Looking over the border

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The UN Convention on the rights of persons with a disability

• Countries committed themselves to provide effective individualized support measures in environments ‘that maximize academic and social development, consistent with the goal of full inclusion’.

• Belgium, Norway and the Netherlands signed this convention.
3 Countries:

• Signing the Convention does not mean that these three countries have made comparable progress, nor have they implemented Inclusive education in a comparable way.

• Actually: Differences between the education of students with special educational needs (SEN) in these countries are quite large.
3 Systems

• Flanders: Two-track system

• Norway: One-track system

• Netherlands: Multi-track system
Percentages:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>% in segregated settings</th>
<th>% students with special needs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Flanders</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>6.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norway</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>7.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What does it tell us?

- Differences in % of students with SEN reflect mostly differences in rules, regulations and common practice.
- Differences in % students in special settings mainly show where students are located, but give limited information on the degree of inclusion of these students.
Social Participation

• Interaction
• Acceptance
• Friendships
• Perception of being accepted
Research questions

• Does social participation differ in BE, NL, and NO compared to typical peers?

• Does it differ for subgroups?
## Method, sample

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Belgium</th>
<th>Netherlands</th>
<th>Norway</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Group</strong></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Typically developing students</td>
<td>469</td>
<td>187</td>
<td>461</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students with SEN</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavior problems</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Severe learning problems</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mild learning problems</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication problems</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sensorial/motor impairments</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Method, instruments

- Acceptance and friendships by nomination procedures
- All students were asked to nominate their best friends in class (max. 5).
- Acceptance: Indegrees
- Friendships: Reciprocated choices
Method, analyses

- Ucinett to analyze sociometric data
- MANOVA to compare the means of the three groups
- Restructuring the groups of students with SEN in two: Behaviour problems and other SEN
Results

Students with SEN are less accepted and have fewer friendships compared to peers without SEN.

Significant differences between systems in level of peer acceptance: Norway lowest.

No significant differences between systems in number of friendships.
Discussion

• Most difficulties in social participation in Norwegian one-track and Belgium two-track systems.
• Expectations were that Norway would do better?
• Only students with relatively mild SEN to regular schools in Belgium and the Netherlands, and almost all students with SEN in Norway in regular schools.
• Samples can not be compared!
Looking over the border and seeing nothing!

• Too quick conclusion: The more progress in implementing IE, the lower the score on social participation.
• Disappointing conclusion: A study in only three countries, with similar instruments, with self-organized samples, with self-controlled analyses failed to come with a solid conclusion.