

# Chapter 7 Marginalisation and risk groups

## 7.1 Introduction

Men can be called the extreme gender – we find men both at the top and bottom of society. In Chapter 9 the ministry has referred to numbers from Central Statistics Bureau and the Equality and Anti-Discrimination Ombud which show that men constitute a clear majority of the leaders in the public and private sector. More than eight out of ten top leaders are men. Men constitute the majority in Parliament as well as in most county and company boards. The ministry has showed in Chapter 3 that men have a higher hourly and annual income compared to women. The ministry has simultaneously pointed out that the range of incomes among men is greater than that of women. That means that within the group with the lowest income in Norway, the majority are men. In this Chapter, the Ministry brings up questions linked to areas in which boys and men constitute the majority of groups at risk of marginalisation, and further examines the situation of marginalised groups.

For a long time the redistribution of care and power between men and women has been the main goal in the work with equality. The historical foundation for this is that men have possessed the key positions of power, while women have dealt with tasks within the family and home. Even a certain equalisation of seats at the county elections does not prevent men from holding three out of four mayor positions. Men are completely dominant among officers, in the church and as leaders in academic institutions. For that reason, the levelling out of genders among leaders and decision-makers is still a central task in achieving gender equality. But a discussion of structural power, with “men” and “women” as the starting point, contributes to make the major differences within the groups invisible. The truth is that boys and men in Norway constitute a most heterogenous group. The differences are greater than for women, and the differences within the group has risen rather than decreased during the last few decades. Many men hold key positions in society and this may never change. The situation on the opposite side of the scale is this: The typical homeless person is a single man in his early thirties of Norwegian ethnicity, without any completed further education and no steady job, thus making him dependent on economical social welfare. In addition, he is often dependent on drugs or alcohol and/or struggles with a psychiatric disorder. To simplify the situation one can say that men top every statistic.

## 7.2 Risk groups

Only a few of those who are considered as a member of a risk group end up being permanently marginalised. To look at people without a job or education is a starting point to limit the group. But there are many within this group that are activated in some way and therefore not considered marginalised. In the group, “none activated”, that is to say people outside the job market and education system, we see that young men constitute an increasing part. Here we find men who cannot handle societal expectations or who refuse to accept the basic ethics of society. Among men we find marginalised groups too, and these groups are growing in numbers.

To be marginalised means to be left without education, paid work, domestic or family related work or without any other activity that can be considered as making everyday life meaningful. There is no single reason why men become marginalised.

The complex causality is linked to different risk factors. One of these risk factors is desertion from further education, which in today's society increases the risk of ending up without permanent work later in life. Another risk factor is impaired ability to function or mental suffering, likewise is the abuse of intoxicants. Those same factors can also be the reason for unemployment, which then can lead to marginalisation if the situation continues. The person's livelihood must then be based on social welfare, something that in itself can be experienced as stigmatising, and contributes to poorer living conditions. There are no research results at hand that show to what extent the evolution of gender roles together with changing evaluations of traditional masculine (or feminine) characteristics affect the risk of marginalisation.

Many in marginalised groups experience their own situation as degrading. Many experience an inability to use their capacities and resources, which is a loss for both themselves and society alike. Preventive work is important, and to make sure that as many men as possible can utilize their capacities and resources in a meaningful manner. SSB finds striking differences between youth in general, and marginalised youth. Marginalised youth have generally speaking poorer health and relatively more individuals carry long-term illnesses. They report to struggling with mental illness two or three times more than youth in general. There are more than three times as many youths struggling with bad habits in different areas among marginalised youth, areas such as alcohol consumption, exercise, smoking and obesity. In addition they come up short on other indicators concerning social contact. They, among other things, lack friends, make little effort to make contact and participate in things with others. They lack intimacy with other people and they find it difficult to get help when they need it.

### **7.3 Desertion from education**

Today's labour market often demands formal qualifications, and education is the key. In the 1960's and 1970's, it was easier for young men to go straight out to work after compulsory school education. Previously, companies would take young unskilled people and train them up on the job; now, schools have to a large degree taken over this responsibility. It is therefore difficult for young people without higher education to find their way in the labour market. Those who lack work experience and education may be only offered jobs with poor wages, insecure employment conditions and few chances for advancement. We are concerned to see more and more young people drop out of secondary education. Boys drop out of secondary education more often than girls, and women go on to higher education more often than men. Social factors, including non-western immigrant background also influence the dropout rate from secondary education.

#### **7.3.1 The educational level of boys and men**

As of October 1, 2005, 91% of 16-18 year olds were enrolled in secondary education. Minority youth choose secondary education less often, especially first generation immigrants, where 71% of 16-18 year olds were in secondary education.

Analyses from the SSB show that there were generally fewer who finished secondary school in the 2000 class than in the 1999 class. More girls completed their schooling than boys. In the 2000 class 74% of girls and 62% of boys completed their education after 5 years. Of those who dropped out we find that most came from backgrounds where their parents only had primary education. Minority students also dropped out of secondary education more often than others.

From a gender equality perspective it is unfortunate that students who choose untraditional options in secondary school are more likely to drop out completely or choose another

direction of study. This includes both girls who have begun in traditional "boy subjects" and boys who have begun in traditional "girl subjects" It may be more difficult for a student to follow through on an educational path where he or she is a gender minority. The way the teaching of the subject is done, the literature choice etc. may also not be well tailored for both genders.

Language-minority groups seem to be more polarised than the language majority in the choice of education. Compared to students from the language majority, language-minority students tend to drop out more often from secondary education. We do see however, that those from this group who manage to finish secondary education seem to be more likely to continue with and finish higher education more often than language majority students.

### **7.3.2 Measures to hinder desertion from secondary school**

While 15% of students in further education quit before they were finished, another 20% finished but without passing. This is among the alarming results from a recent survey in Eastern Norway. The girls in the survey had higher academic achievement than boys. More boys than girls quit, and more boys than girls finished without passing. The survey also shows

- that academic achievement is higher among students whose parents have higher education
- that ethnic majority youth have higher achievement than ethnic minority students
- that youth who live together with both parents have higher achievement than those who do not
- that youth who are following the educational option that was their first choice have higher achievement
- that those who drop out are those with lowest grade point average
- that variation in achievement is highly influenced by the academic marks achieved during primary education

In Chapter 2 of this white paper, the ministry has indicated the systematic differences in learning outcomes for boys and girls measured by looking at the final marks they achieved in primary schools.

"Efforts against desertion" was a set of measures implemented in the period from 2003 to 2006 as a part of the governments action plan against poverty. The effort had as its aim to hinder desertion from secondary education and to gather up those who did drop out and give them guidance to try to help them back into work or education.

There are many and complex reasons why students drop out of secondary education. Efforts against desertion have also been characterised by large regional differences and have encompassed diverse strategies. In all counties the effort has brought many different people together, both inside schools and outside schools, in order to work against desertion from education. Some of the measures have seemed to be successful, including strengthening vocational and educational guidance for students, increasing parent participation, competency development for counsellors, contact teachers and NAV employees and a better information exchange and cooperation between middle schools and secondary schools about at-risk students.

No single initiative has been found to be revolutionary in hindering the drop out rate. The government believes that only a long-term, goal oriented effort on simultaneous fronts will be able to achieve good results. This work needs to focus primarily on boys, especially boys with weak academic marks from primary schools, since they are the highest risk group with regards to desertion from secondary education and since dropping out gives them also a weaker position in the labour market later in life.

## **7.4 Desertion from the labour market**

A stable commitment to education and the labour market is important for an individual to achieve and assure good living conditions for themselves. Participation in work life gives the individual an income and promotes a more even distribution of the economic resources in society. A weak commitment to the labour market is often a main cause of poverty problems for the individual.

### **7.4.1 Men who are outside working life**

Compared to other countries, Norway has a large portion of its adult population in employment.

In 2006 76% of men and 68% of women in the age group 16-74 years were in active employment. In the age group 25-54 years 91% of men and 83% of women were actively employed.

Since the beginning of 1970's, total employment participation has increased from around 61% in 1972 to 72% in 2006. This increase can be explained partly by a growing population segment of adults of working age, and particularly by the increased employment participation among women.

The changes in employment participation have been influenced by several factors. In primary industry the employment has been reduced to a little over a third since 1970. For men this has caused a greater reduction in employment than for women. The aging of the general population, the increase in immigration and the increase in disability pensioning have all contributed to reduce the average employment participation. For men, participation has gone down in all age categories since early in the 1970's. Men over 55 felt acutely the decline in employment activity up until the middle of the 1990's, but employment has increased again during the last few years.

Occupational participation also varies with the economic situation. This is true for both men and women. Since men to a greater degree work in enterprises that are vulnerable to the swings of the market (such as industry and building/construction) and women to a greater degree work in sheltered sectors (such as health and the county sector), unemployment among men tends to vary more over time. We have been in a period of economic growth and unemployment has been lower for men than for women.

In Norway, people who have been unemployed for at least six months are defined as long-term unemployed. According to the SSB's labour survey (AKU) there are now (first quarter 2008) about 7000 long-term unemployed men and 6000 long-term unemployed women. Out of all unemployed people, the long-term unemployed comprise about 21%, both men and women. Norway is one of the countries in the world that has the fewest long-term unemployed.

### **7.4.2 Young people outside working life**

Young people often lack necessary education and work experience, and employers may be insecure about how stable and productive they are. Young people are therefore more vulnerable in the workforce and are to a greater degree dependent on the demand for labour. A tight labour market means that very few are unemployed, even in the youngest age groups. The low levels of unemployment mean that even those who do not complete secondary education may still get jobs. But that is not true of everyone and gender differences exist. In March 2008 two out of three unemployed in the age group 20-24 years were men. The labour

market is not able to even out the gender differences from the desertion from secondary school. More men than women from this age group are therefore inactive.

In the report "The Living Conditions of Youth", SSB has outlined employment marginalisation among youth in the period 2001-2003. In the analysis SSB distinguishes between *partially marginalised* youth, who are away from studies or work for a year, and *marginalised* youth, who are away from studies or the workplace for three years in a row.

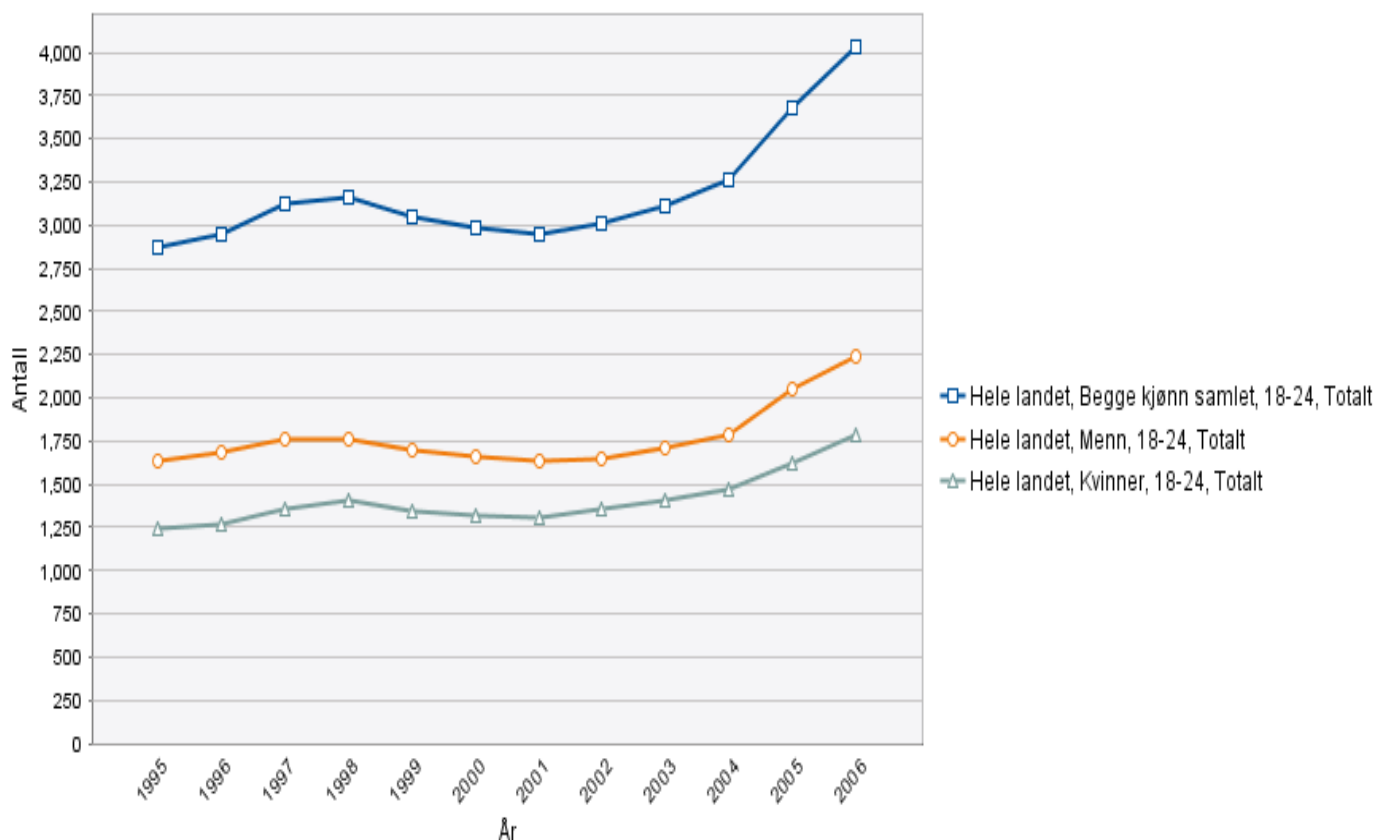
The report shows a clear increase in the number of *partly* marginalised, but in spite of this increase, only 2% were neither in education or a job during the three years of the analysis period. It is this 2% who are the marginalised group. In 2001 there were no gender differences; both boys and girls stand for 6%. The percentage of those who fall outside the labour market is increasing more for boys than for girls after 2001. The percentage of boys who fall outside the labour market the following years is first 21% and then 26%. For girls the numbers are 17% and 19%. Even though more boys than girls fall outside the labour market when one looks at a single year, making them *partially* marginalised, there are no gender differences among those who were outside the labour market for the following three years, therefore being defined as marginalised. 2% of both boys and girls were marginalised in the period 2001 – 2003.

### **7.4.3 Recipients of disability benefits**

Statistics from NAV (The Norwegian Labour and Welfare Administration) show that more and more young men are receiving disability benefits. Psychological problems are the most frequent cause of men under 40 receiving such benefits. In 2006 more than six of ten men in this age group who received disability pension or time limited disability benefits were awarded this because of psychological disability. That applies to about 10 000 men in the age range 18 to 40 years.

For the age group 18- 24 the development looks like this:

*Fig. Nr. 7.1 The development in the numbers of young people receiving disability benefits in 1995- 2006*



Antall: number

År: year

Hele landet, begge kjønn samlet, 18-24, totalt: Entire country, genders, 18-24, total

Hele landet, menn, 18-24, totalt: Entire country, men, 18-24, total

Hele landet, kvinner, 18-24, totalt: Entire country, women, 18-24, total

In total there are actually fewer men than women who are on disability. At the end of 2006 11 % of the population in the age range 18-67 received some form of disability benefits (disability pension or time limited disability benefit) including 12.9% women and 9.2% men. In 2006 the average age for this was 53.8 years. There are a higher percentage of first generation immigrant men who receive disability than the total percentage of men over 50 years of age.

Of all the new women receiving disability in 2006, almost half received time limited disability benefits only. For men this proportion is one of three. In other words, men receive disability benefits less often than women, but when they first receive them they are often long-term.

## 7.5 Social welfare

There are more men than women among young recipients of social welfare, and the gender differences among young recipients are about the same as among all recipients.

In all age groups, over 50% of recipients are men. Between 3% and 4% of the population receive economic welfare help in 2005, and the percentage of the population who receive economic welfare help has been relatively stable for several years. As in previous years, young people are strongly over-represented among recipients in 2005. Of young adults in the

age range 16-30 years, 5,7% received economic aid, while only 2,8% of all adults over 30 years of age received economic aid.

We know that there are percentagewise more people with a lower educational level among recipients of social welfare than in the rest of the population. The numbers in the mentioned analysis apply to the year 2004, and the age ranges are a bit different than what are used here. But the result shows that 25% of all male recipients in the age range 18-24 had primary schooling as the highest achieved educational level. In the population as a whole only 8% of the total number of men in this age range had only primary school. For women the numbers were 21% and 5% respectively.

## **7.6 The homeless**

As a part of its efforts against poverty, the government wishes to ensure measures for the homeless. Many have an image of a homeless person as an older alcoholic man. The image has some truth in it. Men comprise about 76% of the approximately 5500 homeless people, according to an analysis from 2005.

Measures for the homeless are generally not a relevant theme in a white paper on men and gender equality, even though a large proportion of homeless people are men. But it is relevant to look more carefully at whether or not there are certain aspects of male roles that make men susceptible to marginalisation and whether measures for the homeless have sufficient grounding in a male and gender perspective.

The survey of the homeless showed that the greatest numbers of homeless are in the age group 20-45 years. The age distribution varies little between women and men. In the group of homeless there are many more who have not completed secondary education and who have primary education as their highest educational level. Only one of every 35 homeless people has any source of wage income. Most homeless people have little or no experience of working life and are dependent on economic social welfare, because they have few social security rights. Addicts and people with psychological disorders or a combination of diagnoses are over-represented among the homeless. The same is true for non-western immigrants. For this group the risk of getting into the situation of not having a place to live is twice as high as for the general population.

The characteristics of homeless people confirm that desertion from secondary school, lack of access to working life and similar factors increase the risk of marginalisation. Boys/men are over-represented in these risk groups. This underlines the necessity for the counselling services in secondary schools and in NAV to have a gender perspective, so that initiatives and interventions can have the same effect for boys and girls.

## **7.7 Criminality**

Criminality is one of the most male-dominated areas of our society. Criminals and inmates in prisons are mainly men or young boys. Women have comprised about 10% of the registered criminals and 5% of prison inmates for the last several decades, although these numbers have risen slightly recently. In 1990 women made up 12% of those charged in criminal cases. In 2000 the number had risen to 16% and was the same in 2005. Last numbers shows us another rise, for 2008 it is 19 %.

A number of studies show that there is a connection between living conditions and criminality, although the exact causality is not always clear. The report "Career criminals and living conditions" gives an overview of to what degree people born in 1977 were indicted for crimes in the period 1992-2001. The analysis applied to people born in Norway in 1977 who

were resident in Norway in 1992. These people were 15 years old in 1992 and 24 years old in 2001. The survey sample was all the people in this group.

Most of the people in this group were not indicted for any crimes at all. Among those who were, most were only charged once. But some were active criminals over a longer period of time. The criminal careers varied, and some were more typical than others. *The more serious criminal career one has, the lower one scores on important social indices.* Many people with a long-term criminal pattern have not completed secondary schooling; many are long-term recipients of social welfare and have very little connection to working life. Although most of the members of this group have parents with secondary or higher education, a disproportionate number of the persons who had the most serious criminal careers had very little education.

Furthermore, risk of death is an indicator of health and lifestyle, and this risk gets higher as the criminal career gets more serious. The study concludes that career criminality must be seen as significantly connected to the general life situation of the individual and marginalisation processes in society.

### **7.7.1 Juvenile criminality**

Juvenile criminality is a gender-neutral concept for a highly gendered field. It is mostly *boys* who are registered for criminal activity in their youth. Teenagers, and especially young men, have always been over-represented in criminal statistics. Boys represent 75% of all the people aged 15-17 and 85% of all the people 18-20 who are charged with crimes.

An increase of focus on child and youth criminality from the end of the 1990's led to an increase in the indictment and punishment of youth, but in the last few years this has changed. Of the under-aged group, 20% fewer were indicted for crimes in 2005 than 2001. Older youths, and to larger degree adults, have had a different development. Compared to 1980 there are 150% more people from the ages of 18-29 charged with offenses, and over 500% more adults, aged 30 or over. The age distribution among the indicted has changed dramatically the last 25 years. Youth under the age of 18 have gone from 35% to 15% and those aged 30 or over have gone from 18% to 41% of the number of indicted lawbreakers. The number of those actually punished for the crimes in the youngest group has also been reduced from 30% to 8%.

The image of juvenile criminality as a relatively "normal" part of the teenage years seems to be changing. Researcher Balvig points out that a polarisation has occurred in that very few of those charged with crimes are to be found in the large grey mass where most youth are to be found. The picture has become more black and white. More are law-abiding, and many of those who are not are responsible for many of the crimes and the most serious criminality.

Although fewer young people engage in criminality, studies show that those who do do it more often. We see therefore this increased polarity in the youth population. Most people in the youth population do not engage in criminal activity at all, but a small group sticks out that does. In this group the large majority are boys.

Criminal boys have always appeared tough, and their peers have seen them as tough. Adults have said instead that these boys are boys that *wish* to be tough. Criminality can be seen as a way of expressing masculinity among boys and men who do not have other resources to make something of them. Young, marginalised men can for example use violence and fighting to try to achieve status, reputation and self-respect. Criminality for personal gain can also be a source of masculine pride for this group. The gains from such criminal activity, having a lot of money in your hands, can give a person a feeling of being somebody. Engaging in risky



illegal activity allows these boys to show themselves off as brave, technically capable and smart.

The type of masculinity that many boys indulge in by criminal activity has been called *cowboy masculinity*. It seems to be a type of “masculine identity project”. Expressing masculinity in this way requires a boy to be tough, show individuality and courage, and to be in opposition.

### **7.7.2 Gang criminality and boys with immigrant backgrounds**

Gang criminality has been a problem in Norwegian society since the 1950’s. It is during this period that the teenager as a particular social category made its debut. Teenagers are a concept and an ideal connected to a “teenage market”, as young people gain more purchasing power as a result of economic growth. The blossoming of the teenage market creates both supply and demand for special consumer items for youth. These objects serve as lifestyle markers for the age group and distinguish this group as its own category between childhood and adulthood. Parallel to this development is the rise of groups of children and teenagers who engage in what we call *gang criminality*. Gangs and bands were a topic that was often in the press in the 1950’s. Newspaper articles from archives tell that the police at that time had their hands full trying to uncover and round up boy gangs and car gangs that specialised in everything from theft of electrical appliances, shavers, and film cameras to dynamite, weapons and certain brands of cars.

During the last two decades the word “gang” has largely become synonymous with the kind of gangs and criminality we find among boys with immigrant backgrounds. These boys often emphasise their ethnic culture in order to explain why they are so concerned with honour and respect. Some researchers have also emphasised their cultural background. For example, one researcher writes: “Immigrants take a code of honour with them from feudal structures in developing countries and into western society.” Other researchers believe this is a simplistic explanation and believe the issue is more complex. They believe these boys are functioning with a particular perspective on masculinity. The researchers assert that it is not these boys’ grandparents’ code of honour that the boys try to live up to when they talk about honour and respect. Honour, fellowship and a physically tough style are images of a particular masculine ideal. The symbols used for this vary, but the content is usually the same, at least as an ideal. It is therefore not only about the culture of origin of the boys, but also of central cultural masculine ideals in our own western culture.

We often have simplified notions of which ethnic minorities are. Such stereotypes can easily lead the young people in these groups to want to live up to the picture other people have of them. If the media paints a picture of youth from immigrant backgrounds as dangerous, groups can easily arise that try to confirm just that. It is nothing new to see groups of people play on stereotypes in order to gain respect. But it is more serious when boys with minority background begin to play on skin colour as an identity marker rather than clothing or other identity markers that can be exchanged. This kind of activity serves to stigmatise a much larger group, namely all boys of ethnic minority background.

A survey of career criminality among those from 15 to 25 years old shows that 10% of non-immigrants and 17% of non-western immigrants are charged for one or more offense. Non-western immigrants also make up 5% of all people who are indicted for crime, and a somewhat larger percent of all those charged. Individual criminal acts by people of immigrant background are often interpreted as signs of a poor integration and immigration policy. One forgets that the conditions that give rise to criminality among immigrant teenagers are the same ones that give rise to criminality among ethnic Norwegian youth.

Non-western immigrants are more exposed to factors that we know to be correlated with criminality. There are more young people, they live to a greater degree in Oslo, have less education and higher unemployment and are in a more difficult economic situation than most Norwegians. Gender, the educational level of the parents, their own economic situation and level of integration in school and the workplace are more important factors than immigrant background in explaining criminality.

All of these social factors have more to say than immigrant background when it comes to getting caught for crimes during the teenage years. But non-western immigrants are still over-represented in the statistics compared to the rest of the population. One must also remember that a large proportion of immigrant youth do not engage in criminal activity in spite of poor living conditions. There is therefore no automatic causal link between poor living conditions and criminality.

The survey "Young in Norway" shows a polarisation among non-western immigrant youth: Most of them are law-abiding, but a small group is at the other end, engaging in serious criminal activity. This group is responsible for many crimes, even more than comparable juvenile criminals without immigrant background. This group poses a significant problem. Luckily, for most that have done something criminal, the crime is a one-time occurrence. A small group of highly active criminals of immigrant background should not cause the assumption that all of them are alike.

People with non-western immigrant background have their criminal debut later than those with ethnic Norwegian background. Compared with Norwegian youth, the level of criminality takes a jump around the age of 19. The lack of apprenticeships and exclusion from the workplace because of weak academic marks or failure to finish school is also something that happens at that age.

## **7.8 Child Welfare Services (Child Protection Service)**

Of the approximately 40 000 children and young people who received help from Child Welfare Services in 2006, about 54% were boys. The Child Welfare Service should reach out to all families, children and youth and give effective help that is adapted to the needs of the children. Children of ethnic minority background are much more often recipients of help from Child Welfare Services than children without ethnic minority background. The Ministry of Children and Equality is in the process of strengthening the multicultural competence of the Child Welfare Service. On instruction from the ministry, four selected University Colleges are developing educational programmes to increase multicultural competence in the Child Welfare Services. The goal is to give the students basic information about what a culturally sensitive child welfare service would be and to hone their skills in working with children, youth and families with ethnic minority backgrounds. This educational option will start up in the autumn of 2008.

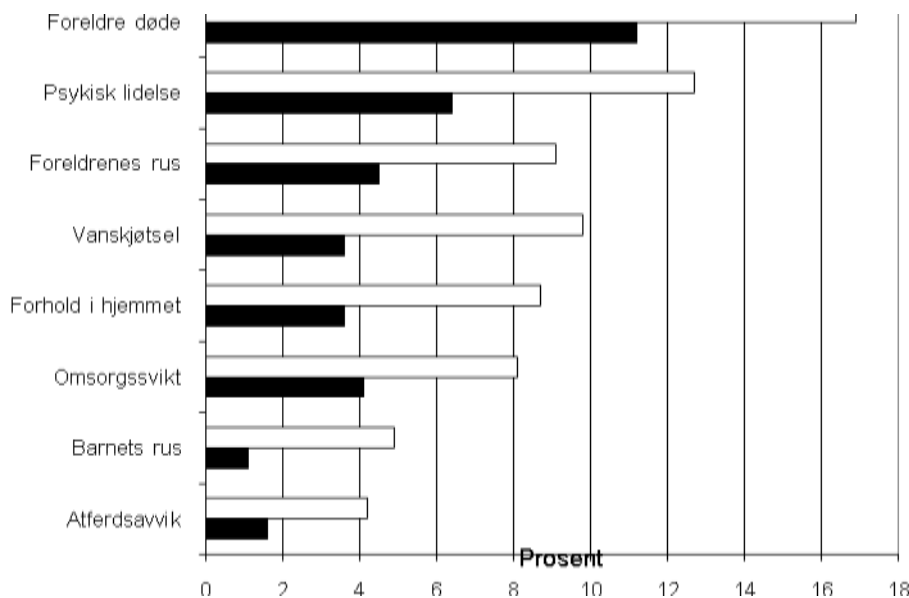
In the autumn 2008, the Ministry of Children and Gender Equality will also start up the mentoring programme "Nightingale" in eight University Colleges. The goal of the programme is to strengthen the multicultural experience in the Child Welfare Service by helping students studying child welfare and social education get increased knowledge about children, youth and families with ethnic minority backgrounds. Beyond this is a goal to help more children and youths finish their secondary education and seek higher education. The project will particularly try to reach boys, who are in the most danger of dropping out.

### 7.8.1 Children in the Child Welfare Service system often live a difficult life

A longitudinal study of children of the Child Welfare system in the period 1990 to 2005 shows that life does not seem to go well for many of these children. The main conclusion from the analyses presented in the report is that persons who have been clients of the Child Welfare system often have poorer living conditions later than those who have not been part of the system. It seems to go relatively well with about a third of the children, but two thirds end up with poorer living conditions than those who have not been in the system. Large differences have been documented with respect to education, income, use of social welfare and unemployment. The results also indicate that previous clients have greater health problems than the general population. Health is indirectly measured by looking at help benefits and disability benefits. Earlier studies have also shown that the differences between children of the Child Welfare system and other children are large when it comes to charges of criminal activity. The knowledge we have about how problems pile up for risk groups implies that there are other differences between children within the system and those outside that must be examined.

Some unequal distribution across gender lines is also reported and it seems that it goes worse for the boys in Child Welfare hands than for girls. Figure 7.2 indicates that gender differences are large for all the types of reasons for referral to Child Welfare Services as regards the percent of children who later took higher education.

Figur 7.2 Number of Child Welfare Service children with higher education according to gender and the original basis for referral. Percent



Jenter: girls

Gutter: boys

Foreldre døde: death of parents

Psykisk lidelse: psychological disorder

Foreldrenes rus: parent addiction

Vanskjøtsel: neglect

Forhold i hjemmet: home situation in the home

Omsorgssvikt: failure of care

Barnets rus: child's addiction

Atferdsavvik: behavioural disorders

### **7.8.2 A male perspective in the Child Welfare Services**

The state Child Welfare Service is working to implement and further develop methods and models directed towards young people with serious behavioural problems, including young criminals. The initiatives and methods are directed towards both boys and girls, but lack an explicit and integrated masculine perspective.

Norwegian research has not looked closely at boys in the Child Welfare Service, criminality among boys or the meeting between the service and these boys from a gender perspective. In this area, as in others, the focus has usually been on girls. The few research contributions that have a masculine perspective as a foundation show that such a perspective does in fact make it easier to understand why young boys become criminals and how gender plays a role in the contact between the environment workers and the boys and in the daily life of the institution.

In a historical study of Foldin Protective School for boys with behavioural problems (earlier Bastøy School Home) in the period 1953–1970 the "institutional eye" of the work of the institution is analysed from a masculinity perspective. This analysis of the archive material from 1950's and 60's reveals the dilemmas in working with the boys with the greatest challenges, something that is still relevant today.

In the doctoral thesis "Normal and abnormal, environment work at home with 14-18 year olds." a study is presented of some measures that the Child Welfare Services has implemented in home environments. The study showed that the same cultural understanding of masculinity that characterised the functionaries at Foldin in the 50's and 60's was present in the measures that Child Welfare had implemented for boys with serious challenges today. "Boys will be boys" is the attitude— also for Child Welfare Service today – and it appears that a gender perspective is not a theme in today's Child Welfare Service. To the degree that a gender perspective is present, it usually does not reach further than trying to get male role models for boys with serious behavioural issues. The children in the Child Welfare system today would greatly benefit if the service would integrate newer gender research, especially new masculinity research into its work with respect to working with boys. Increased understanding of gender as practice, relationships and process could reduce the risk of Child Welfare workers sabotaging their own work, as the employees at Foldin did to a great extent.