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**Researchers experience working**  
**with Refugee minors**

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## Topic Summery

This thesis is a qualitative research study done on the experiences of Researchers working with minor refugees. The unaccompanied minors endure very dangerous routes to reach an unknown destination all on their own, therefor being unaccompanied makes them vulnerable. My data collection has been done in Norway so most of my focus will be on Norway and its practices but I will use experiences of different researchers from different countries. I have also in my thesis used data collected by a co-master student about the relationship between social workers and unaccompanied minors. These data where relevant for elaborating on ethical and emotional aspects related to my topic.

In my thesis I will discuss how researchers interact with the unaccompanied minor asylum seekers, what are the challenges and barriers these unaccompanied minors face in the asylum process and then while settling down in the new host Norwegian society. The minors go through long process of asylum applications and then phase two starts where they are to settle down first at the intake center in the country and then in different municipalities. The research done in the area of refugee's especially minor refugees is not sufficient. The high number of refugees all over the world requires more research done in this area. The voices of the unaccompanied minors should be heard, they could guide us better on how to improve the systems to facilitate them better. I will use different studies to make my argument.

Research is widely given importance in today's time for forming opinions, policies, laws, trends an elaborate update of the situation; this makes the role of researcher very vital. It also brings responsibility on the researcher to do his research as objectively as possible for better and realistic outcomes. I will discuss in my thesis how researchers deal with the unaccompanied minors, how they control their personal feelings whilst interaction with the unaccompanied minor's. I am writing this thesis with some of my own preconceived notions but I am open to new findings, new knowledge and to reject my existing opinion.

## Defining keywords

### Unaccompanied minors:

‘An unaccompanied minor is a child who is under the age of eighteen years, unless, under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier or who is “separated from both parents and is not being cared for by an adult who by law or custom has responsibility to do so” (UNHCR 1997).

### Refugees:

United nations high commissioner for refugees define Refugees as: “Refugees are people who have fled war, violence, conflict or persecution and have crossed an international border to find safety in another country”

Source: UNHCR.org

The United Nations in the convention for refugees 1951 defined Refugees and this definition is the widely used definition in international laws regarding refugees. In 1969 convention in Africa and 1984 Cartagena declaration the definition of refugees was further expanded to include mass migrators who are fleeing violence like civil war etc. as refugees (The New Humanitarian). <https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/migration>

A refugee can return to their home country if the conditions have improved in their country. United nations is the principle body for creating principle policy guidelines for the international laws; states are obliged to make policies based on those principles. People who obtain the status of refugee are given protection on the basis of humanity (Rescue.org 2018).

### Asylum seeker:

Asylum is ‘the grant, by a state of protection on its territory to persons from another state, who are fleeing persecution or serious danger. Asylum encompasses a variety of elements, like permission to remain on the territory of the asylum country and human standards of treatment’ (UNHCR).



A person who is seeking protection from dangers in his own country, but this person's case has not yet been decided legally, has not yet been granted refugee status or protection on humanitarian grounds. It's important that a person applies for asylum at the time of arrival at an international border. It's not necessary that every individual claiming asylum will be considered a refugee.

The rescue.org posted an article in which a very relevant example was given explaining asylum claim, it said thousands of people from the central America tried to cross the American border, these people were fleeing from kidnappings, murders, forceful inclusion into drug gangs, violence against women and children. These people on their arrival at the borders of USA were called 'illegal immigrants' but it is the right of the asylum seeker that his case will be heard, claiming asylum is not illegal act, the case should be heard fairly on the bases of domestic US laws and international principles (Rescue 2018).

Immigrant: 'An immigrant is someone who decides intentionally to leave his home country and to go to another country for the purpose of settling down'. They have to follow a long procedure to immigrate to another country; many immigrants receive permanent residence leading to citizenship. Immigrants make a conscious and informed decision about their desired country of immigration, they do full research, they look at the opportunities that they could avail, and they intend to learn the local language to help themselves integrate into the host society. The immigrants do not have any binding from returning to their own country, they can go back whenever they desire (Rescue 2018).

Migrant: Migrant is someone who moves from one place to another, within or outside his own country for different economic reasons i.e. skilled seasonal workers. They are seeking better opportunities in new lands (Rescue 2018).

# 1. Introduction

## General Introduction

Globally the increase in power struggle has given birth to many conflicts. Every conflict is considered a war, like for example the United States and China 'trade war' or the gray zone warfare, cyber war using information from web, political war using political force or economic pressures (Bosio 2020). War means more than its definition but still researchers argue about 'what is war'? It is very important to define conflicts and war, it's not possible to make appropriate policies and strategies to resolve them, for armies also it's important to clearly understand the definitions of war and conflict (Bosio 2020). According to the Oxford Dictionary the word 'War' is defined as "Armed fighting between two or more Groups". The Cambridge dictionary defines 'Conflict' as: "An active disagreement between people with opposing opinions or principles". Many coercive situations military or non-military and violent or non-violent are described as war. Some think that technology defines war others think it's the politics that's the war (Bosio 2020). Nick Bosio in his article stresses on the lack of a proper definition of what war and conflict are, this lack of proper definition has underlined the issue about war and conflict as a political rhetoric.

In our times one of the major political and social phenomena is Migration. According to the IOM (International Organization for Migration) Europe faced the highest number of migrants in the year 2015 this migration was the biggest Europe experienced after the Second World War. UNHCR reports that the major chunk of these people came from countries like Afghanistan, Syria, Eritrea, Somalia, these countries have a conflict situation going on (Slot 2016). According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees report in 2016 there are around sixty five (65) million people who are displaced forcefully (UNHCR 2016).

The tightening of the laws and border security has also become a challenge for vulnerable children and for men and women refugees who want to seek refuge. The UNHCR reports that in 2015 that in Europe approximately 700 minors per day were applying for asylum. In Greece only one in three refugees was a minor under the age of 18 (Slot 2016). It has been noticed that in the initial months of 2015 when the

unaccompanied minors started coming in large numbers the trend in media was very sympathetic towards them. There were cover page stories about how the wrong doings of warlords have caused life and death situation for these unaccompanied children, the dangerous journeys they take to reach a safe place. The number kept growing and this also changed the attitude of media and they then changed from sympathy to fear that Europe might get out of control, they started framing stories on how the unaccompanied minors are only coming to Europe to enjoy welfare societies and benefits, they published stories about how these unaccompanied minors lie about their age (Lems, Oester & Strasser 2020). Thus the attitude of European countries is changing about asylum seekers, many European countries have taken measures to control entry exists in to their country by fencing the borders and by tight border controls. Increasing number of refugees has been a hot topic of discussion on media through out 2015; the political debate has been divided on the topic (Slot 2016).

This alarming increase in international migration and refugee flow has raised the need for new research/ knowledge in this area. Researchers are showing more interest in this topic (Kaukko, Dunwoodie & Riggs 2016). The need for more studies in this area is the need of the hour; this will also give people more understanding about why refugees leave their country of origin to settle somewhere else and about the dangerous routes they take to reach destination countries. This will also give better understanding to policy makers for making informed policies. Every human being has the right to live with dignity and freedom, exercise all the rights granted to him (Nyame 2015). The children who make it successfully through the dangerous journey and reach the borders of a new country they are given the right to claim asylum, these children are called unaccompanied minor asylum seekers (Nyame 2015).

These refugee minors leave their countries of origin to come to a safer country through a very harsh journey; some come accompanied some are unaccompanied. These minors choose to flee their country of origin due to many reasons some flee from wars and conflicts; some flee from poverty some from social injustices and discrimination (Graciolli de Paiva 2017). After residence permit is granted to them they are faced with a new set of challenges and barriers (Graciolli de Paiva 2017). The minor refugees are a very vulnerable group of refugees; their age is a big factor in this vulnerability. There are many minor refugees who are traveling through different

countries for many years in hope of entering Europe, they think of Europe as a safe heaven but on the contrary many children who successfully enter Europe are exposed too much more vulnerability. Many of the minor refugees do not have any documentation to show at their arrival on borders, this leads to different processes they have to go through like age determination etc. these processes could be invading their personal space or degrading for them (Graciolli de Paiva 2017). While the refugee minors are undergoing some processes for their assessments there are chances that they will be placed with adults in different detention centers. It is also possible that they might experience physical or mental torture by border controls, local police (Graciolli de Paiva 2017). The British government was widely criticized for the ‘Cedars’ a center where they would keep minor refugees forcefully before sending them back to the country they entered Britain from. This center was located near Gatwick airport in London. Followed by the criticism the British government had to close the Cedars center (Graciolli de Paiva 2017).

The United Nations convention for the rights of child has been adopted by all the countries of Europe, this convention highlights the ‘best interest of the child’. This is the main guideline for all the signatory countries when making related policies. For any policy making it is very important that authentic data and statistics are available (Çelikaksoy & Wadensjö 2016). Data registration is also important because it gives a clear idea of how all the countries of Europe are doing with the arriving unaccompanied minors. Not ever unaccompanied minor who applies for asylum gets a residence permit, many get refusals also. The criteria for approval and rejection are different in different countries. Europe needs a joint database, which can reflect the refugee flows and specific statistics. Research also shows that there is discrepancy in the data from all European countries, only some countries have complete data showing the number of unaccompanied minors who applied for asylum (Çelikaksoy & Wadensjö 2016). The situation calls for more information about the refugees; more researches into this field will help improve policies and situation of refugees.

### **My interest in the area**

I started my Masters Degree in Nordic Masters in Social Work and Welfare from the university of Stavanger, Norway in 2017. I come from Pakistan, a country neighboring Afghanistan, India, Iran and China. While growing up I saw many

Afghans coming to our country, living in my city. In the beginning I was not able to comprehend why were these strange people coming and living near us, their small children playing in our streets with no shoes, old torn clothes and messy hair, maybe I was too young to understand. Those people were in very bad condition, their houses were made of bricks without any walls, many would live in one small room. To get food the children would pick papers and sell them which would earn them a times meal or they went to every house in the street begging for food. People living in our area were not happy to see them, they were considered nuisance. I belong to the same ethnicity as those Afghans living near us, we spoke the same language. As I grew up over the years those children grew up as well, the interactions increased, and I was going to university by then. In the university I was introduced to the concept of refugees, war and conflicts. In my 12 years of schooling I had not been thought about these concepts, they were alien to me. Our news channels were not showing us what was happening around. In the university my eyes opened to these concepts bringing more understanding and empathy towards those people. The more we were taught about the international world and the recent happening the more things started to get into perspective for me. I had all my life lived near the refugees, but I knew so little about them. They are still called and considered outsiders and a burden on Pakistan. Two generations have been born in Pakistan yet they are still called Afghans. When I came to Norway and started studying I got even more knowledge about this area, different types of immigrations, refugees etc. and my interest in the area grew more and for my thesis I choose to work on researchers experiences working with minor refugees.

## Research Questions

It is essential that a researcher have some curiosities related to a topic or theme, some unanswered question that needs investigation. As a researcher while doing my research for this thesis I also had certain questions in my mind. My interest in this topic raised curiosities. The research questions are very important for any research project they set the grounds for a focused research. Below is my main umbrella research question along with two sub questions:

Question: What are the experiences of Researchers working with refugee minors?

A: What challenges and barriers to integration these minors face in Norwegian society?

B: How do researchers approach these minors?

## Problem statement:

This thesis is looking at the problems faced by the unaccompanied minors in Norway. The refugee minors who get residence permit either permanent or temporary they are settled into the local municipalities. The phase of integration starts bringing its own challenges. The settling down in new society brings its own pressures. There could be many challenges like Language, Education, culture, socialization norms, weather, and administrative system. Each refugee minor will have his/her own journey and experiences. Their side of story is what I am interested in from the researchers who work with these minor refugees. The role of researchers is essential in my opinion as a storyteller to us. In my thesis I will look at the experiences of different researchers who have worked with the unaccompanied minor refugees. How were their experiences? The experience of each researcher will be different from the other so looking for similar issues, barriers and challenges will be interesting. The loophole in the research area, which makes the understanding about a certain issue or aspect blur, is also essential to draw attention to (Graciolli de Paiva 2017).

## 1. Literature review

Choice of final destination:

In 2009 Jan-Paul Brekke & Monica Fiv Aarset did a research project funded by the Norwegian Directorate of Immigration, the project title was 'why Norway? Understanding asylum destinations. In this project they looked into how asylum seekers make the choice of one particular country for claiming asylum. In this section I will use the report to analyze the choice of destination. In asylum discussions one question that often makes people curious is 'why asylum seekers end up in a particular country?' Number of refugees arriving at international borders varies from time to time and country to country. The time when refugee influx is very high at many international borders the question of what makes the choice of a certain country as asylum destination rises. In the year 2008 when the refugee influx increased abnormally in Norway the politicians and people asked the question why Norway?

A classic understanding of asylum destinations is that people flee from war and violence without specially thinking about their final destination country, this classic view has faced criticism. Scholars are divided between two perspective one group thinks that an individual rationally decides final country of destination whereas the other group says that the individual has very little control over the choice of final destination, it's other factors that lead to the choice of final destinations and these factors are out of the control of that individual (Brekke & Aarset 2009).

In the report by Brekke & Aarset (2009) they look at the three different studies done in The Netherlands on the destination choices of asylum seekers. The Dutch experts views: two Dutch researchers Tetty Havinga and Anita Böker asked the question that do the asylum seekers come to a country by their choice or by the chance they get in their study for the European commission. Focus of this study was three countries Britain, Belgium and Netherlands. The researchers came up with very complex realities with regards to asylum seekers choice of destination country. In the three study countries a very important factor was some kind of social network, this played a big pull factor in the choice of final destination country (Brekke & Aarset 2009). For

the Britain its colonial past also acted as a factor, many asylum seekers in Britain arrived from its former colonies, this factor was less to not relevant in the case of other two countries.

Two other Dutch researchers Biljeveld and Taselaar in (2000) in Brekke & Aarset (2009) their report on why the Netherlands was a favorite asylum destination talk about asylum seekers who didn't have much clarity on why they came to the Netherlands but they only considered Netherlands to be a democratic, peaceful country where people welcome foreigners.

This report also identified that many asylum seekers made the choice of Netherlands because of friends and family living in Netherlands (Brekke & Aarset 2009).

When you compare how refugees are going to different countries the flow into a certain destination country from a certain refuge potential country is linked with the policies. After for example the increase in Iraqi asylum seeking refugees Sweden brought stiffer asylum rules making it tough for them to stay after rejection, they formed agreements of deportation/return with Iraqi government authorities, this step ensured the confirm return of every unsuccessful asylum seeker refugee. The tough new asylum procedures discouraged the future asylum seekers from Iraq considering Sweden (Brekke & Aarset 2009). The tightness of asylum laws with regards to Iraqi asylum seekers forced these people to turn to other countries of Europe where the policies were not as strict as Sweden, or towards the countries with high refugee intakes. Researchers observed that the asylum seekers keep an eye on the countries who intake more refugees than the ones bringing stricter laws, the news is spread virally among potential asylum seekers or among those on the move.

Social networks play an important role in attracting asylum seekers to a certain country (Brekke & Aarset 2009). Policies of the destination country also affect the number of people coming to seek asylum. The stricter policies a country has the lesser asylum seekers will arrive in the country but if the policies are liberal in nature then the number of asylum seeker refugees will increase. The trend of majority of people entering a specific country is also a factor, if many people are going to for example



Norway claiming asylum then many others will follow their footsteps and apply for asylum in Norway (Brekke & Aarset 2009).

#### Unaccompanied Refugee minors:

The children who come to Norway before they have turned eighteen years old, they are alone or without any guardian bearing care responsibilities of the child are considered unaccompanied minors. These children apply for asylum and then some are granted the refugee status and others are denied due to different reasons. These children could be granted protection on humanitarian grounds or on the basis of their claim of refugee status (Kirkeberg & Lunde 2020). In Norway alone during the time period between 1996-2018 a total of 9943 unaccompanied minors were given permanent residence in response to their application for asylum. Out of the 9943 unaccompanied minor's 9344 unaccompanied minors were still living in Norway in the year 2019. 49% of unaccompanied minors in Norway are of afghan origin, 15% of Eritreans origin, and 12% Somalis and Syrians 6% (Kirkeberg & Lunde 2020).

Unaccompanied minors take on harsh journeys in order to reach a safe place. The decision to take flight from the country of origin is not an easy one but the child himself takes this decision or the family takes the decision for him. The young age and rough terrain increases the vulnerability of the unaccompanied children. They in their journey experience harsh weather conditions, extreme hunger and thirst, physical torture, mental stress and much more. The psychological pressure alone is too much as they are on an unknown way not certain of what comes next. These journeys are not short or easy; it takes a long time to reach the destination country. Walking on foot for days under the bare sky, come what may (Çelikaksoy & Wadensjö 2016).

The unaccompanied minors pass through different countries while they reach the final country. They are faced with different challenges at each international border that they cross. With the increase in knowledge about the journeys and routes of unaccompanied minors, increasing refugee arrivals at the borders via different routes has made the border control rules more extreme and the border control personnel are more vigilant. It's getting tougher day by day to cross international borders. It's not a same standard experience that every unaccompanied minor will have; the experiences

of all the unaccompanied minors differ from each other (Çelikaksoy & Wadensjö 2016).

Once the unaccompanied minors arrive in the Norwegian territory they have to apply for asylum. There is no other type of visa they are eligible to apply for. Different factors are considered during the process of asylum application like age assessment, situation in country or origin etc. unaccompanied minors in Norway are divided among two groups one 15 years and under other between 16-18 years old. When the unaccompanied minor's application is approved, they are settled in local municipalities. The municipality is responsible for the further handling of the child.

## Research in the field of refugee Minors

Researchers are professional individuals involved in creation or conception of new knowledge, methodologies; procedures etc. researchers are also responsible for the running of concerned projects (Researchista 2015).

Thousands of unaccompanied minor's asylum seekers have made their way into different countries in the last two decades. These children have left their homes because of the fear of persecution, violence and torture. Some experienced some form of violence or were witness to violence happening with family or parents. The family of minor at times already decides the decision of him leaving home and embarking on asylum journey or the minor decided on his own to leave (Manzano & Agugliano 2018). The majority of unaccompanied minors are boys, very little number of girls arrive unaccompanied at international borders to claim asylum (Manzano & Agugliano 2018). Research in the area of minor refugees is available but this research is mostly in terms of medical or social science. The medical is related to the age assessment testing of minors whereas the social science can somehow be linked to political happenings or legalities (Manzano & Agugliano 2018). The topic of unaccompanied minors is very broad, it has so many aspects involved like arrival, asylum process of intake of these minor refugees, decision on asylum application, integration in host society, family reunification and barriers etc. many aspects of the unaccompanied minors have not been focused a lot in research like the integration process. Small-scale studies are mostly done in this area. Small studies focus on few unaccompanied minors and their experiences with different institutions. In Norway and Sweden a very professional style database is maintained for the unaccompanied minors as they enter the national registries. Researchers observed that in the Nordic region the highest number of unaccompanied minors were received by Sweden in 2015, this trend didn't start all of a sudden in 2008 almost same number was received by both Norway and Sweden. The difference in numbers can be based on the difference in asylum regulations or maybe on the social networks of the unaccompanied minors.

Research done with unaccompanied minors suggest that majority of them are male, the unaccompanied minors is highest from Afghanistan and they are mostly men whereas the unaccompanied minors coming from Africa are equal in ratio (Çelikaksoy & Wadensjö 2016).

In Norway a questionnaire-based study was carried out in which 948 people were included who came to Norway as unaccompanied minor asylum seekers. The respondents were on average 18 years old and had lived in Norway for almost three and half years. The questions asked were about the psychological health, trauma and depression. The questions were also about the treatment they received by people in Norwegian society, the care facilities they received by the municipalities, were they discriminated by friends etc. The results showed that the depression among the unaccompanied minors didn't increase due to the ethnic or social and cultural aspects but the significant increase was observed in depression due to discrimination and psychological trauma. This study also stressed on the importance of understanding by the majority group about the social background of these unaccompanied minors (Oppedal & Idsoe 2015 in Çelikaksoy & Wadensjö (2016).

Another study done was about the provision of housing facilities by two different municipalities, one municipality studied was Trondheim and the other studied was Levanger. In this study government officers were interviewed those who worked at the municipalities and twenty-five unaccompanied minors were also interviewed. The accommodation provided and administered to the unaccompanied minors were very different in both municipalities. In the small municipality of levanger one central body took care of the whole process from registration to integration. In the municipality of Trondheim which had a bigger population the responsibilities were divided among different departments i.e. one department looking at the accommodation matters, other looking at education and so on and so forth. The researchers of this study observed that the minors face both phases during their asylum process and later integration process, in some times they are dependent on authorities whereas in other times they are also independent. Accommodation is very important aspect to measure dependence and independence (Svendsen 2008 in Çelikaksoy & Wadensjö 2016).

Limitations and ethical considerations as researchers working with unaccompanied minors:

Research is done with different groups of people for different purposes. There are vulnerable groups also who are recruited as informants or they are the subjects of research. It's important that the ethics will be considered thoroughly. The rights of the children in research should be ensured if they are taken as informants or study subjects. It's important that the aspects of mutual respect, justice and protection from any kind of harm are taken care of when research with children (Ferdousi 2015). Ethics for research with children have been developed by international research organizations and different states also have their own ethical guidelines. It's the responsibility of the researcher to think about the impact of research on the life of the minor. Historical research on children has given us knowledge about the behaviors and mindsets of children. Research with children is very morally dictated research. A researcher has to keep in mind the basic ethical principles. The research has to consider the age of the minor participating in the research (Ferdousi 2015). The research should be least stressful for the child so the researcher should apply a method, which puts less pressure on the minor. The research with minors should be based on the following principle ethical guidelines:

- Informed consent: the basic principle for any research involving informants requires the consent, in research with children it's important to provide the child with proper information according to the age and written consent is obtained from legal representatives. The child and representatives should be fully informed about the research and its possible implications for the child. The child should be free to decide on giving consent.
- No consequences: the child should be fully informed about research topic, what the questions will be and its impact and then the child should be given free hand to agree or disagree for being part of the research project. No consequences should follow in case of disagreement to participate.
- Well-being and protection: at all times the research should ensure the safety and well being of the child. If the research feels that there is something dangerous or will have consequences for the child then the researcher should inform the representatives and should suspend the research. The researcher is

responsible for keeping eye on sensitive happenings to the child during the research project.

- Minimizing harm: the effects of research could be stressful or depressing for some children therefore it's the responsibility of researcher to keep the research ethics in mind and do best to reduce the possibility of mental or physical harm
- Post research: after the research project is over the researcher should protect the identity of the child who participated in the research projects. The aspect of trust should be upheld so no potential harm is done to the child. Privacy of child and identity information should be anonymized for the protection of the child.

It's important for the researchers to protect the dignity and safety of children when involving them in research. Ethical considerations are extremely important and should be followed strictly. A researcher should keep in mind that the child may not give desired information or may withdraw the consent to participate in the research project. Children should be allowed to express their opinions without any fear or pressure; they should be informed about their rights as informants in research. The researcher should be empathetic and kind throughout the research project and should build trust with the child (Ferdousi 2015).

## 1. Theoretical perspective

In this study I am focusing on the experiences of researchers and their approaches towards the informants that are working with refugee minors and the situation of the minors. Therefore I find ethical theories and social integration theories relevant as theoretical perspectives in my study.

Every chapter adds its own significance to the thesis. In this thesis I will talk about some concepts often emerging in my theme. I will first discuss these with the studies of different theorists who have worked on ethics and human aspects of research.

### Social Integration:

Emile Durkheim in his study of societies introduced the theory of social integration. He perceived society as a unity. He considered society as an organization, which was definitive and was bound by everlasting relationships (Alpert 1940). Durkheim was a

French sociologist who was interested in the study of modern society and how it will affect the process of social integration after the traditional family and church systems were replaced by new economic relationships. Durkheim was considered among the founders of sociology. In the paper by Jonathan Turner he defined social integration according to Durkheim

‘According to Durkheim peoples norms, beliefs and values make up a collective consciousness or a shared way of understanding and behaving in the world. Collective consciousness binds individuals together and creates social integration’ (Turner 1981).

Integration is a complex process that depends on both parties involved, the new comers and the receiving society. Many indicators can be used for the process of integration. Researchers in recent times have been looking at integration as a relationship between host and new arrivals; also they focus on the results of integration Berry (1997) in Viktoriia Gnatenko (2016). Introduced four strategies of Acculturation, they are:

(A) Marginalization: it is when a person does not continue following his own culture but he also does not develop any relationship with the host society.

(B) Integration: it is when a person keeps his own cultures and identity but at the same time maintains balanced relation with the host society.

(C) Assimilation: it is when a person leaves his own culture and identity and tries to find a new identity and embrace host culture.

(D) Separation: it is when a person keeps his own identity and culture but does not keep any relations with the host societies (Berry 1997).

Other researchers took up the research by Berry later and they identified two groups in the process of integration. The first group they identified is the researchers who think that integration is a one-way process where a refugee tries to assimilate adopts the host society’s culture, the second group of researchers think that integration is a two way process where both the refugee and receiving host society jointly make an effort, they both try to adapt to each other (Gnatenko 2016). Relating to the two way process when the people interact diversity is happening and the normally norms and values of host society also get modified to cater to both hosts and new comers (Gnatenko 2016).

### Challenges and barriers in integration:

Around 65 million refugees exist today in our world, these people were forced by different reasons to leave their countries and find safety somewhere else. The very rapid increase in the global refugee movements and other immigrations has created a big debate globally. Host societies are also seen to be interested in the complete integration of the refugees that settle down in their societies. It's important now that the large numbers of people who claim asylum in different countries are also given a smooth integration process. It creates an imbalance in society if two parallel systems start functioning. Society within society cannot exist (Bailão 2019).

In this section I will look at the barriers faced by the refugee minors. In the process of integration what challenges them. The unaccompanied minors are very vulnerable; the handling of these children is done in a very sensitive manner. There are many protocols provided by international convention that ensure the best interest of child (see attachment of Human Rights etc.). When an unaccompanied applies for asylum the application needs to be decided in a short time to avoid the minor going through long waits and uncertainty. In Norway once the application of asylum by the unaccompanied minor is approved they are settled in different municipalities. The municipalities look after the needs of these unaccompanied children like housing, health, education, and social safety. Each municipality has its own policies and integration plans. Some municipalities' follow each other some make their own policies. The central government provides adequate funding to the municipalities for the care of these unaccompanied minors. In Norway many municipalities run programs specially designed for the unaccompanied minors to help them learn Norwegian language and other basics about the Norwegian society. These courses are called introduction courses. Many unaccompanied minors are advised to take the one yearlong introduction course before formally starting school.

The school education in Norway is in Norwegian, this means that the unaccompanied minors need to learn Norwegian to be able to study in school.

Language is a very important factor in the integration process. In every society the locals give importance to their language, the common day-to-day use is in the local language also. The unaccompanied minors are helped by municipalities to avail



language teachings. Its important that the municipality is facilitating these children to learn Norwegian but this facility does not mean that the Norwegian language does not act as a challenge in integration process. Language is a major challenge affecting so many things like education, social interactions, understanding administrative tasks, and daily life chores. The Norwegian language is officially used in all documentations like doctor letters, appointments, reports etc. the life of a unaccompanied minor will be hard without Norwegian language skills. Social interactions among groups are difficult without knowing Norwegian. Many unaccompanied minors are skilled with their own native language only which they cannot use with others or majority this makes these unaccompanied minors unable to interact with others, make friends, hangout with groups of people. This is not only creating difficult in understanding daily tasks but also this affects the minor on personal level also like damaging self confidence, disheartens the minor and cause depression (Summers 2016). If a minor excels the language skill he can integrate very easily in the society. If a refugee does not learn local language his chances to interact with the host society, take part in activities is reduced widely and he will only interact with people speaking his original language this then can lead to isolation (Summers 2016).

Loneliness and social isolation has drastic effects on individuals who take refugee unaccompanied. The feelings of loneliness arise when the minors cannot interacts with fellow citizens due to lack of language skills or maybe the minor is not interested in the interaction due to the attitudes of people towards refugees and refugee minors (UNHCR & ERFEC 2013). Researchers also argue that the unaccompanied minors have already been through so many traumas that there ability to exercise their social skills in full potential. Some researchers also argue that the minors feel they are not welcomed because of the discriminatory behaviors of locals, they feel stereotyped, bullied and neglected. Many researchers point out the gaps in research about how a minor refugee is faced with social interaction challenges (UNHCR & ERFEC 2013).

Health of unaccompanied minors is a very concerning problem for municipalities specially the mental health of these minors. Trauma is the among the main health concerns. The long harsh journey and the past life, events can have a very damaging effect on the minors mind. The young age adds to this sensitivity. Overcoming the traumas is not an easy or fast job. Psychological problems of the minor can have

lasting effects on daily life routine. Many children face extreme forms of violence either done to them physically or mentally or they have been witness to them. The footprints of those harsh times stay in the minds of these minors (UNHCR & ERFEC 2013). Difficult circumstances make the unaccompanied minors to take on long journeys, which are both dangerous and harsh, their life in different detention centers, refugee camps and uncertainty of future these are all very depressing things. Some children cannot recover from their trauma all their lives. Not only psychological health but also physical health is also important. Some minors have physical injuries from accidents happened on their way. Some come with diseases like Tuberculosis, polio, and hepatitis etc. the unaccompanied minors mostly origin from third world countries or developing world where the health systems are very weak and majority of people cannot afford them so many people do not even get the diagnosis of their illness. Health barriers can be of different types like physical disability, sickness, mental health challenges. The uncertainty of asylum procedures creates the fear of re-traumatization in the already traumatized minors. The worries of family left behind keeps a minor stressed and this hinders with his ability to learn, focus and develop interest (UNHCR & ERFEC 2013).

Family reunification is a major goal of unaccompanied minor refugees who are granted refugee status. This aspect of refugee integration is not being researched a lot only few studies talk about it in briefly. The minor refugees once settled in Norwegian municipalities try their best for family reunification. They are constantly thinking about how their family could join them here. These children are not living in isolation; just because they took the journey alone doesn't mean they have fully abandoned their family back home. The unaccompanied minors who have been separated for very long time from their families are more likely to experience a changed/extended family if they are reunified through the reunification regulations (UNHCR & ERFEC 2013). In the struggle for family reunification these unaccompanied minors try to find some kind of employment through which they can save some money or help their family back home financially. Many minors are constantly under pressure from their families for financial support or to call them to his new country of residence. Its also been observed in the limited research available on the family reunification aspect of integration that even if the unaccompanied minor is reunified with his family its not necessary that it will ease the integration process.

Education is another big barrier in the process of integration although it's a big facilitator as well. Education is provided in Norwegian at schools and colleges in Norway. The educational background of the unaccompanied minor also creates challenges for the minor. Some have no education at all some have very weak basic educational foundation. There are also minors who have very strong educational backgrounds but the language creates problems for their performance. Mental health can also affect the performance of a minor in academics. In some Norwegian municipalities the minors are enrolled in one-year long integration program where they learn Norwegian language and basic education. Once they are done with this one-year program they join normal school in accordance with their age, academic background and school assessment (Pastoor 2013).

The above-mentioned challenges and barriers play their role in hindering the integration process of the unaccompanied minors. It's important that more research is done on the integration specifically the unaccompanied minors. The lack of research in this area makes the challenges and barriers less known to common people. It's important to research more for the purpose that the research will bring out more details and minor perspectives. Will be able to help the integration process better.

#### **Ethics:**

Ethics according to Sarah Banks (1995) is the study of morals, the different norms that people follow with regards to what is good and bad or right or wrong. Ethics are sometimes called moral philosophy. In ethics we try to look at why and how are something's good or right (Banks 1995). In social work research there is a wide consensus that ethics, values and morals are an integral and inevitable. Social work research is rich with ethical dilemmas and issues. Ethical codes are the main principles of the profession. Ethical work revolves around the practical doing of ethics. The field of research is evolving and we can read more literature that talks about the broadening of ethical scope to make emotions, relationships and virtues part of research ethics (Banks 2016). Banks (2016) looks at the ethical work in reference to people who put effort to see the hidden aspects of practice and for justifying who they are and what they have been doing. Sociologists and psychologists use the term

work to relate the research to emotional and identity roles. Sarah Banks gave six features that can help the reader conceptualize better the ethics in professional life (Banks 2013 in banks 2016). She later gave one more feature making the total number as seven features. These features do not act as normative framework but rather they are the analytical explanation of the work social workers do. Following are the seven features bank identified:

1. Framing work
2. Role work
3. Emotional work
4. Identity work
5. Reason work
6. Relationship work
7. Performance work

In this chapter I will talk about two features emotional work and relationship work with the help of two different scenarios (Banks 2016):

#### Scenarios 1: case from Cuba

A lady social worker was working in government insurance office in Cuba. The office was responsible for taking care of different claims regarding health insurances claims; only the poor who did not have any other insurance were relevant for getting help from this government office. The lady social worker once experienced that there was a lady whose child was sick but his needs were not on emergency basis, this child was refused by the child health institute based on the judgment of the staff that the child's father has a health insurance so that is why this child cannot obtain this service. The lady social worker talks about her decision to talk to the boss in order to provide assistance to this child. The lady social worker made this decision based on her reasoning and understanding. The lady social worker is working to improve the social work practices that have impact on families and their right to health services. In this case we see the dilemma, it's a classical ethics case in which the focus is not on building relationship with the service user or getting emotionally attached but rather on reasoning and social work values. This scenario has been described contextually and the role of the lady social worker is very relevant.

Scenario 2: working with asylum seeking family in Sweden, mixing professional and personal:

A young male social worker was doing practice work with non-profit organization in Sweden, he was working with school children and families. There was a family, which was recently referred to the organization; the family of a mother and her son and daughter were isolated. The male social worker kept visiting the family for the period of three months. The mother's daughter was mostly depressed and the girl was not able to adjust in school. The male social worker helped this family many times, even when there were some police cases. After some time things started to get better for the family but the male social worker could feel that the mother is looking at him as her family friend. The mother was very unhappy with the ending of the male social workers time with them. The mother asked the male social worker to come and attend the birthday of her boy, which was after four months. The male social worker tells that he was not able to handle this situation properly, he thinks that only because he didn't want to tell the mother that you are only the service users for me as a social worker, and not family friends, the professional lines got blurred.

This case is an example of problematic ethical situation; the student social worker thinks he could have been more professional. In this case emotions are emphasized.

I will use these two scenarios given by Sarah Banks to explain emotional work and trust/relationship work (Banks 2016).

Trust:

In the article 'everyday ethics in Professional life' Sarah Banks talk about relationship work. She is using the term relationship to refer to the relationship of trust among the parties involved in research, social work etc. she is talking about the trust that develops with time among service users and service providers. Luhmann's also talked about the trust factor in social work. He says that the social workers is the representative of the social system also he is the bridge between the persona and the social system. Children are given more trust in social work details now and Luhmann's is interested in looking at this. He is focusing on the concept of trust to look at the positioning of social worker in a certain setting (Christensen 2013).

Now looking at the above given scenarios, in scenario one there is very less detail of the kind of relationship the lady social worker, the child and the mother shared. This scenario is the kind of situation, which is faced by social workers very often. There are almost no details provided about the women and her son and the lady social worker do not have any kind of relationship with the women i.e. trust responsibility or care. The lady social worker is in general challenging the injustice happening with the boy; this scenario is looked as the case of ethical justice, which focuses on universal human rights and general logic (Gilligan 1982 in Banks 2016).

Whereas in scenario two we don't know how the student social worker built trust or how did he do care duties for the family but this scenario is all about relationships. We can understand the degree of closeness from the way the mother cared for the student social worker, how they developed trust and became very familiar with each other during the students practice time with the family. This scenario talks about the challenges faced by the professionals in their professional life.

Trust is very important factor in research ethics. It's very important for the researchers to pay attention to the aspects of trust within the ethical boundaries of research.

#### Emotions:

People put effort to understand the emotions involved like emotions of happiness, guilt, joy, curiosity, sadness and empathy. To develop the concept of emotions in work context Hochschild (1983 in Banks 2016) gave the concept of emotional labour. Banks uses the concept of emotions in a very general term covering emotions in professional life. Where as Hochschild looks at it in a very private term (Lesson 2010 and Smith 2012 in Banks 2016). Emotions are related to ethics because they involve relationships either with us or with others. In a professional context the ethical emotions are focused on not harming, care, guilt, shame etc. emotions and feelings can be differentiated between (Vetlesen 1994 in Banks 2016). In social work research emotional work is going on all the time at times it is not regarded as relevant in cases of ethical considerations (Banks 2016). Even today a very dominant part of social work practitioners argue that the professionals should keep the emotions out of their professional work.

Looking at scenario number one we do not see many emotions highlighted, the mother of sick child is shown upset but we do not have been given an idea about the emotional feelings of the lady social worker, neither her efforts for the case. The lady social worker is sticking to her professional duties and do not have any doubt about the situation of the mother and son. The situation of the mother might have affected her but this has not been talked about in the scenario. In this scenario no emotional work is made visible. The lady social worker however talks about her professional identity and the values of social work embedded in her heart, this somehow hints at the emotional aspect.

In scenario two we see more emotions. The family has been shown as emotionally drained, the mother was crying often and herself and her daughter also had depression in the beginning. The daughter was not able to adjust in school although they got better after sometime. The mother was reminded of her past traumatic experiences with police after the recent encounters with police. The mother was very unhappy when she got to know about the ending of the student social workers practice time with them. In the whole scenario we do not know much about the emotions of the student social worker expressed in the ending part that too came up when the mother considered the student social worker a family friend. The student thought that if she tells the mother that for her they were only service users it will hurt them and that why her professional boundaries. The student was being kind and in this process he went through different kinds of emotions himself like guilt and kindness (Banks 2016).

It is important to talk about professional ethics because it explains on bigger or smaller level the work of professionals. Sarah Banks looks at the role of ethics as a very important part of professional responsibilities she talks about a professional being ethical and also acting ethically (Banks 2016).

## 2. Methodology

### Qualitative research:

Qualitative research is a research methodology that looks at the details of human experiences and analyzes it (Marvasti 2004). Every researcher working with qualitative research is looking for meanings and tries to understand the phenomena in a given situation; this research method is very inductive in nature. Qualitative research method involves use of different techniques for data collection and analyses of the collected data for example semi structured/structured interviews, sampling or individual open ended interviews (Mohajan 2018). Qualitative research is done in a natural environment where the researcher has the opportunity to be fully involved and can collect as much understanding of the surroundings and can have different experiences. Qualitative research is non-numeric. It provides us with the opportunity to study human experiences and human life by studying a specific places or targeted group of people. Qualitative research studies the already existing understandings and perceptions of people about society, social life, relationships, certain programs or other people's experiences (Mohajan 2018). Words are given more importance in qualitative research. Qualitative researchers are interested to study how people understand and give meaning to different happenings in their day-to-day life. Different methods can be used in qualitative research to collect data or study different occurring phenomena's like individual interviews, focused group interviews, ethnography, biography, participant observation, grounded theory, case studies, open ended interviews, discourse analysis etc. qualitative research uses interviews, diaries, observations, questionnaires to collect and analyze material. Qualitative research is becoming more popular in social science because of its focus on studying emotions, perceptions and human behavior's. Qualitative research does not involve statistics and numbers. Qualitative research is rooted in philosophy, psychology sociology and history. New concepts and theories emerge from the results of qualitative research (Mohajan 2018).



During my masters degree we got the opportunity to study in Umeå University Sweden where we were taught about qualitative research as a subject. This was my first time working on this methodology and found it very interesting. I choose to do qualitative research for my thesis because of my past experience of working with it. I have never been good with maths and statistics so choosing quantitative method was not a suitable option for me. Qualitative research gave me the opportunity to use my own understanding of different concepts and experiences of my informants. This approach was more humanly in nature for my preference. I had used qualitative research methodology for my data collection method and to analyze my qualitative data I will use thematic analyses.

#### Inductive and Deductive approach:

Inductive approach: This approach is concerned with the creation of new knowledge, new theory from the collected data. Grounded theory is a classic example of inductive theory. Glaser and Strauss pioneered grounded theory writes Deborah Gabriel (2013). In inductive approach the research has an open mind in the beginning of research about the later findings. The researcher aims at producing a new theory from his collected data. The researcher reflects on his new theory at the end of analyses to see its relationship with other theories in its area of focus. Grounded theory is a very complicated approach, throughout the analyses in grounded theory there are shifts in data (Gabriel 2013).

Deductive approach: This approach has its foundation in a hypothesis. The researcher has a preconceived idea about his subject of study and he starts his research with some understandings. Deductive approach studies the causes of existence of its study subject. Deductive approach wants to study the already existing theories; one cannot conduct deductive research if the theory they aim to study does not exist. Deductive approach in research studies the theories that were developed through inductive research.

It has been seen that during a research project the researchers start with inductive approach and while concluding they use deductive approach to confirm their findings. Researchers have combined the inductive and deductive approaches during their research projects (streefkerk 2019). In my thesis I have used both these approaches as well for some things that I talked about in my thesis I had an already conceived idea

or understanding like family reunification or emotional aspect of a researcher etc. but other wise I had a very open mind about my findings. During my data collection I came across many new information, which I was not aware of before. So in this thesis I have reflected upon my existing ideas and came across new knowledge. I will talk about this in the conclusion and discussion chapter.

#### Methods of data collection:

In qualitative methodology of data collection there are many ways that could be used for collecting data. The type of data collection depends on what the study is about. Researcher makes his plan of research for data collection and decides on the most relevant method (Mbachu 2018). Some common methods of data collection are:

- Literature sources
- Surveys
- Interviews
- Observations
- Documents and records
- Experiments

In this thesis project I have used interviews as the main method of data collection. In addition I have used literature as sources. This is about the already published material on the Internet or in books form is used. This is done through the data, which has been published, by different authors or researchers. News papers, books, articles, reports, textbooks and published papers can be used a literature sources (Mbachu 2018). I also used this secondary data collection method along with interviews for my thesis research. All the information taken from reports, books, articles or different dissertations was fully referenced for.

Interviews: interviews are a data collection method used mostly in qualitative research, in interviews the interview asks the informants different types of questions i.e. open ended, closed ended, specific and general questions and the researcher then records the answers of the participants (Quad 2016). Once the interviews are done the research then transcribes the complete interview for analysis. In my data collection for this thesis I used individual interviews with my participants. I used mobile phone to record the answers. I then transcribed the interviews once I completed each of my

interviews and saved into my personal computer, which could not be used by somebody else. I used open-ended questions in my interviews. The informants were given a chance to speak uninterrupted and without giving leads. Open-ended questions provide more room to the informant to give more information; it does not limit the informants (Quad 2016).

I choose one on one interview because I find them as very informative. A researcher is able to get more than answers in one on one interviews. My reason for choosing one-on-one interviews was they are more focused, all attention is on the informant and these type of interviews are more structured. Previously I have had the experience of group interviews and I did not feel comfortable with them so in my thesis I opted for one-on-one interviews. One on one interviews are very costly and time consuming type of interviews yet this is the most commonly used type (Quad 2016).

#### Recruiting informants:

It is important in Qualitative research to look at the process of recruitment of informants. To get the selection of recruits should be according to the scope of study, recruits should hold relevance to the study subject (Arcury & Quandt 1999).

In this thesis total of three informants were recruited. My Supervisor made the initial contact with the informants. In the thesis plan I aimed at recruiting six informants but unfortunately I had to reduce it to three only. I will get back to this limitation in the other section. One-hour interviews were planned with the informants. The invitation letter were first send out to the possible informants giving brief information about my project, the rights they had in research, the information about how to withdraw at any time and about the audio recording of the interviews. Once I received the positive response from my informants I scheduled time with them and conducted interviews. One of the interview was done face-to-face the other two were done on the telephone. In the beggaring of the thesis I had no plan of doing phone interviews, I had not even known much about phone interviews but the global Pandemic COVID-19 was the reason I had to opt for phone interviews. In ideal situation I would have done face-to-face interviews.

Interviews on telephone for data collection are a very rapidly growing trend among researchers. This method is not very reliable for the academics despite of its

popularity and effectiveness (Block & Erskine 2012). Often in discussion about interview methods the telephone interviews are not given importance. In the face to face interviews there is one big advantage that is that you can observe the informants very closely, you learn more than the answers whereas in telephone interviews you cannot observe. First time use of interviews on telephone was done in 1980s as written in data, it's not a very recent phenomenon of telephone interviews but it has gained much popularity now (Block & Erskine 2012).

I have interviewed two people on the telephone whereas I interviewed one person face to face. All my informants were females. The informants that I selected were having research background. The number of informants was considered all right under the circumstances by my supervisor. I got very positive response from all three informants to be part of my data collection. After my supervisor made her contact first with the researchers I was followed afterward's and luckily the informants were willing to become part of my research project. The researchers had very vast experience in the field of research, although one of my informants had a different topic she was researching on but her general feedback was very productive. Informant number three was very open about all her past experiences that she has had with the children. The advantage that the informant number three had for me was that she was experienced in working at the asylum reception center also which gave her very detailed information and knowledge about the unaccompanied minors in the process.

#### Limitations:

The year 2020 has been a very heavy year for the world, natural disasters; wild fires and above all the global pandemic COVID-19 had jolted the world. The corona virus had affected the whole world. The corona virus started in China in late 2019 but then slowly spread to the rest of the world causing unprecedented situations. The whole world is at war with this dangerous virus. No vaccine has yet been made available. Millions have lost their lives and millions have been affected badly by this virus. The health systems of many developed countries were unable to bear the burden of infected and dead. Social isolations, travel bans, quarantines, lockdowns were the topics of discussion everywhere. The pandemic had its psychological toll on people also; washing hands multiple times, washing groceries with extra care, maintain physical distance has just created paranoia. I was not able to do my data collection on time due to the lockdown and corona paranoia (I still am living with it though) and

this is why I had to apply for extension in thesis submission deadline. The work progress slowed also due to the psychological pressure of the virus. I almost isolated myself in the house for two months just watching the news and overthinking. It has been tough.

The other limitation I had experienced was the lack of material on some topics like integration of unaccompanied minors. There were not very much material available and I had to rely on UNHCR/UN/UNICEF for most materials.

This is my first experience writing a thesis I have not done thesis writing before so throughout the write-up I have been confused about what the right way of doing a thesis is. I have been back and forth checking my table of content readjusting positions of different topics.

One more limitation I would mention here is the third interview that I did, I did not include it all in my analyses, the informant had her project done on polish work immigrants so I did not get much material relevant to my subject. She did give me information in general but less on my topic.

#### Ethical Consideration:

This thesis involved research with informants so the ethical considerations were given importance. The informants were given free hand to decide if they agreed on becoming my informants. The consent forms were provided before each interview. The informants were made aware of their rights as participants in my research. The right to withdraw was provided to all informants without any consequences. The permission to audio record the interview was taken before the start of interview and in the invitation letter it was categorically mentioned as well. The informant's identity was kept anonymous during the analysis of collected data, once I transcribed the interviews the audio recordings were deleted by myself. The trust that the informants showed on me was well maintained.

#### Obtaining empirical data from fellow student:

During my empirical data collection as I have mentioned above I was not able to gather much data which effected my empirical section. I have been doing my thesis

along with my one other fellow student. We had the same supervisor and my fellow student belonged to my degree batch. He was doing his research on social workers experience working with minor asylum seeker children. My fellow student had gathered a lot of data through his interviews. I have been an assistant with him during his interviews and this was done after the approval of NSD and with the informed consent of his participants. He used most of his collected data in his own research but still some parts were unused. After the suggestion by my supervisor while considering the limited data I had we decided that we will contact the participants in the research project of my fellow student and if they give consent I will use the unused parts of data relevant to my themes in my analysis. Fortunately the participants agreed that I could use the data they have provided to my fellow student.

As I was considerate about my own informants I will treat the data I have obtained from my fellow student the same way keeping the same ethical considerations in mind. We will ensure the anonymity of the informants.

In the end of this thesis I will attach the consent emails I have received from the participants of my fellow student's research who allowed me to use their data. I got data relating to emotions and trust from my fellow student. His data was rich in these themes but it did not relate to his research topic that is why he was willing to share it with me. Trust and emotions are very dominant themes that I have talked about in my results chapter but in my own data set I had very limited quotations. My data set was not very lengthy I had strong opinions for the concepts of trust and emotions but the quotes were not enough. The external data set helped me talk clearly about them.

I would also mention here that I was an assistant in the research with my fellow student in his data collection, this was done with the permission of Nsd and the informants gave consent of this. Same way my fellow student was a research assistant in my data collection. We have had this collaboration done for our master thesis. This was a very interesting experience as it gave me the understanding of working in a team but keeping professional ethics in mind. Overall it was a smooth process of collaboration, the fellow student kept very professional attitude throughout our collaboration period.

### Thematic analysis:

Thematic analysis is a way of analysis in qualitative research methodology; thematic analysis is used to answer questions in research about the experiences of people, different views and opinions. It can be used with many different approaches as deductive, inductive etc. no research is neutral its always influenced by the researcher or different researches, thematic analysis doesn't claim neutrality either (Brulé 2020). Braun and Clarke (2006) writes elaborately about thematic analysis and the misconceptions about it, they also talked about how undervalued this method of analysis has been in qualitative research. Thematic analysis is very flexible, it can be done using different concepts from various fields. Thematic analysis research results in finding themes that explains the perceptions, experiences and views of people on a certain specific subject or topic (Brulé 2020).

In the article 'striving to meet the trustworthiness criteria' authors Nowell, Norris, White and Moules (2017) talk about the increasing interest of people in doing qualitative research. This method of research is getting popularity and trust in researcher, this is why it is even more important to conduct qualitative research in a very structural and rigorous manner so the results are meaningful. The researchers should analyze the qualitative research data properly by following the proper steps of analysis. The process of analysis should be detailed and elaborate that it will seem trustworthy to the reading audience (Nowell, Norris, White and Moules 2017).

Braun and Clarke have extensively explained thematic analysis, they have talked about the six stages of thematic analysis in detail. Before I get into my data analysis I will briefly explain the six stages of thematic analysis by Braun and Clark below (Braun & Clarke 2006). Six steps of thematic analysis by Braun and Clarke are:

#### Six steps of Thematic Analysis:

- Familiarization: to understand the collected data, to write down the recorded data and then read it multiple times to develop understanding.
- Initial codes: to write down all initial codes from the transcribed interviews.
- Looking for themes: combining different codes into similar themes.
- Relooking at themes: to look again at stage one and stage two and creating a basic analysis structure.

- Explaining and giving titles to themes: this stage explains the different identified themes and the detailed analysis with a specific name of each theme.
- Report writing: the final stage of analysis where important details, compelling quotations, relating it to the original research questions and relevant literature are written down. A final report is produced in the last stage.

I find this method of analysis interesting and comparatively easy. I have one previous experience of doing thematic analysis for a different exam essay so I have a level of comfort working with this method. I will use thematic analysis to work on my analysis of collected data.

#### Analysis of collected data:

In this portion the data I have collected through conducting three individual interviews will be analyzed. I have used thematic analysis for analyzing my data set. I have followed the six stages of thematic analysis by Braun and Clark (2006) as guidelines for this analysis. The interviews that I have taken were recorded with the consent of my informants that later I transcribed. I must mention that it took me less time than I had planned initially for doing this stage. Once I was done with transcribing the recordings I began reading them. In the first reading it didn't make much sense to me but as I read a few more times I began to form initial codes in my mind. I kept writing down the codes. I had spent many days on this analysis every time I read the text it gave more different ideas for codes. The codes were too many of them quite similar to each other so I combined them into one similar theme or an umbrella theme. This whole process was very long and I am unable to write it all down here so in this thesis write-up I will only write down the last stage of the six stages of analysis. This part of my thesis I have enjoyed doing the most because it gave me freedom to use my own understanding, my own knowledge for analyzing the data of course I will use supportive relevant studies and literature for my arguments. This part has made me the most confused also because I till the end was going back and forth to check if I am doing it right or if I have missed something in the end I pulled it up. Below I will get in to my themes one by one forming my analysis of collected data.



Initially I added my data quotes in the relevant fields but later I got external data set that I have talked about in my methodology chapter. I added more relevant data quotes and tried to draw a comparison between the researchers and social workers approach towards same questions or concepts. It will be interesting to read different data sets and form a common ground or very different responses in my analysis.

### 3. Findings about trust and emotion in the relationship

Trust:

In my data collection I have interviewed three researchers, one thing common in all three interviews was the focus of researchers in building a relationship of comfort and trust with their informants (participants in their research projects). My informants were all PhD students or researchers when doing their projects so they had enough time to do participant observation and spend more time with their participants. The more time they spent the better understanding they can develop, in one of my interviews my informant said and I quote,

*“I spent around 7 months with my participants I met them very often, I spent weekends with them we ate together we went to activities together, they started to open up to me about their feelings and were ready to answer my questions’ (Informant 3).*

The relationship of trust between participants and researcher is considered the foundation of a quality research. The trust factor is given a lot of importance in research as it yields very good results in data collection. The concept of ‘Trust’ in research has not been researched a lot but my informants provided a lot of insight into how it is important to develop trust among them (Guillemin, Barnard, Allen, Stewart, Walker, Rosenthal and Gillam 2018). The area of my research was focused on unaccompanied minors; they are a very vulnerable group and the researchers had to be very sensitive towards them. My interview with informant number one and three I got most of my data from. The informants talked about the nervousness their participants faced in the beginning of their time with them it was not easy for these minors to open up easily about their experiences. In one of the interview the informant said,

*“In the beginning they didn’t wanted to talk a lot with me, we stayed in a ‘Yes and No only’ zone for a while because they were shy or scared maybe but I gave time and I was kind to them not judging” (Informant 1).*

Trust is a human skill that they use in interpersonal relationships. While conducting interviews and listening to my informants answer different questions in detail I got the understanding that these researchers (my informants) had first tried to develop a comfort level with their participants, a comfort level where they can be comfortable around each other once that was achieved then they further progressed in their research data collection. The external data set two suggests that the social workers working with these minors are also building the relationship of trust between themselves and their service users. It's interesting to do a comparison of researchers and social workers both working with the minor refugees in terms of trust. The data I collected and the external data set two I received suggests that just like the researchers the social workers are also trying to work on the building of trust so they are better able to understand their service users one of the social workers said,

*“We talk about these things like how do we do this, how do we create trust, the most important thing is to be your self, the most important tool that we are working with is our self so you have to be honest, open if you are trying to be someone that you are not they would figure it out and they would not trust you they most important thing when they arrive we are open and friendly we help them and we are interested one of the important thing is that we are open welcoming interested in who they are and this plays an important role in trust , we are not just there to do the job we are there because we care we talk about professional love” (informant 2 external data set).*

The above quote shows that the first step for both researchers and social workers is to create trust. Once the relationship of trust is developed then they think that trust is the most important factor and it impacts the minors in many ways.

The social workers like the researchers have a very tricky relationship with their service users and informants. Its very tricky to maintain boundaries and keep the relationship professional but some times the lines get blurred one of the social workers said while answering a question she said,

*“Off course when you work with people specially vulnerable this will challenge you as a human if it doesn't you are not a human. I had a supervision with one of the houses the other day and one of the staff said they (minors) are like my brother and sisters and that makes me extremely frustrated when they make wrong decision. For example when they drop out of school because we do have those who drop out of school and the staff they want them to succeed and get a good life and that kind of shows that they really care. It's not just a job for some of the social workers it's more and to keep the professional distance is at*

*times difficult because you are working in such proximity all the time” (informant 2 external data set).*

This relates to the study of the theorist Sarah Banks that I have talked in my theoretical chapter. She also in one scenario defined how the relationship gets blurred. In the external data set I see a difference of opinion between two informants one of them said,

*“Sometimes challenges can be about the barriers, in this line of work you get very invested but its important to also keeping the relationship at a level that off course you are primary caregiver as they live here. Some live here for two years some live here three some one-year. We have to be there for them and they know that we love them and we are there for them. But having a line that they don’t get co-dependent. Its not good for them in long run if they are co-dependent on you because you wont be there available as their family member” (informant 3 external data set).*

This quote by the social worker made me look at the difference of opinion or different answers from two social workers. The social workers here talks bout keeping a cordial relationship but also maintaining a line that in her opinion is very important for the both of them. Researchers also talked about the maintaining of line where their research is not getting compromised. Respect is very important in any relationship. Trust is developed between researcher and his informants or social workers and their service users by basic relationship etiquettes, by giving respect and understanding. In the case of minor refugees it’s very important to be kind and empathetic to them the relationship between participant and researcher also calls for mutual respect and dignity. It is among the research ethics also that the participant’s dignity should be ensured (Guillemin, Barnard, Allen, Walker, Rosenthal and Gillam 2018). In my data collection I came across the information that my informants talked about how they were being respectful towards their participants and that created an environment of positivity and it gave confidence to the participants to be more expressive,

*“I was being respectful and empathetic with my participants, it was essential for me to not hurt their sentiments” (informant 2).*

When the participants are treated with respect that gives them a feeling of ownership, they are more comfortable to talk openly and participate. The unaccompanied minor who is the participant in the research take time in adjusting to being the participants they have their fears and many are not used to talking about their experiences. It’s very important that the researcher makes the participant comfortable and easy in the process of project. For successful research collaborations the factor of trust is very

important. Trust between researcher and participant's impacts cooperation coordination and performance during the research duration. During interview one my informant mentioned,

*“In the beginning they were very formal and not ready to share much but once we started spending time and I opened up about my research project the formal became informal, I feel time and empathy goes a long way”*

Like my researcher said that its very important for them to make an initial cordial relationship with their informants the data set of social workers also talks about how it is important to make the minors comfortable around them, one of the social workers said,

*“The steps that we start with is by making them feel safe, building our relationship because it is important” (informant 3 external data set).*

## Emotions:

I gave this theme this title because in this theme I will discuss the approach my informants used during their projects and how they separated their own feelings and opinion from influencing the research project and participants. While doing initial codes and selective coding many codes were falling in this category so I combined them into this one theme. In my research questions there were around two three questions related to the approaches used while interacting with unaccompanied minor participants and how to deal with emotions of the researcher. The external data set that I received also had many parts that relate to the emotions while working with unaccompanied minors. My data set talks about researchers emotional journey whereas the external data set that I obtained talks about the social workers that work with these minors. It will be interesting to see the approach these both use during their time with unaccompanied minors. I am also interested in the different approaches they have towards emotional connection in comparison to my own collected data from researchers. In the external data set one of the social worker responded while talking about emotions and bonding with minor refugees,

***“We are living together just like a family and family take care of each other kids”  
(Informant 2 data set 2).***

The emotional aspect of this was my personal curiosity that is why I included the question of emotional effect on the researchers while conducting their research with minors. The researcher has a very important position in any research. The researchers are affected by the research process as well like the way they affect the research process (Widdowfield 2000). While conducting interviews I asked the question about how do the researcher (my informant) kept her emotions in control and not let that affect the research project. My already perceived notion was that a researcher works objectively to the best possible limit. But my informants all three of them said otherwise, informant number two said,

***“I don’t think I keep my emotions aside, at times the child’s life story is very tragic and they are very emotional talking about it, it does get under my skin, I do feel upset and often think about it, after all I am human and we are not without emotions” (informant 2).***

Another informant answered like,

***“Hmm I behave very normal with my participants, I empathies with them I feel sorry for what they have been through. At times the participant want to just talk about their experiences but they are not given the chance to talk so I become the ears they need, I don’t think I need to keep my emotions***

*aside, I feel I can connect better by being emotionally connected to them. Currently I am also writing an article about this". (Informant 3)*

When looking at the external data set and comparing the answers of social workers on the same questions, one of the social worker said,

*"The very important part of work is to understand the emotions the way they appear, its normal to get angry, sad and making sense of it all" (informant 3 external data set).*

The same social workers also said,

*"You have to be strong. Strong adult to stand in front of all emotions and feelings. We have to be kind of locked on our emotions" (informant 3 external data set).*

Now lets look at the above mentioned three quotes where the first one is by a researcher who talks about her emotions during the work with minor refugees, she talks about his human self as emotional and how its alright to feel sad when the minor tells them about their lives. In quote two the social worker number three talks about how important it is to be understanding of the emotions of the minors but in the next quote by the same informant she talks about how she locks her own emotions and acts like a firm strong adult who can draw a line between professional duties and crossing those professional lines by getting emotionally involved.

This made me think that in the case of social worker number three she is talking about understanding the emotions of minor refugee but on the other hand talks about being non emotional whilst work time. Is it possible to understand the emotions of somebody when you are in an emotionally neutral zone yourself? We will discuss this more in discussion section.

During the interview with my informant number three I came to hear about different examples rather stories of how the experiences of the participants affect the researcher like at one point my informant said,

*" I had previously worked in asylum reception center. One of the participant in my research project living in a municipality when talking told me that how its hard for her to fall asleep at night, 'she said that in camp she had a friend who came to Norway with her in boat he was a happy smiling face always, but we got settled in different municipalities and some times later I found out he killed himself'. When I thought about it I knew that boy from reception center and then I kept thinking for days if I could have done something more or better for him maybe he would be still alive so yeah it does effect me emotionally".*

The researchers working with unacompanied minors get to explore many life experiences so did my informants. To form a better researcher participant relationship also it's important to be empathetic of the participant. Being cold non-responsive and

least understanding will impact the participant also. The social workers at one point talked about how it is important to be supervised also in terms of maintaining professional boundaries. She talked about the need for supervision by professionals who can help them with seeing the blurred lines of how much should they get involved, one of the head social worker in the external data said mentioned, *“Off course it will effect everything and that’s the important of being aware of how you feel how is it effecting you the decision of the unaccompanied minors, here the professionalism comes in you have to try and not make it worse for the kid because he is struggling already and have to find out what is the reason they he is not managing to go to school and motivate him to go to school to have a better future so you need to find out the core of the problem and off course that is extremely challenging when you are emotionally involved that’s the reason we do have supervision we go and have one too one supervision and when we see that the social workers are really struggling putting the boundaries between them selves and the youth because if they cross the line and get too much emotionally involved ,we are getting emotionally involved but this involvement can be bad so we need to go into these situations and supervise the social worker in order for them to do good , it’s good they we get involved but we need help and to reflect on how we can be involved in a good way not in a harmful way” (informant 2 external data set).*

Social worker number three from external data answered the same question like this, *“I think its kind of important that you as social worker have to go trough some processes with yourself, where your barriers go. Its not a rule that how emotionally you get involved, we have rules for what is ok and not ok that is kind of independent choice for your self. So I think if you are going to work for many years may be your whole life then that is an important process to go trough with your self. If you are giving every thing to some one and you have nothing left you are like I can not give anything more and you are trying to protect yourself, that’s not good for the kids who are coming after they get the bad result, because you don’t know how to keep the boundaries it is very tricky because you can’t help getting emotionally attached when you work with some one for may years but you have to be conscious about how far you push the line they are moving on and it will be unfair for the ones coming after they will not get the love they need” (informant 3 external data set).*

These two quotes mentioned above from social workers and one from researcher shows the sharp difference of approach between the two different professionals. The researcher in my data collection said how being emotionally connected helps them bond better whereas the social workers talked about how important it is to know the boundaries and balance the emotional attachment with their service users.

#### 4. Findings about different aspects of the situation of the unaccompanied minors

##### Education:

Like I discussed earlier in other chapters about the educational backgrounds of these minors in my empirical data collection also I came across the factor that one of the challenges these unaccompanied minors were facing was coping up with their studies. We cannot look at one thing in isolation here like for example if we are talking about an unaccompanied minor who has been granted residence permit and is now living in a municipality then his life has started from zero again all past data erased and he starts fresh, This is not the situation The burden of past trauma stays with them for very long or maybe lifelong. It is very hard for these children to perform well like their Norwegian peers in school. In my interview with informant number three she mentioned a story of a boy who was doing poor in school but he was called lazy and that he was making excuses to avoid school, she said

*“I asked the boy what’s bothering his performance at school he said, ‘I stay awake all night because when I close my eyes I see blood everywhere, I hear cries of my family my neighbors I see myself standing helpless. They (school) thinks I make excuses so I will miss school but they don’t understand that I am going crazy I cannot pull myself out of what I have been through” (informant 3)*

Learning has been a problem related to refugee children. Being exposed to violence and displacement badly affects the children they are exposed to different traumas. Relocating and restarting is very stressful for these children (Graham, Minhas and Paxton 2016). After all this when the child starts schooling in completely new society and new system adds to the stress. These children carry an invisible suitcase of past trauma with themselves its so heavy that all they focus on is past. Informant number one and three talked about the struggle of children in school, the informants mentioned multiple factors of poor performance at school like language, educational background, and interest in studies, mental stress. While the interview with my informant number three she mentioned

*“These children work very hard but they still are legging behind because of where they come from, how well their Norwegian is, there are many reasons but one thing I noticed is that it needs extra effort to perform well in school”(informant 3)*

There are unacompanied minors who are very resilient too and they work hard to better their life. Every human is different some can have a higher threshold for tolerance



whereas some are very sensitive. Coping abilities and strategies used vary from child to child. The data I collected from literature and informant interviews also talks about resilience in unaccompanied minors, how they want to perform well in studies to become something, which enables them to give back to the society. One of the informants said

***“One of my participant told me that he wanted to become a nurse so he could help people. These children are very keen to give back to the society” (informant 3)***

#### Friends through thick and thin:

The unaccompanied minors live in different camps while their application is being processed. These children at times come with friends to Norway or alone and later form friendships in camps. Some will be granted maybe protection on humanitarian grounds some will be granted protection on refugee grounds or some also get temporary residence until they turn the age of eighteen years. Many are rejected and sent back to their countries or first country of arrival. These children once granted residence are settled in different municipalities. The data collected suggests strongly that these children are very much affected by separation from their friends can be because of their friends not being granted residence or granted temporary residence. One informant said

***“One of the boys told me that he misses his friend a lot who came together with him to Norway but his asylum application was rejected and he was sent back to Kabul. Two days later he died in a bomb blast in Kabul. If Norway had not sent him back he would be still living”(informant 3)***

These children are not in isolation they form social relationships. Data that I collected also reflects that these children do not think of themselves on their own only they are concerned about their friends, their families back home, their new host society. The researchers who I interviews also talk about how much these children are concerned and affected by their friends. This instability acts as a challenge for them to integrate into the society. It slows down the process of adjustment.

#### Giving back to the society:

Unaccompanied minor children are very resilient also despite their tough journeys and difficult past they thrive for better future. Resilience is defined as ‘the capacity to cope, learn and thrive in the face of challenges, change and adversity’ (Cahill, Farrelly, Forster & Smith 2008).

Most common perception is that the refugees are only taking from the society not giving back enough but in my research I found out through the experienced of my informants that these unaccompanied minors are very motivated to do something productive which can help the society. They want to contribute to the society, which gave them a new life. These children are very vocal about it too that how much it means to them to help other people. One informant quoted a boy saying

*“I try to do something good each day for this society, I volunteer at different places, I pick garbed from the street, I help others as much as I can” (informant 3).*

Its not big tasks that these children take up but in their capacity they try to do as much as they can. Their educational choices at times reflect their interest in helping other people. These children are dealing with their past burdens and trauma but little acts of kindness gives them positive hopes (Radicalization Awareness Network 2019). My informant said during an interview regarding a unacompanied minor girl

*“I want to do so much to help people but sometimes I just don’t have the strength” (informant 3).*

There are so many barriers faced by these children that hinders in their integration process. The municipalities take steps to help them cope with these challenges but it’s a long time taking process that involves many variables to work in favor of child and help healing process. The participants in my informant’s research project talked about how their caregivers (social workers) helped them in adjusting to their new life. The role of these social workers is very important for these children. They look up to them for guidance, they go to them with their problems and these children expect them to solve their problem or help them solve it, an informant said

*“One of my participant was very thankful to the social workers who has been with her, she said the social worker is the reason I have started liking living her, she is very kind and she understands my needs, she has a special place in my life and the thought scares me that when I turn eighteen I will no longer have her with me, what will I do without her support” (informant 3).*

## 5. Discussion

In my discussion chapter I will start with looking at the starting point of my thesis the formulation of my research question. I was looking to find answers for three things, one the experiences of the researchers who work with refugee minors, second what according to the minors are the challenges these minors face in the integration process and lastly, third is there any resources that these children have that could contribute to the Norwegian society. The analysis is according to the research questions, first its talking about the experiences that the researchers have while working with them and also the social workers perspective on this (which I got from the external data set). Second part is about the minors, the challenges and barriers they face and what resources they use to integrate in the Norwegian society. In the second part of my analysis I have only used my own empirical data set. I was able to find answers to some of my questions in detail whereas I also faced limitation in looking out for some answers like the resources part and also the integration part. I will discuss below in \more detail.

While reading different literature about this I came across the work of Rebekah Widdowfield (2000). She talks that in early research the 'personal' was kept away from official research reports. By personal she means the emotions, perceptions of the researcher. The research didn't account the personal experiences of the researcher while conducting the research. She talks that the last two decades have been important in terms of valuing the 'personal'. There could be many reasons behind keep the personal out of the research, qualitative research has made the studding of different experiences of researcher and participants possible but still the effort to keep the research more objective is alive. In the male dominated academic discourse on research ethics it's considered illegitimate to talk about emotions (Widdowfield 2000). In my results section I have three major themes that I discussed. I have used two different data sets one is from researchers other is from social workers, both these have worked very closely with unaccompnied minors. Due to limited data that I gathered from the researchers my analysis portion was very small and insufficient but when I combined my data with the external data set I was able to give the result section a new perspective on how can the same question be answered differently. What is ok for one professional is not ok for the other professional i.e. social workers and researchers. The concept of emotions is discussed above where it can be

understood from both the researchers and social workers that it is part of ethics for them, the emotions are a sensitive and a very tricky subject for both social workers and researchers. Sarah Banks (2016) talks about professional ethics where she argues that the role of emotions, relationships should be included. Banks talks about the expansion of ethical boundaries in professional research beyond decision-making with rationality and being faced with dilemmas. Banks (2016) talks about emotional work, she says that people make effort to understand different emotions and also to control their different emotions. The concept of emotional labour was given by Hochschild (1983) in Banks (2016) where she talks about how certain emotions are suppressed and inducted by professional to fulfill their care duties properly and not to cross the line also, she referred to emotions in a very private sense (Hochschild 1983 in Banks (2016)). Banks (2016) used the term emotions in a very general sense though. The researchers have to follow research ethics while their research projects. They have to understand the participant rights. The data that I collected and the interaction that I had with my informants it gave me the sense that keeping their emotions locked was not a thing they did. All my informants talked about how it helped them connect better with the minor asylum seekers and the better relationship they could form. One of my participant said he thinks it's very important to keep the human aspect of the researcher active during research. He even talked about his new project where he is focusing on justifying the need to have active emotions while doing research (informant 3). The social workers data when I read was more about being understanding of emotions but also maintaining a fine line between professional boundaries and creating personal relationships. The social workers seemed to be more concerned about keeping the emotions of the professional in control while around service users (minors). Banks (2016) has talked about the social workers and their emotional involvement with their service users. Different processes are involved in research like judgments, thinking, conclusions etc. these are all interconnected and have deep rooted relationship with perceptions. Emotions are deep rooted in perceptions, one self, his outer environment and different cultures (McLaughlin & Ayubayeva 2015). Trends in research are changing; human aspects of the individual are not being taken in account whereas some decades ago the strict distinction was made between the personal emotions of researcher and his research work.

The researchers also defined the concept of trust as very important for them while interacting with the minors. The social workers also talked about building relationship based on trust, mutual respect and dignity. In this theme it was very similar between the researchers and social workers. These both professionals believed that its essential to develop trust with their participant, a hostile relationship would not be beneficial for any party. The relationship building can be linked to role and identity work also (Banks 2016). Banks (2016) says that trust relationship is very important feature of care related work, she says that trust relationship highlights the significance of responsibility in the sense of taking care of other people, attentiveness in the sense of being aware of the needs of a person and responsiveness in the sense of the people receiving the care (Tronto 1993, Held 2006 in Banks 2016).

The researchers that I had as my informants addressed the barriers and challenges part during my interviews. My third informant provided the most information regarding the questions related to this part of my research. The barriers and challenges are many like educational qualifications, the impact it has on present and future perspectives of the minor like if a child has an educational background of being a madrassa student then he is very likely to suffer in the Norwegian school system, the researcher gave few examples of how the educational background plays important role in being a potential barrier. The minor children are not alone or they do not look at themselves as one, these children no matter how young are responsible for their families also. The Researcher in my interviews talked about how they need to support their families financially.

The whole system is interconnected where not only many factors act together creating a very strong barrier. It also creates facilitating factors like brotherhood, bond with caregivers. The empirical data shows that the researchers share an emotional and trust bond with their participants and the outcomes of these are very positive. The social workers on the other hand are trying to care for these minors the best possible way but on the other hand are working hard to stay within their professional lines to avoid creating dependency of minor service users on them the social workers (Banks 2016). The minors are faced with many challenges during their integration period in the Norwegian society but they are resilient with the strength to participate in different activities to be a giving part of the society. The researchers talked about how much these minors are keen on being productive parts of their new home society.

## 6. Concluding summary

In the end of my thesis I would like to reflect on the whole process of my thesis. It has been a very positive learning experience. I started with a confused mindset and by the time I am writing this conclusion I have a very clear grasp on many concepts. I had learned so many new things from this experience. I would conclude this thesis write-up by going through different points that will give my reader even more clarity about my work. My research questions were framed to identify what according to the researchers are the possible barriers and challenges in integration and the researchers experiences working with unaccompanied minors. With the help of data collection and finding relevant literature sources I tried to answer the questions. I got extra help from the data material provided to me by my fellow student due to the lack of my personally gathered data. The unaccompanied minors when they arrive in Norway they have to go through a lengthy process in which the authorities determines if they will be granted residence permit or not. There are different types of permits that they can be granted based on their application. Once they are granted the residence then the step two of the process starts which is integration of these accepted unaccompanied minors. Role of municipalities is very important in this phase of integration. The minor is now the responsibility of child welfare services and municipality. The integration process is a very lengthy and extensive process that revolves around many different aspects of life. In my research my main subjects were the researchers working in this field who have worked with the unaccompanied minors. I was looking to find answers to my research questions through the experiences of the researchers whom I recruited as my informants. The researchers I interviewed expressed their experiences about different questions that I asked them. They talked about what they think are the possible barriers like mental health, peer separation, family reunification. The literature also provided with knowledge regarding these barriers and challenges. The researchers in my empirical data collection didn't touch upon all points that I came across in the literature but that's the beauty of qualitative research, one can come across many experiences through different methods of research data collection. I also got a lot of substantial data for the first part of my research through the external data set that I got. It helped me talk in more detail about the experiences of social workers working with minors. It kind of also acted as a comparison of two different

professions dealing with the same situation or problem. It was interesting to try this during my thesis.

My research has been a mix of inductive and deductive research approach where I was exploring my existing opinion about some concepts when I started but as I read more and gathered data in the form of literature and empirical data I was compelled to change my opinion like in my opinion I thought that every unaccompanied minor wants their family to come live with them and without this they would not be able to integrate but my opinion was proven not fully right by empirical data, I came to learn that many unaccompanied minors do not want family reunification in Norway they are open to meeting with their family at a third country location. I learned new knowledge because of the empirical data that I collected and from literature.

I would like to talk about the shortcomings I faced during my research work. Many times I was searching for literature on different concepts but there wasn't enough available. For example the concept of integration, there is a big room for research in this area, not enough research has been done on the integration of unaccompanied minors and their experiences especially in Scandinavia. For future researchers I would recommend to look into this research field also. It's very important to reflect on the barriers and challenges faced by unaccompanied minors but what are the facilitating factors needs focus as well. After this thesis I have also developed an interest in doing deeper study of the integration process in minute details. The municipalities also need to look into the latest research when developing policies for the unaccompanied minors. Research is the key to improvement in policies and practices because of there will not be enough knowledge about evolving needs then the outcome of those policies will not be fruitful. Accepting the human aspect in research can be very important for better results.

In this thesis I have tried to produce new knowledge and reflect on existing understandings. I have found out through my empirical data collection that integration does not happen with isolated factors. All the factors jointly influence the process of integration. The mental well being of an individual is very important for better integration. Mental wellbeing is very broad concept. We should not only look at the medically diagnosed mental health problems as mental issues, but we should also focus on other factors effecting mental well being like sadness, grief and frustration etc. the unaccompanied minors despite carrying their invisible suitcase of past baggage

want to contribute to the betterment of host society. By doing small contributions they feel happy and motivated that they are giving back. The refugees are mostly considered the party, which only takes from the society, but in my thesis research I came to learn that they have a very major desire to help the society by becoming productive part of it. These children are very appreciative of the help they receive from the authorities and caregivers.

No matter how hard the past life has been the unaccompanied minors have resilience in them to make an effort to better their lives. They are not thinking about themselves only rather they are considerate about their families their friends and the new society they are part of now. Trying to integrate into the society within their capacity. There are loopholes in the system, which gives a constant feeling of uncertainty to some unaccompanied minors for themselves and their friends. Everything has an overlapping effect on the other. Studying each individual factor by the researchers can contribute to the betterment in policies and practices. Including the child's say in policymaking will add more value to the practice.



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## Interview Questionnaire

### Interviewing researchers

For the theme: "Researchers experience working with immigrant issues".

- The experience of immigrants in Norwegian society and the way researchers approach them, what consideration they follow when dealing with these immigrants within the researchers actual research project.
  - What are the challenges and barriers that immigrants face according to your research theme?
  - Are there any resources these immigrants bring with them and how these resources help them adjust to the Norwegian society?
  - What are the important steps and measure for you as researcher working With immigrant as informants of your research?
  - Challenges researchers face while working -doing research -with these Immigrants (emotionally)?
  - Do these immigrant talk about issued regarding what have helped them Integrate in the society better?
  - What education/skills/help are taught or provided to these immigrants That can help them grow on personal level as well as on societal and professional Level?
  - Is collaboration within or between organizations a relevant theme in? Your research or your research data? How is this theme visible and how is it? Eventually important for the immigrants you are researching?
-

## Attachment: Refugee Rights

United Nations convention on the rights of refugees:

Definition “ A Refugee is a someone who have been forced to flee his or her country because of persecution, war or violence. A refugee has a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality political opinion or membership in a particular social group. Most likely they cannot return home or are afraid to do so. War and ethnic tribal and religious violence are leading causes of refugees fleeing their homes”

Source: [UNHCR.org](http://UNHCR.org)

On 12<sup>th</sup> April 1954 the United Nations convention on the rights of refugees came into force. There are total 46 articles in the convention but below I will be discussing some articles from the convention:

Article 1: This convention will lay down principles which will act as guidelines for international laws and domestic policies. This convention defined who refugee is and every human falling under this category should be given protection.

Article 2: Like the state has responsibility toward the refugees the same way the refugee has certain duties to the country of his residence as well. He should abide by domestic laws and regulations like other citizens.

Article 3: State should provide facilities to the refugees without discriminating on the basis of color race ethnicity etc.

Article 4: State should ensure that the refugee has freedom to exercise or leave his religion.

Article 12: The country where the refugee is living should provide them domicile, the right to marriage should be facilitated by the state.

Article 16: Refugees should be ensured their legal rights as per domestic laws; there shouldn't be any discrimination between the citizens of the country and these refugees. The refugees should be given legal assistance if need be.

Article 23: State is responsible to provide relief to the refugees living legally within its territory like it provides to its other citizens.

Article 26: State will be responsible to ensure the refugees freedom of movement within the boundaries of the country. No unlawful restriction will be placed on the movement or their choice of residence refugees.



Article 27: The refugees who do not have any identity documents, it's the responsibility of the state they are living in to provide them with necessary identity documents.

Article 34: The signatory states should facilitate the process of assimilation and neutralization of these refugees. They should speed the process of neutralization and reduce the costs.

Source: [unher.org](http://unher.org)

### Asylum rights of child in Norway:

In Norwegian law “A person under the age of eighteen years in a child’

Norway is a signatory to the United Nations convention on the rights of children. The domestic laws with regards to asylum seeking children are made on the principles guidelines set in the convention. I will look at some of the articles because of the space limitation in my thesis. Some general principles are as followed:

1: In 2013 a new guardian act was passed in Norway. This was passed to ensure the rights and interests of the minors in a way that the dignity and integrity of the child is not affected. County governors supervise the guardians.

2: prevention of sexual crimes against minors is very important. Improving the investigations in cases of violence against minors and to ensure safety of the child should be number one priority. The core principle of UN convention is ‘best interest of child’ these laws are all accordance with them.

3: the child welfare act was amended in 2014 to improve the supervisions on foster care homes by the local municipalities.

4: The Norwegian immigration act involves the child’s perspective. Amendments were made in the act to create a child sensitive asylum processes. The child’s situation will be assessed and according to the needs of the child a process will be devised. It is more like keeping in mind all the requirements and costume making a process. Childs vulnerabilities will be kept in mind. The inclusion of child’s perspective will also be better in improving the growth and development, fulfillment of basic needs and the right to obtain education (LIDÉN 2019). The Norwegian immigration act 2008 has some provisions and formulations that play a very important role in strengthening the case of child claiming asylum. The threshold for children claiming asylum is lower then that for adults seeking asylum in Norway.

Asylum interview is a phase of asylum process where the foundation of the case is set. The interview is to understand the reasons behind child's need for protection. In the interview the child's guardian is present. In Norway a legal guardian (Representative) is allocated to each asylum seeking minor. The guardian is responsible that the child gets full opportunity to speak and best interest of the child is ensured (LIDÉN 2019). The asylum interview is different then normal immigration related interviews, normally documentations, evidence is considered in interviews but in asylum interview there is no possibility of documents and evidence so the sole dependency is on consistency of the interviewee in his interview.

The child has full right to mental and physical envelopment. There is the possibility that the minor has been exposed to persecution either his parents or any other adult family member may have been hurt so this has long-lasting effects on the mental development of child. The minor should be protected against any type of persecution. The UNHCR points out three types of danger a minor could be exposed to, first forced inclusion into armed groups, second genital mutilation of women and third victim of human trafficking for the purpose of child labour or sexual exploitation (UNHCR 2009).

The age assessment examination should only be carried out if there is serious doubt about the age of the unaccompanied minor seeking asylum. Even after evolution in age assessment measures there still has not been any method discovered yet which gives the accurate age of the minor. The best interest of the child is the main consideration in making any policy or laws. United nations convention on the rights of child has made this the principle for children rights that any country making any policy or law has to ensure that that policy serves the best interest of the child. Norway is also complying with the UN charter.

Source: <https://www.unhcr.org/50ae46309.pdf> & [https://www.idunn.no/childrens\\_rights\\_in\\_norway/11\\_asylum](https://www.idunn.no/childrens_rights_in_norway/11_asylum)



## UN convention on the rights of the child

The convention of United Nations binds the signatory states to follow the principle of 'Best interest of child. This convention contains a total of 42 articles. In this thesis I will mention some of those articles.

- Anyone falling under the age of 18 years gets all the rights mentioned in this convention
- This convention applies to all children without any form of discrimination based on their cast, creed, abilities and status.
- All the signatory states should ensure all the rights are in their true spirit provided to all children.
- Different organization working with children or for children should ensure the principle of 'Best interest of child'.
- Children are free to live their life to the fullest, government responsibility is to provide environment that encourages physical and mental growth.
- Government should not interfere with the child's right to his name, nationality and keeping family relations.
- Children should be allowed to live with their family or if parents live in a different state the opportunity to come meet the child should be provided.
- Children are free to choose, practice and abandon their religion freely.
- Children are free to build social ties, join different groups as long as this does not affect the rights of others.
- Children like adults also have the right to privacy. Laws should protect their right to privacy.
- Government should properly ensure care facilities to children.
- In case of parents not being able to do care responsibilities then there should be people for care who can be understanding of the child's religious, cultural and language values.
- Refugee children should have same rights as other citizen children.
- Children under the care of municipalities or other domestic bodies their situation be regularly checked.
- Children have the right to education. Government should provide free education to all its children citizens.

- Children should be provided a better life standard that can ensure healthy mental and physical growth.
- Governments should provide protection from sexual exploitation.
- Children who have been through violence and trauma should be provided special care.
- Government should ensure children are not working illegally or in dangerous environment.

Source: [unicef.org.au](http://unicef.org.au)

## NSD Approval:

N

### **NSD Personvern**

17.08.2020 10:15

Det innsendte meldeskjemaet med referansekode 817292 er nå vurdert av NSD.

Følgende vurdering er gitt:

NSD has assessed the change registered on 10.08.2020.

The period for processing personal data has been extended until 30.11.2020.

Please note that in case of further extensions, it may be necessary to inform the sample.

NSD will follow up at the new planned end date in order to determine whether the processing of personal data has been concluded.

Good luck with the rest of the project!

Data Protection Services for Research: [+47 55 58 21 17](tel:+4755582117) (press 1)

Consent emails of Participants of external data set 2:

**SV: Data usage request**



18 Oct



She can use the data. No problem

[Redacted]

**Fra:** Sardar Ali Khan <[sardaralikhan99@outlook.com](mailto:sardaralikhan99@outlook.com)>

**Sendt:** torsdag 15. oktober 2020 11:56:42

**Til:** [Redacted]

[Redacted]

**Kopi:** Siv Oltedal <[siv.oltedal@uis.no](mailto:siv.oltedal@uis.no)>; nida sardar ali khan <[nida.s.khan@hotmail.com](mailto:nida.s.khan@hotmail.com)>

**Emne:** Data usage request

Dear [Redacted]

I hope you are doing well. I am writing you this email to ask your permission regarding the data I collected from you to be used by my fellow student Nida Sardar. She as you might have seen in the invitation letter also is my research assistant as well. She needs the parts of my data that I am not using in my research analysis for her master project. If you find it ok that she could use the data I got from the interview I did with you, I will provide her the transcript.

I have discussed this issue with my supervisor Professor Siv Oltedal. Oltedal is also Nida Sardars supervisor.



06:33



**Sv: Data usage permission.**

[Redacted]

15 Oct



Hei,  
its totally fine with me.

Mvh,

[Redacted]  
Kontaktlærer 2. trinn  
Madlavoll skole

---

**Fra:** Sardar Ali Khan <[sardaralikhan99@outlook.com](mailto:sardaralikhan99@outlook.com)>

**Sendt:** torsdag 15. oktober 2020 11:55

**Til:** Nina [Redacted]

**Kopi:** Siv Oltedal <[siv.oltedal@uis.no](mailto:siv.oltedal@uis.no)>; nida sardar ali  
khan <[nida.s.khan@hotmail.com](mailto:nida.s.khan@hotmail.com)>

**Emne:** Data usage permission.

[Redacted]

I hope you are doing well. I am writing you this email to ask your permission regarding the data I collected from you to be used by my fellow student Nida Sardar. She as you might have seen in the invitation letter also is my research assistant as well. She needs the parts of my data that I am not using in my research analysis for her master project. If you find it ok that she could use the data I got from the interview I did with you, I will provide her the transcript.

I have discussed this issue with my supervisor Professor Siv Oltedal. Oltedal is also Nida Sardars



15 Oct



Hi Sardar,

I am fine thanks. Hope all is well and that your master project is coming along. It is fine by me that Nida Sardar to use the data that you collected. Best of luck with your master. Looking forward to read it when its finished.

Best Regards



Technical manager



Resettlement and housing for unaccompanied refugee minors

Tlf. + [redacted]

Mob. + [redacted]

Adress: Kvite [redacted]

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