



Understanding the roles and challenges of child protection employees in out-of-home care arrangements for children of minority and immigrant backgrounds in Rogaland, Norway.

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## **Abstract**

The main objective of the study was to understand the roles and challenges of child protection services (CPS) employees in arranging out-of-home care for children with minority and immigrant backgrounds in Rogaland, Norway. Three municipalities out of 23 from Rogaland County were rationally chosen as the areas of the study. The study used a qualitative approach where a total of six in-depth interviews with CPS employees were carried out. Purposive sampling was used to include research participants in a strategic way to fulfil the research objectives. Snowball sampling was also used to recruit one participant out of the six. Finally, thematic analysis was used to analyse and present the findings of this research.

The results showed that as frontline service providers, CPS employees receive concerns from several sources and follow a three-phase procedure from receiving referrals to placing the case before the County Social Welfare Board for decision-making in the out-of-home care process. Existing laws and policies directly shape and demarcate the boundaries of the CPS employee's roles and responsibilities and are equally applied to all, irrespective of nationality and ethnicity. However, while CPS employees face several challenges in working with immigrant and minority families, e.g., understanding their cultural backgrounds, language barriers in communicating, finding the right matched foster families, ethical dilemmas on account of restrictive laws and policies, and structural barriers, some of their personal prejudices towards immigrant and minorities, and having insufficient understanding of emancipatory praxis within the lens of Critical Race Theory and the multi-culturalist approach further impede culturally cohesive services. Based on the major conclusions drawn from the findings, appropriate policy and practice recommendations, and recommendations in relation to possible further research, are made.

**Key Words:** Barnevern; Child protection; Child Welfare Services; Minorities and immigrants; Norway; Out-of-home care; Roles and challenges.

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## **Abbreviations**

CPS	Child Protection Service
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
CSWB	County Social Welfare Board
CWS	Child welfare services
ECHR	European Convention on Human Rights
ECtHR	European Court of Human Rights
EU	European Union
FST	Family System Theory
HDI	Human Development Index
IDIs	In-depth interviews
IRB	Institutional Review Boards
NGOs	Non-government Organizations
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PACE	Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe
UNCRC	UN Convention on the rights of the child



# Chapter One

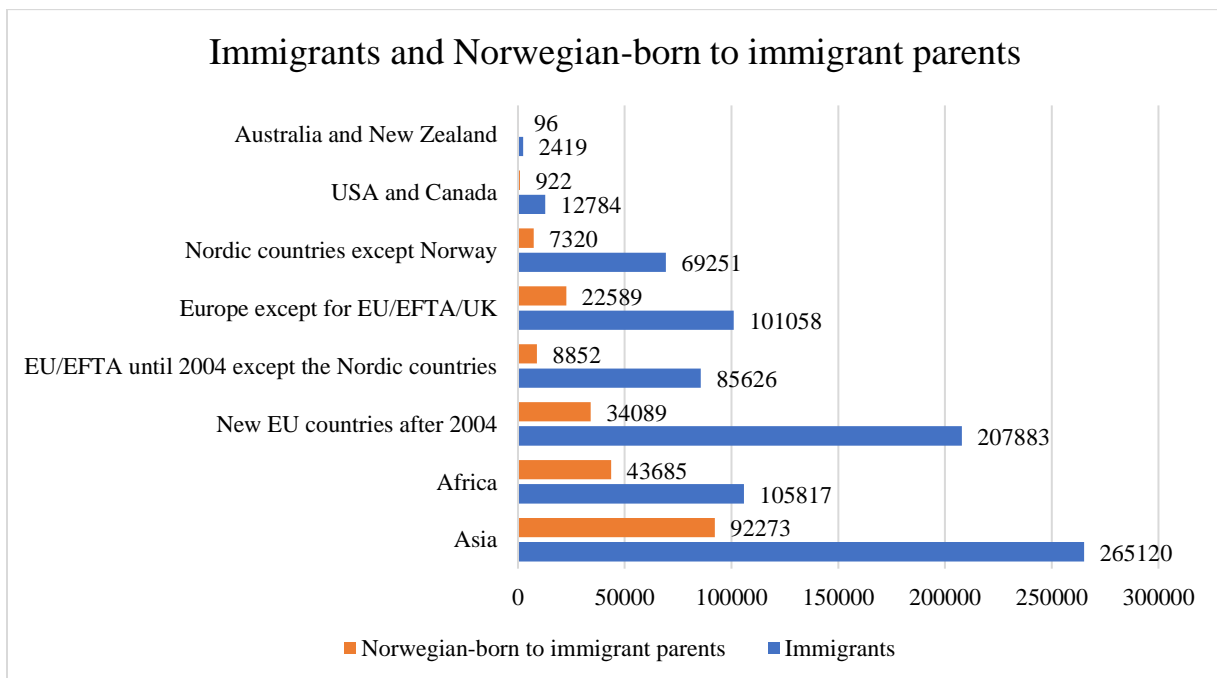
## Introduction

### 1.1 Background of study

Child welfare services (CWS) in Norway is an integral part of the Norwegian welfare state (Križ & Skivenes, 2011), and children are considered both individuals and as a member of their families (Helland, 2020; Ursin, Langfeldt & Lyså, 2022; Pösö; Skivenes & Hestbæk, 2014). Though CWS is responsible for child protection in Norway and considers foster care placement, the County Social Welfare Board (CSWB) decides upon the question of care order like court proceedings, based on the reports and evidence from experts, Child Protection Service (CPS) employees, and other professionals, and also testimonies from parents, children, and other ties (Løvlie, 2022; Douglas & Saus, 2021; NMCE, 2017; Veliquette, 2018; Pösö et al., 2014; Kojan, 2011; Tønning Otterlei & Studsrød, 2022). Appeals can be made on the decisions of CSWB to the District Court in full and the Court of Appeal and Supreme Court on a restrictive basis (Falch-Eriksen & Skivenes, 2019). However, the notion of the ‘best interests of the child’ was incorporated into the Norwegian Constitution in 2014, and section 104 has made it a fundamental requirement while taking actions and decisions which affect children (Helland & Luhamaa, 2020; NMCE, 2017). Care within the children’s own family is prioritized in this section, but all care orders are treated as involuntary as parental consent is not required. However, Skivenes and Søvig (2017) have marked three criteria to remove the child from their home: circumstances that might cause harm or neglect to the child, in-home services prove to be insufficient; and finally, ensuring the best interest of the child based on the overall assessments.

Norway experienced diverse immigration during the late 1960s (Rysst, 2022; Reisel, Hermansen & Kindt, 2019). Stability, safety, wealth, and a trust-based universal welfare system have made the country an attractive destination to migrants (Eriksen, 2013). Immigration in Norway from non-European countries started relatively late compared to many other Western countries, and people, especially from Pakistan and Turkey, came to Norway before 1975 for jobs (Reisel et al., 2019; Eriksen, 2013). People migrated to Norway mainly for three reasons- demand for skilled labor,

protection of refugees and political asylum seekers on humanitarian grounds, and family reunification of the immigrants who were already in Norway (Eriksen, 2013). After the European Union enlargement in 2004 and 2007, a rapid flow of labor migration was experienced by Norway from new EU member states, especially from Poland and Baltic countries (Reisel et al., 2019). Now the country has turned into a multi-ethnic society, and the minority and immigrant people in Norway are broadly comparable to other countries like Germany, France, the United Kingdom, and the Netherlands (OECD 2015b in Reisel et al., 2019). As of 06 March 2023, there are 877227 immigrants in Norway (16% of the total population) (Statistics Norway, 2023), and they mainly come from Asia, followed by EU countries (Figure 1.1). Furthermore, there are five categories of national ethnic minorities in Norway, e.g., Jews, Romani (i.e., tatere), Roma (or Gypsies), Norwegian Finns (i.e., kvener), and Forest Finns (i.e., skogfinner)” etc. (Reisel et al., 2019, P: 849).



**Figure 1.1:** Immigrants in Norway; **Sources:** Statistics Norway (2023)

Norway has been becoming an ethnically diversified society day by day (Staer, 2016), and family-sensitive approaches to families and children are central to Norwegian child protection services (Skivenes 2011 in Backe-Hansen E. et al., 2013; Kriz & Skivenes, 2010). Though Norway is the forerunner in ensuring, advocating, and implementing children's rights (SOS Children's Villages

Norway, 2013), Norwegian child welfare law requires social workers to consider culture and religion while working with minority children (Kriz & Skivenes, 2010a), and the Norwegian government has skilfully legislated equality (Eriksen, 2013; Veliquette, 2018), there are still claims of discrimination against children of minority and immigrant backgrounds in Norway (Dankertsen & Kristiansen, 2021; Rysst, 2022). The cultural schema or identity model in Norway shows that they have only one identity, and others are considered foreigners (Rysst, 2022). Even though there are second and third generation people who are well integrated into Norwegian society, speak Norwegian fluently, and do good jobs, they are often classified as 'foreigners' by their appearances (Ibid). Handulle (2022) showed that immigrant children in Norway must do doubly well compared to Norwegian children to be in the same place. Children born with one immigrant parent often face the question if they are Norwegian based on their skin or dressing style, or behavioral practice (Rysst, 2022). Furthermore, Migrant families are overrepresented in care measures of the Norwegian CPS (Falch-Eriksen & Skivenes, 2019), but the causes of the overrepresentation are mostly unknown.

## 1.2 Operational Definitions

**Child protection employees:** Child protection employees are government or non-profit organization employees who perform a wide variety of activities by applying their specialized knowledge, skills, and training, aiming to ensure the best interests of children and mitigating the hardships of their families (indeed, 2022; Jones & Stafa, 2010). Child protection employees' work includes organized efforts by the government or society to respond to child's safety from abuse and neglect, e.g., physical, or sexual abuse, psychological or emotional maltreatment, failures to meet adequate basic provisions, for example, food, clothing, shelter, education, medical care, supervision, etc. (Berger & Slack, 2014). Thus, child protective services have high power from taking children into care to the rejection of the parents' definitions of their assistance needs (Björkhagen Turesson, 2020; Bruning & Doek, 2021), and their efforts "manifest through a combination of private and public policies, funding mechanisms, and public and private agencies and services" (Berger & Slack, 2014, p: 2965).

The paper defines 'CPS employees' as those who are employed by the Norwegian government and currently working in 'Barnevern' (child protection) in Rogaland County, with the primary responsibilities to provide care and assistance, take measures, and

implement care orders for the best interests of children, and improve living conditions that might pose a significant threat to children's health and development. Their further responsibilities entail providing advice, guidance, and resources to the families of children and youth as per needs.

**Out-of-home care:** Out-of-home care refers to taking children away from home, with or without parental/guardian consent, aiming to protect children from maltreatment, abuse, and neglect and to ensure children's best interests (Tønning Otterlei & Studsrød, 2022). In the care system, some of the children are taken away from home and placed out of the family in foster care or institutional care (Stanley, 2016). Children are placed out-of-home in three ways- a) voluntary placement based on parental consent; b) the agency prepares the care order and places them to the county board for the decision; and c) emergency placement issued by the agency considering immediate severe harms (Fylkesnes, Taylor & Iversen, 2018).

Out-of-home care is used in this paper to mean the placement of minority and immigrant children outside their homes, either with a foster family or in residential care, with parental consent or under CSWB intervention or emergency placement.

**Children of minority and immigrants:** 'Minority and immigrant' is a broad group of people, e.g., "migrant families, families from migrant backgrounds, refugees, asylum seekers, and national minorities" (Veliquette, 2018, P: 12). However, the United National Declaration on Minorities define 'minorities' in its article 1 as "based on national or ethnic, cultural, religious and linguistic identity," and ensures that states should protect their rights and existence (United Nations, 2010, p: 02). Francesco Capotorti (1977 in United Nations, 2010, P: 02) offered the definition of minority as "a group numerically inferior to the rest of the population of a State, in a non-dominant position, whose members—being nationals of the State—possess ethnic, religious or linguistic characteristics differing from those of the rest of the population and show, if only implicitly, a sense of solidarity, directed towards preserving their culture, traditions, religion or language." On the contrary, 'immigrant children' refers to those who have at least one foreign-born parent, and 'first-generation children' refers to those whose one parent was born outside, while 'second-generation children' are those whose parents were born in the destination country but not one of his/her grandparent (Child Trends, 2018). Though both minority and immigrant

children are the inferior groups of people in comparison to the rest (majority), the line of demarcation between ‘minority’ and ‘immigrant children’ is that one’s origin is national by the ancestral process, while the latter is either national born with immigrant parents or immigrated to the country of destinations.

The paper defines the ‘children of minority and immigrant’ to cover a broad range of people covering migrant families, families with immigrant backgrounds, refugees, and national minorities.

### **1.3 Rationale of the study**

CWS is regarded as the mother of child welfare in Norway and provide both assistance and care measures (Løvlie, 2022; Fylkesnes, Iversen & Nygren, 2018b; Douglas & Saus, 2021; Vis, S. A., et al., 2023), where the 'best interest of the child' is fundamental to the Norwegian constitution (Helland & Luhamaa, 2020; NMCE, 2017). However, there are debates about the Norwegian CPS from formal and informal media, official statements from governments, and international organizations (Luhamaa, 2020; PACE, 2015; UNCRC, 2018 in Ursin et al., 2022). The international community protests the state’s authority to remove the child from the family (Stang, 2018). On the contrary, several allegations were filed to the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) against the Norwegian CPS for the violation of Article 8 (Respect for your private and family life) of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) (Luhamaa, 2020). It was found the breaches of article eight in seven cases out of nine relating to child protection and the conclusion was made that Norway pays little attention to the element of migration or culture (Melinder, van der Hagen & Sandberg, 2021). The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe- PACE (PACE, 2015) claimed that CPS employees put less emphasis on placing a child with a biological family and close relatives. CRC Committee and the ECHR have also noted that children are not allowed sufficient contact with their biological families, thus possibly affecting their cultural identity (Luhamaa, 2020; ECHR, 2021; Veliquette, 2018; Stavros, 2022). Removal of young children without ensuring support and attention to reunification or contact rights might be devastating on the ground of the child's rights to family life and to their identity and culture (Luhamaa, 2020). And there is also a lack of professional guidelines and instructions for professionals to steer social workers judgments (Luhamaa, 2020; Fylkesnes et al., 2018b; Kriz & Skivenes, 2010b; Samsonsen and Willumsen 2015 in Tembo & Studsrød, 2018).

Though study findings sketch the violation of Article 8 of ECHR (Luhamaa, 2020), with less emphasis on placing a child with close ties (PACE, 2015; Luhamaa, 2020), protests against child removal by the international community (Stang, 2018; Luhamaa, 2020; PACE, 2015; UNCRC, 2018 in Ursin et al., 2022), and insufficient professional guidelines for professionals (Luhamaa, 2020; Fylkesnes et al., 2018b; Kriz & Skivenes, 2010b; Samsonsen and Willumsen 2015 in Tembo & Studsrød, 2018), there is inadequate literature to shed light on how CP employees make decisions when they organize out-of-home care for children with minority and immigrant backgrounds, and the challenges that they face to organize care for them. To this end, the study would be a time-bound measure to address the guidelines that CPS employees use in organizing out-of-home care for immigrants and minority children, their understanding on cultural differences, and the challenges they face in their field of practice.

#### **1.4 Objectives of the study**

The overall objective of the study was to understand the roles of child protection workers in arranging out-of-home care for children with minority and immigrant backgrounds in Rogaland, Norway. The specific objectives of the study were to:

1. Understand the professional guidelines that CP employees use while organizing out-of-home care for children with minority and immigrant backgrounds.
2. Ascertain how these guidelines might influence the roles of CP employees and the intervention strategies that they adopt.
3. Understand the challenges CP employees face in working with children and families with minority and immigrant backgrounds.

## 1.5 Research Questions

The main research question is: How do CP employees make decisions in organizing out-of-home care for children of minority and immigrant backgrounds and what challenges do they encounter?

The specific research questions were:

1. What issues do CP employees consider and how do they use their professional guidelines in organizing out-of-home care for children of minority and immigrant backgrounds?
2. How are CP employees influenced by their professional guidelines in organizing out-of-home care for children with minority and immigrant backgrounds?
3. What challenges do CP employees face in working with children and families of minority and immigrant backgrounds?

## 1.6 Thesis structure

The study was carried out to understand the roles that child protection employees perform, the guideline that they use, and the challenges that they face in arranging out-of-home care for children with minority and immigrants background in Rogaland, Norway. The thesis is composed of the following chapters:

**The First Chapter**, Introduction, gives the readers a thorough study background and the rationale for the current research. The chapter also covers the operational definitions of the main concepts used in this study, research objectives, and questions.

**The second chapter**, literature review, covers a broad range of discussions based on existing literature on child protection services in Norway, child protection policies in Norway and ongoing debates, minority, and immigrant children and CWS in Norway, minority, and immigrant parents' views about the CWS in Norway, social workers understanding on ethnicity and multi-culturalism, and the challenges that CPS employees face.

**Chapter three** deals with the methodology of the study, covering the study area and location, data collection methods and instruments, sampling: participants and their profile, data analysis techniques, and ethical integrity issues. The chapter further contains a brief detail of critical race theory and the multiculturalist approach and how they were applied in analysing and discussing the study findings.

**Chapter four** covers findings collected through in-depth interviews under specified themes and the discussions on how these findings corroborate or disagree with earlier findings, to what extent the generated knowledge sheds light on the grey areas, and a critical outlook through the lens of the proposed theories. **Finally, chapter five**, Recommendations and Conclusion, reflects the overall summary of the findings and the recommendations in light of the major conclusions drawn from the study.



## Chapter Two

### Literature Review

In welfare states, parents have the right to determine the ways to rear their children and to define their children's best interests, whereas children have the right to seek their best interests from the state if they feel that their rights are infringed (Križ & Skivenes, 2010a). Children with minority and immigrant backgrounds appear to have a diverse range of problems in destination countries, and parenting norms and styles among parents with minority and immigrant backgrounds vary, which require culturally sensitive social work approaches to deal with. Hence, culturally sensitive and responsive social work has become a talk of the global fora in the current world as it recognizes the deep-rooted discriminations within the society that minority people face (Herring, S., et al., 2013; Volckmar-Eeg & Enoksen, 2020; Nygård, Saus & Nicolai., 2018; Harrison & Turner, 2010) and it aims to work in anti-oppressive and anti-discriminatory ways (Herring et al., 2013). However, based on their survey findings, the Pew Research Centre claimed that most Europeans consider migrants as a part of increased societal diversity, rather than a cultural threat (Gonzalez-Barrera & Connor, 2019).

Norwegian society has been becoming increasingly ethnically diverse. Statistics show that the positivity of Norwegian towards immigrants has gradually been increasing (Dankertsen & Kristiansen, 2021). However, there is little research on ethnic inequalities and discrimination issues in Norway as immigration into Norway from non-European countries started relatively late compared to many other western countries (Dustmann & Frattini, 2013 in Reisel, Hermansen & Kindt, 2019). However, the country has now turned into a multi-ethnic society and the minority and immigrant people in Norway are broadly comparable to other countries like Germany, France, the United Kingdom, and the Netherlands (OECD 2015b in Reisel, Hermansen & Kindt, 2019; Vasileva, 2011). As a result, there is a growing interest among policymakers and academic researchers concerning ethnic equality (Reisel et al., 2019).

Norway is one of the world's most 'child-friendly' countries (Reisel et al., 2019) and is the forerunner in ensuring, advocating, and implementing children's rights (SOS Children's Villages Norway, 2013). The country ratified the UNCRC in 1991 (Melinder, van der Hagen & Sandberg, 2021). With the gradual diversification, the scope of ensuing distinctive cultural identity, while safeguarding equal rights in the greater society has currently become an urge (Eriksen, 2013). The practice of culturally sensitive and responsive social work could be a solution to meet the diversified needs of multi-ethnic people in Norway. To this end, the chapter covers a broad range of analysis on child protection services in the Norwegian context, dealing with existing laws and policies, minority and immigrant children and CWS in Norway, immigrant parent's views on CWS, social workers' understanding of multiculturalism, and the challenges that social workers face.

## **2.1 Child protection services in Norway**

Norway has a long tradition of providing welfare services to children and families (Staer, 2016; Melinder et al., 2021). The first law relating to child protection in Norway was initiated in 1896 (Pösö, Skivenes & Hestbæk, 2014; Veliquette, 2018; Melinder et al., 2021; Picot, 2014), and the country has gradually become a pioneer in granting inheritances to children born outside of marriage, to ban corporal punishment, and to create a child ombudsman (Picot, 2014). Child and family policies in Norway are child-centric, considering children as individuals and independent agents within the family (Ursin, Langfeldt & Lyså, 2022; Pösö et al., 2014). The history of Norwegian child protection is traced back to the first years of the Second World War, with the Child Welfare Act of 1953, along with the implementation of the principles of the modern welfare state for marginalized children and youth (Hagen, 2001 & Storø 2008, 2009 in Backe-Hansen, E., et al., 2013; Melinder et al., 2021). The legislation was replaced in 1992, but the child's best interests remain a core guiding principle in both laws (Backe-Hansen et al., 2013; Melinder et al., 2021). In 2014, the notion of the 'best interests of the child' was incorporated into the Norwegian Constitution, and section 104 has made it a fundamental requirement while taking actions and decisions that affect children (Luhamaa, 2020; NMCE, 2017). Again in 2021, the Child Welfare Act was reviewed where the child's best interest is put as a core principle in sections 1-3 aligning with the Constitution and previous laws and policies (Luhama, Krutzinna & Skivenes, 2022).

Norway is one of the most ‘child-friendly’ countries in the world (Reisel et al., 2019; UNDP, 2020 in Melinder et al., 2021), ranks at the very top on the Human Development Index (UNDP, 2022; Melinder et al., 2021), has lower economic disparity among OECD countries (OECD, 2021), and immigrants and native-born children in Norway have access to high quality of basic services, e.g., healthcare, subsidized early childhood education, and social security benefits necessary for wellbeing (Reisel et al., 2019). In addition, children in Norway are entitled to full-day care placement as soon as they reach one year of age, and all the children in Norway grow up with the same quality care (SOS Children’s Villages Norway, 2013). Therefore, the primary responsibilities of the CWS are to provide assistance to children and young people when they live under conditions that might harm their development and health and ensure a safe environment for healthy childhood (SOS Children’s Villages Norway, 2013; Melinder et al., 2021; Pösö et al., 2014).

Norwegian CWS are shared by the municipality, the CSWB, and the Ministry of Children and Equality (Veliquette, 2018; Kojan, 2011). Municipality based child welfare workers are the frontline service providers (Douglas & Saus, 2021; Vis, S. A., et al., 2023) and they are responsible for the welfare of children according to laws and policies. They are mainly responsible for providing advice and guidance, investigating cases, preparing cases for the CSWB, and ensuring follow-up (SOS Children’s Villages Norway, 2013; Kojan, 2011). The CSWB usually decides on the case of intervention in the family sphere and taking children out-of-home care (Løvlie, 2022; Douglas & Saus, 2021; NMCE, 2017; Christiansen & Anderssen, 2010 in Veliquette, 2018; Pösö et al., 2014; Kojan, 2011; Tønning Otterlei & Studsrød, 2022). However, home-based assistance, prevention, and early care interventions are the strategic principles of the Norwegian CWS program, and most children receive in-home care services in Norway (Kojan, 2011; Vis et al., 2023; Staer, 2016). Biological parents rear children while CWS provide supportive measures through in-home care services in the cases of suspected abuse and neglect (Ursin et al., 2022). Norwegian CWS provide various preventive in-home services like parental counseling, leisure time activities, support for people, weekend needs, etc. (Fylkesnes, Iversen & Nygren, 2018b; Douglas & Saus, 2021; Vis et al., 2023). Nergaard (2009) showed that in-home care services have positive impacts on children, and most of the minority and immigrant parents showed satisfaction with the daycare services in Norway as their children usually get to know new issues, gain new experiences, rapidly cope with the culture, and learn the Norwegian language. If guidance and relief measures do not improve the household's situation and reduce the children's risks, CWS

decide to remove the children from home to a foster home or institutional care (Kojan, 2011; Ursin et al., 2022; Vis et al., 2023). There is a concern that Norwegian CWS have shifted its focus from assistance relating to a family's socio-economic situation like financial support, childcare, and weekend homes to providing counselling over the last decade, which might make ethnic minority users vulnerable due to lower access to resources (Fylkesnes, Iversen & Nygren, 2018b).

There are two main types of out-of-home care- foster care and residential care, with a shift towards using foster care more frequently than residential care facilities (SOS Children's Villages Norway, 2013). There are three ways of placing children in out-of-home care- a) voluntary care placement based on parental consent; b) the agency prepares the care order and placement, which is presented to the county board for a decision; and c) emergency placement issued by the agency considering immediate severe harms (Fylkesnes, Taylor & Iversen, 2018). Children are often removed from parents due to drug abuse. Separation of children may also occur when parents are imprisoned or during conflicts/wars, neglect, abuse, orphans, and unaccompanied minors seeking asylum (SOS Children's Villages Norway, 2013; Adeboye, Guerreiro & Höjer, 2019). Poverty is also a common underlying reason for these separations in Norway (SOS Children's Villages Norway, 2013; Needell & Barth, 1998 in Staer, 2016).

Children living on the Norwegian border must be protected from physical and sexual abuse within or outside of the home with appropriate help from the authorities (NMCE, 2017). Any severe occurrence of physical and sexual abuse or any report that proves the violation of children's best interests might lead to a care order (Vis et al., 2023; Melinder et al., 2021). Care orders should be annulled if it is proved that parents can take sufficient care of their children (NMCE, 2017). However, after placing children in out-of-home care, the care order will not be annulled if a child develops attachment with the people and environment where s/he has been placed and if the separation might cause severe problems for the child (Melinder et al., 2021; NMCE, 2017). For example, in some cases, children in Norway claimed that though their biological mother was an important part of their lives, they had grown more attached to their foster family (Ellingsen, Shemmings & Størksen, 2011). In such a case, the care order will not be removed.

CWS assisted 50520 children and young people in 2021; among them, 41789 children received care at home, and 8731 received alternative care (Table 2.1). While the total immigrant population

represents a one-sixth ratio of the Norwegian population, the total number of immigrant and Norwegian born to immigrant children in care measures were 1893 out of 8731, a clear overrepresentation of their number compared to their ratio (Table 2.1). Thus, immigrant children are overrepresented both in assistance measures and care measures for all the years represented in the following table (Table 2.1).

**Table 2.1:** Statistical representation of the CWS measures (assistance and care)

<b>Overall statistics of care</b>									
	<b>2019</b>			<b>2020</b>			<b>2021</b>		
All measures	54592			52862			50520		
Assistance measures	44821			43565			41789		
Care Measures	9771			9297			8731		
<b>Immigrants</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Boys</b>	<b>Girls</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Boys</b>	<b>Girls</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Boys</b>	<b>Girls</b>
All measures	8805	5057	3028	7655	4717	2938	7155	4273	2882
Assistance measures	7199	4594	2605	6779	4255	2524	6337	3847	2490
Care measures	884	461	423	876	462	414	818	426	392
<b>Norwegian-born to immigrant parents</b>									
All measures	7193	3892	3301	7212	3936	3276	7204	3927	3277
Assistance measures	6094	3306	2788	6118	3348	2770	6129	3329	2800
Care measures	1099	586	513	1094	588	506	1075	598	477
<b>Total care measures</b>	1983	1047	936	1970	1050	920	1893	1024	869

**Sources:** Statistics Norway (2022)

In Norway, most of the referrals (78%) received by the CWS come from the police, schools, child welfare and health care, and the second highest categories of referral come from the client himself or herself. However, adoption in out-of-home care against the parents' will, though not promoted, is allowed in Norway (del Valle & Bravo, 2013). Concerning the previous set example of the violation of article 08 of ECHR in the adoption case of Strand Lobben vs. Norway in 2019, the Supreme court clarified that the reasons for adoption must be stronger than continued foster care, and it must be ensured that adoption is taking place for the best interests of the child (Melinder et al., 2021). Norwegian legal regulations mandate that a child's family of origin must be considered an alternative placement option while placing them in foster care (SOS Children's Villages Norway, 2013; Melinder et al., 2021). Coercive placement outside of the home, especially in

residential childcare institutions, is seen as a serious intervention that is considered the last resort when all other initiatives fail (Backe-Hansen et al., 2013; Tønning Otterlei & Studsrød, 2022; Kvalø & Köhler-Olsen, 2016 in Reime & Tysnes, 2021).

Children either in residential care or in foster care might have emotional, cognitive, or mental-health problems (Backe-Hansen et al., 2013; Melinder et al., 2021) as they mainly come from single-parent families with severe risks factors (Backe-Hansen et al., 2013). Organizations operating residential care facilities can be either government-run or privately owned and either for-profit or not-for-profit. Children with severe behavioral problems are placed in un-locked residential care in Norway, unlike Denmark and Sweden, where they are put in locked residential care institutions (Bengtsson & Böcker Jacobsen, 2009 in Reime & Tysnes, 2021). Norwegian institutions vary in size, and each unit has space for one to three and a maximum of ten in each unit (Backe-Hansen et al., 2013; Clausen & Kristofersen, 2008 in Reime & Tysnes, 2021; Reime, 2016). The treatment modalities can be positive for some youths while negative for others (Tjelflaat & Ulse, 2007; Slaatto, A., et al., 2023). Some youth appreciated the coercive placement and considered it an opportunity (Reime & Tysnes, 2021; Slaatto et al., 2023). However, a longitudinal study in Norway showed that the likelihood of marginalization in terms of education, employment, and mortality among children placed in residential care are comparatively higher than those with other means of care or without such experiences (Backe-Hansen et al., 2014 & Clausen & Kristofersen, 2008 in Reime & Tysnes, 2021). Furthermore, the so-called 'contamination effects' occur in residential care, where young people meet with other problematic young people, which hardly gives them the space to overcome adversity (Backe-Hansen et al., 2013; Tjelflaat & Ulse, 2007). So, there are arguments for the reduction of the residential care system throughout the world, including Norway.

## **2.2 Child protection in policies and debates**

Norway initiated the first law relating to child protection in 1896 (Pösö et al., 2014; Melinder et al., 2021) and as stated above, is considered the pioneer in ensuring child rights in many ways, e.g., granting inheritances to children born outside of wedlock in 1915, banning corporal punishment of children in 1972, and creating a child ombudsman (Hennum, 2017 in Veliquette, 2018; Picot, 2014). Three major laws are well known to bring major reforms in child protection in Norway- the Act of the Treatment of Neglected Children in 1896 (Vergerådsloven), the Child

Welfare Act of 1953 (Lov om barnevern), and the Child Welfare Act of 1992 (Lov om barneverntjenester) (Picot, 2014; Pösö et al., 2014). The Act of 1896 was prominent in making the state's responsibilities with regard to children and placing them in out-of-home care considering children's involvement in criminality (Hennum, 2017 in Veliquette, 2018; Picot, 2014). The Children Welfare Act of 1953 brought the focus of prevention activities and family support (Picot, 2014) and the Child Welfare Act of 1992 brought issues to consider children as an individual and their rights to be heard, and also ensured the primacy of the best interests of the children (Hennum, 2017 in Veliquette, 2018; Picot, 2014; NMCE, 2017; Skivenes, 2011 in Tempo, 2022).

Norwegian government published their strategies 'Childhood Comes but Once', in 2013, and an action plan, 'A Good Childhood Lasts a Lifetime', in 2014 aiming at enhanced protection of children from physical and sexual abuse within and outside of the home (NMCE, 2017). In 2013, a new guiding principle was also initiated to assess the quality of attachment between parents and children while evaluating the care given by parents (Backe-Hansen et al., 2013). At the national level, the Ministry of Children and Equality in child welfare initiates laws and policies and ensures service delivery through administration. An independent ombudsman of children works as a monitoring body to safeguard and oversee the implementation of all children's rights (Björk Eydal & Kröger, 2011 & Hennem, 2017 in Veliquette, 2018; Melinder et al., 2021; Picot, 2014).

Family-sensitive and therapeutic approaches to families and children are central to Norwegian child protection services (Backe-Hansen et al., 2013; Ylvisaker, Rugkåsa & Eide, 2015; Skivenes, 2011 in Tempo, 2022). Article 102 of the Norwegian Constitution has put a provision since 2014 concerning the right to have 'respect for their privacy and family life, their home and communication' (NMCE, 2017, P: 25). However, actions taken need to be anchored within laws and policies as the authorities are allowed to encroach these means by Article 113 which include an invasion in the private sphere of life (NMCE, 2017; Skivenes 2011 in Backe-Hansen et al., 2013). During the intervention, in the absence of parental consent or youths' disagreement, a court order needs to be sought (Backe-Hansen et al., 2013; Pösö et al., 2014; Kojan, 2011). Considering increased migration in this era of globalization, the Norwegian Child Welfare Act ensures that children's religious, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds must be taken into consideration while placing them outside of home care (NMCE, 2017).

The basic principles of Scandinavian policies and Norwegian social work are cultural homogeneity, social equality, and universalism (Esping-Andersen, 1990 & Kraus, 2015 in Nygård et al., 2018; Chinga-Ramirez, 2017; Gullestad, 2002; Ylvisaker et al., 2015). The universal child welfare act in Norway works as a safeguard measure for all children, and there are no specific services with regard to ethnicity (Nygård et al., 2018). Gullestad (2002), Chinga-Ramirez (2017) & Ylvisaker et al. (2015) claimed that equality in Norway is considered as sameness which can be translated and interpreted as likeness, similarity, and common identity, which lets people feel they have equal value. This notion denies the diversities of the society and asks immigrants to become Norwegian, while it is also tacitly assumes that migrants can never achieve these qualities. Hence, immigrants are often criticized as they cannot correspond with Norwegian knowledge, and on this ground, Norwegians consider themselves as advanced and hierarchically superior (Gullestad, 2002). Gullestad's understanding and explanation of egalitarianism, though criticized by others, still gives insights into the disproportionality of ethnic minorities in Norwegian CWS (Veliquette, 2018).

Norwegian policies towards immigrants have thrived in the direction of equality, sometimes realized as assimilation, and the word 'Likhet' refers to both 'equality' and 'similarity' in Norwegian, meaning no terminological differentiation has been made between equal rights and cultural similarity (Eriksen, 2013; Veliquette, 2018; Chinga-Ramirez, 2017). However, the idea of egalitarianism in the realm of migration and integration has become ambiguous as these policies talk to ensuring equal access to services, and also expecting migrants to become the prototype of Norwegian, like in parenting or accepting Norwegian ideals to be recognized as equal (Rysst, 2022; Bendixsen et al., in Veliquette, 2018). Rysst (2022) asserted that without discussing race, it is not possible to combat racism, and colour-blind policy leads to increased racism, not the opposite.

The word 'diverse' is frequently used instead of multiculturalism in Oslo, Norway (Eriksen, 2013). Claiming equality is more laudable and appreciable in Norway, whereas claiming the right to diversity is more difficult (Eriksen, 2013). Since after the Second World War, Norwegian official policy marks that "we are all equal" and "have the same worth" irrespective of our colour, skin, sexuality, and gender (Rysst, 2022; Gullestad, 2002; Kojan, 2011; Chinga-Ramirez, 2017). Though Norwegian policies talk about equality entailing equity and sameness, it will not be an exaggeration to say that policies are colour-blind on the ground of the denial of the existence of



racial inequalities, either by their presence or significance (Rysst, 2022). In examining egalitarianism in the contexts of immigrants and diverse populations, there has been the claim that families are not given sufficient information to change and be equal (Erstad 2018 in Veliquette, 2018), and while migrants are asked to become like the majority of the people for greater integration, there are assumptions that they cannot make it (Bendixsen et al., 2018 in Veliquette, 2018). In this context, families who want to be merged and get integrated with Norwegianism lack sufficient information and guidance (Veliquette, 2018).

Though there are no anti-discriminatory laws at the national level in Norway (Kriz & Skivenes, 2010b) and no concrete guidelines for social work practice to work with ethnic minority children and their families (Fylkesnes et al., 2018b; Kriz & Skivenes, 2010b; Samsonsen and Willumsen 2015 in Tembo & Studsrød, 2018), Norwegian child welfare law require that social workers consider culture and religion while placing minority children in the care system (Kriz & Skivenes, 2010a; NMCE, 2017; Melinder et al., 2021; Picot, 2014). The policy in Norwegian Child Welfare, in congruence with policies of so many countries, also opines that children should grow up with their biological families and they should be in contact with their families when they are placed in out-of-home care (Ellingsen, Shemmings & Størksen, 2011; Melinder et al., 2021; Picot, 2014).

### **2.3 Minority and immigrant children and CWS in Norway**

CWS disproportionately engages with immigrant families rather than Norwegian families (Handulle & Vassenden, 2021; Veliquette, 2018; Staer, 2016). Children with immigrant backgrounds are overrepresented in CWS, whether preventive measures or out-of-home care (Kalve & Dyrhaug, 2011 in Backe-Hansen, et al., 2013; Kriz & Skivenes, 2011; Staer & Bjørknes, 2015; Tembo, Studsrød & Young, 2021) but very little is documented in the literature about why children with ethnic and immigrants background are overrepresented (Backe-Hansen et al., 2013). However, Staer & Bjørknes (2015), Berg, Hewson & Fotheringham (2017) and Tembo et al., (2021) illustrated that poverty within the family, single parenthood, higher dependency on social benefits, lower parental education, and entry of unaccompanied minors are persistently associated with minority families, which are considered as leading factors to be involved with CWS. The traumatic experiences that refugee migrants and their children face at their homes and on their way to destination might be another cause of CWS involvement (Tembo, 2022). Paulsen et al., (2014 in Ursin et al., 2022, P:28-29) identified three main reasons for the overrepresentation of children

from ethnic minority backgrounds children in CWS: "(1) cultural and minority group-related factors (divergent understandings and expectations of childcare); (2) living conditions (immigrant populations are socio-economic disadvantaged); and (3) refugee-related factors (war, having to flee, long periods in reception centres, and exile)." Studsrød et al., 2014 in Fylkesnes et al., (2018b) and Veliquette (2018) asserted that around 80 percent of households received services from CWS with their consent, while a significant portion of the rest claimed that they had very minimal option to reject CWS interventions.

It was surprising to many people to see the critiques of the Norwegian CWS, especially seeing the concerns from the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE, 2015) and the UN Children's Committee (UNCRC, 2018 in Ursin et al., 2022) in dealing with children of ethnic and minority backgrounds and the use of forced removals. Norway considers equality as sameness, and the notion denies the diversity of the society (Chinga-Ramirez, 2017; Gullestad, 2002; Rysst, 2022; Bendixsen et al., in Veliquette, 2018) and asks immigrants to become Norwegian (Veliquette, 2018; Chinga-Ramirez, 2017). Furthermore, in out-of-home care services, parents shared more emotional stories than those who experienced in-home interventions (Fylkesnes et al., 2018b; Melinder et al., 2021; Tembo & Studsrød, 2018). Hence, UNCRC (2018 in Ursin et al., 2022) has raised several concerns, e.g., if the removal of the child is in the best interests of the children, the use of coercion to separate children from their parents, do children have sufficient contact with their families, are their languages and cultures considered while they are in state custody, and is there sufficient information sharing and communication between CWS and migrant families?

Taking a case as an example- *Abdi Ibrahim v. Norway*, the child was Muslim Somali who was allowed for adoption by a Christian foster family where mothers wished for him to perform and maintain his cultural and religious roots (ECHR, 2021; Veliquette, 2018; Stavros, 2022). ECHR declared that various interests had been taken into consideration while placing the child but there were shortcomings as they could not ensure the wishes of the biological mother. There was less contact between the mother and the son, and the authority had failed to maintain the ties with his cultural and religious roots (ECHR, 2021; Veliquette, 2018; Stavros, 2022). The decision of the court set an example for the violation of the law and asks social workers to be more careful on ethnic and cultural grounds (Veliquette, 2018). Ursin et al., (2022) provide another example where a 16-year-old girl was removed from her family without offering primary care and was placed in

foster care as the girl had to take care of her siblings, do household chores, and continue her studies in the absence of her parents who would remain busy in earning livelihoods. Concerning the CWS intervention, the child enjoyed her days in foster care, but she also felt that it was not worth it as she could not assist her parents in days of their grief. She said that she would feel more contented to assist her parents and siblings rather than being in foster care (Ursin et al., 2022). For the second case, social workers did not consider that the care notions might vary in different contexts. Children's age and maturity play a significant role in the care continuum (Nordenfors & Melander, 2017, P-9) and the girl was 16 years old. Substantial care might have negative impacts, including mental ill-health, while adaptive care gives them 'resilience' (Bauer, 2016; Nordenfors & Melander, 2017). While children's inability to meet care demands might make them feel ashamed (Nordenfors & Melander, 2017), adaptive care might give them moral agency and higher contentment built on emotional attachment (Berman, 2018). There are many factors that influence CPS employees, for instance, state mandates, societal and political contexts, normative views, laws and policies, and professional discretion (Fylkesnes, Taylor & Iversen, 2018a), in making decisions about risk assessments, the best interests of children, and what constitutes proper parenting (Fylkesnes et al., 2018b).

## **2.4 Intensive parenting and minority and immigrant parents in Norway**

While parents usually have the right to control and exercise parenting, raising children in Norway is not entirely a private matter but rather a state issue as well (Tembo et al., 2021). Parenting in the Norwegian norms can be parallel to 'intensive parenting' where parents receive guidelines and detailed advice about health and hygiene, food and diet, upbringing and socializing (Tembo et al., 2021), and children are seen as "more vulnerable to risks impacting their physical and emotional development than ever before" (Faircloth, 2014 in Fylkesnes et al., 2018b) and good parents need to invest quality time, energy, money and care to ensure proper development of their children and to avoid risks (Fylkesnes et al., 2018b). It is common for Norwegian parents to actively encourage their children's education and extracurricular pursuits and participate in activities that are relevant to their academic advancement (Frønes & Strømme, 2014 in Staer, 2016). Minority and immigrant parents might have different parenting norms, and the lack of resources might impede their abilities for 'intensive parenting,' which eventually marginalizes them within the social hierarchy (Staer & Bjørknes, 2015; Fylkesnes et al., 2018b; Kriz & Skivenes, 2011).

Ethnic and immigrant parents are often seen to lack Norwegian knowledge regarding parenting, and there are bureaucratic norms about how to be an ideal client (Fylkesnes et al., 2018b; Ylvisaker et al., 2015). Classification of immigrants as ‘others’ (Ylvisaker et al., 2015), and into good and bad parents often exists, and immigrant parents have to make Norwegian Welfare Institutions understand that they are good parents (Handulle, 2022; Handulle & Vassenden, 2021; Ylvisaker et al., 2015). For example, immigrant parents perceive expectations, recommendations, demands, and directions on parenting, including children's bedtime, after-school activities, diet, etc., as a control mechanism (Tembo et al., 2021). Though these demands were not directly articulated, parents need to be satisfied in a way to be considered good parents. However, while some immigrant parents acknowledge the need for assistance in playing their parenting roles and appreciate the support that they get from the state and CWS (Friberg & Bjørnset, 2019 in Tembo et al., 2021), there is quite a wide body of research that claims that there is mistrust between families of migrant and ethnic backgrounds and CWS in Norway (Vassenden & Vedøy 2019 in Handulle, 2022; Kriz & Skivenes, 2010a; Handulle & Vassenden, 2021; Tembo et al., 2021) and that many migrants fear the CWS (Berg et al., 2017 & Vassenden & Vedøy, 2019 in Handulle & Vassenden, 2021; Tembo et al., 2021).

Immigrant parents feel the environment of continuous surveillance and scrutiny through surrounding people and institutions, e.g., schools, health centres, CWS, etc., and they always need to behave in a normative way in order to be perceived as good parents and not to be reported (Tempo et al., 2021). Social workers often construe parental economic inabilities and poverty with unsuitable mothering and failures in providing care and thus colonize their positions (Ylvisaker et al., 2015; Tempo et al, 2021). On the other hand, CPS employees respect the rights of the child and trust them more than the parent's authority, and children sometimes use CWS as a shield to avoid being disciplined; thus, parents feel the loss of power in their parental status in Norway (Tempo et al., 2021). Considering the overall challenges, parents express their intense fear of losing custody of their child, being deported, and negative emotions, e.g., anxiety, loneliness, shame, loss of hope, false accusation, no autonomy, and stereotyping (Tembo, 2022).

There is also the truth that racism and discrimination still exist towards ethnic minorities in Norwegian society (Dankertsen & Kristiansen, 2021). Immigrant and minority parents fear the

CWS might be due to cultural insensitivity, ethnic discrimination in services by CPS employees (Handulle & Vassenden, 2021; Fylkesnes et al., 2018b), and they fear being perceived negatively by personnel working in kindergartens and schools and consequently reported to CWS. (Handulle & Vassenden, 2021; Tembo et al., 2021). For example, Somali parents frequently report that they have been experiencing discrimination and racism in Norway and are often stigmatized as lazy, giving birth to too many children, are welfare-dependent, and not fluent in Norwegian (Handulle & Vassenden, 2021). It is well understood that each family member is not isolated; instead, they are well connected. As Family System Theory (FST) states, if something affects a person in the family, it affects the all-other members, and if something affects the family system, it affects each family member (Hyde-Nolan & Juliao, 2012). There are claims from the media reports that Somali parents send their children to Somalia for certain years to escape Nordic welfare institutions and persistent discrimination to save the family system from being affected (Handulle, 2022). Hence, they expressed their worries about the development of their children's image as Norwegian-Somali rather than Norwegian, where stigmatization involves many aspects of their everyday life (Handulle, 2022). It has been claimed that immigrant and minority families are considered foreigners when they have been living in Norway for many years (Gullestad, 2002; Ursin et al., 2022), and even second and third-generation children also grow-up with dual identities, Norwegian and their nationality of origin (Ursin et al., 2022). However, the socio-cultural, economic and political dynamics contributing to this are complex, and need to be better understood.

## **2.5 Social workers understanding of ethnicity and multiculturalism**

Norwegian society has been becoming more multicultural and they are gradually becoming positive toward immigrants (Dankertsen & Kristiansen, 2021). However, the disproportionality of ethnic minorities in CWS is an international phenomenon in the modern world, and the lack of cultural understanding could be a contextual factor of why children with ethnic and minority backgrounds are overrepresented in CWS in the Norwegian context (Veliquette, 2018). Hence, culturally sensitive and responsive social work has gained increasing attention globally, including in Norway, and it entails the critical outlook of social workers on the issues of power, privileges, structural inequalities, and power imbalances (Fisher-Borne et al., 2015 in Nygård et al., 2018). The recent Global Social Work Statement of Ethical Principles (IASSW, 2018), rooted within a

critical and emancipatory paradigm, specifically addresses this, with the following ethical requisites:

- 4.7 Social workers recognize that dominant socio-political and cultural discourses and practices contribute to many taken-for-granted assumptions and entrapments of thinking, which manifest in the normalization and naturalization of a range of prejudices, oppressions, marginalization, exploitation, violence, and exclusions.
- 4.8 Social workers recognize that developing strategies to heighten critical consciousness that challenge and change taken-for-granted assumptions for ourselves and the people whom we engage with, forms the basis of everyday ethical, anti-oppressive practice.

Social workers employed by CWS are responsible for providing help and care to children living under circumstances that are harmful to their health and development (Ylvisaker et al., 2015; Tempo, 2022). Professionals like social workers and child investigation officers must realize that parents with ethnic minority backgrounds hold subordinate positions where professionals hold financial and legal means (Johansson, 2013), and they may exert their power deliberately or unconsciously, for example, in writing documents, defining normality, taking the dominant culture as the best, constructing cultural hierarchies, and reaffirming dominant values and norms (Hennum 2011 in Veliquette, 2018). Hence, Ortega and Faller (2011) urged professionals to be self-aware and go for self-reflection to realize and identify the imbalances in power dynamics between them and their clients.

Embedded cultural expectations on how children should act in Norway emerged as a source of silencing children and youths' everyday experiences (Fylkesnes et al., 2018). Social workers also define how parents should act compared to the Norwegian parenting perspective, irrespective of their hardships, struggling lives, structural discriminations, and racism (Ylvisaker et al., 2015). Tembo (2022) showed that while some social workers understand the hardships of immigrants and deal with the crisis moment empathetically, being kind and supportive, others become reactive and use child custody as a control mechanism where police and court are their supportive partners. Hence, indigenous communities, including researchers, demand culturally sensitive social work

practices where social workers are expected to be highly aware of structural and power imbalances, cultural discriminations, and colonization (Nygård et al., 2018; Johansson, 2013; Sewpaul, 2013).

To this end, it is urged to create an inclusive and empowering learning environment for social work students to engage in emancipatory praxis (Flem, Sewpaul, Juberg, & Vigen, 2021) by arguing that gender and racial discrimination are profoundly rooted in the existing social institutions (Sewpaul, 2013), to recognize the unending impact of colonialism on this postcolonial world order due to globalization of neoliberalism (Jönsson, & Flem, 2022; Jönsson, & Flem, 2018), to challenge the existing power imbalance under the postcolonial framework and inequalities based on intersectionality (Flem et al., 2021; Jönsson, & Flem, 2022; Jönsson, & Flem, 2018). The lack of understanding of the cultural milieu may prevent social workers in ensuring effective social work practices (Veliquette, 2018). However, Norway had forced the assimilation policy through the establishment of the "Finnefondet" (The Lapp Fund) to promote Norwegian teachings in Sami and Kven areas (Dankertsen & Kristiansen, 2021). Cultural aspects of minorities and immigrants get less focus or may have subordinate status in the Norwegian CWS (Hollekim et al., 2016 in Veliquette, 2018), and the views of the parents with ethnic minority backgrounds are not given sufficient weight (Fylkesnes et al., 2018). Kriz & Skivenes (2010) claimed that social workers in England have more experience and expertise in anti-racist practices than social workers in Norway.

Norwegian social workers sometimes assume Norwegian families to be ideal foster families over migrant families and prefer to place ethnic children with mainstream Norwegians for greater integration (Dankertsen & Kristiansen, 2021; Ylvisaker et al., 2015). Though the policy in Norwegian Child Welfare emphasizes keeping children with their biological families and maintaining contact with families unless exceptions are made with specific out-of-home care placements (Ellingsen et al., 2011; Melinder et al., 2021; Picot, 2014), social workers sometimes fail to ensure contact and to maintain the ties with children's cultural and religious roots, e.g., *Abdi Ibrahim v. Norway* case (ECHR, 2021; Veliquette, 2018; Stavros, 2022). The Immigrant Forum in Norway has raised concerns that CWS sometimes place children in foster families that are culturally and linguistically different from their own, and it becomes problematic when these children forget their cultural and religious roots (Veliquette, 2018). Hence, the need for multicultural foster homes has become a long demand in Norway (Veliquette, 2018).

While working with ethnic minorities and immigrant families, social workers in Norway see themselves as cultural instructors rather than cultural learners (Križ & Skivenes, 2010a), and sometimes categorize the service user culture as the subordinate culture (Ylvisaker et al., 2015), a reflection of discriminatory attitudes. To this end, Hultman, Forkby & Höjer, (2020) argued that building trust and rapport with service users, understanding their backgrounds, and respecting their uniqueness provide the basis of professionalism, the lack of which leads to legitimacy crises.

Norwegian social workers are more prone to the assimilation of linguistic aspects rather than being aware of racial issues (Križ & Skivenes, 2010b). Social workers who work with ethnic groups in Norway consider culture and ethnicity as hybrid and fluid, have less static cultural conceptualization (Nygård et al., 2018), and consider 'culture' as problematic rather than looking into discrimination, racism, and structural imbalances (Ylvisaker et al., 2015). Their decisions are influenced by state mandates, societal and political contexts, normative views, laws and policies, and professional discretions (Fylkenes et al., 2018a). Here, professional discretions play a significant role as these change over time based on political, historical, and cultural contexts (Fylkenes et al., 2018a).

## **2.6 The challenges that social workers face**

Understanding minority ethnic children's backgrounds requires time, resources, and knowledgeable social workers (Fylkesnes et al., 2018a; Douglas & Saus, 2021; SOS Children's Villages Norway, 2013). Research has identified that cultural sensitivity, language, issues of trust, and bureaucratic procedures might impede service provisions for ethnic minorities and immigrants' children (Križ & Skivenes, 2015 & Skivenes et al., 2014 in Fylkesnes et al., 2018b). One of the main challenges for social workers is the scarcity of resources- the local authorities do not have enough resources to follow up and provide support to all families who need support (SOS Children's Villages Norway, 2013). Another challenge is trust-building. Trust building through effective communication, ensuring participation, and creating a climate for information sharing in CWS contexts, though it bears high significance, is a challenge due to limited resources, staff turnover, case procedures, parental negative attitudes, social worker's lack of understanding of what participation means or how it can be achieved, and the challenges of social workers to decide over the weight they should put on children's views vs. children's ability to decide over their best interests (Fylkesnes et al., 2018).



The language barrier is another main challenge while working with immigrant children (Chand, 2008 in Kriz & Skivenes, 2010a; Kriz & Skivenes, 2010b). In a recent study, Buzungu (2023) discusses how language barriers and untrained translators negatively impact social workers' interactions with ethnic minorities, and the implications of these for social policy and social work's ethical commitments. While Norwegian social workers acknowledged language as a barrier, they did not show strong feelings about the problem compared to social workers in England (Križ & Skivenes, 2010b). The tentative reason might be due to greater awareness of anti-racist practices by the English social workers than the Norwegian (Križ & Skivenes, 2010b). Even with the use of an interpreter to offset the language barriers, social workers lose time and trust and fail to establish good working relationships while working with ethnic and immigrant parents and their children (Kriz & Skivenes, 2010a; Buzungu, 2023). Social workers often cannot express themselves properly to service users and interpreters often do not understand the child welfare systems well.

Social workers often cannot assess the real intentions of the carer or the child as they usually hear a summary from the interpreters, not the actual verbatim (Križ & Skivenes, 2010b). Sometimes it is hard to find skilled interpreters; social workers struggle against organisational constraints and limited resources, and they often do not trust the competency of the interpreter (Kriz & Skivenes, 2010a; Buzungu, 2023). Decision-making regarding risk assessment and whether to remove a child or not to be placed in alternative care is extremely complex and demanding, even when working with the same or similar group of people. These complexities are accentuated when working across differences of language, nationality, religion, culture, race and class, and sufficient state and organisational resources must be put in place to ensure that social workers live up to the ethical requisites of the profession, particularly in relation to respecting and responding to diversity and recognition of the inherent dignity and worth of every person (IASSW, 2018).

Finding foster homes has been challenging (NMCE, 2017). Social workers separate siblings as they are unable to locate foster homes which can accommodate all (SOS Children's Villages Norway, 2013). The concluding observations for Norway by the UNCRC (2010 in SOS Children's Villages Norway, 2013) expressed concerns that in some places, a sufficient number of alternative foster families are not available, leading to a dependency on luck when it comes to placing a child. Considering the overall background, recruiting enough foster homes, including minority and refugee families, has been made a priority by the Norwegian government (NMCE, 2017)

## 2.7 Conclusion

Overall, Norway is one of the most child-friendly countries in the world (Reisel et al., 2019; UNDP, 2020 in Melinder et al., 2021), and a pioneer in ensuring child protection in many ways- initiating its very first law in 1896 (Pösö et al., 2014; Veliquette, 2018; Melinder et al., 2021; Picot, 2014), banning corporal punishment, creation of an ombudsman, and approving inheritance for out of Wedlock children (Picot, 2014). The municipality, CSWB, and the Ministry of Children and Equality are responsible in to work for children's welfare in Norway (Veliquette, 2018; Kojan, 2011). Norwegian legal regulations mandate considering minority and immigrant children's culture and religion while placing them in out-of-home care (Kriz & Skivenes, 2010b; NMCE, 2017; Melinder et al., 2021; Picot, 2014). However, Norway considers equality as sameness and the notion denies the diversities of the society (Chinga-Ramirez, 2017; Gullestad, 2002; Rysst, 2022; Bendixsen et al., in Veliquette, 2018) and social workers consider Norwegian families to be ideal foster families (Dankertsen & Kristiansen, 2021) and asks immigrants to become a prototype of Norwegian (Veliquette, 2018; Chinga-Ramirez, 2017).

Hence, concerns have been raised by PACE (2015), UNCRC (Ursin et al., 2022), and by several researchers, e.g., Kriz & Skivenes (2010b), Dankertsen & Kristiansen (2021), Fylkesnes & Skivenes (2018b), Handulle & Vassenden (2021); Ylvisaker et al. (2015). Though there are concerns from international organizations, media, and researchers about the CPS while working with minority and immigrant children, very little is known about how social workers make decisions while working with minority and immigrant children in organizing out-of-home care; if they have any specific guidelines and if yes, how these guidelines affect their decisions; if there is no guideline, how do they make decisions; how does professional discretion work in their professional field of practice; to what extent do the existing laws and policies, state and political mandate, and professional settings influence their decisions; what challenges do they face, and what kind of measures do they take to overcome existing challenges in their day to day practice setting? To this end, the study was carried out to understand the guidelines CPS employees use to work with minority and immigrant children and the challenges that they face.

# **Chapter Three**

## **Research Methodology**

The study was qualitative in nature. The rationale for choosing a qualitative approach is that it would best fit this study to investigate answers to the ‘what’ and ‘how’ research questions and provide a deeper understanding of the contexts and the phenomena that would not be possible under a quantitative approach (Cleland, 2017; Neuman, 2014). Both primary and secondary data were used in this study. Secondary data were collected and reviewed mainly from books, indexed journal articles, authentic newspapers and reports, and websites. Primary data were collected through in-depth interviews. This chapter covers this study's research design and methodological framework. The chapter particularly discusses the location of the study, data collection methods and instruments, sampling frameworks, data analysis techniques, ethical considerations, and theoretical lens for data analysis and discussions.

### **3.1.1 Study area and location**

The study was carried out in Rogaland County, Norway. The City Population Index (2023) pictured the pros and cons of the county. As per the index, the county has an area of 8589 square kilometres and is composed of 23 municipalities, with a total population of 492,350 people, where 124,628 are children between 0-19 age category, and 87598 are immigrants (based on the country of birth). The study included research participants from three municipalities out of 23 where a total of 256,874 population out of 492,350 live, a clear representation of 52% of the total population of Rogaland County. Furthermore, these three municipalities host 64183 children between the 0-19 age category (covering 51% of children of Rogaland County) and 55923 immigrants out of 87598 immigrants of the county.

### **3.1.2 Data collection methods and instruments**

A qualitative approach was used to reach the objectives of the study. In-depth interviews (IDIs) with CPS employees were used to collect data. This data collection method was chosen as it is beneficial to seek and understand personal understandings and perceptions on specific issues

(Hennink et al., 2011 in Ghimire, 2019), and the interviewer may choose to explore the wide array of questions containing ‘what’ and ‘how’ and ‘why’ (Bryman, 2016). IDIs were carried out to understand the professional guidelines that CPS employees use, the dilemmas they encounter in following these guidelines, the way they organize out-of-home care, and the challenges that they face in working with children of minority and immigrant backgrounds. An interview guide was used to collect the data through IDIs (See Appendix 01).

### **3.1.3 Sampling: Participants and their profile**

CPS employees were chosen as the participants of the study. Though CSWB is involved in the decision-making process of care orders, CPS employees were interviewed in this study as they write the documents, define normality and cultural boundaries, affirm dominant values and norms, carry out investigations, prepare documents for CSWB, and implement care orders. Purposive sampling was used to include respondents who have sufficient experience as CPS employees, dealing with children from minority and immigrant family backgrounds. The logic of using purposive sampling is that, as a researcher, I wanted to sample participants in a strategic way so that those sampled were relevant to the research questions, and to fulfil the research objectives (Bryman, 2016). A total of 15 municipalities out of 23 of Rogaland County were approached to reach the right participants for interviews. One of the municipalities cooperated and referred two participants to be interviewed. Furthermore, I managed to interview three participants through personal networking and rapport with the diverse communities, including mainstream Norwegian and immigrants in Rogaland County. Snowball sampling was further used from the referred sources to recruit compatible research participants and got one participant to interview. So, a total of six CPS employees were interviewed in this study from the three municipalities of Rogaland County. Three participants were female, while the rest were male, and the range of their working experiences with minority and immigrant families varied from 04 years to 10 years.

### **3.1.4 Data analysis techniques**

Data, which were collected through the in-depth interviews, were recorded subject to the participants’ consent. Recorded interviews help to correct the ordinary limitations of our memories, allow thorough scrutiny about what participants say, double check participants' answers if necessary, and to counter the accusation of manipulation or biases (Bryman, 2016; Heritage,

1984). A digital recorder approved by the University of Stavanger (UiS) and usually accepted by the Norwegian Centre for Research Data AS (NSD) was used to record the interviews, which is encrypted in the UiS central data preservation system with the highest confidentiality where no one has access except the researcher. De-naturalized transcriptions were prepared immediately after returning from the field, especially for the sake of length and ease of understanding (Bryman, 2016). The transcription and re-checking of each interview took around 07 to 08 hours on average. No externals were recruited throughout the whole process of interviews and data processing in order to maintain confidentiality.

The transcribed data were stored in separate files for each interview and put in the NVivo system to code to get appropriate themes. A thematic analysis approach was used to analyse the findings of the study. The rationale for choosing 'thematic analysis' is that it is characterized by flexibility (Bryman, 2016), a theory itself that can be applied to a variety of theories and epistemological approaches (Braun & Clarke, 2008), and appealing to emerging researchers as it appears intuitive and straightforward (Riessman, 2008). Both inductive reasoning, which emphasizes the emergence of patterns, themes, and theories from the collected interview data (Bryman, 2016), and deductive reasoning, which includes established knowledge and theories as a point of departure, were applied to find themes and analyse the data. While done with coding and searching for patterns and themes through extracting the interview data, a total of 07 themes were found under the inductive approach, and two specific themes, i.e., 'social worker's understanding of ethnicity and multiculturalism' and 'the challenges that social workers face' were taken under deductive approach, and then themes under both approaches were analysed and discussed.

### **3.1.5 Ethical Considerations**

As my research involves human subjects, approval from the institutional review boards (IRBs) to guide research processes (Landau, 2008; Berg, Hewson & Fotheringham, 2012) and to represent ethical validation (Nygård & Saus, 2016; Ferguson & Clark, 2018) should be in place. Hence approval from the Norwegian Centre for Research Data AS (NSD) was obtained with proper documentation, e.g., project brief, interview guide, informed consent letter, etc (See Appendix 01, 02, 03 & 04). This approval granted me permission and legitimacy to reach the right participants (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007; Pittaway, Bartolomei & Hugman, 2010).

As a researcher, I was fully aware of the ethical issues, as narrated by Bryman (2016), Hammersley & Atkinson (2007), Andanda (2009), Pittaway, et al., (2010), Peled & Leichtentritt (2002), Berg et al. (2012), and Sobočan, Bertotti & Strom-Gottfried, (2019), and in general, these are: not to harm participants; providing sufficient information to the participants before the interviews for them to make informed decisions; and non-deception. Considering the overall perspective, confidentiality and privacy issues of the respondents and their opinions were safeguarded with the highest ethical integrity (Berg, et al., 2012; Andanda, 2009; Pittaway, et al., 2010; Mertens & Ginsberg, 2008). To this end, pseudonyms were used in the reporting of the data to conceal and protect the identity of the participants. Subject to a comprehensive explanation of the research objective, respondents' verbal and written consent were taken in advance in a standard format (See Appendix 02 & 03) (Bryman, 2016; Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007; Mertens & Ginsberg, 2008; Homan, 1992). In reporting and the publication process, the researcher ensured that the findings are not misused through ensuring transparent representation of themes and patterns (see appendix 05), especially to harm service users or any other partner to the research process (Sobočan et al., 2018), and the benefits of research would be sufficiently shared with research participants (Andanda, 2009).

### **3.1.6 Trustworthiness of the study**

Trustworthiness as an alternative term to validity, reliability, and neutrality in the quantitative study was proposed by Lincoln and Guba (1985) to assess qualitative research. Trustworthiness incorporates credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Bryman, 2016; Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Shenton, 2004; Nowell, L. S., et al., 2017). To ensure credibility, the study design was finalized in consultation with the assigned supervisor. In addition to the continuous consultation with the assigned supervisor from the very beginning to the presentation of findings, ongoing suggestions were sought from colleagues, other faculty members, and researchers. For the validation of the research design and data collection instruments, materials were shared with a group of faculty members of the UiS, colleagues, and other relevant stakeholders. To ensure transferability, sufficient background information in the context of fieldwork was provided for readers throughout the paper as they can decide if the context is similar to another situation and whether the findings can be applied to other settings. The 'audit trail' process from the beginning of the research project to the very end was ensured with the highest ethical integrity as future investigators can repeat the study to ensure dependability.

As an outsider, I was fully aware of the hardships of working in a different context, and misunderstanding communication tone and verbal-nonverbal expressions might lead to the misrepresentation of data. Though an insider has distinct advantages in understanding contexts and their knowledge is an asset in the research process (Kanuha, 2000; Labaree, 2002), there is also the truth that being an outsider, I put my highest ethical integrity is not biased and carried out the research from the third eye perspectives (Kanuha, 2000). This ensured the confirmability of the study, the final criteria of trustworthiness. I engaged in critical self-reflectivity by keeping fieldnotes on my thoughts, feelings, and reactions after each interview, and by engaging in dialogue with my supervisor to keep in check potential biases and pre-conceptions.

### **3.2 Theoretical Framework**

Norway experienced a diverse range of migration since the late 1960s from non-European countries for jobs (Reisel, Hermansen & Kindt, 2019; Eriksen, 2013; Rysst, 2022), an exodus from European member states through European enlargement in 2004 and 2007 (Reisel et al., 2019), and the country is now considered as a multi-ethnic society (OECD 2015b in Reisel et al., 2019; Vasileva, 2011). Once there were debates about using Critical Race Theory (CRT) in Norwegian contexts considering its origin in the USA contexts, and less applicability due to monolingual cultural dominance (Dankertsen & Kristiansen, 2021; Massao & Fasting, 2010.), current Norwegian academic discourses and public landscape have deeply been involved with discussions about racism, discrimination, cultural differences, religious differences, ethnicity, and identity (Kyllinstad, 2017 in Taadi, 2021).

The notion 'race' is not present in the Norwegian laws, official language, and constitution, and the term 'immigrants' is often labelled with racism in Norway (Taadi, 2021). Norwegian fundamental principles espouse cultural homogeneity, universalism, equality, and welfare, where equality refers to 'sameness' and asks immigrants to embrace the Norwegian way of life (Chinga-Ramirez, 2017; Gullestad, 2002; Ylvisaker, Rugkasa & Eide, 2015). Furthermore, the Scandinavian undocumented maxim '*Janteloven*' referring to 'the law of Jante' suggests that no 'one is inherently superior or has greater worth than anyone else' in terms of 'intellectual maturity, physical appearance, and general ambition' (Turausky 2011 in Taadi, 2021). The maxim, though, enhances democracy but limits the room for a culturally plural society as it requires service recipients to be prototypes of the

mainstream society (Rysst, 2022; Veliquette, 2018). Norwegian Statistical Central Bureau survey findings revealed, for example, that “immigrants should strive towards being as similar to Norwegians as possible” was supported by 49 percent of Norwegian (SSB, 2013 in Taadi, 2021) where, the survey referred by ‘immigrants’ as people coming from Eastern Europe, Asia, Africa and South and Central America, a clear reflection of how Norwegian use this term to refer people with the non-western look (Taadi, 2021). Thus, non-discussion of inequalities and racial issues in public discussion and colour-blind policies lead to increased racism rather than reducing it (Rysst (2022). To this end, theoretical lenses explain how I applied and analysed the findings of this study through CRT and the lens of cultural pluralism.

### ***3.2.1A Critical Race Theory (CRT)***

CRT scholars, though, acknowledge that there is no definitive starting point for this theory; it is frequently cited that the theory evolved in the 1970s when academicians, lawyers, and activists across the USA realized that the civil rights era of the 1960s became stagnant and the re-emergence of the racism in a latent manner (Willis, 2008; Cole & Cole, 2017; Delgado & Stefancic, 2011 in Taadi, 2021). As a strategy to defend the subtle comeback of racism, Dr. Derrick Bell became the pioneer of the CRT (Constance-Huggins, 2012), followed by some other scholars, e.g., Richard Delgado, Angela Harris, Patricia Williams, Mari Matsuda, and Kimberlé Crenshaw (Bousseau & Martell, 2021). The theory also drew inspiration from critical legal studies, radical feminism, and European philosophers and theorists, e.g., Antonio Gramsci, Michel Foucault, Jacques Derrida, etc. (Delgado & Stefancic, 2011 in Taadi, 2021). With the involvement of scholars of colour in critical legal studies (CLS), they extracted the non-addressment of racial and discriminatory issues explicitly in CLS, and the CLS conferences of 1986 and 1987 became the genesis years for CRT as more coloured scholars voiced concerns over racial unconsciousness (Willis, 2008). Though CRT centres on race, it still critically reflects on the intersectionality or diverse forms of oppression- "class, gender, sexual orientation, nationality, ethnicity, language, and immigration rights"- that exist and are experienced by people of colour (Willis, 2008, P: 17). CRT is though predominantly used in the United States to analyse and discuss racial and ethnic disparities across several disciplines, including social sciences, the theory has been adopted elsewhere throughout the world to analyse the same issues (Taadi, 2021).



CRT is not limited to reflecting individual prejudices; it confronts and challenges the dominant societal and institutional forces questioning structural racism, aiming to dismantle racial discrimination (Lawrence et al., 1993 in Willis, 2008). The theory questions equality theory, the foundation of the liberal order, legal reasoning, and the neutral principle of the constitutional law (Taadi, 2021, P: 24) as these ignore existing structural inequalities that normalize and perpetuate racism (Constance-Huggins, 2012). The theoretical base of CRT helps to analyse the presence of race and racism across dominant cultures (Gillborn, 2015 in Bousseau & Martell, 2021) and to understand the intersection with other forms of inequalities, e.g., class, gender, ethnicity, etc. CR theorists aim to reveal, challenge, and advocate for changes in racist policies and practices that subjugate and marginalize minority groups (Bousseau & Martell, 2021). This is how CRT provides ways to understand and assess implicit and explicit racism in policies, structures, and practices (Bousseau & Martell, 2021), and thus can be a potential tool to understand how race, racism, and power impact social work practice (Kolivoski, Weaver & Constance-Huggins, 2014).

Three key tenets help in understanding and applying the theory in practice. Firstly, racism is endemic (not an abnormal experience; reproduced in structures, customs, and experiences; and often less visible to people with racial privileges) (Constance-Huggins, 2012; Taadi, 2021). The normalization advances colour-blind policies and programs and indiscriminately ignores people of colour (Taadi, 2021). Secondly, the theory criticizes 'interest convergence' holding the notion that the majority aligns with the minority only when their interests are well served and considers "material accumulation of wealth as a core manifestation of racism", especially to serve whites (Delgado et al., 2017 in Taadi, 2021, P: 25). Finally, the theory considers racism as 'social construction' (society can manipulate and recreate racial groups) (Constance-Huggins, 2012; Taadi, 2021; Sewpaul, 2013). The notion holds that race is not biological, genetic, inherent, objective, or fixed; instead, it is the society/state which creates and manipulates or retires when convenient (Delgado et al., 2017 in Taadi, 2021).

### ***3.2.1B Applicability of CRT in Context***

CRT has been applied in several research papers to explore the expression of the racialization of minorities and/or immigrants in Norwegian healthcare services (Taadi, 2021), child protection services (Dankertsen & Kristiansen, 2021), sports (Massao & Fasting, 2010), racialization practices (Hervik, 2022), and teacher education policy (Fylkesnes, 2019). Though the theory is

highly relevant within the American context, where racism is more visibly present in the social category of everyday life, racialization is done quite differently in Norway, and I considered the theory to be helpful to understand the implicit but powerful hierarchies that exist in the Norwegian society (Dankertsen & Kristiansen, 2021). CRT would be helpful in understanding the ambiguous role of racialization in the Norwegian context as ‘racism’ is cited here as a substitution using terms like ‘ethnicity’, ‘multiculturalism’, ‘culture’, or ‘diversity’ (Dankertsen & Kristiansen, 2021). Practically in this study, the theory helped to understand and critically look back at the professional guidelines that social workers use and the professional discretion that social workers consider while making out-of-home care decisions for children with minority and immigrant backgrounds. This will help to understand if intervention strategies reflect racism with the focus on establishing a mono-centric society in the name of comprehensive integration, without consideration of the cultural and socio-economic contexts of ethnic minorities. The key tenets of the theory will help to understand if the guidelines are colour-blind and if the intersectionality of minority and immigrant children and their families influences CP employees’ decisions while organizing out-of-home care. The theory will help to understand the principles of equality and neutrality of Norwegian society. Finally, the theory will also help to understand the challenges that CPS employees encounter in dealing with intersectionality, with race being an important criterion. Flem et al (2021, p. 8), in a study on emancipatory praxis in relation to intersectionality, concluded that “it was the visible markers of difference in respect of skin colour and race, that played more profound roles in discrimination, exclusion and oppression, rather than nationality per se”

### ***3.2.2A Multiculturalist approach***

The term ‘multi-culturalism’ in sociology refers to ‘ethnic pluralism’ or ‘cultural pluralism’, entailing various ethnic identities and dialogues without sacrificing each one’s identity (Reynolds et al., 2008 in Wikipedia, 2023), denoting the existence of mixed ethnic community with their multiple cultural traditions (Gasimova, 2022 in Wikipedia, 2023). The theory supports the idea that immigrant and ethnic minorities must not be judged or discriminated against based on their skin color, race, language, ability, or willingness to assimilate (Ballard J, et al., 2019). It is often related to identity politics, the politics of recognition, and the politics of disagreements. The term ‘multiculturalism’ has been included in lexical resources long before and may even be traced back to the Greek, Germanic, Roman, and other historical gates, though with differences in

understandings, development methods, and the extent (Grazulis & Mockiene, 2017). Hence, multiculturalism is considered as old as human history, and the existence of cultural diversity naming cultural coexistence, and respect for diversity have been features of many historical empires, e.g., Ottoman (Kymlicka, 2012). However, the modern world considers multiculturalism as a way of blending different cultures, including norms and values, customs, and religious beliefs.

Before the Second World War, the ethnocultural environment and religious diversity in the West were coded by undemocratic and illiberal relationships of hierarchy, justified by racialized ideologies like prioritization of specific coloured people and their cultures over others (Kymlicka, 2012). After World War II, the call for equality of races and people by the UN geared political movements due to the fact of the denial of older hierarchies. There was wider recognition of multiculturalism in the Western democracies from the 1970s to mid-1990s through a diverse range of multicultural policies and minority rights, rejecting the ideology of unitary and homogenous nationhood, but the backlash and the retreat of multiculturalism started again in the mid-1990s through a call for assimilation from the majority groups fearing of threat to their way of life (Kymlicka, 2012). However, the theory of ‘multiculturalism’ was criticized and questioned on the ground that the notion denies social and political rights where most of the problems of immigrants and minorities lie, trivialization of cultural differences, and perpetuating minorities and immigrants as ‘others’ (Kymlicka, 2012).

Globalization has opened the door of a floodgate of migrants, especially since the 1960s. Issues like the humanitarian crisis, hunting skilled labour, family reunification, and the search for a better life have been honing the migration process. A UN international migration report shows that the number of people living outside their country reached 281 million in 2020 (UN, 2020). Between 2000 to 2010, the number of international migrants increased by 48 million globally, adding up to more than 60 million between 2010 to 2020, and the number of forced displacements reached 34 million in 2020, a sharp double in comparison to 2000 (UN, 2020). So, the question arise, how long may we deny the rights of immigrants and ethnic minorities in this era of globalization, and to what extent is it possible to establish a harmonious society segregating them from their cultural, religious, social, and economic rights? Therefore, under the notion of ‘Multiculturalism’, the rights to citizenship or territory are not sought, rather it considers establishing a model claiming democratic citizenship mounted by human rights, replacing earlier uncivil, racialized, and

undemocratic relations of hierarchy and exclusion (Kymlicka, 2012). So, the theory claims that immigrants and minorities should be entitled to civic rights and liberties and not be discriminated against in employment, housing, and other areas of life covering their ethnic difference (Parekh, 1995; Kymlicka, 2012).

### ***3.2.2B Applicability of Multi-culturalism in Context***

As a reaction to the disadvantages of assimilation theory, the theory of multiculturalism came into place, and the world has been embracing the theory replacing the assimilation one. The UDHR 1948 has kept provisions intact for the cultural and religious rights of individuals. Social workers in Norway use existing laws and policies, especially the Child Welfare Act of 1992 (revised in 2023), ECHR initiated strategies, and other relevant inputs as guidelines for their work. The theory was used to understand how CP employees in Norway realize multiculturalism in day-to-day practice and whether the notion of a pluralistic society influences decision-making while organizing out-of-home care for children of migrant and ethnic backgrounds. The theory also helped to explore the challenges that CPS employees face in working with minorities and immigrants.

### **3.3 Challenges faced and the limitations of the study**

While a specific portion of the CPS employees works with out-of-home care placement for children of minority and immigrant backgrounds, the language barrier made the path significantly harder to reach the right participants to interview. I had to invest much time to reach the right CPS employees to interview, which ultimately put time constraints on meeting project deadlines. In addition, the recorder did not record the voice unexpectedly during one interview, and I had to rely on the notes taken during the interview session for analysis. Furthermore, a broader sampling frame and research areas could strengthen the research in general, but the data extracted through six interviews for this particular area are sufficient to shed light on the study questions and objectives. It would be better if I could put every important quotation under every theme during analysis, but the limited word count would not permit this. However, the extraction of patterns and themes are put in the appendix section (see appendix 05). In addition, there was scope for friendliness bias as half of the participants were reached through personal networking. To this end, the researcher met participants in person on the day of the interview only, and initial communications, including sharing project details and other relevant information, were done

digitally to avoid friendliness bias. To be in a comfortable place, at the very beginning of the interview, I explained how I had become interested in this project even after coming from the global south, especially to avoid participant's reactivity bias. Though there was space for 'confirmation bias' from my side, I have put as much data as possible to show where Barnevern is doing good work and where they have scope for improvement from a non-judgemental place. Questions were asked in order and explained where necessary to avoid wording bias.

### **3.4 Conclusion**

Based on the qualitative approach, the study was completed through six in-depth interviews with CPS employees who have a range of four to ten years of working experience in Barnevern with immigrant and minority families. The chapter confirms that study participants were chosen purposively from three municipalities of Rogaland County. Thematic analysis, entailing inductive and deductive approaches, was followed in analysing and presenting data for this research. The lens of the CRT and multi-culturalist approach were used in analysing and discussing the findings. In addition to primary ethical considerations, the trustworthiness of study is discussed.



## **4.1 Navigating out-of-home care: From intake to resolution**

**4.1.1 Barnevern and Out-of-home care:** Barnevern, the Norwegian frontline CPS provider, is a public agency to protect all the children in Norway and ensures their rights through the lens of the ‘best interest of the child’ as discussed in the literature review. Out-of-home care, either foster care or institutional care, takes place either by consent of the parents or by court order in the absence of parental consent. Most of the out-of-home care usually takes place based on court proceedings, and sometimes requires police help. One of the CPS employees said:

And if they agree with us, the core system is to get a paper that says, okay, yes, you can remove the child. Then we can go home. And you know, sometimes we have police help, sometimes we, just you know, inform the parents [ID: 00104].

**4.1.2 Sources of referrals:** Participants of this study and also researchers, e.g., Veliquette (2018), Kojan (2011), Vis et al. (2023), Handulle & Vassenden (2021), and Backe-Hansen et al. (2013) confirmed that CPS employees usually receive referrals or complaints from several sources, e.g., a private person (neighbours), Bernhagen (kindergarten), schools, doctors and nurses, and the police. CPS employees have defined alcohol abuse and being the witness to violence as the leading causes of out-of-home care for Norwegian children. While institutions like SOS Children’s Villages Norway (2013) and researchers such as Adeboye, Guerreiro & Höjer (2019) and Staer (2016) identified several causes, e.g., conflicts/wars, abuse, orphans, and unaccompanied minors seeking asylum and poverty for children to be placed in out-of-home care, this paper documents some unique and additional causes for immigrant and minority children to be placed in out-of-home care- parental inabilities (insufficient parenting knowledge) to care for children, financial insolvencies, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and medical issues like ADHD. Furthermore, misunderstanding cultural differences has been identified by ID: 00104 as another cause of receiving referrals.

The usual causes of (immigrant and minority) children taking out of home care are- parental inabilities to care for children and PTSD. Parents usually do not have knowledge regarding mental health issues, especially (those) who come from outside [ID: 00101].

Most of the time, it's financial situations and also cultural barriers. It can be a teacher who doesn't necessarily understand the (immigrant and minority) parents’ point of view (of the child-rearing process) [ID: 00104].

**4.1.3 Phases of out-of-home care:** Out-of-home care takes place either through parental consent or court order, or emergency care order (Fylkesnes, Taylor & Iversen, 2018; Kojan, 2011; Ursin et al., 2022; Vis et al., 2023). The paper is potentially the first to document how a case is being stepwise dealt with from the reception of a referral to decision-making. CPS employees usually go through *three phases*, from receiving a referral to the resolution of a case. As the law posits, the *initial phase* starts with the investigation after receiving the referrals. The very initial investigation takes one week, and Barnevern officials need to decide either to decline or continue further investigations. In the *second phase*, the case is referred to one of the three teams considering their age: Small Barn to deal with children 01-06 age category; Team Skole (School team) to investigate children aged 07-12; and Team Youth to move on with children aged 13-18 (can be up to 23). This phase usually takes three months, from receiving referrals to making investigation plans as per the law. As a part of the investigation process, the team usually does home visits to observe living conditions and parent-child interactions and talks with concerned individuals to reach a decision. Without parental consent, the case follows the *final phase*: appearing CSWB. CSWB is a state judiciary and serves as a tribunal in out-of-home care decision-making. However, considering the severity of the cases, the child welfare administration or the prosecuting authority might make emergency care orders (*See the quote of the ID: 00106*) (Backe-Hansen et al., 2013; Tønning Otterlei & Studsrød, 2022; Reime & Tysnes, 2021), with emphasis on foster care entailing biological principle (SOS Children's Villages Norway, 2013; Melinder et al., 2021), but the decision needs to be approved within 48 hours of the order by CSWB in pursuant to the Child Welfare Act (Storhaug, A. S., et al., 2022). Appeals can be made within three weeks of the decision, and around one-third of all emergency care placements are appealed (NOU 2020 in Storhaug, A. S. et al., 2022). In the words of one of the participants:

But then we also have situations like acute cases, emergency cases, where that (emergency placement) can happen in one day. If we get, for example, called by the police, we are now in a home because there was some disturbance, and the mother who is taking care of the children is really really drunk, she cannot be able to handle responsibility for a two-year-old now. And then we have to make an emergency out-of-home placement. That's another law, another paragraph. And it's not permanent, it's for as long as she's unable to take care of the child [ID: 00106].



## 4.2 Path to protection: Guidelines CPS employees follow

All the participants unanimously agreed that child protection law (latest revised in 2023) and all other existing laws, and the review of the court proceedings are their main guidelines in ensuring the best interests of the child. International conventions like ECHR are also in priority, considering recent cases made against Norway under the ECtHR (*See the quotation of the ID: 00101*). The findings align with Fylkenes et al. (2018a), where they claimed that state mandates, laws and policies, societal and political contexts, and normative views influence CPS employees' decisions. Though four of the six CPS employees did not discuss having a separate guideline, two CPS employees [ID: 00104 and ID: 00105] from two different communes narrated an additional checklist that they consider when making progress with different cases. However, the checklists work as a recommendation, not something that needs to be mandatorily followed. The findings align with that of Fylkesnes et al. (2018b), Kriz & Skivenes (2010b), & Tembo & Studsrød (2018), who stated that there is no concrete guideline for CPS employees to work with ethnic minority children and their families.

We usually use guidelines given by Child Welfare Law, Review of the Court Proceedings, New Child Protective Law 2023, and International Conventions like ECHR. Especially due to breach and conviction in ECtHR, now we are more focused on international conventions as well, like ECHR [ID: 00101].

In line with the second objective of the paper, it confirms that laws and policies directly shape and demarcate the boundaries of the CPS employee's roles and responsibilities, and there is no way to go beyond these (*See the quotation of the ID: 00102*). CPS employees further narrated that these laws and policies are *equally* applied to all, either minorities and immigrants or Norwegian. While the first narration is the unique findings of this paper, the second part of the findings aligns with the findings of Nygård et al. (2018), where they cited that the universal child welfare act in Norway is a safeguard measure for all children, with having no specific services for ethnic and minorities. To this end, the debate that was raised by Gullestad (2002), Chinga-Ramirez (2017), Eriksen (2013), Veliquette (2018), & Ylvisaker et al. (2015) is that 'equality' in Norway is considered 'sameness' which denies the rights of diversities. The notion of 'egalitarianism' in the realm of migration and integration is considered ambiguous by Rysst (2022) & Veliquette (2018), which urge the immigrant and minority parents to be the prototype of Norwegian. To this end, the CRT

lens also claims that racism is not an abnormal experience; instead, it is reproduced in structures, customs, and experiences; and is often less visible to people with racial privileges (Constance-Huggins, 2012; Taadi, 2021). Hence, the emancipatory paradigm urges to recognize the normalization and naturalization of a range of prejudices, oppressions, marginalization, exploitation, violence, and exclusions based on dominant socio-political and cultural discourses and practices (IASSW, 2018) and to challenge the existing power imbalances under the postcolonial framework and inequalities based on intersectionality (Flem et al., 2021; Jönsson, & Flem, 2022; Jönsson, & Flem, 2018; Sewpaul, 2013). As the diversification of Norwegian society is going on, accommodating the rights of diversified communities is the concern of the time. In addition to the straightforwardness of the law, CPS employees recognized that, in some cases, they face dilemmas in following the law on the one hand and the professional discretion in ensuring the best interests of the child on the other hand (*See the quotation of the ID: 00104*). In such cases, they need to consult with a legal counsellor and make decisions compatible with the law.

But since we are in Norway, then the law will dictate... Anything that is prohibited by the law, then no one can change it... So, if the mother and the father say, I'm the best parent on the earth, but I kind of smack him sometimes in order to get his attention and to correct him. The law says that the police will come to you, and you will go to the court. So that, then, they need to understand that it's in the law [ID: 00102].

Yeah, there are dilemmas because, you know, both the law says we have to consider the best interest of the child, but also the child has the right to family life, and there's a lot of things that contradict [ID: 00104].

### **4.3 Unveiling Journeys: Out-of-home care and family reunification efforts**

**4.3.1 Biological principal vs. second best option:** The findings of this paper and also literature (Kojan, 2011; Ursin et al., 2022; Vis et al., 2023; Staer, 2016) showed that the existing laws of Norway prioritize the biological principle and the children's rights to family. At the same time, the findings of this study and the literature (Kriz & Skivenes, 2010a; NMCE, 2017; Melinder et al., 2021; Picot, 2014) are aligned with Norwegian law, which asks that culture, religion, and language be considered when placing children in out-of-home care. However, study participants stated that finding foster families from immigrant and minority communities are challenging so they recruit

mainstream families as the second-best option to ensure the best interests of the child. On this issue, one of the CPS employees said:

Even though we're struggling to find them because the law says you need to take care of the culture, language, and religion. But when you don't have options, then you take the second best. So that's why we recruit from Norwegian homes [ID: 00102].

**4.3.2 Intensive parenting and cultural differences:** Parenting in Norway requires intensive efforts, and parents are required to be involved with their children's lives both at and outside school. The findings are supported by Tembo et al. (2021) and Fylkesnes et al. (2018b). However, CPS employees sometimes receive cases from the school regarding immigrant parents' limited caring attitudes toward their children compared with Norwegian parents, based on a lack of understanding of parenting norms among immigrant families. This labels immigrant parents as bad (Fylkesnes et al., 2018b) and they fear school-teachers and Barnevern (Handulle & Vassenden, 2021; Tembo et al., 2021). Furthermore, CPS employees explained that parental non-understanding of the living styles in Norway is reason for receiving complaints, e.g., not understanding food culture, weather, dress code or sleeping habits. To this end, Staer & Bjørknes (2015), Fylkesnes et al. (2018b), & Kriz & Skivenes (2011) argued that minority and immigrant parents might have different parenting norms, and the lack of resources might impede their abilities for 'intensive parenting,' which disadvantages and marginalizes them.

CPS employees often provide guidance and offer different kinds of training to immigrant and minority parents on how to raise a child in Norway. The training courses mainly cover what Barnevern is, Norwegian norms of raising a child, ingredients to be considered as violence, and the way of communication with the child. These guidelines are the cultural norms for Norwegian parents (Tembo et al., 2021). Though it is not possible to comment on the training contents based on the current data, the themes of the training modules give an overview that show the normalization of assimilation, rejecting the idea of the multiculturalist approach. While some of the immigrant parents found these guidelines, demands, expectations, and recommendations helpful, some others consider this process as a part of a control mechanism (Tembo et al., 2021), and thus make them fearful of Barnevern.

**4.3.3 Collection of foster families:** When it is the time to take children in care measures, CPS employees sometimes ask parents if they have someone within their network to take care of the child. However, Bufetat is a state-owned organization that usually finds foster homes for CPS employees. They write content on the internet and other places to collect foster families. In general, responsible parents, financial solvency, the place to accommodate a new child, non-judgemental attitudes, time and energy, openness and respect for other religions, and warm hearts and eyes are the main qualities that CPS employees require to consider a family as a foster family. They have specialized training to assess potential foster families. When they decide to place an immigrant child in a Norwegian foster home, they add other expectations, e.g., providing compatible food (like Halal for Muslims, no beef for Hindus), taking an Afro girl child to the compatible hairdresser, maintaining religion and language within the home circle, and taking them to visit native community/cultural fests (*See the quote of the ID: 00105*). These are just expectations Barnevern employees put with hope in foster families. These are unique findings of this study (*See section 5.6.4 for further details*).

You need both a wise head and a warm heart. And when you get a foster child, your home is (a) kind of official home. You have to have a lot of visitors coming into your home to check... And a lot of foster parents do have their own children as well. So, they have to find a balance in this... And if they cannot stay with someone with the same religion or same culture, the first parents have to have advice on how they (the foster family) can help the child to maintain the religion, language, and culture. And in school, they can learn their language and have education [ID: 00105].

**4.3.4 Family reunification efforts and dilemmas:** Family contact during out-of-home care is one of the core concerns to keep their family bonding intact. Though findings revealed that four to six times contact in a year with biological families had been emphasized by law, concerns were raised by researchers and institutions, e.g., ECHR (2021), Veliquette (2018) and Stavros (2022) about CPS employee's failures to ensure the contact. Findings further revealed that the revised law in 2023 emphasized ensuring 12 times family contact in a year, a positive shift in the paradigm. However, while CPS employees in this study indicated that care measures are always temporary, and they constantly strove to improve family conditions to ensure family reunification, two of the

CPS employees (ID: 00101; 00104) indicated that it was hard to reunite families, especially after the emergency care measures, and the number they could reunite was statistically insignificant.

Parental non-cooperation to improve their conditions was mentioned by CPS employees as one of the main causes why children cannot be reunited (*See the quote of the ID: 1001*). Furthermore, when a child is placed in a *wealthy* Norwegian family filled with all the amenities they expect, the biological parents' incapacity to provide those becomes a barrier to reunification, as reflected by one CPS employee. The question 'Why do parents stop cooperating after the child removal?' requires further investigation, and a claim by CPS employees that 'they do not want to change' is not a sufficient answer (*See section 5.5 & sub-section 5.6.4 for further details*). In addition, when smaller children get emotionally attached with the foster family throughout the long care process, it becomes difficult to reunite, considering the children's best interests. The law also states that the care order will not be annulled if a child develops attachments with the people and environment where s/he has been placed and if the separation might cause severe problems for the child (Melinder et al., 2021; NMCE, 2017). In addition, children often forget their mother language, and it also becomes a barrier in the reunification process. To this end, Veliquette (2018) urged multicultural foster homes as a solution. However, although CPS employees face dilemmas during the reunification stage, they expressed their concerns about the causes to think that why does a child cannot stay at their home?

We usually go for open dialogue and keep communication with the family; we strive to continue working with the family for family reunification. But in most cases, it does not go well. (The) family stops keep contacting, or the family does not want to change [ID: 00101].

Our goal is always to work with the parents so the child can be reunited. There are a lot of factors to play. So statistically, you know, not a lot of children are united [ID: 00104].

#### **4.4 Child's best interests & parental rights: A delicate balance**

One of the most frequently cited words throughout the interviews was the 'best interest of child/children', and all CPS employees were highly concerned about the best for the child. Word frequency analysis extracted from interview data showed that CPS employees showed around six times higher concerns for the best interest of the child than the rights of the family, which is understandable given legal and constitutional mandates in Norway.

And the child is always in the centre, even if some of the parents want them to be in the centre. Everything we do is going to help the child [ID: 00106].

Obviously, children are the most vulnerable within the family and should get priority. But the ongoing process of scrutiny to measure parental capacity includes a wide array of surrounding eyes that always put extra pressure on parents' shoulders and make them feel under surveillance (Tembo et al., 2021). Respect for the child's rights and trusting them more than the parent's authority allows the parents to feel powerless in parenting codes (Tembo et al., 2021) and to negative emotions, e.g., anxiety, loneliness, shame, loss of hope, no autonomy, and stereotyping (Tembo, 2022). To this end, the question arises: How is the best interests of the child to be ensured without ensuring the best interests of the family? The existing laws of Norway prioritize the biological principle and the child's rights to family. However, if the reunification of the children for emergency placement is statistically insignificant (*See sub-section 5.3.4 for further details*) and children cannot be reunited due lack of attachment with the biological family considering insignificant contacts, how is the best interests of the family or child ensured? While it was a frequent claim that parents stop cooperating after care measures, the question 'why' comes in place, considering their cultural and societal factors. Just blaming parents by claiming that they do not want to change is not a sufficient answer.

Out-of-home care as the subject matter of the study, the recent Bollywood movie 'Mrs. Chatterjee vs. Norway' (2023) came into the discussion during the interviews. All the CPS employees talked about the high exaggeration in the movie's plot, and I cannot agree more. However, the movie still raised concerns from the global south perspective that requires scrutiny with out-of-home care decisions, and it highlighted the variability and subjectivity of the interpretation of "the best interests of the child", especially when disarticulated from the cultural context. For example, it is quite often in the global south that the husband earns for the family, and the wife takes care of the

household chores, including children. In most cases, wives are burdened with home chores and jobs they do outside, which must be discussed and debated through a gender lens. When allegations about children are brought, wives are usually blamed by their husbands and family members. While ensuring the best interests of the child is the core concern, how do CPS employees ensure family rights and cooperate with the mother to contest a discourse that places all the blame on her shoulder? Furthermore, in any failure case, stigmatization by neighbours or ghetto communities abroad is a common culture for many people around the world, and thus the question arises: How do CPS employees perceive the right to the privacy of the family? Or, while child removal itself is highly emotionally damaging for parents, how do CPS employees look after the best interests of the family, considering the stigmatization? The questions raised are not to make allegations but rather as food for thought for policymakers and practitioners to consider how the rights of the family could be balanced with the best interests of the children.

Though not often, one of the CPS employees (ID: 00106) narrated receiving teenager's unwarranted allegations against their parents, like they beat them at home, and were afraid to return home, with the expectation of being placed in Norwegian homes, assuming more luxurious lifestyles and wealth, and more freedom (*See the quote of the ID: 00106*). The findings align with Tembo (2022) who claimed that children in Norway sometimes use the CWS as a shield to avoid being disciplined. In such cases, how do CPS employees come to know if they are ensuring the best interests of the children and their families? This is an example of a dilemma in balancing children's and family rights for CPS employees.

We had quite a few examples of migrant teenagers who came to us and said that they, for example, got beat regularly at home and couldn't go home. So, they had to be placed in a Norwegian, and they specifically asked for Norwegian homes. And then it was discovered afterward, when they regretted that they had made it up, because they thought that going into a Norwegian home, they would get much more wealth and allow to do more [ID: 00106].

#### **4.5 Social Worker's understanding of ethnicity and multiculturalism**

CPS employees were concerned about the cultural differences. They complained about their struggles to understand the backgrounds of immigrants and minorities and considered it as one of the core challenges they face (*see the sub-section 5.6.1*). All the CPS employees complied with the laws that the religion, language, and cultural background of the child should be considered while placing them outside of the home. They also recognized the requisites of ECHR while making out-of-home care decisions, considering the cases filed under ECtHR against Norway. Hence, they unanimously claimed that when they faced the challenges of finding foster homes from someone close to the family/community, the second-best option of placing the child outside their cultural context came into place. They talked about some extra qualities that they demand from the foster families when they need to choose the second-best option. To this end, one of the CPS employees (ID: 00105) talked about extra documentation to ensure transparency throughout the out-of-home care process.

However, one of the CPS employees said that parents put emphasis on 'religion' when placements take place, but s/he considered it as challenging as the placement within the Norwegian family brings more opportunities, fortunes, and paves the way for better reintegration. To this end, s/he preferred Norwegian foster homes that are more liberal and open to different religions for greater reintegration (*See the quote of the ID: 00103*). To this end, Dankertsen & Kristiansen (2021) & Ylvisaker et al. (2015) narrated that Norwegian social workers sometimes assume Norwegian families to be ideal foster families over migrant families. This can be seen through the CRT lens as the individual prejudice of the CPS employees towards immigrants and minorities (Willis, 2008), and shows his/her cultural insensitivity and discriminatory attitudes.

It's just easy when you place it within (the) family, of course. But then you have the challenge when you place it within (the) family. They speak their mother language all the time, and they fall behind (the) Norwegian language and adapt. They always want to have a job or manage a school, but those who live in Norwegian foster homes, get a lot of benefit(s) with the school and language and to adjust in the country, to adapt [ID: 00103].

While four of the CPS employees comprehensively talked about the things they consider when they receive a referral to work with minority and immigrant children; three of them said that their



colleagues often face issues in understanding immigrant and minority perspectives. For example, while eye contact in Norway is quite important to refer to emotional bonding between children and their parents, it is not that important in some other countries. Indeed, keeping eye contact is considered arrogant and disrespectful in some cultures of the south. Similarly, while using a pram to carry babies is the culture of Norway, body contact (keeping babies on their lap or carrying them on their backs) is far more important in child rearing in many countries. Taking another example, using hands instead of spoons or sleeping with parents instead of having a separate bed for children until a certain age is common in many countries, while these are taboos in Norway. When CPS employees, holding financial and legal means (Johanssen, 2013), do not have sound understanding of cultural differences, privileges, structural inequalities, and power imbalances to practice culturally sensitive social work approaches (Fisher-Borne et al., 2015 in Nygård et al., 2018), they might exert their power deliberately or unconsciously, for example, in writing documents, defining normality, taking the dominant culture as the best, and constructing cultural hierarchies (Hennum 2011 in Veliquette, 2018).

These might create racial discrimination within the CRT lens and assimilation in the multiculturalist approach due to CPS employees' failures to interpret the case in a culturally sensitive way. To this end, one of the participants [ID: 00102] with experience from both the global south and north said that the misunderstanding of cultural differences of his/her colleagues might lead to problems, and this could be one of the reasons why immigrants and minority people do not cooperate with Barnevern. This must be recognized that failures in understanding intersectionality through the lens of CRT and the multiculturalist approach, would reinforce other forms of inequalities, e.g., class, gender and ethnicity. However, to compensate, CPS employees stated that they try to make decisions in a team or share insights with colleagues.

If you meet my colleagues and then they don't understand this barrier... It could be that they (immigrants and minorities) don't get the help they need because we don't understand them [...] because of these conflicts or barriers, or maybe they cannot cooperate with you because there is a misunderstanding [ID: 00102].

CPS employees often talked about the guidance that they provide to immigrant and minority parents on how to raise a child in Norway. For example, while CPS employee [ID: 00104]

explained that they receive complaints from the school regarding immigrant and minority parents, but often there is nothing to be worried about as these are cultural differences, where she provided guidance to parents regarding how to raise a child in Norway instead of explaining the cultural differences to the school-teachers. Similarly, ID: 00106 talked about an Indonesian family who was used to sleeping while the sun goes down, but in Norway, it is an odd-case scenario during summer. The employee rightly identified it as a cultural difference but ended up providing guidance to the family. The missing point here is that Muslims have the last prayer of the day at night-time. While it is hard for Muslims to follow the sleeping timetable during summer, they cannot leave prayer too. In this instance, providing guidance to parents or putting pressure on them to sleep early might deprive them of their rights to religion. This represents the absence of understanding the multiculturalist point of view and thus leads to violating the rights of democratic citizenship. Ylvisaker et al. (2015) argued that CP employees in Norway define how parents should act according to Norwegian parenting norms, irrespective of their hardships, struggling lives, structural discrimination, and racism. These sorts of cultural misunderstandings and frequent guidance to raise children in Norway could be a logical ground for immigrant and minority parents to feel that they are forced to be more Norwegian.

As per law, CPS employees need to go for the second-best option when they do not find foster families from minority backgrounds. As stated above, CPS employees brilliantly input that they usually look into a number of qualities in selecting foster families. However, immigrant and minority parents' incapacity and financial insolvencies have equally been narrated by CPS employees as causes of placing their children in out-of-home care. On this ground, Ylvisaker et al. (2015) & Tembo et al. (2021) claimed that child protection often conflates parental economic inabilities and poverty with unsuitable mothering and failures in providing care. On the contrary, to explain the reasons for not finding foster families from immigrant and minority backgrounds, one of the CPS employees [ID: 00105] claimed that immigrant and minority parents do not want to cooperate with Barnevern as they feel that in doing so they assist Barnevern, not to the families of their community.

But we also see that there are some people from other countries that don't want to be foster parents because they are afraid of being friends with the Barnevern and feel that they will help us instead of helping the families who are from the same country [ID: 00105].

Another CPS employees [ID: 00102] confirmed that not having a big house, sufficient money to care for a child, and inadequate time to invest, etc. are the main hindrances in recruiting them. To this end, Norwegian foster homes were defined as ‘wealthy’ and ‘well resourced’. Under the CRT and multiculturalist approach lens, the conscious or subconscious use of these terminologies reflects the discriminatory attitude or lack of sensitivity towards immigrants and minorities. The demands for a big house and sufficient money pale in the face of a time when migrants go through a lot of stress, relating to getting jobs, settlement or the next move, families left back home, children’s adaption and education, and the acculturation process.

## **4.6 Challenges faced by CPS employees**

**4.6.1 Understanding cultural differences/backgrounds:** Raising children is culture-based, and understanding the backgrounds of minority ethnic children requires time, resources, and knowledgeable CP employees (Fylkesnes et al., 2018a; Douglas & Saus, 2021; SOS Children’s Villages Norway, 2013). All the CPS employees unanimously agreed that understanding cultural differences is the most challenging part of working with immigrant and minority children. The major challenges in understanding cultural background include- where they are from, what is normal for them and what is not, why they behave in a certain way, what are the culturally sensitive needs of the child, and how to meet these needs (*See the quote of the ID: 00101 as an example*). CPS employees talked about time constraints, resource constraints, and trust building as the other challenges they face in addressing complex issues.

While it is the CPS employees' responsibility to ensure the child's best interests, understanding cultural differences becomes a challenge and, thus, a great dilemma for them. For example, while smacking is allowed in some cultures as a form of controlling or correcting a child’s behavior, it is completely prohibited by law in Norway. The law vs. the culture in relation to things such as feeding and sleeping practices of some immigrants is a challenge for CPS employees, as discussed above. CPS employees faced dilemmas in understanding what is normal and what is not. To this end, being open and curious to know about their culture, talking to them, and building trust are the usual strategies CPS employees try to adopt (*See the quote of the ID: 00104*).

The most significant challenge that I face to work with immigrant children is to understand their cultural gap. It is really extremely important for me to understand, but ... [it] is really challenging [ID: 00101].

It's better to have openness and be curious... We don't have all the knowledge of all cultures, but the parents know more than we do. So, let's ask them. So, you know, talk to them. Ask, I'm curious, you did this. Is this a culture, or is this, you know? So, asking the parents also can build openness and trust [ID: 00104].

**4.6.2 language and the use of interpreters:** Language is a significant barrier to working with children of immigrant and minority backgrounds children. To meet the challenge, they usually take assistance from translators. One of the challenges is the use an interpreter while working with parents who can speak a little Norsk as they raise the concern that they are perceived as not being able to speak Norwegian or being inferior. However, though it is the agency that finds the translator, immigrant, and minority parents may also bring someone whom they trust. The core challenges with the trusted person is to ensure the privacy of the information that a professional translator has, not having understanding of the system and the technicalities of Barnevern, and the poor levels of proficiency and competency of translators. They lack the right terminology, and a lot of information gets lost in translation, while these are important in preparing documents and making decisions. One of the CPS employees [ID: 00105] stated that this might create room for misunderstanding in the decision-making process. The findings are supported by Kriz & Skivenes's (2010a) & Buzungu's (2023) research. They further narrated that the use of an interpreter requires more time for CPS employees to deal with the case, and they fail to establish good working relationships with ethnic and immigrant parents and their children.

In my experience, a lot of interpreters don't have the qualification, especially in formal cases like Barnevern. They don't have the right terminology. And a lot gets lost in translation. So that is also a challenge when it comes to when parents or the family does not speak Norwegian [ID: 00104].

**4.6.3 Acculturation process:** The acculturation process is one of the core challenges that CPS employees face while working with children of immigrant and minority backgrounds, especially with teen children. Children have less agency in some countries, and the family is considered the

law-giver. Children in this modern age use social media like TikTok, Snapchat, Facebook, Instagram and make new friends, learning languages, and watch Hollywood and Bollywood while parents remain with their home culture, watch old movies, and might not use social media. When parents want to dictate their cultural choices, some children revolt and want to merge with Norwegian culture. In the case of unaccompanied minors, parents find huge differences when they are reunified, and it produces a big clash instead of putting smiles on their faces. CPS employees find these instances challenging as prioritizing a child's interests is often claimed to be assimilation by their parents. CPS employees make efforts to build bridges between the child and the parents, which is challenging and takes time.

First of all, we have to identify that it is a problem and a challenge. And then we often try to build bridges, like we are trying to make the parents and the child get closer in understanding each other. Why is this important for my parents, and why is it important for my child? Try to accept and maybe reduce the expectations a little bit from both sides and find a kind of middle way [ID: 00105].

**4.6.4 Finding right matched foster family:** Another challenge is finding right matched foster families from immigrant and minority communities, and this concern was recognized by NMCE (2017) and UNCRC (2010 in SOS Children's Villages Norway, 2013). Two of the CPS employees from two Barnevern claimed that immigrants do not know about the Barnevern, and they are afraid of being friendly with Barnevern. Researchers, e.g., Handulle & Vassenden (2021) & Tembo et al. (2021) also claimed that migrants have fears of CWS, and this is the cause of their non-involvement with Barnevern (*See the quote of the ID: 00105*). Sometimes it is hard to find a good match even if they are from the same countries, as there are still differences in religion and cultures. However, two other CPS employees from another Barnevern narrated about the immigrant parent's inability to buy big houses, not having space to accommodate a new child within the family, economic hardships and time as the primary causes.

Yeah, they are trying hard to recruit more immigrant families because it is needed. But when you see they cannot just buy a big house, (how may we) recruit a family? And (if we need to) buy a big house for them, so it will not be cost-effective. So, they are doing a lot of course, they are sharing a lot of information, they are kind of making facilities... With some help, they can help us as well [ID: 00102].

## **4.7 The dilemma of trust and the insights of CPS employees**

While Barnevern is highly debated and sometimes criticized by media, and scholarly writings, e.g., Handulle (2022), Kriz & Skivenes (2010a), Handulle & Vassenden (2021), Tembo et al. (2021) is mistrusted, especially by immigrant and minority people, CPS employees consider this to be the result of lack of proper information about what Barnevern does. They talked about rumors about immigrant communities fuelled by media reports. They claimed that the media writes one-sided reports and does not represent what Barnevern really does. One of the CPS employees [ID: 00104] considered it as a part of the stigmatization of Barnevern. It has been termed as a “more click and then big letters instead of the good stories” by one of the CPS employees [ID: 00105].

So, I had a mom that I think she moved from Norway with the rest of her children, because child welfare took care of her boy, and she was afraid. Then she came back, and her son needed help. And then she got a different view about child welfare that they could (get) help. But they had to experience, and they had to tell the others [ID: 00103].

One of the CPS employees [ID: 00102] brought insights about the emotional damage that parents experience due to the care measures as the main cause of fearing Barnevern, while rumors and misinformation boost their fears. In addition to misinformation and lack of knowledge regarding the Norwegian system, another CPS employee [ID: 00106] raised the point that the fear partly exists because of the stories aired by people with experience who have not been treated well. This claim has been endorsed by Handulle & Vassenden (2021) and Fylkesnes et al. (2018b), who write about cultural insensitivity, ethnic discrimination, and unfair treatment by CPS employees as the cause of fear of CWS.

## **4.8 Conclusion**

Barnevern, under each municipality, works as the frontline service-providing organization in Norway and is responsible for ensuring the bests interest of the child (Douglas & Saus, 2021; Vis, S. A., et al., 2023). CPS employees usually receive concerns from several sources, and then they usually follow three steps from referral to making a decision. Throughout the whole process of out-of-home care measures, they use laws and policies as their main guideline to carry out the investigation to preparing documents to placing the case to CSWB. From the above discussions, it can be stated that while CPS employees face some challenges in dealing with immigrant and

minority children and struggle to understand their cultural backgrounds, and while laws and the system shape their choices, they still have scope to understand immigrants' points of view by investing quality time, and using the lens of emancipatory praxis (Flem, Sewpaul, Juberg, & Viggen, 2021; Sewpaul, 2013; Jönsson, & Flem, 2022; Jönsson, & Flem, 2018) to understand the structural imbalances, power relations, the hegemony of laws and policies to embrace multiculturalism, and their limited outlook around immigrants and minorities cultures. The use of CRT and the multiculturalist approach would help CPS employees to question structural racism, aiming to dismantle racial discrimination (Lawrence et al., 1993 in Willis, 2008).

# **Chapter Five**

## **Conclusion and Recommendations**

The chapter covers the concluding remarks, embarking on the major findings of the study like the process of out-of-home care, CPS employees understanding of immigrant and minority issues in the light of the CRT and multi-culturalist perspective, the delicate between the best interest of the child and the family rights, and the challenges CPS employees face. Furthermore, the chapter sheds light on the possible policy and practice implications and provides recommendations for further research.

### **5.1 Conclusion**

The overall objective of the paper was to understand the roles and challenges of CPS employees in organizing care for children with immigrant and minority backgrounds. A qualitative approach was followed to collect and analyse the findings. Norway has a long tradition of providing welfare services to children and families (Staer, 2016; Melinder, van der Hagen & Hagen, 2021) and has become the pioneer in many aspects of child protection, including the creation of an ombudsman (Picot, 2014). Barnevern, under each municipality, is the frontline CPS in Norway that provides services through the lens of the 'best interests of the child' pursuant to the Norwegian Constitution and laws. CPS employees receive concerns from several sources, including educational and health professionals, regarding the infringement of the child's best interests. The out-of-home care process in Norway usually follows three phases from case reception to investigations to placing the case before the CSWB for making decisions. An emergency care order can be made by a welfare administration or prosecuting authority (Backe-Hansen et al., 2013; Tonning Otterlei & Studsrød, 2022; Reime & Tysnes, 2021) but needs to be approved by the CSWB within 48 hours of the order and appeals can be within three weeks of the decision (NOU 2020 in Storhaug, A. S. et al., 2022). All the existing laws and policies, review of the court proceedings, and international conventions are the major guidelines for CPS employees. Though sometimes CPS employees follow a checklist, there is no concrete guideline to work with immigrant and minority children. These laws and policies shape the boundaries of the CPS employee's roles and are equally applied



to all, irrespective of nationalities. A major critique is that the term 'equality' in Norway is considered 'sameness' (Gullestad, 2002; Chinga-Ramirez, 2017; Eriksen, 2013; Veliquette, 2018; Ylvisaker et al., 2015), which constitutes a denial of the right to diversity, which is of major concern to critical race theorists (Constance-Huggins, 2012; Taadi, 2021).

Parenting in Norway requires intensive efforts both in and outside school. Immigrant and minority families' cultures are often misunderstood, and their inability to participate in intensive parenting is often labelled as bad or incapable parenting. Sometimes CPS employees pay little attention to understand their burdens abroad, thus paving the way for racial discrimination. Furthermore, CPS employees often ended up providing guidance and training to immigrant and minority parents on the child-rearing process. Though some parents find this guidance helpful, others consider this as part of the control mechanism (Tembo et al., 2021). The continuous surveillance from surroundings raises a concern about the family's right to privacy. In out-of-home care, the biological principal always remains in priority as per law, and when a removal of a child is deemed necessary, the law requires that the child's language, religious and cultural background be taken into consideration. However, the participants reported challenges in finding suitable foster homes from immigrant and minority communities, so they choose the second-best option. Sometimes, personal prejudices of CPS employees towards minority and immigrant communities motivate them to place their children in Norwegian homes, that are considered beautiful, culturally superior, and aesthetically appealing (Ylvisaker et al, 2015), that allow for the comprehensive integration of the child. This paints a picture of failure in understanding intersectionality through the lens of CRT and the multiculturalist approach, which exacerbates racial discrimination.

CPS employees considered understanding the cultural background as the most pressing challenge in working with immigrant and minority children. Communication barriers due to language and finding suitable interpreters were considered two other major barriers besides cultural differences. CPS employees also face challenges in finding the right matched foster family aligning with their religion, language, and culture. While CPS employees face many challenges based on their limitations in understanding the socio-cultural contexts of migrant and ethnic minority families, this is exacerbated by external, structural barriers such as limited skilled interpreters, lack of time and restrictive laws that produce ethical dilemmas in decision-making.

## **5.2 Recommendations: Policy, practice, and research**

### **5.2.1 Policy and practice implications**

The principle of nation-building and developing a welfare state while recognising cultural diversity and building a cohesive society through legal and factual means has become the mandate of the 21<sup>st</sup> century (Eriksen, 2013). All the CPS employees recognized that understanding cultural backgrounds is the most pressing challenge in working with immigrant and minority families. While cultural sensitivity and responsiveness are complex phenomena in child protection, cross-cultural training is considered the best possible solution (Harrison & Turner, 2010). To this end, cultural awareness and sensitivity through extensive training and education is the key for culturally cohesive services in Norway. As ‘culture’ is dynamic and changes and evolves over time, working with immigrant and minority families requires continuous efforts of making inquiries and engaging in critical reflexivity instead of fearing and attempting to eliminate cultural diversities and uncertainties. Dealing with ambiguities and uncertainties is part of the professional, ethical mandate of social workers (IASSW, 2018). Continuous awareness of self-prejudices and having a non-judgmental attitude, being a cultural learner instead of being an instructor, and having an open mind to know and grow every day to work with diversities could be the panacea in providing culturally cohesive and sensitive services. Furthermore, in addition to understanding their cultural backgrounds, families' socioeconomic and migratory factors need to be recognised in preparing documents and making decisions by CSWB.

The recent Global Social Work Statement of Ethical Principles (IASSW, 2018), having its root in critical and emancipatory paradigm, makes a call for social workers raise their critical consciousness on how normalization and naturalization of a range of prejudices, oppressions, marginalization, exploitation, violence, and exclusions take place due to entrapments of thinking and taking assumptions for granted within the existing socio-political and cultural discourses and practices. Therefore, in addition to having a sound understanding of immigrant and minority families' cultural backgrounds, it is also important to understand the socio-political, structural, and state mandates as potential sources of oppressive and/or anti-oppressive practices. To this end, I emphasize that with continuous efforts of making inquiries and reflexivity in understanding immigrant and minority families' backgrounds, a self-critical consciousness would help to realize the reproduction of structural racial discrimination (Flem, Sewpaul, Juberg, & Viggen, 2021;

Sewpaul, 2013; Jönsson, & Flem, 2022; Jönsson, & Flem, 2018) and to take steps in ensuring culturally sensitive and responsive practices.

Children are the most vulnerable members of the family, and their rights should always be a priority. However, the study has raised concerns about the family's rights vis-à-vis children's rights that have implications for policy and practice. Furthermore, the laws and guidelines define how the structure should be, e.g., applying laws equally for all irrespective of structural constraints on family functioning and socio-economic and cultural diversities, continuous and intrusive surveillance on parenting versus a family's right to privacy, extensive qualifications to be considered as a foster family, and intensive parenting norms for all. There is scope for debate and modification to uphold immigrant and minority families' rights and to establish a culturally cohesive society from policy and practice perspectives.

### **5.2.2 Further research possibilities**

CPS employees are far more concerned about the 'best interests of the child', and this is broadly understandable as per laws and the contexts. To this end, the study raised some concerns to ensure the family's rights aligned with the child's best interests. Further research may explore the concerns raised throughout the paper, especially focusing on how the rights of the family could be balanced with child's best interests. There were two frequent claims made by CPS employees. The first claim was that immigrant and minority parents often stop cooperating with Barnevern after emergency care placements, and their 'unwillingness to change.' This raises the question: why do they stop cooperating with Barnevern? How CPS employees guide parents and to what extent, and in which contexts do they want to change the parents that make them reluctant to cooperate might be further investigated. The contents of the training modules may also be scrutinized to see whether these courses contain sensitivities towards immigrant and minority parenting norms. The second claim was: Immigrant and minority parents do not want to become foster parents. Though the paper provides some insights that include both their constraints and racial attitudes toward them, further investigations can be carried out to explore other probable factors that contribute to the scarcity of immigrant and minority foster families. Finally, though structural legal and other requirements shape the boundaries of the CPS employees in some respects, how CPS employees understand and engage in emancipatory praxis to question, challenge and undo structural inadequacies and sources of oppression, exclusion and marginalisation might be investigated.

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## Appendices

### Appendix 01: In-depth Interviews (IDIs) Guideline

Understanding the professional guidelines that CP employees use while organizing care for children with minority and immigrant backgrounds.

1. Would you narrate the care services that you offer to children from minority and immigrant backgrounds as a part of your professional responsibilities? Are there extra services for children with minority and immigrants background, considering their needs?
2. How do you decide to place minority and immigrant backgrounds children into out-of-home care? What are the leading causes of placing them? What are the issues that your professional guideline put as provisions to consider while placing them for out-of-home care?
3. How do you decide on the cultural identities of children with minority and immigrant backgrounds while organizing out-of-home care for them? What does your professional guideline say about these aspects?
4. How do you ensure family contacts for minority and immigrant backgrounds children after out-of-home care placement? What is the process of family reunification? Is there any provision in your professional guidelines about contacts or family reunification?

Ascertaining how these guidelines might influence the roles of CP workers and the intervention strategies that they adopt.

1. Are you allowed to go beyond your professional guidelines and use your professional discretion in arranging out-of-home care for children with minority and immigrants background? How do you decide if you cannot reach a concrete decision using your professional guideline?
2. How do you deal with possible contradictions between your professional guidelines and your personal understanding?
3. Would you please list the qualities of an ideal foster home for children with minority and immigrant backgrounds? How have you come to these qualities as the best?

Understanding the challenges CP employees face in working with children and families with minority and immigrant backgrounds.

1. What are the differences, if any, to work with minority and immigrant children in comparison to mainstream Norwegian children?
2. What are the major challenges that you face in organizing out-of-home care for children with minority and immigrant backgrounds? [probe if necessary - language, time and resources constraints, understanding backgrounds, finding suitable foster family, finding emergency placement]
3. How do these challenges impact your services to children of minority and immigrant backgrounds? And what are the consequences?

## Appendix 02: Project information

### **Are you interested in taking part in the research project**

*“Understanding the roles and challenges of child protection workers in out-of-home care arrangements for children of minority and immigrant backgrounds in Rogaland, Norway”?*

This is an inquiry about participation in a research project where the main purpose is to understand the roles of child protection workers in arranging out-of-home care for children with minority and immigrant backgrounds in Rogaland, Norway. In this letter we will give you information about the purpose of the project and what your participation will involve.

#### **Purpose of the project**

Though CWS is responsible for child welfare and their protection in Norway and considers foster care placement, the County Social Welfare Boards (CSWB) decide upon the question of care order like court proceedings (Løvlie, 2022). The notion of the ‘best interests of the child’ was incorporated into the Norwegian Constitution in 2014, and section 104 has made it a fundamental requirement while taking actions and decisions which affect children (Helland, 2020). However, there is inadequate literature to shed light on how Child Protection (CP) employees make decisions when they organize out-of-home care for children with minority and immigrant backgrounds, and the challenges that they face. The specific objectives of the study are to:

1. Understand the professional guidelines that CP employees use while organizing out-of-home care for children with minority and immigrant backgrounds.
2. Ascertain how these guidelines might influence the roles of CP employees and the intervention strategies that they adopt.
3. Understand the challenges CP employees face in working with children and families with minority and immigrant backgrounds.

The main research question will be: How do CP employees make decisions in organizing out-of-home care for children of minority and immigrant backgrounds, and what are the challenges that they encounter? The specific research questions are:

1. What issues do CP employees consider, and how do they use their professional guidelines in organizing out-of-home care for children of minority and immigrant backgrounds?
2. How are CP employees influenced by their professional guidelines in organizing out-of-home care for children with minority and immigrant backgrounds?
3. What challenges do CP employees face in working with children and families of minority and immigrant backgrounds?

The research project is a master's thesis and a part of the partial fulfillment of my master's degree in social work with Families & Children. The data that I will collect for this project will not be used for any other purposes.

### **Why are you being asked to participate?**

The study has planned to interview six Child Protection Services employees under the Rogaland county. Purposive sampling has been planned to use to select participants of the study, especially to include participants who have two to three years of experience as a CPS worker and sufficient exposure to deal with children from minority and immigrant backgrounds.

### **What does participation involve for you?**

If you choose to take part in the project, this will involve a face-to-face interview with me, the researcher. It will take approximately one hour. The interview includes questions about roles performed by you and challenges that you encounter in care arrangements for children of minority and immigrant backgrounds in Rogaland. Your answers will be recorded by an electronic audio tape recorder, and no video clips will be taken. In addition to audio recording, I will take notes during the interview session.

### **Participation is voluntary**

Participation in the project is voluntary. If you choose to participate, you can withdraw your consent at any time without giving a reason. All information about you will then be made anonymous. There will be no negative consequences for you if you choose not to participate or later decide to withdraw.



### **Your personal privacy – how we will store and use your personal data**

We will only use your personal data for the purpose(s) specified in this information letter. We will process your personal data confidentially and in accordance with data protection legislation (the General Data Protection Regulation and Personal Data Act).

- Universit t i Stavanger, as the university and institution, is responsible for the project, and we have a student drive in the system where only the researcher will have access to the data. All the data will be locked in a safe.
- Your name will be anonymized, and I will mark your identity with a code. The list of names, contact details and respective codes will be stored separately from the rest of the collected data. I will store the data on a research server/drive protected by UIS, locked away/encrypted.

For further confirmation, participants will not be recognizable by any means in publications as no personal information, e.g., name, age, occupation, religion, etc. will be disclosed.

### **What will happen to your personal data at the end of the research project?**

The project is scheduled to end by 06 June 2023. To be more precise, the project period is: from 06.02.2023 to 06.06.2023. The collected data for this research project will be anonymized and used for this study only. At the end of the project, all collected data, including electronic audio recordings, will be deleted. The preserved project data will not be used for any other purposes except for the validation of the current master's thesis project, if necessary.

## Your rights

So long as you can be identified in the collected data, you have the right to:

- access the personal data that is being processed about you
- request that your personal data is deleted
- request that incorrect personal data about you is corrected/rectified
- receive a copy of your personal data (data portability), and

send a complaint to the Data Protection Officer or The Norwegian Data Protection Authority regarding the processing of your personal data

Yours sincerely,

Vishanthie Sewpaul

Kazi Abusaleh

Project Leader

Student (if applicable)

(Researcher/supervisor)

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## Appendix 03: Consent Form

### Consent form

Consent can be given in writing (including electronically) or orally. NB! You must be able to document/demonstrate that you have given information and gained consent from project participants i.e. from the people whose personal data you will be processing (data subjects). As a rule, we recommend written information and written consent.

- For written consent on paper you can use this template
- For written consent which is collected electronically, you must choose a procedure that will allow you to demonstrate that you have gained explicit consent (read more on our website)
- If the context dictates that you should give oral information and gain oral consent (e.g. for research in oral cultures or with people who are illiterate) we recommend that you make a sound recording of the information and consent.

If a parent/guardian will give consent on behalf of their child or someone without the capacity to consent, you must adjust this information accordingly. Remember that the name of the participant must be included.

Adjust the checkboxes in accordance with participation in your project. It is possible to use bullet points instead of checkboxes. However, if you intend to process special categories of personal data (sensitive personal data) and/or one of the last four points in the list below is applicable to your project, we recommend that you use checkboxes. This because of the requirement of explicit consent.

I have received and understood information about the project [insert project title] and have been given the opportunity to ask questions. I give consent:

- to participate in (insert method, e.g. an interview)
- to participate in (insert other methods, e.g. an online survey) – if applicable
- for my/my child's teacher to give information about me/my child to this project (include the type of information)– if applicable
- for my personal data to be processed outside the EU – if applicable
- for information about me/myself to be published in a way that I can be recognised (describe in more detail)– if applicable
- for my personal data to be stored after the end of the project for (insert purpose of storage e.g. follow-up studies) – if applicable

I give consent for my personal data to be processed until the end date of the project, approx. [insert date]

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(Signed by participant, date)

## Appendix 04: Approval from Data Protection Official for Research, NSD



# Assessment of processing of personal data

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Reference number	Assessment type	Date
154614	Standard	08.03.2023

### Project title

Understanding the roles and challenges of child protection workers in out-of-home care arrangements for children of minority and immigrant backgrounds in Rogaland, Norway

### Data controller (institution responsible for the project)

Universitetet i Stavanger / Det samfunnsvitenskapelige fakultet / Institutt for sosialfag

### Project leader

Vishanthie Sewpaul

### Student

Kazi Abusaleh

### Project period

06.02.2023 - 06.06.2023

### Categories of personal data

General

### Legal basis

Consent (General Data Protection Regulation art. 6 nr. 1 a)

The processing of personal data is lawful, so long as it is carried out as stated in the notification form. The legal basis is valid until

06.06.2023.

### Comment

ABOUT OUR ASSESSMENT

Data Protection Services has an agreement with the institution where you are carrying out research or studying. As part of this agreement, we provide guidance so that the processing of personal data in your project is lawful and complies with data protection legislation.

#### FOLLOW YOUR INSTITUTION'S GUIDELINES

We have assessed that you have a legal basis to process the personal data, but remember that it is the institution you are employed/study at that decides which data processors you can use and how you must store and secure data in your project. Remember to use suppliers that your institution has an agreement with (e.g. for cloud storage, online questionnaires, video calls, etc.)

We presuppose that the project will meet the requirements of accuracy (art. 5.1 d), integrity and confidentiality (art. 5.1 f) and security (art. 32) when processing personal data.

#### NOTIFY CHANGES

If you intend to make changes to the processing of personal data in this project it may be necessary to notify us. This is done by updating the Notification Form. On our website we explain which changes must be notified: <https://sikt.no/en/notify-changesnotification-form>

#### FOLLOW-UP OF THE PROJECT

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

Good luck with the project!

## Appendix 05: Tree of searching for themes and sub-themes from coding



## Appendix 06: Non-plagiarism declaration

I hereby declare that the Dissertation titled “Understanding the roles and challenges of child protection employees in out-of-home care arrangements for children of minority and immigrant backgrounds in Rogaland, Norway” submitted to the Erasmus Mundus Master’s Program in Social Work with Families and Children:

- Has not been submitted to any other Institute/University/College
- Contains proper references and citations for other scholarly work
- Contains proper citation and references from my own prior scholarly work
- Has listed all citations in a list of references.

I am aware that violation of this code of conduct is regarded as an attempt to plagiarize, and will result in a failing grade (F) in the program.

Date (dd/mm/yyyy): 05 June 2023

Signature: 

Name (in block letters): KAZI ABUSALEH