a consequence, the young people themselves must navigate different political logics and policies, at the same time trying to plan for their own future.

Religion and Faith

Another theme evident among some of the young people is related to religious faith and practice at school. This is not, as we shall see, always related to a present and individual faith; it can also be related to the young people having lost their faith or to religion at the societal level. Saleh is one example. He grew up a Muslim, but has since lost his faith. During a movie screening at school, his own history and life changes caught up with him.

> We went to the cinema and watched a movie [with the class]. There was a religious family with four or five daughters. They were not religious, they had relationships with boys. Then they got exposed to stuff, got locked up, they thought of honor and stuff. Stuff that religious people sometimes think of. You shouldn't do that, be in contact with guys and stuff like that. This is quite common, especially within Islam and such. I tell you, it was awful, I can't, I couldn't take it, so I just left. My mentor followed, I felt sick for a week. […] I've been through stuff like this, I've seen this with my own eyes. Then I didn't think about it because it was common, there wasn't anything wrong. But when I see someone get forced like that, it's awful. Then someone shot herself, it was awful.

Saleh's own experiences make it impossible to sit through the movie screening with his class. He felt sick and could not stay; he felt he had to leave. His school had no preparedness for what the movie had triggered. Saleh feels bad for a week, and when he talks about it with us, after some time has passed, it still makes him feel bad.

Others still adhere to their religious beliefs and practices and must combine these with going to school. Adel, for instance, has no place to pray at school. As a result, he goes back to his living accommodations to pray during his school days. This is similar to Yousuf, who talks about how he can no longer follow "the rules" completely:

> Yousuf: I follow the prophet, God. What's in the Koran. But not 100%, since I'm young and live in Sweden. […] But what should you do? Think about school, should you pray in the classroom? There might be places to pray in, but then you're in class. Should I leave for five-ten minutes, I can't claim to have been to the toilet.

The Swedish schools are not always adapted to these young people's need to pray, nor are they responsive to the possible tensions felt by young people who feel they need to pray. Both Yousuf and Adel bear witness to how their faith and the organization of the Swedish schools create tensions that they themselves must resolve.

However, what happens inside the school is of course related to ongoing societal and political changes. As argued by Stuart Hall (2012), specific structures of transformation, displacement and condensation delineate new diasporic spaces. From this perspective, it is not strange to see a greater focus on Islamic faith and on being a Muslim among the young people themselves during this time and at this place. There is an anti-immigrant rhetoric evident in most of Europe, especially focusing on Islam and Muslims (Farris, 2017; Herz, 2019; Shain, 2011). Inscribed in this anti-Muslim discourse is the idea of an 'assumed social separateness, cultural fixity and boundedness of religious […] difference' among Muslims (Mac an Ghaill &

Haywood, 2015, p. 98). These homogenic ideas and the pressure from society on especially young Muslim people, but also non-Muslims arriving from countries where Islam is the dominant religion, are clear among the young unaccompanied people we have met. They cause tension in their everyday life and in school (see also Odenbring & Johansson, 2019).

Adar from Syria thinks a lot about his own chances related to being a Muslim in Sweden, but even more, he thinks about his sister. His sister has also come to Sweden as an unaccompanied minor. She is doing very well in school, but she wears a veil, and recent public debates regarding the veil have caused Adar to worry about his sister.

> Adar: [I] don't want her to feel nervous about this. She's doing so well in school. I think about this, she studies for years, for her life, and then she can't get a job. I think that's the biggest bullshit.

Adar worries about his sister's chances and possibilities, and this affects his emotional status. The recent focus on young Muslim people in Europe positions them at the center of the public debate. It is hard to disregard this. Going to school, and fighting for "her life," might all be for nothing if his sister has little chance of getting a job.

What these young people must do is to navigate between a number of things: their own religious beliefs, their ability to exercise their religion, the schools' ability to pick up on their individual needs, and society's approach to faith and believers. On the one hand, we see examples of finding solutions that get around obstacles, for instance going home to pray and then returning to school. On the other hand, this creates a situation in which the young people may need to navigate processes of othering.

Being the Other – Racism in School

> When Farid attended [a course in] Swedish, he temporarily joined a 'regular' high school class for 'domestic science.' The teacher then told the class how different things were in other cultures. That in some cultures, the father ate first, then the mother and finally the children. This made an impression on Farid. Why didn't he protest, he asks himself? 'Maybe people walk around believing this. What mother would let her child starve?' he asks me rhetorically. 'I've seen my mother give us the meat and later herself gnaw on the leftovers, for us children to have food' (Observation note).

When Farid joins the class, the teacher reproduces imaginative conceptions of immigrant families, that of a patriarchal family where the father's wellbeing supposedly comes first. For Farid, this means that he is exposed to a situation of being questioned (Wernesjö, 2014). His mere presence in the class elicits the teacher's story, making him an involuntary recipient. When we met with Farid and he talked about this incident, he was still affected by it and angry, not only at the teacher, but also at himself for not speaking out.

This incident can be understood as his presence affecting the classroom, urging the teacher to speak up. Farid entering this space disturbs the otherwise easy passing of white, Swedish bodies (Ahmed, 2007; Djampour, 2018). Ahmed (2007) describes it as a situation where whiteness creates a comfortable space for white bodies; they are not being questioned. This is not the case for a body that cannot pass as white, instead creating an uncertainty in which the body itself is stressed by the challenge to what it can do. This is what happens to Farid; his ability to move and speak is caused by the teacher's sudden focus on "other cultures." He keeps asking himself why he did not speak up, but at the time he felt it was impossible. When encountering racism in institutional contexts, the racialized subject might "go along with [it]" as a form of institutional *passing*, as Ahmed (2012) puts it. By not opposing the teacher, Farid maintains the status quo, he becomes "the 'right kind' of minority, and as such he can protect himself from becoming the "sore point" (p. 157).

Another example is Javad, who says that when he tries to approach other students, "they walk away." Javad believes they get information stating that "immigrants are dangerous." Both Javad's encounters with his peers and Farid's with his class can be interpreted as examples of *silent racism*, as opposed to explicit racism (Trepagnier, 2001), or of *everyday racism,* as Philomena Essed (1991) writes. These are everyday actions that go unquestioned by the dominant group of people, but that reproduce institutional racism. It is through these repetitive norms of othering that the borders and fixity of the social world are reproduced (Butler, 1993).

Sometimes, however, these repetitions become even more explicit. Javad tells us how one of his teachers at one point told him point blank that she "hates you [people]". Javad continues:

> The thing is, she's a teacher. They, as teachers, are supposed to give young people encouragement. They're supposed to make the world brighter. But if they think like that, how are you supposed to complain to others who don't get it, who never lived like this, if the leader talks like that?

Javad means that the teachers are the ones who set the tone, who are able to create an environment of encouragement. But when the teachers themselves spread racism, this makes it difficult to argue against the racism spread by other students.

Both Javad and Farid find themselves out of place in school. This can be manifested through having racist slurs thrown at you from school personnel, being ignored or only by being physically in place. As Beverly Skeggs (1997) argued, racialized bodies carry unequal value based on their position in space and time. Because Javad and Farid have been put in a social context where they are racialized, they are constantly considered, and themselves feel, out of place.

Thus, being categorized as an unaccompanied minor not only means having had to flee without parents or other adult caregivers, it also means being drawn into processes of labelling, othering, and racism. It means being drawn into violent actions. For the young people themselves, this often entails being put in a "situation of questioning" (Wernesjö, 2014), that is, being under the constant scrutiny of the people around you as well as the scrutiny of society, politicians, and the media. This forces people to be ready to provide answers, to defend themselves, and to pass as a "good enough" immigrant or classmate.

Passing as a "Good Migrant" or as Just Another Classmate – Expectations and Adaptations

In this section, we will focus on expectations, on becoming passable and adaptations to such expectations in relation to education and schooling. This has different manifestations, including being expected to adapt to the "right" version of a young immigrant or the "right" student, as well as the young people's ways of dealing with such demands. What the manifestations have in common is that they, in different ways, force the young people into a situation of being questioned. They are either being questioned or at risk of being questioned, and as such, they are at risk of not passing (see Goffman, 1963/1990) as a "tolerable" migrant or classmate.

One manifestation of a migrant who is considered passable is *the working migrant*. This is related both to the now dominant neo-liberal view on integration in the West and to history, particularly slavery and colonialism, where black and indigenous bodies were punished and disciplined to become future workers for the white state (cf. Parsons, 2012). The "modern" neo-liberal incarnation of this manifestation is dependent on the "immigrant" being able to find paid work at all costs. Research suggests that these demands have created a situation where certain groups of immigrants constitute the core of a European precariat with low wages and poor working conditions (Anthias et al., 2013; Farris, 2017; Mulinari, 2018). This is comparable to how the young migrants in our research are being treated in school regarding their future career.

> Javad: So, I talked to [the student counselor] and told her I would like to keep studying in the municipal adult education program to be able to finish school […] She asked me first where I came from. "Afghanistan". Then she said: "Why don't you apply for vocational training?" […] I told her "I want to get an education", and she looked at me strangely.

It is rather common for the young people to talk about their dream job or education, but then to report how they have been encouraged to choose something else. What these suggested jobs tend to have in common is their precariousness; they are either physically or mentally taxing or are associated with poor working conditions. However, this "choice" is not always related to the school, but, as in Javad's case, it may also be the effect of living a totally precarious life.

Chuhan, for instance, talked about the importance of getting a good education and staying in school, until he suddenly located his mother. Because of her health, Chuhan wanted her to come to Sweden. This meant that Chuhan had to pay for her trip, hospital bills and be able to provide for her when she arrived in Sweden. As a result, he started working in a store and was not able to stay in school.

> I was supposed to study this year, but I can't since I must bring my mother. She's completely alone, and you know the rules from the Migration office. You must have an income, after tax, it must be 18,000 kronor [approx. 1800 Euro]. And it's difficult to get a job in this city, so I've chosen to work in this store. It's shit time but also fun.

Chuhan worked 7 days a week to be able to save up money, which affected his health. He felt, however, that he was not able to turn work down because there was

tough competition for these kinds of precarious jobs among people with a low education who needed money. He had no choice. He must prove to the Swedish authorities that he is a "good migrant" who can pay and care for his mother, as a result he is pushed out of school and into a highly precarious life. It can be argued that both Javad and Chuhan are being pushed into precarious work – Javad by his school counsellor and Chuhan because of the tougher migration laws in Sweden. Both risk losing the education they need and want, all because of what is expected of them as "good migrants."

Another manifestation is the *"good classmate."* Early in 2016, the local media focused on a case of manslaughter committed by a young person with an Afghan background. Andy, himself from Afghanistan, told us that this was a tough time for him at school, even though he himself would never harm anyone. Andy described how he thought his schoolmates were thinking: "They're angry, why would a migrant we help do such a thing towards Swedes, Swedish citizens." He also says he felt labeled. Andy is one of only a few students with a migrant background at his school. Only a few in his class know about his background and that he is an "unaccompanied refugee minor". We ask him why:

> [The classmates] are very nice, the whole class. They believe that I'm still one of them, that's, I'm one of them, it feels a bit like that. But if I said I'm an unaccompanied minor they'd think sort of: "Aha, but wait, you're from another group, have had a tougher background." So, they'll treat you differently sort of.

Thus, in Andy's view, being considered an unaccompanied minor could mean his classmates seeing him as not belonging to the in-group of classmates. Andy wants to be one of them, not to be seen as strange or somebody with a tough background. Therefore, he tries not to act like an unaccompanied "refugee," but instead tries to pass as a "good classmate."

Precarious Schooling – A Violent Act

Most of the young people we have met seem to enjoy going to school and many dream of getting an education and a good job. Sometimes the school can represent the end of the line after a long time without safety and security. However, once they can attend school on similar terms as other students, their precariousness does not seem to end, rather the opposite. It is a continuum of precarious schooling and the young people must find strategies that allow them to overcome, to pass in or to learn to live with the situation.

In this chapter, we have pointed out a couple themes that the young people themselves have talked about and that in some way or another have affected or have had the potential to affect their time in school and getting an education.

First, the school system risks, due to administrative violence (Žižek, 2008), *creating new borders* for these young people to cross. When specific rules or schools aimed at newly arrived immigrants or "unaccompanied minors" are created, new

challenges occur, especially when the young people are approached as a homogeneous group of people with the same needs and dreams (cf. Rousseau et al., 2001; Tørrisplass, 2020). Moreover, those who are deemed deportable experience precarious schooling and the feeling of being separate from other pupils.

Second, everyday life itself can be *precarious,* given how the young people are being treated and approached in society at large, both on a local, regional, and global scale. For instance, being able to reunite with your family may be extremely important to some, but instead of making it easier to combine school with bringing your family to Sweden, this is treated harshly (Sager, 2011), in this case forcing the young people out of the schoolroom and into precarious work.

Third, experiences of *racism and racialization* are common, both at school and in everyday life. The young people are drawn into processes of othering, based either on their origin, gender, race or religion. Religion, in general, and Islam, in particular, have lately been the center of attention in Europe (Farris, 2017), forcing these young people to find strategies to pass both as a student among other students, and as a "good immigrant" and "classmate" in particular.

What these themes have in common is how they create a precarious time in school, which can end up becoming *a violent education*. We have seen the direct violence targeting some, such as the teacher's racist hate towards Javad, as well as administrative violence, such as forcing someone to move to another part of Sweden to get age-adapted education. We have seen symbolic violence in the form of categorization, homogenization and being questioned, and finally, systemic violence through policies that create and uphold impermeable borders.

We argue that the school system needs to adapt to these young people's own wishes, experiences, and challenges in the context of their everyday life, without homogenizing and reproducing inequalities and violence aimed at them. Further, racism needs to be addressed and fought methodically, both on the policy level and on the local level within the schools. It is evident that some of the young people have been affected by racist violence perpetrated by peers as well as teachers, but almost all of them have been affected by the violence of the implicit, silent everyday racism that is reproduced through policies, politics, and practices.

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