Poverty, Shame and Social Exclusion

Working Paper 1: Norway

Literary Representations of Shame, Poverty and Social Exclusion in Norway

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Introduction

Poverty is a concept loaded with meaning. It has been operationalized within the framework of varying agendas and predicated upon the use of differing indicators (Hagen and Lødemel 2010, Murray 1984, O'Conner 2004, Room 1999, Townsend 1979, Wacquant 1996, Walker 1995). The meaning of poverty extends to identity. We establish who and what we are – our selves – through social interaction (Mead 1934). Who we are draws from, and reflects in complex ways, where we are in social life – we reflexively construct our experiences and ourselves in relation to available and prevalent social identities (Blumer 1969, Rose 1997). Studies in social psychology have demonstrated this, suggesting that the phenomenon of shame is both externally generated and internally felt (Adler and Adler 1993, Becker 1963, Goffman 1963). According to Scheff and Retzinger (1991), individuals experience anxiety when they face the threat of social separation. In this way, situations that increase the threat of social exclusion may create anxiety that manifests itself as guilt or shame (Pettersen 2009). Skjefstad (2007) connects the phenomenon of social exclusion to the experience of shame, noting the importance of social recognition for people who have experienced social exclusion and stigmatization and suggesting that shame may be a consequence when individuals are denied such recognition (Pettersen 2009).

Conversely, shame may also result in feelings of worthlessness and increase the tendency to escape or disappear, as well as spawn maladaptive responses such as aggression, self-directed hostility and negative long-term behaviours (Fontaine *et al.* 2004, Jönsson and Starrin 2000, Tangney *et al.* 1996, Tangney *et al.* 2006). Within the context of poverty, Sen suggests that a key capability is one's ability to live without shame, arguing that the experience of shame and being shamed or stigmatized may reduce one's agency and capability to act, and as a result, may increase one's social exclusion (Alkire, 2002, Sen 2006).

Tracing Shame and Stigma

The discourse of social exclusion came to the forefront in EU discussions in the late 1980s as a multidimensional and politically acceptable replacement for "poverty" (Nilssen 2009). This discourse has been reflected in the social focus of the Nordic work approach, whose aim is, in part, to increase the economic and social integration of Norway's potential labour force in order to overcome exclusion (Drøpping 1999). In the past two decades, the concept of poverty, however, has resurged as a focal point of Norwegian welfare activation strategies to promote economic development (Gubrium 2009, Hagen and Lødemel 2010, Lødemel and Trickey 2001). Underlid's (2001) study of the psychology of poverty has explored cultural conceptions and personal experiences of poverty in Norway from a psychological perspective.

In conjunction with the Norwegian component of the Economic and Social Research Council /Department for International Development project, "Shame, Social Exclusion

and the Effectiveness of Anti-poverty Programmes", this report traces the discursive representations of poverty, shame and social exclusion within a selected corpus of influential Norwegian novels and short stories. This work is grounded upon the idea that the conditions of society percolate through its cultural material, providing a discernable channel for understanding the identities and selves in question (Holstein and Gubrium 2000). The working question is whether or not, and how, the available identities, actions and strategies discerned in the material resonate in the articulated experiences of the Norwegian poor.

The report focuses on eleven texts from the Norwegian canon that reflect the dominant cultural ideals, as these will best sensitize us to the dominant Norwegian public opinion. This includes three with a focus on the Norwegian poor or socially excluded before the development of the welfare state (pre-WWII). These novels include Hamsun's *Hunger* (1890/1998), Skram's *Lucie* (1888/2001) and Stranger's children's book, *The Ghosts* (2006). Four texts by Sandel – her novel, *Krane's Café* (1945/1985) and three short stories, "Shit-Katrine" (1927/1985a), "Mother" (1927/1985b) and "A mystery" (1932/1985) – deal with the particular experiences of being a woman just before and during the development of Norway's welfare state. Two novels –Larsen's children's book, *Beautiful Outlaw* (2006) and Haff's *Shame* (1999) are set in Norway's recent years. Finally, two novels – Ambjørnsen's *White Niggers* (1986/2008) and Jacobsen's *The Conquerors* (1991/2009) – describe the shifting experiences of the poor and socially excluded in Norway before and after the establishment of the welfare state.[1]

The core portion of this report provides an analysis of how poverty, shame and social exclusion are represented and connected within influential Norwegian literature.[2] The report concludes with an overview of the key messages from this analysis: these findings will sensitize the Norwegian team when we later explore how shame in conjunction with poverty and social exclusion may be experienced.

Results from textual analysis

The purpose of this report is to examine the nexus between shame, poverty and social exclusion, as this is presented in selected and influential Norwegian literary texts. How do the texts analyzed describe the interrelation between poverty, shame and social exclusion, as experienced by the protagonists depicted? We begin this section with a discussion of how the texts use textual and demographic dimensions to describe differing experiences of poverty, and the shame connected to impoverishment and social exclusion. Next, we focus on the process of shaming: how and where does shame and shaming connected to one's social and economic status occur? We then move on to a description of the consequences and responses to shaming on and by the protagonists

[1] Specifics regarding influence and plot of each text are described in Appendix A.

[2] Appendix B provides an overview of methods and methodology.

depicted in the texts. Finally, we discuss how the texts represent the protagonists used strategies to minimize the chance of experiencing shame in the first place.

1 Dimensions of Poverty, Shame and Social Exclusion

The authors depict a range of demographic attributes – including one's generation (age), location, gender and the particular experience connected to being a child – to suggest how these dimensions may shape the ways that poverty, shame and social exclusion are experienced. The texts analyzed also offer representations of how poverty, social exclusion and shame are connected experientially for their protagonists.

1.1 Demographic dimensions

The texts analyzed suggest differential experiences concerning poverty, social exclusion and shame depending upon one's demographic particularities, including generation, class identity, gender, as well as geographical location (urban, small town, or rural). Additionally, many of the texts describ changing experiences of poverty and social exclusion during the life course.

1.1.1 Generational conceptions of poverty and shame: "then" and "now"

Frønes (2001) describes the relational nature of shame and outlines "older" and "newer" types of shame. Classic shame is experienced when norms and rules of behaviour are broken. The older sets of characters in the three novels described in this section are shamed by breaking the norm of independence – for them, shame is catalyzed by the lack of a public welfare state or by remnants of Norway's pre-welfare state Poor Law years when collecting social assistance benefits. It is noteworthy that this shame, however, motivates them further to follow norms, for example by upping one's efforts as a producer/worker or by taking on the humility that might be associated with being in "dependent" circumstances. As Frønes suggests, this type of shame has changed in modern times to a more individualized phenomenon and is associated with the failure to realize individual goals, reach a level of personal fulfilment and potential. This failure is internalized and may result in loneliness and self blame (Skårderud 2001, Underlid 2001). Angelin (2009) reports that the younger social assistance recipients described difficult feelings of shame, stigma and powerlessness associated with being workless. This suggests that shame in its more modern incarnation may instead act more as a de-motivator than as a motivator to participate in the workforce. Furthermore, Frønes (2001) suggests that a third type of more recent situation-based shame is associated with feelings of dehumanization and invisibility in society's eyes. This type of shame can also lead to feelings of low self worth.

Hamsun's (1890/1998), Jacobsen's (1991/2009) and Ambjørnsen's (1986/2008) comparison of "then" and "now" suggest different experiences and expectations for different generations of the poor in Norway and reflect the heightened sense of stigma

attached by older people to dependence and to one's perceived failure to fulfil one's social and civic responsibilities. Research has, for example, described a vastly lower level of take up of available social assistance benefits for older Norwegians compared with Norwegians in younger generations (Hatland 1992, Johnsen 1987). Hamsun's *Hunger* (1890/1998), Ambjørnsen's *White Niggers* (1986/2008) and Jacobsen's *The Conquerors* (1991/2009) describe changing conceptions of poverty and social exclusion over the past 100 years in Norway, as well as the changing nature of how shame may be attached to these phenomena. Hamsun's novel describes conceptions of poverty, social exclusion and shame that may be pertinent to experiences before the development of Norway's welfare state. Ambjørnsen's novel focuses on the difference between "then" (pre-welfare state experiences/pre-WWII) and "now" (post-welfare state), while Jacobsen's also offers a picture of poverty during the development of the welfare state.

Hamsun's protagonist represents the older conception of poverty and the shame that may be attached to deviance from a social or economic norm. His impoverished and homeless protagonist lives in harsh circumstances and is as a consequence unable to produce work. Jacobsen's novel, on the other hand, recounts the extensive social changes that took place during Norway's 20th century transition from an agricultural and fishing economy, to urbanization and industrialization, to a post-industrial society and its social and cultural transformation. He does this using one family's experience moving from agrarian Northern Norway and poverty into working class industrial – and post-industrial – Oslo. This semi-autobiographical story of one family is a symbol for the larger "class journey" of Norway's social democratic society after WWII (Østli and Neegaard 2005). Jacobsen focuses on the long class trajectory from impoverishment and hardscrabble working class existence into the bourgeois middle class that is made possible through the development of the social democratic welfare state.

Ambjørnsen's (1986/2008) portrait of pre-welfare state shaped conceptions of poverty and shame are similar to Hamsun's and his comparison of "then" and "now" reflects a transformation similar to the one that Jacobsen describes. In one tense scene at a local Oslo social assistance office Ambjørnsen contrasts the stigmatization and shame experienced by two older women (ostensibly brought up during the pre-welfare state Poor Law years) with the shamelessness of younger social assistance recipients (who have grown up in the 1960s and 1970s): "Anxious Mrs. Hansen and Widow Olsen, who represented the old school, those who remembered the poor box and who had anticipated the whole damn week for this meeting with those who knew most and best about others lives… had placed their purses in their laps, and stared straight ahead…they possibly philosophized a little over Jesus' words concerning the meek and all the heavenly events that were to come" (15-16). The younger clients, meanwhile, are comprised of "speed freaks…a crazy in circular and mumbling incantations toward the floor…women from the streets…dragging on filter cigarettes…and laughing" (16).

The sense of exchange is expressed differently for the protagonist in *Hunger* and Ambjørnsen's older assistance recipients when compared with Ambjørnsen's more

modern protagonist. While Hamsun's pre-welfare state protagonist keeps a careful tally of the debts and favours he owes society, Ambjørnsen's younger protagonist, growing up in the 1970s and entering adulthood in the 1980s, seemingly does not feel the pressure to work or contribute directly to society (through labour or production) in exchange for the help he receives from state. In fact, the younger social assistance clients Ambjørnsen describes are, for the most part, irritated by the expectation that they should feel any shame. Ambjørnsen's protagonist scornfully describes the patronizing idea that he is collecting *alms* from his case provider and instead sees his assistance check as a benefit that keeps him able to maintain his life on the cultural margins: financial support from the welfare office is grounds for throwing a party. Thus, within this more modern context Ambjørnsen suggests that the focal point for an "exchange" for this social assistance recipient ceases to be between himself and the state (via work or the search for work) and instead becomes a more local exchange between the recipient and his local social support network.

Jacobsen also notes the disparity in expectations concerning rights and responsibilities evidenced by his multi-generational protagonists. For his earlier protagonist living in early 20th century coastal northern Norway the class lines are distinct and secure: the farmers and fishers are workers who must struggle to make ends meet, but do so with a pride in their identity as "workers". Alternately, the discourse of equality enabled by the securities provided by the welfare state pervades the more modern setting experienced by Jacobsen's later protagonists and results in shame being cast or felt by those who have done better or worse than their peers, socially and financially.

In line with Bourdieu's (1984) ideas concerning status and cultural and social capital, the concepts of shame, dignity and social citizenship in the second half of Jacobsen's novel (focusing on "now") are less directly tied to one's independent ability to produce and keep one's family with food and shelter, but rather by one's identity within a more nuanced hierarchy of culture and privilege: rather than maintaining a level basic subsistence, the idea of relative poverty and privilege make shame a more relational phenomenon. Jacobsen describes a new sort of relative poverty that one of his protagonists experiences in her move to the city during the second world war: this move symbolizes both a move to modernity and the transition to a developed welfare state. The protagonist had been happy with very little during her youth, and improved material circumstances do not necessarily result in improved self-esteem: "The city has its own way of making an individual poor right after receiving one's wages. The more knowledgeable and an insider one becomes, the faster an individual notes that they are missing something in the way of clothing; standards change all the time and must to a certain degree be followed, either one wants to be fine or invisible" (166). The focus on material consumption increases even more within the suburban context of a transitional (working to middle class) suburb just outside central Oslo. The youngest protagonist in Jacobsen's novel who represents "now" grows up in the cultural upheaval late sixties and early seventies. Rather than pride in what one *does* and what one *produces*, shame becomes attached to the expectation of social mobility and agency. As the protagonist notes: "Shame is, as Kundera says, not tied to something we *do*, but to what

we *are*, that which we have no control over. But I'd say that in addition to what (shameful) you are, it is also the lack of ability to hide who you want to be" (365). He is shamed when he is unable to find his way within the newly imposed nuances, expectations and pressures of the social and cultural hierarchy.

Wiborg and Hansen (2009) describe the intention of Norway's welfare state to promote the policies of equality of opportunity and equality (Eriksson and Goldthorpe 1992). Since WWII, Norway's welfare policies have sought to provide a generous safety nets consisting of free health care, pensions and welfare transfers, as well as universal and free access to the educational system. These policies have aimed to promote equal opportunities and to mitigate the effects of social inequalities (Esping-Andersen 1990). While the long-term vision of these policies has been to remove the significance of social origin on social mobility (Wiborg and Hansen 2009), the greater possibility for social mobility that is predicated upon the establishment of a strong welfare state translates instead in the texts describing "now" into a heightened sense of shame that arises from the dissonance between an expectation of mobility and the reality of constrained options. The modern context of social possibilities and social mobility are reflected by the words of Jacobsen's youngest protagonist concerning the modern shame that arises from the dissonance between whom one will be and who one is. Kierkegaard (1849/1980) describes a similar phenomenon within an existential context: "The problem is that the individual has an ideal representation of the self that one strives to fulfil. Such ideal representations prevent the individual from acknowledging the self" and this builds a "disparity of shame" (Pettersen 2009, 94).

Furthermore, Jacobsen's text suggests that the modern welfare state creates a new pressure to fit into the distinctive norms of the middle class. Norway is a society that prides itself on its egalitarianism, yet this system may be predicated on an "equality of sameness" (Gullestad 1992). Within this context, "being one of us" requires a careful balance. As Gullestad (1984) notes, the things to be avoided are, on the one hand, failing to maintain or adhere to a common standard of norms that can be evaluated in one's appearance and behaviours. On the other hand, one must take care not to make explicit any social ambitions that attempt to open a hierarchical gap between oneself and one's peers. Jacobsen's youngest protagonist describes the modern and situational shame that he experiences in the negotiation of his position (economically and socially) with respect to his peers and family during the life course. He explains how this possibility for feeling shame or for shaming others results in a careful negotiation to establish one's "equalness" to others. He describes this tension within the context of reunions with former acquaintances: "An extra strain is to again meet someone who in his own eyes hasn't "managed so well" (629). The protagonist explains his discomfort further: "I begin…to feel the creeping suspicion that even the most responsible and sociable individuals have a category in the back of their heads that's called 'the helpless', the 'unchangeable', the 'lost cause', a category where one hides away everything one doesn't understand" (527). Jacobsen suggests that the discomfort from

this attempt to mitigate shame is intensified by the reality that there still are boundaries to social mobility.

1.1.2 Location: rural/small town versus urban experiences

Norway's class journey has been marked by temporal as well as geographical shifts (Østli and Neegaard 2005). Three of the novels analyzed describe the differing expectations, social pressures and living circumstances that accompany life in urban, small town, and rural settings. These factors may have bearing on varying forms and levels of shame that might be associated with poverty and social exclusion in each setting. Jacobsen's (1991/2009) novel describes the geographical journey of one family from subsistence living in coastal northern Norway to a transitional (working-to-middle class) life in an urban Oslo setting. Jacobsen uses the experiences of one protagonist moving from Northern Norway to urban Oslo in the 1930s to show how the conception of what it is to be "poor" shifted as a result of this change. Jacobsen suggests that poverty has been a structural reality for the protagonist's father and his family – "fishermen have always lived as he now does…that's life" (149) and thus has not been a direct mark of personal failure. Harsh living conditions have been tempered by having the means to independently provide for one's family. Alternately, Jacobsen's protagonist describes how Norway's urbanization (and industrialization) has dispersed the means of production beyond the family and resulted in a heighted sense of powerlessness and dependence: "there was unemployment in the city, pure misery many places, for unlike the islanders, they couldn't just sit themselves in a boat and row home a meal when their bellies screamed, they had to stand in a line with notes and beg and lower themselves" (91). Jacobsen suggests that the cycle of shame in the urban setting has deeper psychological effects for the poor people his protagonist (Marta) meets – this shame is internalized and eventually results in a sense of meaningless: "Poverty in the city is namely of another and more harsh type than Marta knew from home; it is paired with audacity and a special type of insanity. They don't lie down and sigh, city dwellers, for the neighbour won't hear that anyway, and they can't force themselves to sea to catch herring or whitefish when the pantry shelves are empty either. They instead become angry, their laughter is hard and meaningless…and they don't ever listen to what is said to them" (203). This shame thus accompanies the loss of one's ability to independently provide for oneself and one's family. Furthermore, within this new context, Jacobsen suggests, it is no longer only how hard one can work/produce that counts, it is also (and perhaps more importantly) one's ability to manage life's new challenges, including new and different technological cues. Within this context, shame arises from "cultural" as well as material deprivation. Facing a new setting, there is the possibility of being unable to keep up with the rapidly changing society.

The city is not always a setting for increased shaming, however. Several of the novels analyzed ascribe increased shaming to life in a smaller town setting, suggesting that the anonymity of urban life may also be a benefit in the sense that one is not subject to and therefore not continuously shamed for the failure to adhere to a strict set of small town norms. In other words, these texts suggest, the small town setting is the perfect breeding

ground for the rigorous practice of social disciplining. Sandel's *Krane's Café* (1945/1985) offers a vivid description of the disciplining one may experience as a "social deviant" within a small town setting; the town's censure of the protagonist is especially rigid due to the melding of individual with community identity. The book's narrator – a gossipy local townsperson – explains: "…much was at stake. Not only for the individual, but for the whole town. …We count on people who know how to behave" (10-12). As the behaviour of Sandel's protagonist reflects upon the reputation of the town as a whole, any behaviour perceived as deviant is quickly a matter of local social shaming. As a result, seemingly everyone – teen-aged boys, the protagonist's children and customers, townsmen and women – engage in the shaming and social punishment of the protagonist. Ambjørnsen (1986/2008), alternately, describes the escape from repression his protagonist experiences after leaving his hometown for a more cosmopolitan locale: "Bergen was a city, and people didn't react as appreciably if you had a whole in the seat of your pants and had hair down your back" (291). Solheim's 2010 study on the receipt of social assistance in small town settings also suggests these pros and cons of small town versus city life. As she reports, while the social workers in small towns likely have more knowledge and understanding of the local context within which the client operates (Solheim 2001, Hålas 2006), social assistance recipients may feel increased stigma from their situation, due to the increased chance for – or threat of – the transmission of information about one's welfare status. In other words, there may be more intimate knowledge concerning the direct experiences of the poor in a smaller town setting, but it is precisely this knowledge that may also serve as a source of increased social shaming and personal shame.

1.1.3 Gender: Women's particular experiences with poverty, social exclusion and shaming

Sandel's texts focus on the "difficult economics of being a woman, especially a mother" as well as the unequal power relations between men and women (Wilson 1985, v). In *Krane's Cafe* (1945/1985), she suggests that the shaming her female protagonist experiences from her small town peers is in large part due to her resistance against the norms of what it is to be a good wife and mother. Sandel wrote *Krane's Café* during the early establishment of Norway's welfare state: her protagonist, who along with her two children has been abandoned by her husband, must fend for her family without the help of today's childcare and housing benefits. Her husband describes himself as a "free man", yet has "skipped the legal part" of granting her a divorce (68) and only sporadically provides financial support for his children. For the protagonist, however, "freedom" has meant the freedom to "stand outside in the bitter wind. To freeze. A woman alone" (121). Sandel's protagonist is caught in a double burden of economic vulnerability: her vulnerability as a woman is demonstrated through the town's expectations that she will be the sole caretaker for her children, despite the fact that her husband has been the primary earner.

In contrast to Sandel's protagonist, the male protagonists in Ambjørnsen's (1986/2008) novel do not feel shame at following a free spirit lifestlye. Ambjørnsen's female

protagonist, meanwhile, is specifically stigmatized by her hometown peers for her decision to live on the borders of society. This decision is depicated as more risky for the female protagonist, who has not conformed to the social norms of motherhood and companionship. She earns derision for her decision to break free of the normal pattern of small town life in Norway: "She wanted to trample her own way, that wayward little goat. A safe house, children and debt had not been enough for her – she had cast herself right out into the World!" (75).

Several novels analyzed also suggest that their women protagonists face a heightened focus concerning how they appear within a social context (the looking glass writ large to full length mirror!). The role one plays – how one appears – becomes more important than what one *does* and, in this way, women are additionally shamed for their deviation from the physically and socially normative. In one of her short stories (1927/1985a), Sandel describes the dismal social position of a small town prostitute (Katrine), noting that other women in the same profession have been better able to displace their own shame and shaming by the town. For instance another prostitute in the same town "was no different and no better than Katrine and you could hardly say she enjoyed respect. But she knew how to assert herself, in spite of her position; she…wore a clean shirtwaist…and her hair was slicked with water into a top-knot and curled bangs. She didn't tug around a basket and make as if she were out on another errand than she was, but acknowledged the facts and looked people in the eye…her tongue was feared. That's an asset in this world" (46). Sandel's description suggests that the more assertive woman better manages any potential for shaming by the town by taking care to present a neat and self-possessed image. This theme of women's appearances also comes up in other Norwegian texts on impoverished women (*Lucie*, *Krane's Café*, *Shame*, *The Conquerors*): for women in particular, the way one looks/what one wears/how one presents oneself is especially important. It is the physical qualities of women – what one looks like as much as what one *does* that is the focus.

It could be argued that Sandel's texts speak a vulnerability for women that ended with the creation of a more expansive welfare safety net. Research suggests, however, that this double burden is still present for women in Norway. Norway's modern welfare state has been structured to increase the conditions for women's autonomy in the arenas of labour participation and caretaking (Skevik 2006) and it might be expected that the issue of gender has little bearing on the experiences of women versus men in terms of how shame and social shaming might be connected to one's poverty. However, because Norway's welfare offerings have, in large part, been predicated upon a "male breadwinner model" in which many of the country's more generous benefits are tied to the expectation of full time employment outside the home, the increased autonomy of women does not necessarily eradicate the particular burden of care associated with the social expectations connected to motherhood, nor society's gendered norms concerning the proper roles, behaviours and sacrifices of being a woman (O'Connor 2004, Orloff 2008). This tension is also reflected in the heightened shame and stigma that Ambjørnsen's more modern female protagonist experiences due to her choice not to limit herself to marriage and family in small town Norway. Furthermore, the pressure on

women to *appear normal* may not be limited by the presence of a strong welfare state. Solheim (2010) suggests that the particular position and expectations connected with being a woman may in and of themselves result in differing experiences of poverty. Drawing upon theories that describe women as more relational, she suggests that poor women may make more relative comparisons in public, that their situational shame may be activated by behaviour that they may feel may be cast as less "worthy" of receiving help, and that as a result they may feel increased fear of being exposed as either poor or dependent on social assistance.

1.1.4 Children's experiences with poverty, social exclusion and shame

The protagonist in Sandel's *Krane's Café* (1945/1985) experiences shame associated with her role as a mother because of her inability to provide her children with the resources sufficient for a comfortable life. For the protagonist, shame is felt both from society's judgment as well as from feelings of personal failure to do well by her children: "…they see me. And it disgusts them. You get thin-skinned…like in a love affair. You withdraw into yourself at the slightest criticism" (36). Thus, Sandel suggests, the shame for women may result in feelings of heightened criticism – of shaming – coming from their children as well. The flip side to the double burden that poverty places on women is the special burden this places on children. Research suggests that family conflict has a significant impact on the adjustment of children later on in life (Backe-Hansen 2004, Helgeland 2008, Hjelmtveit 2008, Pettersen 2009). Sandel's (1945/1985; 1927/1985b) and Larsen's (2006) texts describe particular challenges associated with the experiences of poverty and social exclusion for young people. Children tend to be dependent on their parents and, as a consequence, may experience a heightened sense of loss and insecurity if living in a family situation that is insecure, socially or financially.

Both Sandel (1927/1985b) and Larsen (2006) describe the dilemma faced by children growing up in an unstable family situation. Both texts focus on instability tied to neglect or social deviance of a mother. Sandel notes how the age of the children involved may result in variable effects. Two of the children in her story are young and seemingly do not understand the implications of their mother's heavy and public drinking with a friend (Trina the Butcher), however, one of the children is old enough to understand that his family is stigmatized by this behaviour: "They say he can hang around for hours on the path, lying in wait alongside it in the bushes to watch out for Trina the Butcher and hinder her from coming….They say he's fought with her. And that he follows after the two women, pleading and persuading in a low, insistent voice, taking his mother by the arm…But when she twists away from him and goes off anyway, he runs to the woods and stays there a long time, hiding himself like a sick animal. Someone ran into him there once. His face was swollen from crying" (23). Thus, Sandel suggests that the boy's shame is heightened by his desire to remain loyal to his mother.

Larsen's (2006) young protagonist has been abandoned by her mother, yet like the boy in Sandel's story, she remains largely loyal to her mother and defends her when

questioned about her living circumstances. Much of the tension this protagonist experiences relates to her dilemma over whether accepting the care of new friends constitutes a betrayal of her mother and when it is okay to redefine what she calls "home". The protagonist attempts to reconcile this dilemma by creating a story of the life she is able to have apart from her mother. In the story the protagonist tells herself, it is her mother who is keener on developing a relationship than she is, suggesting that she uses the story to displace the shame and sorrow of abandonment. In one imaginary conversation with her mother, the protagonist says: “Hi Mom…it’s me. Yeah. You should just see where I am now. It’s so nice! What? Yes, it’s a large place with gold in the roof…everything’s happy and there’s music, do you hear? What? What? No, I don’t know when I’m coming. Okay. Bye” (57). While the protagonist feels shame over the possibility that she may be betraying her mother by choosing to live a more secure life, Larsen also suggests this strategy is necessary to help the protagonist minimize the opposing sense of shame she experiences over her loyalty to a mother who constantly disappoints.

Larsen’s (2006) short novel describes the way that poverty and shame may be heightened for children due to the social exclusion that may be connected to the insecurity of social and economic poverty. In focusing as much on the loneliness that the protagonist experiences as the material deprivation that she withstands (she has a warm apartment to sleep in, but no regular food available), the author emphasizes the social exclusion aspects of poverty as much as the economic ones. The protagonist and her mother are continually on the move and the impermanence of her location translates into added insecurity. The insecurity of the lifestyle of both the protagonist and her mother translates into a heightened need to avoid the shame of being “found out”: “She had moved as long as she could remember. Every time someone became concerned, every time the school began to ask too much about her mother, or sent home a letter saying that she had to come to a meeting, her mother and Naud moved to another place. And after some weeks her mother began to stay away again” (30). Larsen describes how the circumstances of a nomadic life mean the protagonist does not have the time or space to create social bonds with teachers or peers. As the protagonist (Naud) wonders: “What about the school. The teachers must easily see how it was for her? That she was hungry. That she did all she could to be almost invisible? No, they hadn’t begun to see it. And she hadn’t been to school that many days….Naud had just moved to this place and hadn’t yet made friends. Therefore there wasn’t anyone to notice her, and no one who missed her” (9). Larsen suggests that this state of constant flux in location prevents Naud from developing personal connections or from those around her developing an awareness of her situation. For children, the shame of poverty may thus also be connected with intensified experiences of social exclusion.

1.2 Poverty, social exclusion and shame

The Norwegian texts connect social exclusion and shame to poverty in varying ways,

depending upon the date of publication as well as the particularities of the protagonist (gender, age, class). The texts with a focus on pre-welfare state Norway refer to an absolute poverty characterized by homelessness and economic deprivation; solitude and social exclusion may occur by dint of the insecurity connected to one's living situation. Within texts having a more modern focus it is the lack of social networks themselves that may overwhelmingly have bearing on one's social and economic insecurity.

Hamsun's (1890/1998) and Stranger's (2006) texts offer a depiction of how poverty and shame may have been connected with social exclusion in pre-welfare state Norway. Their protagonists experience the absolute poverty of homelessness and complete economic deprivation. These texts suggest that the social exclusion of their protagonists is due in large part to the insecurity connected to their harsh living circumstances. Hamsun's protagonist is not only materially impoverished, but his social networks are also minimal. He spends much of the novel searching for a friend to provide a meal or a warm place to sleep. Reflecting the pre-welfare state times, Hamsun's poor protagonist must rely upon the kindness and generosity of private resources – Hamsun suggests that this dependence serves to enhance the exclusion his protagonist experiences. He finds that those he thought were his friends are hesitant to hold contact with him and describes the experience of being shunned by one such "friend": "Why was he in such a hurry? I certainly didn't mean to ask him for a handout…" (7).

Likewise, while Stranger's (2006) *The Ghosts* takes place in modern Oslo, due to the protagonist's special situation (he is a statue of Henrik Ibsen come to life), he is also unable to access the benefits of the modern welfare state. Thus, Stranger's novel also describes a scenario in which a protagonist is not protected by the state's public offerings. Like Hamsun's protagonist, this protagonist also experiences the social marginalization of not having a place/home within which or friends with whom he can take refuge: "Henrik Ibsen walks along the street. He is freezing, but each time he tried to go into a store or a shopping centre, he is asked to leave again right away. Those who walk by pretend as if he doesn't exist, and only look right by him. As if he was invisible…The seriousness begins to occur to him. He has no money. Absolutely none, and without money he will not get anywhere…In addition he's without friends and family…" (31). Like Hamsun's protagonist, Stranger's protagonist spends most of his time focusing on trying to maintain a level of subsistence. These activities do not easily pave the way for the development of broad social networks, much less the sense of agency necessary to easily realize a move out of one's impoverished condition.

Ambjørnsen's (1986/2008) and Jacobsen's (1991/2009) novels depict more recent experiences of poverty in Norway, wherein the modern welfare state has mitigated many of the risks associated with economic poverty. These authors depict a more relative definition of poverty and rather than focusing on mostly economic barriers, focus overwhelmingly on the phenomenon social marginalization and limitations to social mobility. Within the more modern context of relative deprivation, the strength or lack of social networks themselves significantly determine one's ability or one's capacity to

function. These texts also suggest that newer experiences of poverty may be attached to shame that is more likely to be internalized and individualized. Unlike the protagonists in *Hunger* (1890/1998) or *The Ghosts* (2006), the protagonist in Ambjørnsen's *White Niggers* has the basic means – foundationally provided by the welfare state – to have the time to develop his networks on the margins. Rather than spending his time searching for food and housing, this protagonist spends much of his time "hanging out" with friends and visibly displaying his agency. The poverty—social exclusion—shame/stigma nexus differs vividly between this book and *Hunger*. Thus, rather than having to focus on the search for a place to sleep, this protagonist is able to define "home" as the social solidarity/support he receives from his local community of outcasts and long-term friends. As opposed to the early protagonist of Jacobsen's *The Conquerors*, who draws upon the solidarity he builds through work and family, this protagonist has the space to choose his solidarity network – he and his social network are "knit to each other with invisible bands" (41).

Offering a similar description of the potential for building a network on the margins, Jacobsen's youngest protagonist describes the possibility of three life paths that are enabled within the modern welfare state context: the successes, the rebels, and the loners/socially excluded – the "third way": "There are two ways to win acceptance here in life, roughly speaking, two hierarchies, an official-legal and an unofficial-illegal. …Childhood is thus a type of wandering between crime and obedience, between winning status though being good at school and through being a good rebel. …There is also found a third, little strange outsider group, silent people who don't strive for favour in either circle, people who know they don't have a chance in either of the places" (333). It is this third track of "the invisible" (335) that is marked by true social exclusion and stigma. Jacobsen ties this social poverty to the shame of family circumstances, poorly made life choices, and a general lack of motivation to fit in.

Strong family networks are an important means to normalize one's potentially marginalized and/or alienated identity within the modern setting. Haff's (1999) protagonist in the novel *Shame* depicts the importance of family networks in growing up years. Jacobsen's protagonists have strong family resources, despite their economic vulnerability. Throughout *The Conquerors*, each of the protagonists draws upon their families to shore themselves up during difficult times. Haff's protagonist, however, reflects the "third way" that may occur without a strong family network. As this protagonist describes it: "From my earliest childhood I had been the black sheep of the family" – she has been "repudiated and lives in exile" (40). "Our family was known to be close-knit and intimate, but I had never been part of that closeness. There had been times when I was weak and vulnerable and could have done with someone's shoulder to lean on" (40). The protagonist has fallen into a cycle of homelessness and shaming that she has experienced since her childhood and by the end of the novel we understand that her family has played a key role in her descent into social marginalization and relative poverty. Ambjørnsen's protagonist has grown up with a supportive family and although he is "social excluded," it is only from dominant society. Thus, he fits into the category that Jacobsen calls "the rebels." This protagonist and others living on the

margins may not perceive social exclusion in the same way that Hamsun's, Stranger's, or Haff's protagonists do. Put another way, the social camaraderie and solidarity Ambjørnsen's protagonist feels with his fellow network of "freaks" serves as a pseudo-family and allows him to maintain a functional identity, as well as to avoid the shame that might otherwise come from his minimal income and exclusion from dominant society.

While poverty (in a dominant social and economic sense) may perhaps result in limited capabilities in the sense of social networks formed and social capital gained, Ambjørnsen and Jacobsen suggest that the existence of a strong welfare state also provides the socially and economically marginalized the ability and agency to build and shore up networks on the margins. These texts, in fact, offer a cynical view of the welfare state's effects as not necessarily increasing social mobility, but serving as a mechanism to strengthen the bonds between those within particular classes or on the margins – "bonding social capital" – as opposed to a mechanism for those who are more disadvantaged to improve their lot in life – "bridging social capital" (Putnam 2000). Here, the shame that may be connected to one's poverty and the motivation to displace one's shame may serve as a mechanism that further hinders the possibility for bridging to occur. The agency provided by the welfare state may be what keeps Ambjørnsen's protagonist, for example, engaged with the margins of society. The protagonist's sense of identity is threatened when this network is weakened. Describing one such "weak" moment, he notes: "What I felt just then, I can't remember, but I think it was not different than a large emptiness, a *non-feeling*" (71). One particularly low point for the protagonist occurs when he leaves his comfortable network of friends to attend trade school. Here, he fails to find comrades on the margins and experiences the type of desperate social exclusion that is more akin to the protagonist's in *Hunger*: "I was well used to being a deviant and an outcast, but I was also well used to *surrounding myself* with deviants and outcasts. …There was nothing I could identify with here" (257). Ironically, it is the protagonist's need for a stable social network that ultimately influences him to cast away the ambitions tied to this education.

2 The Process of Shaming

According to Mead (1934/1967), our identities are not natural or inherent, but rather, they develop "in the given individual as a result of his relations to that process as a whole and to other individuals within that process" (135, as cited in Pettersen 2009, 115). This section is on shaming as it occurs in a social/relational sense within the texts analyzed. More specifically, we focus on the process of shaming: how and where does shame and shaming connected to one's social and economic status occur? There are many ways in which shaming can take place: running throughout these texts is an emphasis on how a cycle of shaming can begin early on in life through the shame that may be "learned" within the social context (and contest) of school. The texts analyzed describing the process of shaming later on in life, taking place via the receipt of private and public assistance.

2.1 "Learned shame": Shaming in school

Bourdieu and Passeron (1977) and Bourdieu (1984) emphasize the way in which schools reproduce existing social divisions based on wealth, privilege and power. According to these scholars, schools value and reward the cultural capital of the dominant culture and devalue that of students from subordinate cultures. Within the novels by Ambjørnsen (1996/2008) and Jacobsen (1991/2009) the reward and punishment of certain cultural distinctions result in variable shaming of and shaming by the protagonists. The protagonists of each text first learn their (relatively low) positions within the socio-economic hierarchy within the school setting. Ambjørnsen describes a teacher with fascistic tendencies who drills social norms into the heads of his students and who punishes students who do not fit these norms. It is this forced shame that the book's protagonist describes as the catalyst for his movement into the margins of society. In the scenes with the teacher, Ambjørnsen suggests that the institutionalized practice of teaching selected students to feel shame and others to act as the "shamers" work to break the social solidarity among students: "Divide and conquer. The old rule"(121).

Two of Jacobsen's protagonists are also targeted during elementary school by authoritarian and hostile teachers. Here, social hierarchy is reproduced via an authoritarian teacher during the protagonists' early school years: both are hampered in learning to read by the harsh feedback they receive from their teachers. Jacobsen uses one protagonist's (Marta) early schooling experience to describe how her schooling functions to limit her social mobility: "Marta doesn't learn the letters at school, they have a new teacher who doesn't try...to hide that some are worse clothed than others, but highlights that, like a point almost, and as evidence of her own ability and culture" (56). This strategy works effectively on the protagonist, she internalizes the shaming that she experiences and develops a temporary reading disability, describing her letters as "looking like animals and people…resembling her teacher...and making her scared" (58). It is only a strong family network that pulls this protagonist out of her difficulties at school. Her learning troubles are overcome through her family network – her family is aware that it is "not because of her letters" that she has difficulty in school, "but because of injustice, clothing or appearance or something otherwise poor" (58). Her older brothers teach her to read despite teacher challenges. Marta's son, Rogern another of the novel's protagonists, grows up in the 1960s, years in which Norway has begun to follow the mantra of equality within the classroom. Jacobsen, however, contends with the notion that the school's social reproductive function has lessened in more recent years. Like his mother, Rogern also consistently experiences shaming within the classroom. Like his mother years before him, he is also treated harshly by one of his early teachers, has difficulties with reading and memorization, and is temporarily placed in a special education class, which offers the threat of exclusion from the "normal" society within the school. Like his mother, he is saved from this fate through the tutoring help of his older brothers.

Bourdieu and Passeron describe a location for agency within the context of modern schooling, however, wherein connections to extensive and influential social networks

may allow for differential treatment of students coming from a particular social stratum. While Ambjørnsen's and Jacobsen's texts point to the reproduction of the social hierarchy within the school setting – their protagonists learn to attach shame to their relative social and economic positions – these texts also touch upon the agency that protagonists may have to use one's social connections (dominant or on the margins) to navigate this hierarchy. For example, as the siblings of Jacobsen's protagonist, Rogern, help him learn to read, they also teach him establish himself within the higher echelons of the "illegal" sector of the school hierarchy. Thus, within this setting, the shaming process may encourage the formation of networks on the margins – what Jacobsen describes as a network of "rebels".

2.2 Shaming from the receipt of assistance

Several novels deal with the shame that poor individuals experience as they receive assistance either from the state or from private sources. While the Norwegian welfare state has aimed at reducing the need for assistance obtained via private networks, the themes of *dependence*, *patronage*, *worthiness* and *punishment* running through texts focusing on a pre-welfare state setting are similar to those described in texts with a more modern focus. Sandel's (1945/1985) novel takes place during the transition to the modern Norwegian welfare state. As with Hamsun's protagonist, without the presence of childcare and housing benefits, Sandel's protagonist must depend on the kindness of community and the individuals around her in order to stay above subsistence level. While she is exploited by her customers and sales manager in her desperation to make ends meet these "benefactors" patronizingly suggest that they are doing her a favour by giving her their business. Her sales manager suggests that she lacks a good work ethic, noting: "You must do this…You know we only want what's best for you" (25). Because of the protagonist's vulnerable position, her hard work is easily characterized by the townspeople as a lazy dependency on the generosity of others. Her landlord, who is also exploiting her for her work, describes his approach to her struggles using the discourse of tough love. People who don't learn to swim must go to the bottom, and there's nothing to be done about it. If all the rest of us who can swim are going to have to tow those who can't, the whole caboodle will end up at the bottom" (42). In this sense, the discourse of citizenship and "the good of all" are used to defend the social shaming and exclusion that takes place.

Sandel highlights the irony of this situation in having her protagonist's reputation defended only by a man she briefly meets for a two-day rest from work and family. For example, this man describes the way in which the protagonist's main sponsor has twisted her financial and social vulnerability into a discourse of unworthy dependence, to their own benefit: "Don't let her get a hold on you. All she'll do is turn you into a pauper. What I mean is, she'll make you *feel* like a pauper. And then you're *finished*…If you let her decide, there'll be nothing left of you. People like her can turn the lot of us into miserable beggars" (26). Later, he notes: "I'm telling you, pity kills. They'll use it to suck

the marrow out of you, like leeches. They can make mincemeat out of a person. Don't let them get their teeth into you, d'you hear? They relish it so. They get such a kick out of it. They're so kind, you see. But you'll be finished, you can bet your life on that" (102). Sandel suggests the effect that the cycle of overblown private patronage, social discipline and shaming can have on its recipients – poor self esteem and the loss of one's self respect – and the bolstering effect it has on its deliverers. In her novel, the townspeople (as well as the protagonist's husband) shame the protagonist so as to raise their own social profile.

In this setting of privately distributed welfare assistance, Sandel (1945/1985) describes a punitive approach to dealing with those individuals who deviate from what is considered socially acceptable and who seemingly fail to understand their proper role in society. The book's narrator, a local gossip, pointedly suggests: "You do more harm than good by being too kind, and that's for sure" (8). Sandel describes a system of rigid expectations for the poor concerning the exchange of work for dignity and subsistence pay. In the end, this system – which works according to a protocol of social punishment, internal shame and scant incentives – is weighted so much to the punitive that the poor give up. The protagonist describes the cycle of shame and exhaustion: "One day you're not up to anything at all. You haven't the courage to do the work you want to do. And you haven't the time to do the things you ought to do. Or the strength perhaps. You know there's only one solution: to get through it, however hopeless it may look. But you get so tired, so tired" (161).

Sandel's descriptions of the tensions inherent to the provision of private assistance also have bearing on many of the issues inherent to publicly provided assistance. She describes the dilemma that the providers and receivers face concerning how to properly weigh generosity against the aim to help their recipient to regain her bearings. This dilemma and the tensions it produces results in the potential for shaming of both provider and receiver. In one short story (1932/1985), Sandel describes a couple (the Isaksen's) taking in a female boarder (Mrs. Arnold) who has just separated from her second husband, under the assumption that she is "poverty stricken and alone in the world" (118). The couple must carefully try to balance providing too many incentives (creating dependence and being stigmatized for consorting with someone in a shameful position) with being too harsh (and thus being shamed by the townspeople). In this way, Sandel provides us with the tensions inherent in the provision of welfare assistance, on a micro level. As Mrs. Isaksen suggests: "It was only right that Mrs. Arnold be grateful. She certainly had reason to be. On the other hand there was no need for effusiveness. That kind of thing could easily get out of hand. It was just as well that Mrs. Isaksen made her own position clear, now as later…Mrs. Isaksen, who saw her now from the back, ascertained in silence: Beautiful coat, good shoes, pretty hat – looks anything but needy - I can't offer her my old gray coat after all…" (115). Mrs. Isaksen describes the fear that the perception of generosity will cause her boarder to become dependent: "Aha, maybe you're one of those terribly modest and helpful people, who think they acquit themselves so well that they can just stay and stay. This is where one should be on one's guard, all right…" (117). Alternately, she also must reconcile her urge to keep

Mrs. Arnold's motivation up, while not seeming to treat her too harshly, lest she be shamed by the townspeople for not being generous *enough* with someone truly in need. She describes the tensions this quandary intensifies: "Mrs. Isaksen opened her home, was willing to do it, yes, even to share her wardrobe if it came down to it. She wasn't inhuman. But she liked a situation to be clear and straightforward. And the one she found herself in was not only unclear, it was oppressive" (119).

Ambjørnsen's text deals with the shaming that his protagonist experiences when collecting public social assistance benefits. Here, the punitive and tough love demeanour of the social worker he comes into contact with is similar to descriptions of private patronage in Sandel's short stories. The social workers depicted in *White Niggers* apply a carefully calculated model of social costs and personal benefits to determine their treatment of clients. For example, Ambjørnsen's protagonist describes his irritation with the inflexibility of a welfare system that refuses to pay benefits to anyone outside of the general pension-earning labour market. When asked by a social assistance caseworker what his profession is, he notes "author," to which the caseworker patronizingly replies: "This is exactly the problem! We must take on a job, you see!" Within this rigid system, the protagonist's creative work as an author is not valued as it is not seen as a direct contribution to Norway's economy or society. Ambjørnsen further describes the loss of honour and conscience that his protagonist experiences at the social welfare office. It is clearly expected within this setting that part of the expected exchange for money received would be to humble oneself before the office personnel. As is the case with the boarder in Sandel's (1932/1985) short story, the protagonist – as an economically struggling assistance recipient – is considered suspect because he does not act properly humble nor grateful for the help that he receives: he refuses to express any shame at his dependent position. During one tense scene in an Oslo social assistance office, the protagonist describes how the performance of humble recipient is supposed to play out: "we were all too broke to make such an uproar so near to the money purse. We had come to beg, we had unfortunately no money to build a revolution, at least not before we ourselves had received a clear and unequivocal *no*. ...This is what it is to be a poor fuck: honour and conscience are lost" (17). While the protagonist refuses to humble himself to his caseworker, he is, nonetheless shamed at having to take part in such a pretence in the first place: "The whole thing was a disgusting affair that definitely had reduced my self-esteem significantly, even if it hadn't been so damn high before" (307). Thus, within both a private and public context, the provider faces the dilemma of providing generous enough benefits so the recipient is able to subsist – or otherwise face social scrutiny for being too "harsh" – without providing such a high level of benefits that the recipient loses motivation and becomes dependent. The recipient, sensing the tension generated by such a calculation, experiences the shame of dependence, of failing to contribute appropriately to society or community (failing to take part in the exchange of rights and duties) of possibly being judged as "undeserving" and of having to prove one's worthiness as a recipient in the first place.

3 Consequences of and Responses to Shaming

The texts analyzed suggest that the effects of the shaming tied to poverty and social exclusion are not easily picked apart, but rather, form a continuum of experiences based on each protagonist's particular context. That said, many of the texts also describe sustained effects connected with this shaming.

3.1 The continuum of shame

The consequences of the shaming that is connected to poverty might be described as immediate or sustained. Many of the texts analyzed, however, suggest the relational and contextual nature of shame. Rather than dividing the consequences of shaming into these categories, the texts analyzed primarily describe the consequences of shame as part of a continuum that is based on the particularities of circumstance, personal relationships and timing.

For instance, in her short story, "Mother" (1927/1985b), Sandel describes the interactions between the mother – who has been labelled as "socially deviant" by the townspeople – and her children. While Sandel describes several scenes in which the children are clearly affected by the shame that is connected with their relative stigma, one description emphasizes the impermanence of their shame: "Mother and children talk to each other in high, happy voices; each one goes back to her or his task afterwards. All is peace, harmony, happy activity" (24). While the shame the children experience may have permanent and sustained effects, the direct feeling of shame that they experience are contextualized by location and the relational aspects of the situation. This description suggests, for example, that these children may feel shame when reminded in town of their mother's behaviour, but when at home, they may feel that their mother's behaviour is "normal".

Hamsun (1890/1998) uses the structure of his novel to suggest the continuum of this experience. The novel is told in the past tense – as the protagonist/narrator begins: "It was in those days when I wandered about hungry in Kristiana…" (3). Hamsun's choice of a first person narrative standpoint allows him to evocatively convey the shame and stigma that are borne by and inflicted upon an individual living in poverty and the novel focuses primarily on both the protagonist's immediate struggles to survive, as well as the longer cycle of effects that this struggle produces. Despite this focus, however, Hamsun's use of the past tense emphasizes the idea that this struggle has been of a fixed duration and has at some point ended. While the protagonist's struggle with poverty and the shame he experiences as a result are agonizing and the effects both immediate and long lasting, Hamsun suggests that these are not permanent, fixed or inherent conditions. The protagonist is not *naturally* imbued with the morals, characteristics, or elements that would limit him to the category of "poor" – rather, it is his situation and those he comes into contact with that bear on his mental state and character. Thus, Hamsun's novel suggests that shame is not experienced as a discrete event or set of events, but that its effect is context-based.

3.2 Sustained effects

Those effects that might be described as sustained that run throughout the texts include damaged individual identity, limited autonomy/independence and dehumanization.

3.2.1 Damaged identity

The novels by Jacobsen (1991/2009), Haff (1999) and Ambjørnsen (1986/2008) describe the pride their protagonist's experience at their identities as worker/producers or artist/creators. Jacobsen describes his early protagonist's pride at making his living through production of goods (agriculture and fish) with economic value, despite the tough lifestyle this work requires: "a profession, one knew the conditions, one lifted one's value out of the harbour, oneself, the family and a whole farm" (22). Jacobsen thus suggests that, despite economic impoverishment, the protagonist is able to maintain pride and self-respect from his ability to provide for his family, as well as contribute to the general Norwegian economy. Jacobsen suggests that the protagonist's identity as a worker and provider are shaken when he briefly loses his independence. The protagonist briefly experiences shame when he losses an eye as the result of a construction accident: "Far more shocking [than the loss of his eye] was the stay at the hospital…where he had lain and knew how it was to not be able to get up and be a craftsman, where he needed help to use the toilet, how it was to no longer be the man he always had been" (70). Nonetheless, after a brief recovery at home and despite losing his farm and his eye, he begins again to think of the future: "When the earth had been turned, they braced themselves for the plowing. There was no food forthcoming from plowing land and picking it clean of stones in the fall, but there was hope" (86). Thus, the shame that might otherwise be sustained is cast away when the protagonist is able to re-establish his role as an independent worker and provider.

While the pride that Haff's and Ambjørnsen's protagonists experience is not directly tied to work output, they take pride in their cultural identities as authors. It is, in part, this identity that allows these two protagonists to rationalize their lifestyles on the margins. Ambjørnsen's protagonist's identity as a free-spirited author is shaken at several points, however, when he is forced to come to terms with the fact that his is an unstable lifestyle. Social marginalization and subsistence living may fit with the identity as a struggling author for a time, but to maintain this identity he must produce at least some work. As he notes: "There is a large difference between a drunk man who dreams of being an author and a drunk author" (340). In order to begin to assume the identity of a *real* author (one who produces work), the protagonist shuts himself off from the world and attempts to write. It is his lack of ability to produce written work that results in further feelings of shame. This shame is associated with a failure to bolster his identity and explanation for his lifestyle, rather than a lack of ability to work. Like Ambjørnsen's protagonist, Haff's protagonist lives life on the margins and experiences shame that she is feeling potentially false hope concerning the possibility that she might be able to claim an identity as a writer: an editor from her old publishing house visits her in a mental hospital and notes that he is a fan of her novels and has planned to release new editions

of two of them. Her shame is related to the feeling that she has squandered her identity as an author: "'Tomfoolery!' I said to myself…'The idea of you writing?' I said contemptuously to myself. 'You who no longer know what it means to hope and live your life from hand to mouth, without any prospect. You who have lost your future and thereby the ability to transport yourself in imagination and have taken to doing fiction with your body. The only novel you can write is another physical adventure where you let yourself go, getting messed up in all sorts of impossible situations'" (133). The shame that these protagonists experience is not as much due to the fact that they have not produced work as it is to the fact that their cultural roles as authors has been threatened. Thus, they are able to re-establish their identities, and mitigate the sustained shame they might feel, by reassuming their identities as authors.

3.2.2 Dehumanization

Sandel (1927/1985a) suggests that the shame that is connected to economic and social poverty reaches its pinnacle when one has completely lost one's sense of identity through dehumanization. Sandel describes this phenomenon in her short story, "Shit Katrine" and suggests that the protagonist in this story has experienced shame that will be long sustained. Sandel refers to the protagonist (Katrine) only by her first name throughout much of the story. Toward the end of her visit to church, an old man asks her if she is "Katrine Hansen," noting that he was a good friend of her father's. This revelation clearly causes the character to feel even more shame than usual and Sandel suggests that she has so lost any identity associated with what might be defined as a "normal" life that to be confronted with a long-lost identity is painful. This is similar to Jacobsen's description of the intense shame felt by someone who has not done well in life and who meets a former acquaintance from a time in which things were better. When the character is asked by the old man who she is, her response is first incredulous – as if she has almost erased this former identity from her mind – and then one of pain: "'Tell me who you are, you who've been so helpful toward an old gentleman like me?'…I believe everyone looked around. And it was no small fraction of the town's eyes Katrine had on her when she answered in a half-choked voice, 'Katrine Hansen.'" The old man asks her several times to repeat her name more loudly and she answers, unhappily: "'Katrine Hansen,' Katrine shouted, tremendously loud. Something wild came into her eyes" – when the old man asks her if she is related to his old friend, "Katrine suddenly bolted, as if she wanted to charge right over us. Tears ran, round and clear, down her heated face" (51). Sandel suggests that this confrontation with her old identity has been the ultimate form of shaming for her character, who must hide to deal with this shame.

This process of dehumanization is also suggested by the seeming invisibility of those individuals without any economic or social resources and is often marked within those individuals living on the streets. Stranger's (2006) protagonist (Henrik) retains enough of his former identity not to immediately feel the shame of being spurned by people and places from his former regular routine – the description of what he first experiences is more akin to shock and surprise – as the day continues he gradually begins to understand that as he has none of his former social network around him and is

homeless, his former identity no longer applies. The most recognition he receives is "Poor Man!" whispered by a mother to her daughter: "Most others seemed to not see him at all…People just walked right by. The snow fell slowly from the sky. The waiter from the Grand asked him to move away from the door. 'You're scaring away the customers,' he said. Henrik only nodded slightly with his head as an answer. Then he begins to walk" (20). Another homeless man describes the lack of recognition he receives from *normal* society. In this sense, he describes a condition that is so stigmatized that it ceases to be seen – rather than actively shaming the homeless, they have become so removed from society's view that they are merely invisible: "People don't even see us. It is almost as if we don't exist, I sometimes think. Like we really are ghosts, spirits…" Similarly, Larsen (2006) relays the young protagonist's (Naud's) sense of invisibility throughout the novel. "Naud slept alone in the block apartment. It wasn't cold there. But there wasn't anything to eat, and nothing to drink other than water from the water faucet. What about the neighbors? Was there no one who saw her? Naud could do a trick: she was good at making herself almost invisible" (8). Her dire circumstances (hunger/neglect) accompanied by her unwillingness to bring further shame onto her mother mean that she must further remove herself from others: "It was just as if she was invisible to them. They saw right through her. And that was fine, as long as they left her in peace" (41).

3.3 Responses to shame

Many of the texts analyzed offer a description of shaming that suggests that the shame connected to poverty is contextually and relationally derived and is therefore part of a continuum of experience. Snow and Anderson (2001) suggest that the socially excluded and poor employ strategies for salvaging self worth and identity when facing the shame that is associated with their economic and social situation. Several of the texts describe a pattern of strategies that the protagonists employ to minimize their own experienced shame. It is notable that all of these strategies are relational in nature. In other words, they require an individual (or community) to position him or herself in relation to others on the social-economic hierarchy in order to diffuse shame.

3.3.1 Displacing shame

Cooley (1922) and Goffman (1963) have described the social and relational nature of shame. We are "looking glass selves," casting and shaming our identities through the eyes of others. Here, the phenomenon of shame is both externally generated and internally felt. It is reasonable within this context, therefore, that one strategy for minimizing one's own feeling of shame would be to revert shame back to those individuals who have been perceived as engaged in the act of shaming (the "shamer"). This strategy of "shaming upward" is described by Hamsun (1890/1998) and Haff (1999).

When Hamsun's protagonist is revealed to be without resources or feels the threat of revelation, he turns the tables on his revealers by casting suspicion on their relative level of (economic and social) advantage. This strategy allows him to gain some command of

the situation. The protagonist turns his feelings of shame concerning his situation around into disdain for the good fortunes and easy lives of those surrounding him: “To take comfort and make it up to myself, I began to see all sorts of faults in these happy people who were gliding by…I gave a long spit over the sidewalk, without bothering whether it might hit someone, angry with and full of contempt for these people…I lifted my head and felt deep down how blessed I was to be able to follow the straight and narrow” (105). Similarly, Haff’s protagonist does not express shame at her current and recent situation of semi-homelessness and binge drug taking. While acknowledging that society and her family see her living situation and behaviour as deviant and shameful, she describes these circumstances without directly judging herself. Instead, she uses her sister and brother – who lead seemingly “successful” lives – as foils to suggest that they are leading “false” and corrupt lives as a successful television personality and businessman, respectively. Her brother “has denied everything and will shortly achieve amnesia” and her sister “has chosen the oblivion of perfection and will go far on the path of infallibility”; she is the only sibling who has done “nothing to hide” her stigmas (362). Thus, this protagonist casts shame back onto her siblings by virtue of the fact that they attempt to hide behind a façade of respectability.

Sandel (1927/1985a) and Jacobsen (1991/2009) describe the flip side of this strategy in which shaming occurs “downward”. Here a less fortunate “shameful scapegoat” is targeted by the local community – for example, a small town or a school class – as a way to raise the self-esteem of the other members of that community. Sandel’s protagonist, Shit-Katrine, is the primary target for shaming by her small town and serves as the way in which the townspeople can displace their own sense of shame. She is “the lowest, most wretched of us all in that little community there at home – she who we called, without hedging, the whore. A brick in the wall…that in turn held up the others, an institution…and at the same time, the town’s shame and disgrace, the scapegoat, who no one wanted to acknowledge, who no one saw” (43). Jacobsen’s youngest protagonist describes how such a strategy begins in the school setting, noting that by focusing on those who are worse off he has been able to displace the shame and anxiety he has felt in the classroom: “I discovered that indeed there could be found those who had it even worse, and that eased the pressure a little. I understood among other things that I had to avoid doing a part of the things *they* did” (325). Both strategies suggest that shame may be displaced by directing shame onto others within one’s social realm and that this may take place both up and down one’s relative social hierarchy.

A third strategy to displace shame is described by Hamsun (1890/1998). Here, the protagonist helps those who are more disadvantaged and thus clarifies one’s own relatively higher position as *not* worst off. More specifically, this protagonist reclaims a sense of dignity by taking on the identity of justice-provider as he adheres to an elaborate hierarchical system of how justice should be meted and regularly offers his money and belongings to people he feels are “in need”. When his charity is refused by the “less fortunate”, however, the protagonist experiences recognition of his low position in society and his shame is heightened. He describes this experience of shame due to one ungrateful recipient of alms: “He took the money and began to look me up and

down. What did he stand there looking at? I had the impression that he examined especially the knees of my trousers, and I found this piece of impudence tiresome" (9). Thus, Hamsun suggests, the strategy of shame displacement can backfire and result in a heightened sense of awareness concerning one's condition and, as a result, intensified shame.

Finally, Stranger (2006) describes a fourth strategy for displacing the shame that is connected to one's loss of identity and visibility. His homeless protagonist uses Bourdieu's notion of symbolic capital to strategically draw upon the hyper visibility of an Oslo theatre audience to draw attention to Oslo's homeless population. Stranger suggests that social capital pervades the theatre audience: "Hundreds of mobile telephones blink, as they are turned off and put away in purses and dress jackets. The hall is packed. Some are even aware that the Prime Minister sits among the audience" (54). This well-connected, powerful crowd exudes the sort of capital that Stranger's protagonist and his homeless friends lack. In making themselves visible to this high-powered crowd, Stranger shows how the invisible homeless are able to re-emphasize that poverty is an issue to be dealt with and simultaneously give poverty a human face. While the privileged audience might otherwise ignore or treat the homeless individuals who enter the stage as a joke, Stranger's protagonist uses the fact that the audience is enclosed in a small space to his advantage. He and his homeless friends commandeer the stage and address the audience directly. With this directness and given that the audience is "trapped" in their seats, there is no way to physically avoid the protagonist and his friends. Within this confined context, a homeless man is for once able to speak directly with the audience: "Dear all audience members!...We are homeless. We live right among you. On the street. Under bridges. In stairways. We live there. Summer and winter. It is cold and it is hard. In this way, we have lived for many years now. Now we want to also sleep under a roof. In a bed. Eat warm food. All that you in the hall take for granted" (59). When members of the audience respond with laughter and clapping, the protagonist's friend again reasserts his visibility: "This is not theater!...This is real. We are real people…We are people like you are, who freeze, become hungry, become sick of things" (62). With this show of visibility and by insinuating that the audience has been complicit in creating this shameful situation, the audience begins to respond to the man. In a similar way to the strategy of "shaming the shamer," the assertion of visibility here is predicated upon the well-connected and powerful feeling shame for their lack of attention to the homeless. This particular strategy may be reflected in today's organizing efforts of Norwegian interest groups for the poor (for instance, of Fattighuset and Fattignorge).

3.3.2 Chronic failure to divert shame: Existential meaningless

Existentialists subscribe to the idea that individuals attempt to actively make sense and negotiate their existence and circumstances as they are framed within and seemingly reproduce structural inequalities, oppression and alienation. Thus, existentialism focuses on the agency of the individual as he or she attempts to understand these dimensions (Pettersen 2009, 81). Several of the texts analyzed describe strategies that are

employed by protagonists who have ultimately failed to mitigate the shame that they have experienced due to their circumstances. These strategies are, seemingly, the *only* ones remaining by which the protagonists can, in fact, assert their identities and their agency.

Snow and Anderson (2001) have likewise noted that when the homeless participants they spoke with had been unable to successfully employ strategies to divert the wreckage of their identities and thus had failed to maintain the semblance of a rational identity, they had mostly fallen into a cycle of drug addiction, mental illness or suicide. These scholars suggest that this scenario may be indicative of a descent into the existential meaningless that accompanies a complete loss of individual agency. This idea of the total loss of agency is, however, belied by the textual evidence offered within Haff (1999), Ambjørnsen (1986/2008) and Skram (1888/2001).

Haff's (1999) protagonist describes how the seemingly non-rational meaning that might be used to characterize her mental instability and drug addiction have, in fact, been mechanisms that she has used to cope with the shame that her family and society have directed toward her. Having been declared legally (and mentally) incompetent by her sister – and thus, seemingly denied the agency to make her own life decisions – she defiantly emphasizes her agency: "I was left behind, humiliated and stripped to the skin. The fee [the attorney] received for erasing me from the ranks of the living and transforming me into an imaginary quantity, must have been anything but a modest one….At the thought of having been eliminated, a sort of gaiety rose within me – I could now spend the rest of my time as a free hitter in the great ball game of life. From now on I could pull out all the stops, the crazier the better, and nobody would be surprised or attribute any significance to it" (15). Drug use has also allowed her to displace the shame and guilt of betrayal by and of members of her family. She describes the escape that drug taking offers: "the world expands and takes on a greater luminosity. Everything that weighs me down falls away, the gates of heaven open, and I'm lifted up and borne into celestial bliss." (6).

Ambjørnsen (1986/2008) and Skram (1888/2001) discuss the suicides of two characters as acts of agency. These texts suggest that, given the existential scenario of completely losing one's agency to choose one's path, suicide is the only choice one has left to make. In Ambjørnsen's novel, the suicide of the protagonist's closest female friend might at first represent the action of "giving up". The friend has experienced family dysfunction, as well as the shame of losing her commitment to her identity as an artist. With lung cancer, she ends up tired of life, engaging in prostitution, and overdosing on heroin (29). While this friend has seemingly lost the will to live, Ambjørnsen describes her suicide as a defiant act to choose her destiny. She notes that she has purposely chosen to increase her intake of heroin to induce a quick death and her final words make it clear that she sees her decision as her own choice: "I have not thought that anyone will choose for me; that time has passed" (42). She defiantly states: "I *will* go to hell" (45 – Ambjørnsen's emphasis). Likewise, Skram's female protagonist chooses death given her complete social exclusion and lack of power within society and

marriage. In doing so, she refuses her stigmatized existence and describes the agency that only suicide offers: “What if she had gone out and done away with herself. People *could* take their own lives” (118). Skram’s description of the protagonist on her deathbed viscerally suggests the agency that she reclaims through this decision: “Suddenly she reared up, grabbed Gerner by the arm, pressed her other hand to her heart, and with a convulsive movement of her whole body, vomited. It came with such force that it streamed over the bedclothes and onto the floor” (146). The acts of these protagonists suggest that the seemingly irrational behaviors of and decisions made by individuals who have been subject to chronic poverty and shaming can instead be read as last resort acts of agency.

4 Counter-indications: Refusing Shame

The strategies for displacing shame that are described above indicate the ways in which the poor may deal with the shame they experience. These strategies reflect Goffman’s (1963) depiction of the *negotiation* of shame and stigma, in which the shame of poverty may be something with which the protagonists cope. Our textual data, however, suggest that limiting the analytical focus to only those strategies that reflect reactions to and negotiations of shame, once experienced, may fail to acknowledge many of the alternate strategies that the poor may employ when encountering social shame concerning their circumstances. Indeed, four of the texts – Jacobsen (1991/2006), Ambjørnsen (1986/2008), Stranger (2006) and Hamsun (1890/1998) – suggest that their (relatively and absolutely) impoverished protagonists also actively refuse to take on shame.

4.1 Building solidarity

Jacobsen (1991/2006) and Ambjørnsen (1986/2008) describe the strategy of establishing a consciousness of class solidarity to prevent the structural generation of shame and shaming. The early protagonist in Jacobsen’s novel relies upon the promise of class rebellion to refuse the shame he may experience from being exploited for his work. He is able to work under exploitative conditions without internalizing shame through a constant focus on the mantra that revolution will enable the working class to “inherit the earth”: “He never grew tired of saying it: the conquerors. It is the working class who will be history’s conquerors, yes, also here in the country, it is we who are God’s voice on the earth, the Lord’s and Stalin’s resounding voice: it is we poor fools who will inherit the farm” (41). While not counting on a flow-blown class revolution, the more modern protagonist in Ambjørnsen’s novel describes the social solidarity he and his co-workers establish while working low level jobs in a wool factory. Ambjørnsen’s protagonist suggests that this solidarity among fellow workers is what keeps he and his colleagues motivated, despite the depressing work conditions: “it was a bottomless solidarity, completely without limits. You fought for the lazy shitsacks tooth and nail, and they fought for you” (209). In a similar way to the social networks on the margins that this protagonist is able to forge and use to bolster his self image, the system of solidarity that he builds with his co-workers acts as a bulwark against the tedium and depression

that might be associated with his everyday activities at work. Despite the use of solidarity to avoid the shame of an economically exploitative work situation, Jacobsen's protagonist reflects the risk of employing such a strategy: this protagonist experiences heightened shame when the reality of his weak position is revealed. He attempts to organize a worker strike in response to the shamefully low prices that he receives for his fish products, yet the action crumbles under pressure from the buyer and from the knowledge that they are operating from a position of extremely weak leverage.

4.2 Storytelling

According to Cooley (1902/2006), we develop our identities – our "selves" – through our interactions with others. The generation of identities, however, is not a passive act that is inscribed by society on an individual, but can be said to be a dialogical process in which individuals may actively play a part in determining the identities they will assume (Hermans et al. 1992). This assumption is predicated upon the idea that individuals have the agency to actively negotiate their identities within a social context. Mead (1934/1967) describes how individuals participate in role-playing as they develop their identities and make meaning of their selves in interaction with others (Pettersen 2009, 115; Scheff 1990). This active meaning making is depicted by Stranger's (2006) and Hamsun's (1890/1998) protagonists, who create framing devices to rationalize their actions and thus refuse the more shameful identities that would otherwise be thrust upon them. This activity, more specifically, takes the form of storytelling. Stranger's (2006) protagonist uses his recollections of a better past and his past identity as a successful playwright as a way to avoid facing the shame of his present circumstances and the protagonist in Hamsun's (1890/1998) novel is able to avoid acknowledging the depressing particularities of his circumstances through the creation stories about his identity.

As a way of dealing with his now impoverished condition, Stranger's protagonist focuses on better times - on his past identity, his friends and family and their association with dignity and self-worth: "He closed his eyes and dreamed himself back in Italy. To the years he lived there with his family. Warm days. Wine. Wife…and son. …And so everything with the work, yes. All the time working with writing new plays…The critics celebrated. Unknown women wrote long love letters to him. The invitations poured in to parties and premieres. He was brilliant and knew it" (32). Just as Ambjørnsen (1986/2008)'s and Haff's (1999) protagonists strategically reassert their identities as successful authors, the protagonist in Stranger's novel also emphasizes his past identity as a successful playwright and cultural leader. This strategy is what affords the protagonist the agency to actively change the circumstances that he and his other friends face: he has refused to internalize his newly impoverished identity.

Because Hamsun's protagonist does not have the same cultural resources as Stranger's does to draw upon – this protagonist was not formerly a cultural icon – he is on shakier ground when applying a similar strategy. This protagonist creates stories to explain his circumstances to himself and those around him. The strategy is to save face within otherwise humiliating circumstances. Within these stories, his identity shifts: he is at

various points throughout the novel a highly esteemed professional, clown, fool and hero. Hamsun uses exaggerated language and details to suggest how the protagonist's storytelling allows him to build and maintain hope in spite of his miserable circumstances. For example, the protagonist carries around a green blanket that serves as his protection against the elements when sleeping outside. This blanket is a symbol of his precarious living situation and he creates the story that he is a world traveller having his breakables from his travels wrapped within the blanket to avoid the stigma and shame that might be associated with his lack of resources. The protagonist explains this strategy: "What would people think of me?...Then it occurred to me that I could…get it wrapped; that would make it look better right away, and there would be nothing to be ashamed of anymore in carrying it" (33). The protagonist continues this charade when later meeting a friend, who asks what kind of package he is carrying, to which he replies that he has bought material for new clothing and creates the fiction of having successfully found a new job (35). Thus, the blanket, which would otherwise be a symbol of his defeat, becomes a prop upon which the protagonist is able to thwart the shaming that might be attached to his poverty.

As in Jacobsen's novel, the act of storytelling for Hamsun's protagonist is, however, often met with the cold reality of his situation, and then followed by either hopelessness or face- and spirit-saving strategies. This constant churning is what most preoccupies the protagonist and – along with material poverty – is seemingly what keeps him from consistently producing the articles and texts that would allow him some financial security. For example, the protagonist pretends to be a professional journalist working late to explain why he remains on the streets at night. This story serves the dual purpose of mitigating the shame that he might experience due to his homelessness as well to bolster his preferred identity as a writer. However when his plot is revealed the protagonist experiences the shame that comes both with dependency and the inability to care for himself, as well as from having committed the morally compromised action of lying. The protagonist acts out this shame with his actions of humility: "I…mock myself, make myself an object of derision. I could have thrown myself in the gutter" (140). Thus, the risk associated with refusing shame may be contingent upon one's relationships (with fellow workers), identities (or past identities) and relative positions of strength on the social and economic hierarchy.

5 Implications of findings for Work Package 2

This section focuses on how we might use the findings described above to further sensitize ourselves when conducting interviews with the poor in the next work package.

5.1 Demographic Dimensions

The texts analyzed have used varying narrative standpoints to describe differing experiences of poverty and the shame connected to impoverishment. The authors have touched upon the ways in which a range of demographic attributes may shape the way

that poverty, shame and social exclusion are experienced, including one's generation (age), location, gender and the particular experience connected to being a child.

Generational components: The data suggest three primary periods of focus with regard to the poverty experience: before, during and after the development of the welfare state. This suggests that we place emphasis on probing for different experiences and expectations when interviewing poor individuals who may have experienced poverty before, just after, or far after WWII. It will also be interesting to explore whether or not older individuals may differently discuss the motivating and de-motivating effects of poverty when compared with younger interview participants, as well as how the possibilities promised by the equalizing aims of the welfare state may shape the ways that individuals experience shame within the context of their economic and social difficulties.

Location: rural/small town versus urban experiences: The differing levels of and contexts for the attachment of shame to poverty and social deviance that are reflected in the texts analyzed will be an interesting focal point for the analyses of data from subsequent interviews. The points that the texts analyzed have made about the relative benefits and disadvantages to living in a small town setting may be reflected in our interviews with the poor and we may want to pay careful attention to follow up with interview participants who have moved from a small town or rural to an urban setting (or vice versa) on how the challenges they have faced may (as economically or socially disadvantaged or as social assistance recipients) have changed with this change in setting.

Gender: The data suggest that women may experience heightened stigma and shame attached to their poverty, both due to the expectations attached to their roles as caretakers as well as the increased emphasis placed on their appearances within a social setting. We may wish to focus on gender differences concerning social and caretaking expectations in our analyses of interview material. Additionally, it will be interesting to note whether any of these gender differences are heightened for women at particular ages (i.e heightened pressure to take care of one's family economically for women of childbearing age).

Childhood: the challenges faced by children with respect to the insecurity, sense of potentially divided loyalty, shame and social exclusion mean that we will have to take special care when designing our interview guide with this group. Additionally, those texts that were created for a younger audience clearly softened much of the stigmatized story behind the reasons for the impoverished condition of the characters; these authors were careful to minimize the shaming that they might indirectly engage in by covering the issue of poverty. The data and these cautions suggest that we must take care not to ask questions in such a way that they appear to ascribe blame to parents for economic challenges. We should also keep in mind that children coming from especially challenged homes may experience a good deal of social exclusion and stigma in their everyday experiences. We will need to design interviews in such a way that children interview participants feel comfortable. While we may ask their parents questions that

more explicitly focus on financial and social difficulties, we should take care to design interview questions with children that focus more on their particular everyday experiences and activities.

5.2 Poverty, social exclusion and shame

It may be worthwhile to explore the claim by Ambjørnsen's and Jacobsen's texts that while social exclusion from dominant society is a feature of relative poverty in Norway, it is not necessarily a feature that is associated with direct shame and yet, it is a challenge if we are concerned with reaching the welfare state's goal of social mobility. Some interesting points to focus on: How do our interview participants talk about their social networks? Do they characterize them as a resource for social mobility? Do they use their networks to minimize the shame they might experience due to relative economic deprivation? Are there instances in which the individuals interviewed experience absolute social exclusion (i.e have failed to form support networks) and, if so, why might this be the case?

5.3 The Process of Shaming

Our data suggest that in interviews with children and adults, we should pay close attention to how and where shame is experienced: the particular contexts for shaming. While the texts focused on the locations of school and aid, it is possible that interview participants will add depth and variability to this picture. For the purposes of this project, it will be particularly interesting to focus on how the recipience of public assistance may be a source of shame. How do the norms, rights and expectations that are attached to the public provision of minimum income assistance take part in generating feelings of shame? Are there instances in which this type of shame may be mitigated within the public setting?

The texts analysed also point to the shaming that is experienced by one's very categorization as "poor", "needy" or "dependent". Sennett (2003), using psychiatric diagnosis as an example, describes the modern sense of shame that is generated through one's categorization by experts. Being categorized by others may imply losing something of oneself, of one's identity (Pettersen 2009). Underlid's (2005) study of how Norwegian social assistance recipients in the early 2000s experienced shame in their everyday lives provides evidence for the connection between social categorization and shaming occurring within a Norwegian context. This issue of "the shame of categorization" should be taken into account when designing our recruitment and interview methods for subsequent work packages.

5.3 Consequences of and Responses to Shaming

The data suggest that poor individuals may employ multiple strategies to diffuse or minimize shame. While it is possible that our interview participants may speak of poverty, social exclusion and the shame that is associated with both as phenomena that have been thrust upon them unwillingly or due to fate (i.e. using the language of

passivity), we should take care to keep in mind that they may also frame their responses to these phenomena in words that suggest that they are active agents. Within the context of our analysis of the data from work package two, it might be interesting to explore the differing contexts in which the language of passivity and agency are used. Additionally, we should take care to note within which contexts and relationships the experiences of shame and shaming are heightened for our interview participants.

5.4 Counter-indications: Refusing Shame

The idea that individuals do not merely take their identities for granted and passively accept the identities that society may assign them, but instead play an active role in determining their identities and social roles, suggests that we should take care to acknowledge our assumptions concerning the interview participants in the next work package. For instance, while many of these participants may be in dire financial straits or seemingly be marginalized from mainstream society, they may not describe themselves as "poor" or "socially excluded," and moreover, they may not describe their experiences as challenging or difficult. We need to be aware of these assumptions, both when designing our interview guides and when analyzing the data we obtain from these interviews. There is the danger of "reading between the lines" to such an extent that we re-inscribe the identities and actions of the interview participants and ultimately focus only on the data that fits with our preconceived notions of what it is to be poor. In other words, we should not be surprised if the discussions of the interview participants about their experiences yield seeming inconsistencies and do not neatly fit these notions. Rather than treating these data as outliers, they may instead be understood as reflections of a more nuanced picture of the experiences, identities and strategies of our participants.

Final words

Haff's (1999), Ambjørnsen's (1986/2008) and Jacobsen's (1991/2009) books describe a more modern and relative experience of poverty that is as much marked by social exclusion/marginalization as by extreme economic difficulties. All three novels refer to the surging agency of the economically marginalized during the 1960s and 1970s. While the experience of shame attached to poverty may have been increasingly individualized in recent years, the development of the welfare state may simultaneously have meant that the sense of poverty as an inherent flaw has shifted for younger generations who have benefitted from the rights associated with this system. These novels also suggest that the tendency of the culturally and socially marginalized to form "bonding" networks may have created the space for the discourse surrounding poverty to include an increased sense of agency and possibility.

Two of the books analyzed – Larsen's *Beautiful Outlaw* and Stranger's *The Ghosts* – were written after the year 2000. Notably, both were written in 2006, the year after a parliamentary election in Norway whose agenda, in large part, was driven by discussion of a poverty crisis. The past 10 years, termed the "poverty decade" by Hagen and Lødemel (2010), has represented a marked shift in the public perception and

presentation of poverty in Norway. These two novels for young adults can be said to be textual outcomes of this shift as they focus on the agency of the poor to resist and push beyond harsh circumstances. Moreover, the texts also emphasize the possibilities offered by the establishment of solidarity groups on the margins in order to demand recognition from society. This strategy has been reflected in the tendency for Norwegian interest groups representing the poor (for example: Fattighuset and Fattignorge) to increasingly use the language of empowerment to circumscribe their discussions concerning poverty. Additionally, the Norwegian government has made poverty into a mainstream issue, with a focus on barriers that the poor face rather than any inherent characteristic or threat (of dependency) that they may possess. Underlid's (2005) qualitative investigation of how long-standing recipients of social assistance in Norway at the turn of this past century focused on the shame that these individuals attached to the receipt of unpredictable and discretionary financial aid as well as the relatively low expectations attending the categorization as a "social assistance recipient". Newer initiatives within Norway's welfare system – namely, the merger of Norway's labour and welfare services in 2006 as well as the creation of the human capital focused "Qualification Programme" in 2007 – have, however, been publicly predicated precisely on the state's attempt to mitigate these shame-inducing practices.

It remains to be seen whether these social phenomena and welfare state strategies may, in fact, have changed the way that the poor in Norway experience shame in connection with their economic and social circumstances. In other words, it may be possible that the experience of poverty in Norway today is less associated with shame. We will explore this and many of the other issues highlighted above through interviews with the poor in the second work package.

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Appendix A – Influence and Plot of Texts Analyzed

Hamsun, K. (1890/1998), *Hunger*

Influence: Hunger has been described as one of Norway's most influential novels and as an early example of modern, psychology-driven literature. It has been translated into multiple languages (including three versions in English) and adapted into two film versions.

Plot: Written after Hamsun's return from an ill-fated tour of America, the novel is loosely based on the author's own impoverished life before his breakthrough as an author in 1890. Set in late 19th century Kristiania (Oslo), the novel recounts the adventures of an unnamed starving young man whose sense of reality has given way to a delusionary and miserable existence that is marked by the tedium and torture of being forced to constantly wander the streets of Oslo in pursuit of nourishment and a warm place to sleep. With a lack of food, warmth and basic comfort, the protagonist's mind slowly disintegrates. Overwhelmed by hunger, he scrounges for meals, at one point nearly consuming his own pencil, an allusion to the breakdown of his identity as an author. His social, physical and mental states are in constant decline, yet he also plays strange pranks on strangers he meets in the streets. He experiences a major artistic and financial triumph when he sells a text to a newspaper, but despite this he finds writing increasingly difficult. At one point in the story, he asks to spend a night in a prison cell, fooling the police into believing that he is a successful journalist who has merely lost the keys to his apartment; in the morning he can't bring himself to reveal his poverty, even to partake in the free breakfast they provide the homeless since this would bring their attention to the fact that he had lied about his identity and would land him in further troubles. Finally as the book comes to close, when his existence is at an absolute low, the protagonist finds work on the crew of a ship bound for parts unknown.

Skram, A. (1888/2001), *Lucie*

Influence: Lucie is one of the renowned novels of Amalie Skram, a renowned Norwegian feminist author who is most known for her trilogy, *Hellemyrsfolket*. The novel's focus on the topic of turn-of-the-century class divisions and the double standard for men and women concerning sexual morality contributed to debates that took place in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

Plot: As with Amalie Skram's *Hellemyrsfolket*, *Lucie* deals with people born to difficult life circumstances and focuses on the social and political factors that result in an impoverished living condition. While not economically impoverished, Skram endured the social exclusion during and after her time in a mental hospital and understood the experience of starting life anew. This perspective on stigma and social isolation are reflected in *Lucie*. "*Lucie* reflects Skram's empathy with women who…had been ostracized from 'good' society because of their behaviour and background (Hanson and

Messick 2001, 155). The book takes place in Oslo in the 1880s, during the time of social and political controversy concerning what should be the sexual rights and norms of women and men. The book's protagonist, Lucie, is a working class woman in her early twenties with "an unsavory past". While never stated openly in the book, Lucie has worked at the Tivoli theatre as a "showgirl", there are insinuations that she spent some years as a prostitute and she has clearly had sexual experience with men, including a former engagement to a sailor that ended in a stillbirth and not marriage. As the book opens, Lucie marries her beau, Theodor Gerner, a lawyer from higher society (middle class) who is much older than her. The book's plot centers around the troubles that Lucie and Gerner face within their marriage; neither Lucie, Gerner, nor Gerner's straight-laced middle class social community are able to forget Lucie's past. Gerner attempts to mold Lucie into a "proper" middle class wife through a consistent repertoire of etiquette training, threats and silence treatments, with Lucie increasingly clinging to her more comfortable past and rebelling against Gerner's harsh treatment. This rebellion includes flirtation with another man and spending time with her old friends from Tivoli. After one harsh argument between Lucie and Gerner, she walks the streets of Oslo late at night, sleeps in a graveyard, and is there raped by a passing vagrant. Lucie becomes pregnant as a result of the rape and the novel ends with the birth of Lucie's child and her subsequent death by fever.

Stranger, S. (2006), *The Ghosts*

Influence: Stranger's novel won a national prize in Norwegian literature (Riksmålsprisen) in 2006.

Plot: This novel is primarily intended for children and both brings the life and work of Henrik Ibsen to life (literally) for children and provides a perspective on homelessness that is careful in its attempt to not demean those living in this situation. The statue of playwright, Henrik Ibsen, comes to life in present day Oslo, on what is the 100th anniversary of his death. Ibsen, who has missed the historical, cultural, and technological developments of Oslo, at first feels out of place given the historical gap in his experiences, but realizes what has happened and then experiences cognitive dissonance due to the gap in his stature as a writer while alive and his place within society today. Ibsen experiences this feeling upon seeing his old house (now a museum), seeing his favored table at the exclusive Grand Hotel – and being either shunned or thrown out of both locations in present time because of he is not recognized and then, is shamed for his expectation of recognition. Realizing that he has lost his privileged identity, Ibsen begins to wander the streets of Oslo and calling himself "Henrik" to indicate his newer, more humble, identity. Henrik, who cannot obtain help from those around him, must sleep outside and begins to freeze. He is only saved by a homeless couple who discover him, take him over to their campsite, and offer him food and the warmth of their campfire. Upon meeting a group of over one hundred homeless people, Henrik decides that their plight must be made *visible* to the rest of Oslo and he uses his experiences as a playwright to invite himself and his new friends onto the stage of a well-attended play to describe the reality of homelessness to the play's attendees.

The audience is caught and must pay attention and finally, when the police arrive to disperse the gang of homeless interlopers, the audience supports the group and pressures the Prime Minister (the illustrations resemble Jens Stoltenberg) to build a shelter for the homeless in Oslo. Through this device of Ibsen's making homelessness *real* for the previously disinterested audience, Stranger teaches his reader about Ibsen's life. As Ibsen the renowned playwright heavily influenced the rules of drama with his use of Realism in plays that challenged assumptions and spoke directly about controversial issues (Moi 2006), so does Henrik the homeless wanderer do the same. In doing so, Henrik Ibsen preserves his identity and brings to light a controversy concerning the plight of the homeless. While Stranger's story pertains to the absolute poverty associated with homelessness, the story's comments on marginalization, loss of identity, and invisibility are relevant to a discussion of the shame and stigma that is associated with a more relative definition of poverty.

Sandel, C. (1945/1985), *Krane's Café*

Influence: Sandel is considered one of Norway's great feminist authors. While she is most frequently associated with a series of three books which became known as the *Alberta Trilogy*, *Krane's Café* has also been placed on lists of classic Norwegian novels.

Plot: *Krane's Café* (1945) takes place during the interwar years small Norwegian northern coastal town. Sandel wrote *Krane's Café* as an older woman, after divorce and a custody battle (Rees 2003). Protagonist Katinka Stordal has been left by her husband and thus placed in the difficult position of raising two teen-aged children and trying to pay bills through backbreaking work as a dressmaker. The book centers around two days of social unrest within the confines of the local Krane's Café, which starts when Katinka receives a note from her landlord threatening to put her and her children out on the street if she does not pay her rent. As with *Hunger*, the limited action of the protagonist of *Krane's Café* is centered around the desperation and shame associated with looming homelessness. While, like the protagonist in *Hunger*, Katinka is not protected by a strong welfare state, Katinka is also responsible for the care of her children. Sandel suggests that Katinka's position as economically vulnerable and caretaker places her in a situation that is marked by such extreme desperation and constriction that she eventually fails to keep playing the game of exchange that society has demanded of her. The landlord's note serves as a "last straw" of sorts for Katinka, who leaves her home workshop and sits at the café for the next two days, consorting with a clear outsider (a rough Swedish dock worker whom the book's narrator calls "Bowler Hat") and drinking wine. Katinka briefly drops all pretenses of fitting within the social expectations of self-sacrifice for women in her situation and engages in deviant behaviour with regard to the town's strict/confining social norms.

Sandel, C. (1985), *Collected Short Stories*

Influence: Sandel is considered one of Norway's major short story writers and is studied and read for her feminist leanings. Her short stories are found in many Norwegian anthologies.

Main themes: These short stories in this collection focus on particular economic burden of being a woman, especially a mother and the unequal power relations between men and women, as well as the loss and insecurity experienced by children with estranged or troubled parents. Her stories present women in situations where they might be portrayed as victims – situations permeated with injustice and hypocrisy – but rather than making these female characters into victims, Sandel suggests that they use their anger and despair over their situations to emphasize their independence and agency.

"Shit-Katrine" (1927/1985)

Plot: This story focuses on the economic and social circumstances of poverty in the character of Katrine Andersen, a small town whore who is known to the townspeople as "Shit-Katrine," because of her sputtering response to being incessantly taunted as she walks through the town's streets. The story begins with a pointed description of the extent of Katrine's social exclusion. She is the primary target at which to direct shaming and serves as the way in which the townspeople can displace their own potential for shaming. When Katrine attempts for once to take part in a community activity – Sunday church the town is shocked by Katrine's seeming gall in trying to move beyond the position set for her. The church's pastor uses her as a vehicle for setting himself morally above the townspeople. When her true identity as the daughter of a local townsperson is revealed she flees the church in shame.

"Mother" (1927/1985)

Plot: This story deals with the effect that parental instability has on children. Through the gossipy narration of a local neighbor, it is suggested that the mother of three children living in a small town in Norway has a problem with alcohol and the father, when home, has a similar problem. According to local norms, the mother has become a deviant of sorts in the town's eyes and this status serves to variably stigmatize the children. As in Krane's Café, Sandel also indirectly describes the assertion of the mother's independence via what might otherwise be described as deviant behaviour. The mother refuses to be shamed by her status as semi-abandoned by her husband and refuses shame by engaging in shameless behaviour (drinking).

"A mystery" (1932/1985)

Plot: Sandel tells the story of a woman – Mrs. Arnold – who is taken in by a couple, the Isaksens, in small town Norway after having broken up with her second husband under mysterious circumstances. While the couple welcomes Arnold with the understanding that she is "poverty stricken and alone in the world" (118), the depth of Mrs. Arnold's troubles, however, continues to be a mystery to the Isaksens throughout the story.

Larsen, D. (2006), *Beautiful Outlaw*

Influence: The book was written in cooperation with the Norwegian Red Cross and contains Red Cross contact information for troubled children and youth. The main story is followed by figures relating to children born to parents with drug dependency and

psychological problems, as well as coming from violent or EU-defined poverty. The book ends with a call for Red Cross volunteers.

Main Themes: This sentimental and empathy-provoking novel was written for children and young teenagers and focuses on the issues of security and choice for children coming from insecure homes. The novel also more broadly deals with the issues of social exclusion and loneliness. Naud, a girl (between 8 and 12 years old) living from day to day on food she can steal from the backs of trucks, enters the backyard of Nilsen, a lonely older man, to eat the food out of his birdfeeder. Naud does not know her father and has been severely neglected by her mother (who Larsen suggests has a drug addiction of some sort and when she is at home, is in the presence of a series of strange men) and Nilsen lives a lonely life in which his main companions are the flowers in his garden. The novel, therefore, focuses on how Nilsen and Naud move from loneliness into friendship – with Nilsen eventually finding love with an older woman who works at a nearby kiosk (the Kiosk lady). In focusing as much on the loneliness that Naud experiences as the material deprivation that she withstands (she has a warm apartment to sleep in, but no regular food available), the author emphasizes that social exclusion aspects of poverty as much as the economic ones.

Haff, B.H. (1999), *Shame*

Influence: *Shame* won the Norwegian Critics' Award in 1997.

Plot: The novel centers on the life of Idun Hov (aka Josefine Charlotte – "Finelotte" – Sand), an author and poet who has been committed to a mental hospital for a number of years as well as the life of her father, Vegard Hov, a parish minister who was sentenced to prison as a collaborator with the Nazis after WWII. The plot of the book provides us with a semi-chronological trajectory through Idun's life in order to finally explain how she has come into the situation (of social marginalization and mental illness) that she is in. Idun is contrasted against her successful twin sister, Kathrine Elisabeth (originally named Urd Hov, but who has since changed her name to prevent being associated with the shameful name of her father. "Thrinebeth" is a psychiatrist and documentary filmmaker who has not been beset by the same issues as has Idun, thus speaking to the contingency of social marginalization. While Idun has experienced a succession of traumatic childhood experiences and has been condemned to a life spent mostly in a mental hospital (at her sister's instigation), her sister – with ostensibly the same childhood – has not for various reasons explained within the novel, been vulnerable to the same issues. The novel begins in the "present" (1996) with Idun explaining her precarious state as a resident in the hospital and her recent escape into "normal" society. She soon begins to write the story of her father's life history using her father's journal entries and her own memories as her sources. The trials of Idun's life and of Norway's WWII occupation enter her writing: Idun's experiences fuse with the German occupation of her country and with the shame of collaboration. Through these entries, Idun recalls her implication in the unjust sentencing of her father as a war collaborator and a series of betrayals of her by her family – notably, her grandfather's intervention to

keep her away from the man she loves and to separate her from her newborn baby as well as her siblings' failure to empathize with her plight and actions to have her committed. These memories act as a final explanation of her trajectory into the deviance of drug addiction and homelessness and serve as a counterpoint to the "successful" lives of her sister and brother. Thus, the book provides a personal look at one person's trajectory into poverty (characterized here by homelessness and drug addiction), as well as how the phenomenon of shame – or the attempt to divert overwhelming shame – may be implicated in this trajectory.

Ambjørnsen, I. (1986/2008), *White Niggers*

Influence: White *Niggers* was written as a book about outsiders for outsiders, but since it won Cappelen's novel competition in 1986 and was distributed by a well-known Norwegian book club, the book was one of the most famous Norwegian books from the 1980s.

Plot: This semi-autobiographical book takes us inside the environment of three socially marginalized friends. Having seemingly chosen their lives on the margins, they are deemed "white niggers" by their scornful peers and by Norwegian society at large. The book primarily explores how the protagonist (Erling) and his two friends (Charlyand Rita), born to small town middle class families have ended up in the social underclass. Much of the blame for this occurrence is placed on the oppression they experience growing up in a small town setting. The book is divided into three parts, where the chronologically last events come first. The second and third parts deal with how the book's three protagonists have ended up in their current situations. The first part deals with the recent past (1983), in which Erling, Rita and Charly live in Oslo, surviving (not altogether uncomfortably) off of monthly social assistance checks and assuming the identities of authors and artists. Their social network is a crowd that consists of transexuals, junkies and "freaks". Erling and Charly have just reunited with Rita, who has fallen into bad times – she has lung cancer, has begun to work as a prostitute and take heroin regularly. Erling and Charly help her to quit prostitution and the three live together while Erling and Charly attempt to produce some writing. This section ends with Charly traveling off of state funds, Rita ending her life and Erling promising to redeem his life with regular work and writing. The second part deals with the early lives of this trio, who grow up in a small town. Charly and Erling have comfortable family situations, whereas Rita grows up with her godmother and grandmother because her mother has fallen into hard times. This portion of the book primarily deals with the marginalization and oppression that the trio experience within school and the comfort they seek – and receive – via the community of "social deviants" that live on the edge of town. The third part of the book deals with the trio as young adults. Charly and Erling have attempted to find professional identities as within the industrial sector, but have gradually realized they are destined to be writers. Rita searches for an identity as an artist, but to no avail. The three go through assorted romantic relationships and entanglements – at one point Erling almost becomes a father – and decide to move

together to Oslo to pursue their artistic careers. Once in Oslo, heavy drug taking and regular nights out become the main activity, suggesting the paths the trios lives will take.

Jacobsen, R. (1991/2009), *The Conquerors*

Influence: This book won Norway's Bookseller's Prize in 1991 and was nominated for the Nordic Council's Literary Prize. The novel also was in 2006 listed in one of Norway's national newspapers (*Dagbladet*) as one of the "25 best novels" from the past 25 years.

Plot: As with Ambjørnsen's *White Niggers*, this novel is semi-autobiographical. *The Conquerors* is an epic family novel that recounts a family's history over three generations through the 20th century in Norway. The first part of the book tells the story of a girl's (Marta's) experiences growing up on a fishery in (Dønna) Northern Norway until she moves into her own apartment in Oslo with Frank, with whom she will share the rest of her life. The second part - "Boy" – follows the life of Marta's youngest son, Rogern, from childhood in the working class suburbs of Årvoll in Oslo in the 1960s until adulthood in the 1990s as an established family man with his own data programming company within the new IT industry. The novel recounts the extensive social changes that took place in Norway during this period - the transition from an agricultural and fishing economy through industrialization to a post-industrial society and its urbanization and social transformation. Jacobsen does this using one family's experience moving from agrarian Northern Norway and poverty into working class industrial – and post-industrial – Oslo. Jacobsen uses this span of three generations to create a picture of how Norway has developed from being a country of harsh conditions – where the working class had to work extremely hard to survive, to a social democratic welfare state where this harsh lifestyle has been reduced considerably.

Appendix B – Methodology and Methods

Data selection

We examined cultural conceptions of shame, poverty and associations between them in Norway using content- and discourse- analyses of selected Norwegian literature (novels and short stories). This corpus of literature was built using a top-down approach starting out from all possible texts and progressive refinement down to our final list of texts using the specifications and recommendations described below. We allowed ourselves the flexibility to modify our selection methods during this process to enable a more cyclical approach. The result was a specialized, topic-oriented corpus that was guided by our primary research questions and hypotheses (Mautner 2008).

We chose works in the Norwegian canon that reflected the dominant cultural ideals. Our assumption in selecting influential Norwegian literature was that this data reflected broad popular conceptions (dominant beliefs) concerning social phenomena. Literature deemed "influential" is often mass-produced, is available on a widespread scale, receives high levels of public attention, and is able to wield political influence. Thus, influential literature both reflects mainstream social thought and, in turn, can shape discourse through its impact on large audiences and its ability to shape common constructions of reality (Mautner 2008).

Our aim was to examine *how* these texts reflected the concepts of poverty, social exclusion and shame. Our first selection criterion was for novels and/or short stories that dealt with issues of poverty (for example: had an impoverished protagonist or discussed an individual trajectory into or out of poverty). We further narrowed our selection using a second (ideal) criterion of those texts that directly discussed or described shame, embarrassment, humiliation, stigma, and social exclusion within the context of poverty.

The concept of poverty and the groups of people associated with this concept have shifted significantly within Norway within the last 100 years. "Poverty" and "the poor" in 1890s Norway – when the industrial period wholeheartedly began – differed from that in Norway during World War II, and from how these concepts may be popularly defined in today's Norway. In order to operationalize these concepts, therefore, we focused on the individuals who were and are currently associated with these terms during these periods. We chose to focus on the poor historically (including the industrial and WWII periods) because these concepts may have some impact on current popular understandings of these terms (i.e. historically poor groups – farmers displaced by industrialization, those individuals joining the resistance during the WWII – may now in the popular conscience be thought of as, for instance, "poor, but proud" or "worthy" and thus, may be drawn upon as a discursive resource in contrast with today's poor). The experiences of the poor from the period surrounding WWII might also have particular bearing on the way that today's older poor population in Norway describe their experiences with poverty, social exclusion and shame.

The way that poverty and the poor are defined today within the context of Norway's strong welfare state setting (Esping-Andersen 1990) is markedly different from how these groups might be perceived in a setting such as Britain, where social insurance benefits have been extended less broadly, and the groups considered to fit within the category "poor" more inclusive (Lødemel 1997). Norway's broad extension of social insurance (SI) benefits has ensured that most of its residents are entitled to a generous system of welfare benefits. Lødemel (1997) suggests that since the development of the welfare state in Norway, this has created a seemingly paradoxical situation in which the relatively smaller number of individuals *not* entitled to SI benefits represent Norway's most marginalized groups, who are entitled only to a "last resort", means-tested social assistance scheme (Lødemel 1997, 141).

Indeed, this shift in the composition of groups in Norway representing the poor was reflected in our preliminary search of the literature for pieces dealing with the issue of poverty or the poor, which primarily yielded novels and short stories written before WWII. There was a lacuna within the literature concerning this topic in the period between WWII and the mid-1970s. This is understandable if we consider the fact that the number of individuals living in Norway considered to be "poor" decreased drastically within these years and those remaining in poverty are the extremely marginalized. We have acknowledged this shifting definition in our selection methods and used a broader concept of poverty to select pre-WWII literature dealing with this issue, while applying a narrower selection method to select more recent literature.

Since WWII and especially since the passage of Norway's 1967 Social Assistance Act, groups considered to be living in poverty have been those groups eligible for Social Assistance benefits or those children living within the child protection system. In other words, for our selection of post WWII literature, we used as search terms concepts associated with those groups who largely make up Norway's social assistance population – single parents, unemployed non-western immigrants, the long-term unemployed, drug addicts, the unemployable mentally or physically ill (Naper et al 2009, van der Wel 2006)**.** Additionally, as children located within the Norway's child welfare services tend to move into the social assistance system (Backe-Hansen 2004, Hjelmtveit 2008, Helgeland 2008**)**, we also included terms associated with this group into our selection process. Sources for refinement of our list included the reference desks at the Deichman National Library, Oslo: Literature and Children's Literature Departments and Ellen Rebecca Rees, Faculty, University of Oslo Institute for Linguistic and Nordic Studies.

Methods of analysis

We conducted basic content and discourse- analyses, using the methods outlined by Wodak and Krzyzanowski (2008) as a starting point.[3] We also drew from analytic

[3] We have chosen this text as it deals specifically with discourse analysis of print media and focus group discussions (to be utilized in a later work package).

techniques based on the assumptions of New Historicism. Analyses conducted within the New Historicist tradition focus on social context, where information concerning the author and intended audience are considered and historical, cultural, and political particularities are acknowledged. Here, we recognized how the author's description of the reality of "the poor" and the social phenomenon of poverty may have been influenced by the period of time in which the piece was written, the period of time that the piece focused upon; the particular cultural, social, and political influences of these times; as well as the intended audience.

We used, however, discourse analysis as our primary methodology. Discourse analysis (DA) is concerned with the representation and creation of meaning through language, as well as with how language is used and related to particular social/historical/political contexts, how words are used to convey meaning. The method of discourse analysis examines "text in context" van Dijk (1990: 164) and we focused on the social, cultural, historical, cognitive, and political contexts of language used by selected authors as they describe poverty and shame (Wodak and Krzyzanowski 2008).

There are various ways of *doing* DA. These range from methods focusing on the detailed mechanics of language (semiotics) to those with more emphasis on the use of broader discursive categories. Our analysis was guided by the latter emphasis; more specifically, we followed the DA methodology presented within Gee (1999). This type of analysis focused on how language was used to describe "specific social activities and social identities ('memberships' in various social groups, cultures, and institutions)" (Gee 1999, 1).

Gee provides six "building tasks" to analyze how language is recruited to place social phenomena within certain cultural worlds, to situate these phenomena with related identities, and to draw political connections between these phenomena and others. These building tasks include semiotic building, world building, connection building, activity building, socio-culturally situated identity and relationship building, and political building. We focused on the latter three building tasks in our analysis as these three attended to how each text linked social and personal identities to varying systems of power. This emphasis is especially useful given our aim of sensitizing ourselves to how poverty and the poor in Norway are attached within dominant Norwegian discourses to various social hierarchies, normative systems, and shaming/ stigmatizing activities.

We translated Gee's (1999) suggested analysis of social activities to an analysis of how each author described the current and past activities of the poor. Those living in poverty have also been attached to particular identities and relationships throughout each text. Within these accounts, we relied upon Gee's "socio-culturally situated identity and relationship building" task to discuss the identities, roles, and relationships that the texts' protagonists assumed as they carried out their activities. This task also helped to illuminate the values, beliefs, and ways of knowing that delimited the behaviors and interactions of each protagonist. Finally, we focused on how our selected texts assigned value to certain social goods and perspectives and applied Gee's "political building" task

to analyze and discuss how social networks, status, and power shaped the authors' treatments of poverty and shame.