



Universitetet
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Masters Thesis

NOSWEL Masters in social Work and
Welfare

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**Social workers experience
working with unaccompanied
minor asylum seekers**

Acknowledgment.....	5
Abbreviations and definitions	7
Chapter 1 Introduction	10
Problem statement	10
Chapter 2 Conflicts and the refugee situation	12
2.1 Conflicts that causes the refugee situation	12
Current Refugee situation in Europe	15
Refugee situation in Norway	17
Chapter 3 International conventions.....	19
United Nations convention on the rights of Child	19
Universal Declaration of Human rights 1948	22
UNHCR Guidelines on policies and procedures in dealing with unaccompanied children seeking asylum 1997	23
Chapter 4 Process of intake of Unaccompanied minors seeking asylum	25
Integration of these unaccompanied minors	27
Role of Care Givers (Social Workers):	30
Chapter 5 Theoretical framework	34
Barriers in Integration	34
Systems theory	36
Social Integration	39
Chapter 6 Methodology	40
Qualitative methodology:.....	40
NSD:.....	41
Recruiting informants and about informants	41
Individual Semi-structured interviews:	42
Thematic analysis.....	42
Ethical considerations and limitations.....	43
Chapter 7 Analysis	45
Barriers that minors experience:	45
<i>Language barrier</i>	45
<i>Social networks</i>	47
Family reunification, a facilitator or barrier in integration	50
As resourceful citizens	54
Social workers experiences	56
Chapter 7 Discussion.....	60
The situation unaccompanied minors are facing	60
The experience of the social workers	63
Chapter 8 Reflections on my research process	65
References.....	67
Attachments	77
Interview guide	77
Consent form	78

Acknowledgment

Foremost I would like to thank Allah Almighty for His blessings upon me.

I begin with my sincere gratitude to my supervisor, Siv Oltedal, who cooperated tremendously throughout the research with her guidance and comments that has helped me understand things in a better way, giving a new perspective to my knowledge.

I would also extend my gratitude to my teachers at the University of Stavanger for the knowledge and experience that I got while studying the NOSWEL degree.

I also want to thank my family for their support in every step of my life. My parents who have always been behind me as my strength. My brothers for always encouraging me in stressful situations and guiding me where I need help.

I want to specially thank my wife, Nida Sardar, who has been my strongest pillar of strength and the constant support I always rely on. Finally, to my daughter Sofia Sardar, whose positivity kept me going. I am truly indebted with the support and help they have shown me and for doing everything to cheer me up.

Many thanks to every person involved.

Sardar Ali khan

Abbreviations and definitions

CRC	Convention on the rights of the child
EMN	European migration network
IDP	internally displaced people
HRC	Human Rights Commission
UN	United Nations
UAMs	Unaccompanied minor asylum seekers
UDI	The Directorate of Immigration
UNICEF	The United Nation's children fund
UNHCR	The United Nations High Commission for Refugees

In order to explain the concepts, it is very important to start with the definitions of certain important words. The definition also sets the way one looks at it. In the following passage, there are the definitions of the concepts I will refer to in this thesis.

- Refugees

“Someone who is unable or unwilling to return to their country of origin owing to a well-founded fear of being prosecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular group or political opinion”

Source: The 1951 Refugee convention, UNHCR. <https://www.unhcr.org/what-is-a-refugee.html>

- Unaccompanied Minor seeking asylum

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

Source: UNHCR. <https://www.unhcr.org/publications/legal/3d4f91cf4/guidelines-policies-procedures-dealing-unaccompanied-children-seeking-asylum.html>

- Child

“A child is any person under the age of eighteen”

Source: UNICEF, Convention on the rights of child. <https://www.unicef.org/child-rights-convention/what-is-the-convention>

- Asylum seeker

“An asylum seeker is a person who has left their country and is seeking protection from serious human rights violation and persecution in another country, but who hasn’t been yet recognized as an refugee and is waiting to receive a decision on their asylum claim. Seeking asylum is a human right. This means that everyone should be allowed to enter another country to seek asylum”

Source: Amnesty International. <https://www.amnesty.org/en/what-we-do/refugees-asylum-seekers-and-migrants/>

- Human right

“Human rights are rights inherent to all human beings, regardless of race, sex, nationality, ethnicity language, religion or another status. Human rights include the rights to life and liberty, freedom from slavery and torture, freedom of opinion and expression, the right to work and education, and many more. Everyone is entitled to these rights without discrimination”

Source: United Nations. <https://www.un.org/en/sections/issues-depth/human-rights/>

- Social work profession

“Social worker is practice based professional and an academic discipline that promotes social change and development, social cohesion and the empowerment and liberation of people. Principle of social justice, human rights, collective responsibility and respect for diversities are central to social work. Underpinned by theories of social work, social sciences, humanities and indigenous knowledge, social work engages people and structures to address life challenges and enhance wellbeing”

Source: International federation of social worker. <https://www.ifsw.org/what-is-social-work/global-definition-of-social-work/>

- Welfare state:

“A social system based on the assumption by a political state of primary responsibility for the individual and social welfare of its citizens”

Source: “Welfare State.” Merriam-webster. <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/welfare%20state>

Chapter 1 Introduction

Problem statement

Norway is among the Scandinavian countries, located in the northern Europe, and is famously known for its enrich culture, valuable resources and social welfare system. Due to its attractive social setting and welfare arrangement, it is often regarded as the periphery of migrant influx, migrating from different parts of the world for a promising future. The migration regulation dates back to mid-1950s, but in order to create effective mechanism, Norway implemented several laws during 1970s to layout parameters to regularize immigrations and monitor the high inflow of immigrants. (Cappelen, Ouren & Skjerpen 2011). In 1974 a temporarily halt was in place on immigration making this halt permanent in 1975. In the 1980's Norway had some liberal policies, which again increased the immigration trend. After the expansion of EU, Norway saw an increased immigration from within Europe (Cappelen, Ouren & Skjerpen 2011).

During the late 1900s and early 2000, the world has witnessed multifaceted challenges like the aftermath of wars, terrorism, natural disasters and economic recessions, making solid ground for people to migrant to another country for progressive future. Norway is also one of the countries that received number of immigrants, especially as refugees and asylum seekers, creating a high influx of people being depended on the welfare state. This also led to a great number of unaccompanied minors as immigrants, raising the alarm of concerns for the state (Cappelen, Ouren & Skjerpen 2011).

Worldwide, the concern for unaccompanied minors seeking asylum mainly stated when UNHCR started to collected data on their migration. As per the statistics from 2013, there were around 25,300 unaccompanied minors who applied for asylum in around 77 countries (UNHCR 2013), and Norway is one of the prominent countries to provide shelter to such minors. Unaccompanied minors are very vulnerable because they do not have any support system around them like parents and other family. There could be many reasons why they decide to flee their country of origin. Wars, famine, natural calamities and refugee situations are some of the reasons why these children decide to be separated from their families (Ressler, Boothby and Steinbock, 1988). It's a possibility that the parents themselves send the child for the pursuit of a better

life, or it's also possible that the child has himself decided to flee (UNICEF & UNHCR 2017).

AIM OF THE STUDY

In this thesis I will analyze the existing knowledge regarding the unaccompanied minor asylum seekers and the way social workers approach them. I will look at different conventions and treaties that Norway is obliged to follow in terms of children rights and refugees. Norway is signatory to these conventions which make it a binding on the country to follow the protocol. I developed my interest in this area after a visit in 2017 to EMBO - Stavanger based organization working with unaccompanied minor asylum seekers. It's not that simple that an unaccompanied minor comes and in the blink of an eye settles down in a society, starting life from zero. A child who comes to a strange country without prior knowledge about it is faced with many challenges, and the baggage of the past is very heavy to carry. There are many barriers they face while they integrate into the Norwegian society. Language, societal difference, culture, food, weather everything plays a vital role. It is important to study these barriers for better understanding of the issues. Here it is important to mention that it all varies from child to child. There can be many different factors creating barriers and adjustments. The unaccompanied minors can also be considered resilient because they have overcome many obstacles during their journey to a safe place. To be part of a new society is demanding. Thus, their effort to learn a new language, contribute to the new society and help others should be validated. My aim in this thesis is to create new knowledge and also to reflect upon the existing knowledge in the specific area

Research Question:

The in depth knowledge about the topic will be obtained by the help of the following research question. In this research, I have one main research question and two sub-questions. The main question is the umbrella under which the sub questions will be looked upon.

Question No 1: What are the Social workers understandings of minor asylum seekers experiences in the Norwegian society?

A: What are the Barriers and Challenges they face in the process of integration into the Norwegian society?

B: Do these unaccompanied minors bring any resources with them?

Chapter 2 Conflicts and the refugee situation

2.1 Conflicts that causes the refugee situation

To understand the thesis topic, it is very important to have a look at the major events that happened in the recent history that resulted in the high influx of refugees and asylum seekers.

At the present day, the world documents more than 79.5million people who have fled their homes due to conflict or fear of persecution, out of these 79.5million people almost 29 million are refugees. Children under the age of 18 make half of this number (UNHCR 2020). This didn't start overnight, a long history of wars and violent conflicts have led to these high number of people to take refuge. After the World War I and II, the continent of Europe faced mass uprooting of people; many people lost their lives and other their livelihood. The Soviet Union and the US cold war went on for a long time. The Soviet attack on Afghanistan has also lasted for almost ten years

resulting in very huge refugee crisis. Millions of Afghanis flee the country, taking refuge in neighboring countries like Iran and Pakistan; some also came to Europe (Maley, 2002).

The aftermath of US invasion in Afghanistan in 2001 and Iraq in 2003 also resulted into high number of refugee crisis. It is estimated that millions of people flee their countries either as refugees or seeking asylum, resulting into the crisis that the world still witnesses (Hinnebusch in 2007& Rogers in 2009). Most of these migrants moved either to neighboring countries or to the US and Europe.

The continent of Africa has been facing violent armed conflicts as well, for example, the Ethiopia-Eritrea war that has been going on since 20 years. It started in 1998-2000 on the matter of ownership of plains of Badime. These two countries were having very friendly relations with each other previously. This war destroyed the economy of the two countries also damaging the societal structures. Instead of spending their limited resources on human development the countries rather invested on arms and defense. The war resulted in bloodshed this war lead to displacement of more than one million people (Allo 2018).

South Sudan civil war is also a conflict in recent history, which lead to large number of people taking refuge and asylum in other countries. In 2013 political instability was caused by the issues between presidents Salva Kiir and vice president Riek Machar, which led to the removal of Machar vice president. This started a violent dispute between presidential soldiers from both groups. This conflict displaced around 2.24 million and almost 400,000 people died (Global Conflict Tracker 2020).

In 2011, the Arab spring is an important happening. Small countries of Middle East went through uprisings against their ruling regimes for establishment of democracy. It started in 2011 in Egypt; Cairo's Tahrir Square was the gathering point of the protestors who demanded democracy and end to the regime of Hosni Mubarak who was the president for life of Egypt (Byman, 2020). This happening in Egypt sent a very strong message to other Arabs, and to the rest of the world that Middle East was finally embracing 'Change'. This Arab spring was thought to be the breath of fresh air in 2011 but today in 2020 this seems far from what was expected. This has caused

civil crisis in Libya, Yemen and Syria writes Noah Feldman (2020) in his book ‘The Arab Winter a Tragedy’. The Arab spring has very wide ranging effects on the world. The creation of Islamic State “Caliphate” was a very notable development. The Islamic state gained power in Iraq, Syria and they were implementing the caliphate with use of terror and violence. ISIS claimed to have religious authority on all the Muslims (Byman 2020). Al Qaida inspired them but they later disowned them. The Islamic state declared their rule caliphate and Abu Bakr Al Baghdadi as the first caliph.

The effect of Islamic state was evident in Syria as well. Syria itself was going through civil war as the aftermath of the Arab spring. The Syria civil war cannot be ignored when talking about refugee crisis and displacement (Hjelmgaard 2018). Conflict in Syria initially started because of the upraise of people against the regime of president Bashar Assad but it escalated to a deadly civil war. This conflict also gave rise to Islamic State (known as ISIS). The Syrian crisis created one of the worst refugee crises after the Second World War. It also became a battleground for international powers for show of strength. This conflict started because of the uprising of people against the president of Syria Bashar Assad, his government was unable to solve the economic issues and the people were deprived of freedom (Hjelmgaard 2018). Around 5.5 million of the Syria’s population, people have fled to other countries. The neighboring countries like Turkey, Lebanon, Iraq and Jordan received almost 95% of these 5.5 million people (Hjelmgaard, 2018). All these conflicts have affected the situation for the whole world.

Children and women have been a large group amongst the refugees and the most vulnerable group. Many were left orphaned and widowed by these conflicts and many with physical disabilities. The plight of these refugees is worrying for the world. Many countries opened their doors for these refugees, while many were hesitant in taking them in high numbers. The refugee problem is a humanitarian problem where people move from a place of fear to a place of safety and guarantee (Barman 2020). Today, this is the issue concerning the whole world and international politics. Host countries are faced with social, political, economic challenges when they take refugees.

Current Refugee situation in Europe

In Europe this year 2020 between the time period of 1st January-30th June around 26,800 refugees and immigrants have arrived through the Mediterranean, out of these 26,800 almost 19% are children (UNICEF 2020). This number is significantly less this year as compared to 2019, mainly because of COVID-19, apart Italy, which has seen great increase in refugees as compared to the past trends. However, as 19% of the recent inflows of refugees in Europe are children, many countries like in Greece, Bulgaria, Serbia and Montenegro provided basic mental and psychological wellbeing support.

COVID-19 pandemic has caused an imbalance in the normal practices, like everything else the refugees have also been suffering greatly from this pandemic. The situation for refugees have significantly deteriorated, borders were shutdown, local lockdown, created a pressure situation on the reception center setup for these refugees. The majority of these refugees faced problems in accessing many services. Health care, vaccinations, training the front line staff to deal with refugees these all were halted. The ongoing processes for family reunifications and asylum claims were affected as well (UNICEF 2020).

The refugees in camps or the migrants were exposed to sexual violence and stigmatization. The travel restrictions impacted the mobility for these refugees and migrants. Children accompanied or unaccompanied were faced with discrimination (UNICEF 2020). The refugees in flow in Europe in the first two quarters of the year 2020 as per country of origin is 12.7% from Afghanistan, 10.9% from Syria, 7.3% from Tunisia and 6.9% from côle d'Ivoire. Over 10,400 children are either unaccompanied minors seeking asylum or are separated kids.

Nonetheless, in the recent years, a large number of unaccompanied minors have come to Europe and the US, creating a dilemma that these minors come to the borders without an adults or parents making their situation very fragile and unprotected (Manzano & Agugliaro 2018). UNHCR asserts that not all children who come

without legal guardians or parents are unaccompanied; they might be separated from parents and could be with traffickers or smugglers, friends or sibling (Esther & Francisco, 2018). United Nations has passed and adopted many conventions and protocols on the rights of the child, refugees, and humanitarian protocols, but we also need to see that the international laws and obligations on paper match with the practices on ground related to unaccompanied minors (Manzano & Agugliaro 2018).

Data from the UNHCR suggest that out of the total refugee population around the world half of it consists of children aged below eighteen, this number is the highest number compared to previous ten years. Unaccompanied minors make a big portion of children refugees (Manzano & Agugliaro 2018). It's a dilemma that the unaccompanied minors were not even recorded before late 1990's and early 2000, the trend of considering unaccompanied minors seeking asylum is a recent phenomena (Manzano & Agugliaro 2018).

In the year 2015, Europe faced its highest wave of refugees' influx after World War 2. The refugee flow continued the whole year, this was record breaking. These people reached Europe by boats across the Mediterranean Sea, majority of people were Asian or African origin (Bolstad 2019). Syrians, Afghans and Somali refugees were the highest (Bolstad 2019). The data suggest that more than one million people came to Europe by the sea route (United Nations association of Norway 2016).

The refugees who come to the Europe are not just a burden on the countries, they bring with themselves a very diverse set of skills, expertise and experience in different fields, if this is utilized properly they could become a great asset for Europe's work force (cooper 2015). Some of them have an established career before coming to Europe because of different reasons, the fear of persecution forced many well-established individuals to take refuge. Alice Beste talks about her experience working with a refugee council in London where many refugee attendants were teachers by profession, these people wanted to have more information on how to join the British education system (cooper 2015). She emphasizes on the valuable skill set these refugees brought with them. The asylum seekers who are accepted have the right to work in Europe but they are often faced with many challenges in entering the work force, missing Educational documents, costly procedures to attest

documentation from bureaucracy, the long process often discourages them (cooper 2015). Financial independence in refugees provides them confidence to feel productive not a burden, build societal connections and be a contributing part of the society. The diversity that these refugees bring along if given proper chance can also reform the workplaces, society. The societies could have a more diverse approach towards the refugees (cooper 2015).

Refugee situation in Norway

Norway has also been a host to many refugees. In the period of 1990-2015 around 141300 refugees have come to Norway, among which, 23500 refugees were granted residence to their other family members, summing up to a total of 45100 family members. The country where they come from is important in terms of family immigration (Statistics Norway, 2017). Norway in 2009 received the highest number of unaccompanied minor asylum seekers, a total of 2500 after The Netherlands. This high number of unaccompanied minors seeking asylum in Norway made this the top agenda for Norwegian government. The largest portion of the 2500-unaccompanied minors that Norway received was from Afghanistan. The unaccompanied minors are a very vulnerable group and their care is very important for the child welfare system of the country. The unaccompanied minors go through a proper system where they are later settled in municipalities. The role of social workers is very important here when the unaccompanied minors get into the system and are accepted either temporarily or permanently residence (Staver & Lidén 2014).

In the first half of 2019, the asylum applications dropped to a new low. The coalition government of center right parties tightened the immigration laws, the results are visible. According to the UDI, in the first half of 2019, they received 982 asylum applications from the asylum seekers who came to Norway. If compared with the statistics of first half of 2018, this is a 13% drop. This is the lowest after 1977. In 2016 and before the average number of applications be between 4,000. At that time, the largest groups of asylum seekers were from Syria followed by Turkey and Eritrea (Nikel, 2019).

The Norwegian directorate of immigration says that out of the total 982 asylum applications, 267 were children under the age of eighteen, 65 of them were unaccompanied minors. The government has been criticized for its strict immigration policies. Since 2015, a very sharp decline has been noticed in asylum applications. This decline caused the closure of almost 17 asylum reception centers (Nikel, 2019).

Chapter 3 International conventions

In this chapter my focus will be on the international conventions and declaration related to Human rights, rights of a Child and what are the protocols for unaccompanied minors.

United nations have passed many conventions ensuring human rights to all citizens. The member countries are the signatories in these conventions and this bounds them to follow these conventions and implement them in their countries. I will get into the details of conventions related to my topic one by one.

United Nations convention on the rights of Child

United nations general assembly adopted the resolution on the rights of the child on November 20th 1989 and it came into effect in 1990. All members of the General assembly who signed the convention were bound to implement it in its true spirit. This convention has fifty-four articles each emphasizing on the rights of a child. Below I will present some of the articles of this convention.

Article 1: This article gives the definition of who is a child; it says that any human below the age of eighteen is considered a 'child'.

Article 2: This articles stresses on the role of state to ensure that all children under its jurisdiction are given their due rights without any discrimination of caste, creed, race financial status, sex, color, disability or religion.

It also guides the state to ensure that no child is discriminated or punished based on his/her opinion, choices, parent's religion or choices.

Article 3: The best interest of child should be the aim of policies by social welfare institutions, laws, administration and parents. State should keep an eye on the matters related to the child.

Article 10: This article of the convention addresses the state that if a child gives application for family reunification it should be looked upon with humanity, consideration. The applicants or their family members should face no adverse consequences.

If a child has parents in a different state they shall have right to maintain relation on regular basis. State bodies should respect the right of parents to a child to leave any

country, even their own country or to enter their own country. The state can only deny the right to leave if it is a matter of national security, public order, moral or health issues or if it is against others right to freedom.

Article 19: State shall ensure that a child is safe from physical or mental violence, malpractices, abuse, sexual abuse or exploitation through administrative, educational, legislative and social measures.

Establishment of social programs to ensure appropriate measures is taken for the support of child and those who have care responsibility of the child like parents, guardians. Other measures should also be taken like investigations, follow-ups reports referrals and identifications in the instances of maltreatment, if necessary judicial involvement.

Article 22: States should ensure that any child who is seeking a refugee status or who is considered a refugee, irrespective of accompanied with parents or unaccompanied be given full humanitarian assistance. They should be given appropriate protection and safety in accordance to domestic or international law.

The states shall cooperate or assist with the United Nations, or other governmental/ non-governmental organizations collaborating with the United Nations to ensure protection to a child-seeking refuge and to obtain any contact with parents or other family members to ensure family reunification. If the family reunification is not possible due to no parents or other family members, then the child will be subject to protection either permanently or temporarily.

Article 25: The child who is for the purpose of mental health, care, protection or any treatment placed by competent authorities, should be regularly viewed. A periodic review of his her condition should be made to ensure the best interest of child. The placement should be appropriate for his treatment.

Article 30: States where indigenous, ethnic minorities, religious minorities or linguistic minorities are living, child belonging to these minorities or indigenous background should not be deprived of his/her rights in their community with other members of their community. A child should be free to practice his or her own religion, speak their own language and enjoy their own culture.

Article 36: It is the responsibility of the state to protect the child against any form of exploitation, prejudice or any other things that is against his welfare.

Article 37: This article has four points firstly it talks about the protection of child against any kind of harm, persecution, inhumane treatment, torture. A child should

not be given life imprisonment or death sentence without the possibility of release for the crimes done by person below the age of eighteen. Secondly a child should not be by force deprived of his liberty. Actions such as arrest, punishment, detention and imprisonment should be used in cases as a last resort and the time should be shortest. Thirdly the child who is deprived of freedom should be treated with dignity. His needs should be kept in mind according to his age. Child should be kept away from the company of adults unless it is necessary and ensures best interest of the child, he /she should be allowed to keep contact with his family through visits and correspondence. Fourthly the child who is deprived of freedom should have full rights to legal assistance. The child should also have the right to challenge the illegality of his detention/ denial of freedom in a court of law or appropriate competent institutions. The authorities should make a fast and fair decision.

Article 38: In conditions of armed conflicts the state should ensure value of international humanitarian laws that are applicable to a child. Individuals under the age of fifteen should not take part in hostilities; it is the duty of state to ensure this. A child under fifteen years of age should not be recruited into the armed forces. It is international obligation under humanitarian law on states to protect civilian populations; they must take protective measures for children during any violent conflict.

Article 39: The state is responsible to take appropriate measures for the proper recovery of a child from any mental or physical trauma and to help the child reintegrate into the society if the child has been victim of any form of neglect, exploitation, and torture abuse or any degrading punishment or treatment. Such environment should be provided for recovery, which nourishes health, positivity self respect, and self esteem of the child.

Source: United Nations Convention on the rights of a Child 1989.

<https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/ProfessionalInterest/crc.pdf>

Universal Declaration of Human rights 1948

United nations declaration of human rights is the foreface of humanitarian laws the states will make. The general assembly adopted these points to ensure provision of human rights to people. This also acts as the interpretation of what human rights are. Following are the important article from the United Nations declaration of human rights for all the countries

Article 1: each person is born free and is equal to the other in terms of rights and dignity. They are capable of having conscious and understand logic; they should therefore act respectfully towards each other in the spirit of brotherhood.

Article 2: This declaration also focuses on the freedom of choice and liberty to every individual. A human being should not be subjected to , cast, creed, language, race, sect, religion, color, origin, political affiliations etc.

Article 3: Every human has the right to security, freedom and the right to life.

Article 5: No individual should be subjected to discrimination on the basis of their sex, cruelty, torture, punishments or treatments that are degrading and inhumane.

Article 9: No individual should be forced to exile, detention and forceful arrest.

Article 13: Every individual has the right to movement in the state of his residence; every individual also has the freedom to leave his country or come back to his country.

Article 14: Every individual has the right to seek asylum in another country if he/she fears persecution. This article cannot be invoked if the individual is seeking asylum from prosecution of a non-political crime or is acting against the basic principles of United States.

Article 15: Every human has the right to a nationality. No individual should be deprived of his nationality and should be free to change his nationality.

Article 18: Every human has the right to practice his religion, change religion, freedom of thought, freedom to choose, freedom to live alone or in community. To express his beliefs freely.

Source: United Nations declaration of human rights 1948 document.

https://www.ohchr.org/EN/UDHR/Documents/UDHR_Translations/eng.pdf

UNHCR Guidelines on policies and procedures in dealing with unaccompanied children seeking asylum 1997

Below I will presents some points from these guidelines.

- Access to the territory: The unaccompanied minor asylum seekers are very vulnerable that is why it is very important to give them access to territory.
- Identification and initial action: On the points of entry it is important that the authorities identify these unaccompanied minor asylum seekers and give them priority. Interviews with the child should be done for registration; documentation done in the best way, which will further ensure the best interest of a child. Appointment of a guardian is important right after the child is identified as unaccompanied minor. The advisor or guardian should have ample experience in child caring so he could ensure child rights and safeguards them. The guardian should also see if the needs of the child are met properly. When conducting the interviews their age should be kept in mind and age appropriate manner of interviews should be adopted. It is also important to take interviews for bio data collection as soon as possible after arrival. The interviewee doing the interviews with the unaccompanied minor should be trained in working with refugees and children. Interpretors should be specially trained as well. Whatever the case is the wishes and views of the unaccompanied minor should be considered.
- Access to asylum procedures: The unaccompanied minor asylum seeker should have the right to all asylum procedures irrespective of their age.
- care and protection of minors seeking asylum: A unaccompanied minor is entitled to special care and protection specially because they are alone. The child who is seeking asylum should not be detained; this point is emphasized more in the case of unaccompanied minor asylum seekers.
- Refugee status determination: The decision on the application of a unaccompanied minor for refugee status should be given priority because of the vulnerability of the minor. The unaccompanied minor is not aware of the laws and is not legally independent so a representative should be given to the child who is aware of the background of the child and will protect his interests. Interviewee should be a professional officer. The appeals should be decided upon as soon as possible. While assessing the application of an

unaccompanied minor special importance should be given to his or her limited knowledge of country of origins situation, his or her vulnerabilities.

- Identification of durable solutions: In case of the approval of unaccompanied minors application and is permitted to stay there could be two possible solutions one could be integration into the society or second could be settlement in another country on the grounds of family reunification. In case the application is denied as a refugee or on humanitarian grounds then an assessment should be made for the best possible solution. The best possible solution should be devised keeping the important aspects of his/her case. A third party panel should be made who can overlook at the case and make workable recommendations.
- Implementation of durable solutions: The solutions decided should be implemented without any unnecessary delay. If the child is granted refugee status or is accepted on humanitarian grounds he or she should be placed in the community for future integration. If repatriation is the only and best solution then it should be ensured that a parent, child welfare, relatives, government agency, non-governmental agency is ready to take the child's responsibility. They should be able to take care of the child and provide the necessary care. Proper counseling should be provided to the child before return. International agencies could be involved for creating contacts and implementing assistance plans for the families.
- Cooperation and coordination: The process that we discussed above requires cooperation and information sharing between different stakeholders. Close cooperation and support among these different governmental agencies, police, and special agencies is very critical for the care of the unaccompanied minor asylum seekers.

Source: UNHCR Document of guidelines on policies and procedures in dealing with unaccompanied children seeking asylum.
<https://www.unhcr.org/publications/legal/3d4f91cf4/guidelines-policies-procedures-dealing-unaccompanied-children-seeking-asylum.html>

Chapter 4 Process of intake of Unaccompanied minors seeking asylum

In 2015 a total of 5500 unaccompanied minors came to Norway to seek asylum the highest so far but this number reduced drastically over the next year due to the strict immigration rules of Norwegian government, in 2017 only 191 unaccompanied minors applied for asylum (Garvik, Paulsen & Berg 2016). The reason for less minors seeking asylum is that the Norwegian government brought tighter legislation to restrict the people thinking of Norway as their asylum destination. In 2015 the new law was brought in practice where the government started issuing temporary residence permits valid till they would turn 18 (Save the children 2017). Once the accepted minors start living in municipalities the new phase starts which is the integration and assimilation starts. The new place is not only physically required like accommodation but a place in society and culture (Penninx 2003).

There is no specific definition of integration because the requirements for a society to accept new people in it vary from society to society, not one size fits all approach. Integration is not a person only job but many factors play their role in integration process. Host communities, governmental institutions, and the refugee themselves play important role (Penninx 2003). Integration process works between the individual, his interest to assimilate his efforts and the receiving society. The receiving society is a stronger determinant in setting the direction for integration process, as the individual has to adapt more than the society adapting to him. The individual integrating will face two levels of institutions while he integrates into the new society first the government level institutions like educational places, law and regulations, these are more written in nature and secondly the unwritten social institutions like religious or cultural institutions (Penninx 2003). States should promote policies that encourage diversity, this creates ease for the individual and the society also has a bigger threshold of acceptance.

The current immigration policies of Norway are being looked upon in this section. The earlier policies and the current policies are all important because they give us understanding of the changing policies with the changing international situations.

Policies are subject to criticism also because each country protects its own interests first and devises policies based on their limitations and resources. There are some international obligations also that binds the countries to follow like international conventions, protocols, charters, bi-lateral agreements and humanitarian aids etc.

Norwegian government placed some measures to restrict the flow of unaccompanied minor asylum seekers. One of the laws was regarding children aged between 16-18 years and those of them whose application for refugee status was not approved. However their return was not possible, due to lack of proper care facilities. They were therefor given two years temporary residence permit. This permit was nonrenewable. This law was widely criticized by the NGOs and other human rights bodies (Staver & Lidén 2014). This law also resulted in many unaccompanied minors escaping from the reception center due to the fear of being deported.

The unaccompanied minors in Norway are mostly put in asylum process, they do not have any other type of permits they could apply to. Once the registration process starts the minor is given a DUF (Automatic identity number used by UDI) number by the directorate of immigration, this is a standard procedure for all migrants and refugees from third world in Norway. After that the unaccompanied minors are required to apply for a type of permit, those unaccompanied minors who do not apply for asylum have no other option as per Norwegian law. Victims of human trafficking are an exception to this rule, for the victims of trafficking there are other different type of permits they could apply to if they withdraw from asylum claim (Staver & Lidén 2014).

It is a general understanding that a minor who does not have any parent should be granted a legal guardian. This is to ensure that the best interests of child are protected; these guardians represent these unaccompanied minors also. From July 1st 2013 the term 'representatives' for asylum seekers have replaced the term guardian. From the time the unaccompanied minor will be registered the representative will be present. Representatives will ensure that the best interest of child is protected. Representatives should also see that the unaccompanied minors are given proper care, provided shelter and health care facilities. Representative also helps in tracing down the family. These representatives are not responsible for daily life of minors.

Once the process is completed and the residence permit is granted the child will be settled in the municipality. In the municipality he or she will have a new guardian. It is then the responsibility of the municipality to hire, train and supervise the representatives. It is important that the representative produces a police clearance certificate to ensure his or her suitability for the job. Asylum interview is done after the age assessment test (in case of doubt about the age) writes Staver & Lidén (2014) in their report for European Migration network. All the asylum seekers, adults or unaccompanied minors have the right to legal advice. Each unaccompanied minor is given a lawyer right from the beginning of his application process.

The 'Norwegian organization for asylum seekers' has two important roles that it plays. Firstly it provides information to all unaccompanied minors about their rights and duties during the asylum process, secondly they provide legal aid to the asylum seekers whose applications have been rejected, they can also intervene on behalf of the rejected applicant (Staver & Lidén 2014).

The unaccompanied minor asylum seeker whose application is granted is given a residence permit. There are two types of permits they can obtain, one it could be given refugee status or, two they could be granted residence based on humanitarian grounds. If UDI feels there are some discrepancies regarding the identity of a minor then they could be given a temporary card or could be restricted from permanent residency or family reunification unless identity is made clear (UDI).

Those unaccompanied minors whose application is denied both on refugee status grounds and humanitarian grounds, but their documents are not enough care facilities upon their return. These minors are granted two years non-renewable permits. Once they are eighteen years of age this permit expires (Staver & Lidén 2014).

Integration of these unaccompanied minors

After the asylum process is completed the next phase starts of integrating these minors into different municipalities. The general aim of Norwegian integration policy is to involve the individual in economic activity and active social life in the

community. The Norwegian integration policy lays importance on the attainment of education, finding work, paying taxes and becoming a valuable part of Norwegian society (Thorud 2017-18). Integration is a combined effort by different parties. There are expectations that the individual should be willing to contribute, participate and accept the new host society but it is also the duty of the society to be open minded, accepting and helpful towards these individuals. In Norway the unaccompanied minors are settled in two different settlements the ones under 15 years are settled with different arrangements than the ones aged between 15-18 years of age. This applied to those unaccompanied minors who are granted asylum (Thorud 2017-18).

The Norwegian directorate of children, youth and family affairs 'Bufdir' and the office for children, youth and family affairs 'Bufetat' are the institutions that are responsible for government funded child welfare services, they also look at adoptions and family counseling's. The bufetat is responsible for running care facilities for the unaccompanied minor asylum seekers and refugees (Bufdir.no). The settled children (former Unaccompanied minors seeking asylum) who are under 15 years are under the responsibility of bufetat. Bufetat with cooperation with directorate of integration and diversity (IMDI) settles children under 15 years. With three months of getting asylum Bufetat aims to settle down the children in different municipalities with proper care situation (Staver & Lidén 2014). In Norway Directorate of integration and diversity is responsible body for the settlement of all, children aged between 15-18 granted asylum or others granted protection.

Accommodation:

Four types of accommodation are there for the unaccompanied minors.

- To settle down the unaccompanied minors in with foster care or if they have any relatives. This is mostly applied to children under the age of 15.
- Different institutions, this is for the children with different needs.
- A shared accommodation for 3-5 unaccompanied minors with the facility of staff available all the time according to the requirements. This is for children between 15-18 years of age.
- Housing with staff (not full time) based on sharing or individual but is monitored.

Health facilities:

In Norway the adults seeking asylum are only entitled to emergency health care services but the unaccompanied minors have same health care rights as other Norwegian children. Different municipalities have different practices. Norway does not have a standard operating protocol for secondary health care like follow ups with specialists for municipalities dealing with unaccompanied minors each municipality devise its own policies but the right to basic and secondary health care facilities. The minors who require special health care needs like mental health care they are taken care of by proper psychiatric care or therapy. Children with Physical disabilities are also given proper health care services (Staver & Lidén 2014).

Education:

Children living in Norway for more than three months (including unaccompanied minors seeking asylum) have the right and duty to get education according to the education act section 2-1. Each municipality is responsible to ensure that all the minors living in it are provided with education facilities. The reception centers enroll these children at school, and then the school does its assessment that the education provided is according to his age, the education obtained from country of education and the Norwegian language level of the child. There are also initiatives by some municipalities in which they run introduction classes for these unaccompanied minors recently settled in municipalities. These children join the normal school progress after completing this one-year introduction course (Sletten & Engebriksen 2011). It is also the possibility that the child starts normal school and do additional language course along with it. Unaccompanied minors aged between 16-18 who has residence permit have the same rights to education as other Norwegian children. Unaccompanied minors aged between 16-18 with a temporary residence permit have the right to high school education (Sletten & Engebriksen 2011).

Role of Care Givers (Social Workers):

The children are settled in different municipalities. There are supervised accommodations for these children. They fall under child protection if the child is fifteen years or younger and the children between sixteen and eighteen years are under the directorate of immigration. In these care homes they are taken care of by social workers. Social workers work very closely with these children. Norway has very high living standard for unaccompanied minors compared to other countries of Europe (Omland 2020). Once the child is settled in Norway the child welfare services are responsible for them. The child welfare services carries out its care functions through different organizations which have different responsibilities like accommodation, education, health etc. social workers carry out these functions. The social workers report to child welfare services about the child, they together make goals for the child, which the social worker is responsible for (Omland 2020).

Each professional caregiver has the responsibility of a certain number of children. These children have a contact person in child welfare services also whom they meet every now and then or if it's urgent. Caregivers with exception of adjustment follow almost similar guidelines for some minors. The Norwegian policy makers want to keep equality in providing care facilities to its refugees and unaccompanied minors. The role of caregiver is very essential in the healthy mental and physical growth as well as healthy environment. The caregivers consider the idea of care as of any Norwegian household (Omland 2020). The Norwegian caregivers act as care providers and an authority; the minor does not have the right to choose if a male or female will be his caregiver, helper. The caregiver understanding of the accommodation can affect the way he looks at his care providing practice like if he is considering it as an institution or as a home. If the carer thinks of the accommodation as a home then care will be done in a way which is just like every Norwegian home but if the carer looks at the accommodation as an institution then it will be more professional in nature like routines, rules, interventions by carer etc. (Omland 2020). The careers are advised in Norway to be considerate of the traumatic experiences of minors and use care practices in accordance with guidelines given by different studies on trauma. In Norwegian care homes they use the trauma informed care, which is a very sensible way of carrying out care practices for these minor children. The

caregivers are encouraged to observe the hidden clues of fear, stress, and anxiety in the children (Omland 2020).

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Chapter 5 Theoretical framework

In any research it is very important to have a perspective, a lens to look at the data through. One theory cannot be used to define everything because this thesis has been looking at many different concepts. There has been much important terminology that is very significant in the sense that it is giving direction to the researcher. I have also used different theories and concepts for my empirical data analysis. Before I move on with the analysis portion I find it very important to discuss some theories relating to the themes of my analysis, also in the general thesis write-up it can reflect up on different concepts used.

In the research about children it's important to include them yet the young children are the biggest group excluded from research (Alderson & Morrow 2011). It's important to make them part of research specially on topics they are the target group, for example the unaccompanied minors are very less in research done on them, their participation is very minimal. The minors should be allowed to take part in voicing his/her opinion when some decisions are being made about them (Alderson & Morrow 2011)

Barriers in Integration

Unaccompanied minor asylum seekers come from different countries. They all have different educational level, different skill sets, different economic conditions. Everything is different for each one of them. The unaccompanied minors who come from a same place or country have many differences among them. The unaccompanied minors come to Norway through very harsh routes risking their lives, on the way many put their lives in danger, they are even subjected to extreme violence and trauma. They are alone but they are not alone they come along friends who at times do not make it successfully, they may get residence permits but their friends may not be successful. The psychological aspect of this is very tricky and needs attention.

Norway is a very welcoming society but children coming from Middle East, Asia and Africa will have a very different reaction to the Norwegian society. To say they will have a cultural shock won't be wrong. The Norwegian society is based on equality and care it is run differently than other parts of the world. It can be somehow overwhelming in the start for a child to adjust in it, the language barrier cannot be ignored it plays a very important role writes Covello Leonard (1939). Below I will discuss some barriers faced by these unaccompanied minors, which are challenging their integration into the society.

Language:

The people who have experienced the difficulties and disadvantages of not knowing the language of a society and having to adjust in it, it is important to have a common language for adjustment, integration and assimilation (Covello 1939). The role of language is very important for any individual starting a life in a new country. While Norwegians are very fluent with English but the education is in Norwegian, daily routine tasks are in Norwegian so it is inevitable that a person has to learn Norwegian to be part of the society and make a life. The unaccompanied minors who come to Norway seeking asylum are given language education in their first year after acceptance of asylum application. It is expected from them to be well versed in Norwegian after the one-year introduction course (Thorud 2017-18). The children start normal school after the first one-year of language training, the school education is in Norwegian so their understanding of the language will be playing big role in their progress in school studies. One thing cannot be seen in isolation there are many overlapping aspects of it. Many children learn very quickly depending on their age but some might have a slow pace (Thorud 2017-18).

This is a challenge for many unaccompanied minors. The municipalities are responsible for these unaccompanied minors to get Norwegian language education, including social studies. The burden on the shoulders of a child is heavy, a baggage of past life is on the child's shoulder and to start from start again might be hard for some children (Thorud 2017-18). The number of asylum applicants reduced drastically in Norway resulting in closure of many reception centers. This decreased caused many municipalities to reduce their language training initiatives (Thorud 2017-18).

Education:

In Norway special emphases is made on education. The Norwegian education system is very comprehensive, its aim is to provide quality-learning environment to all. It also pays special importance to the children with different and special needs. Children belonging to a minority language group or children who need special educational support (Thorud 2017-18). Unaccompanied minors come to Norway with different educational backgrounds. The quality of education is also different in each country so the unaccompanied minors have all very different educational levels. The unaccompanied minors when join Norwegian education system face many problems. The education is in Norwegian and that itself could be a barrier for some minors. There are many minors facing psychological trauma and posttraumatic stress disorder that might cause sleep disorders for them this affects the ability to learn. Educational background is important for the minors because they if have a weak educational background they might not be able to cope with the new educational system.

There are many more aspects of education as a barrier for children. So many things overlap each other for a child creating a challenge to learn and study. All children are obliged to obtain education; this applies to every child living in Norway (Thorud 2017-18).

Systems theory

Urie Bronfenbrenner a psychologist who developed the systems theory, this theory gives explanation of how environment affects the process of human development. The theories of human development represents the view that the human development takes places, that human development is a complex process, which takes in account the interactions between individuals and their surrounding environment (Ettedal & Mahoney 2017).

Bronfenbrenner has talked about how a child develops in his environment; he revised his original theory and termed it Bio-ecological systems theory. In this revised theory Bronfenbrenner talked about how the individual himself is playing an active role in his development process. Bronfenbrenner has given four types of interrelated

environmental systems in his ecological systems theory as Micro, Meso, Exo and Macro-systems. These different types effect the human development in different settings (Ettetal & Mahoney 2017). These four levels are considered very important in understanding human development. Lets look at these four levels one by one, Micro-systems: Microsystems is the most proximal level of ecological system; it talks about the direct interaction of individuals in a particular setting. For example in a school the organized sports activities for children after school is representing one micro system. Micro systems can be different type of activities like arts, sports, social projects, religious projects and educational camps. The children who are taking part in these after school activities are showing very positive outcomes be that emotional, physical or psychological compared to their peers who did not attend these activities (Ettetal & Mahoney 2017). Research shows that some activities have more positive impact then other activities, like Ettetal & Mahoney (2017) talk in their paper that regarding adults the religious groups have more positive effect and about children there has been positive effect if they opt two different types of activities. Quality of these activity programs has been given importance too, which plays a part in the outcomes of these activities. It's very important to make sure the children feel part of these activities for getting positive outcomes (Ettetal & Mahoney 2017).

Meso-system: Meso-system in Brofenbrenners levels of environmental systems in his systems theory talks about the interaction between different micro levels in the surrounding environment of the individuals. Microsystems interact with activities and this impact human development for example if something happens in one micro-system it will have an effect on another microsystem as well. It is then very important to look at the other environmental setting helping development process along with activities (Ettetal & Mahoney 2017). Research done on families talk about how different settings for youth development should be coordinated like after school activities and home activities. Most parents motivate their children for activities that match their home environment more. Comprehensive communication between all partners I-e children, parents and school should be ensured for better results and positive human development (Ettetal & Mahoney 2017).

Exo-systems: This system talks about the involvement of other factors which might not be part of an individuals living environment but the individual will be effected by them. This is more like trickle down effect where other people in his life influence the

individual's development. Exo-systems research is very limited with regards to after school activities. This Exo-systems is about how parents are more interested in introducing or allowing the children to participate in the activities that interest them, that they might have done so the children are also doing what the parents did after school. Research also shows that the children whose both parents are working participate less in activities as compared to children who have one of the parents with them at home (Ettetal & Mahoney 2017).

Macro-systems: This level talks about the beliefs, norms and values of people influenced by the cultural, economical and religious factors within a society. Macro-system impacts development within different micro-systems and it gives a lens through which an individual will see his future experiences. Macro-systems is a way of understanding different individuals in a similar setting, what factors play role in their different performances. What are the reasons some individuals cannot fit into some activities that others can (Ettetal & Mahoney 2017). In the systems theory by Brofenbrenners he talks about the four levels, he says that social status and culture are two very important macro-systems; culture has been given less importance as compared to social status. Social status is referred to as the economic position of the individual within a society. Research suggests that children with poor financial backgrounds are less likely to participate in after school activities compared to there financially well off schoolfellows. Culture as a macro-system has been studied by researcher also, the researchers talk about how different activities can have positive impact on children where they can interact with fellows in their mother tongue or activities which they find similar to their culture.

Different theorists have criticized Brofenbrenners system theory. These theorists talk about every system being different from each other and having its own district role whereas System theory talks about interconnectedness of different levels. Networks approach was presented against the system theory and it was argued that this is a better representation of different human ecological systems and their overlapping's (Ettetal & Mahoney 2017). Brofenbrenners system theory was also criticized for being children centric whereas it talked about adolescents as well and their development within different environmental systems (Rosa & Tudge 2013).

Social Integration

In the mid 1950's integration theory rose to limelight although its roots go deeper. After the nation states were formed the theory of integration got importance among the researchers and social scientists in Europe. In the 1950's and 1960's the work of Haas and Deutsch increased the value of integration theory. Before the scholars were only focused on integration within Europe but soon the concept spread globally (Jarvis 1994). Integration as a concept is the combining of different objects to form a whole. It can be used in human integration as many different people joining in on some common grounds to form a common agenda or way of life (Holzner 1967). Social integration is social constructed in which many different groups or individuals take part in social relationships, it is a very multidimensional approach. It is like creating a sense of community with different identities for people. Social integration is very structural in nature; it can represent both presence and absence of social support (Lunstad & Lefler 2020). Different ways can be used to measure the level of integration although it's not fully possible to measure integration accurately. New research shows that the integration is very important for the mental well being of people. Social integration can play a vital role in the emotional well being of people also. For adults its very important, to make relationships, to develop friendships and form different diverse social networks. All these are essential for the social satisfaction of individuals. The UN fulfillment of these social needs have consequences (Lunstad & Lefler 2020). A research study of around 148 perspective studies resulted that when the person has strong social ties and social relationships it increases the chances of survival by 50% (Holt & Lunstad 2010 in Lunstad & Lefler 2020). Whereas another research suggested that when social relationship doesn't exist, the person is isolated and lonely then there is 30% increase in chances of mortality (Holt & Lunstad 2015 in Lunstad & Lefler 2020).

Chapter 6 Methodology

In this chapter I will discuss the methodology I used for data collection. The structures I used for collecting data, recruiting informants, transcribing the audio recordings and further analyzing the data.

Qualitative methodology:

In my thesis I have chosen Qualitative research as my Research methodology. I have worked with this method previously, which gives me confidence in using this approach. I will explain the qualitative research method briefly.

Qualitative research is a non-numerical type of social science research. Qualitative research is used to understand social life through collecting data and then interpreting it from a targeted group of people's perspective. Qualitative research focuses on micro level interactions of daily life (Crossman 2020). Sociology and qualitative research have a shared history; qualitative research has been used in sociology from the time this field was born. Social scientists have been attracted by qualitative research because it helps them understand the meanings behind behaviors of people, their actions and interactions among each other (Crossman 2020). The researchers who use qualitative research use their ears, eyes and intelligence to obtain understanding and perspectives of different events, happenings and people.

In qualitative research there are different methods that can be used to collect data, each researcher according to their preference and requirement select these methods

- Direct observation
- Open ended surveys
- Focus groups
- Oral history
- In-depth interviews
- Ethnographic observation
- Participant observation
- Content analysis

Historically after using the above-mentioned methods the researcher uses his eyes and intelligence to code and decode the data collected. Then comes the analysis part where the different themes that emerged in codes are discussed in detail. These days the use of different computer software's is getting popular for the purpose of codes and analysis (Crossman 2020).

NSD:

Norwegian center for research data is a supervisory body on all research projects. Permission from NSD is important, as without this many projects will not be done. In Norway it is step one of doing research that involves other people as informants. Like a standard operating procedure I also applied to NSD giving all the details for my thesis research project. There is a form that one has to fill I did so also. I got my approval for data collection and then I started recruitment of informants and data collection.

Recruiting informants and about informants

I recruited three informants. My supervisor made the first contact on my behalf to the potential informants, after getting the interest of becoming informants in my thesis research I established contact with them. I sent them the invitation letters, which contained brief details about my topic. The invitation letter maintained the rights of informants, which they could exercise at any time. I did three interviews in total. All the interviews were done on telephone using the application 'WhatsApp'.

I recruited three informants. All three of my informants were Females and they were all social workers from profession. After my supervisor made initial contact with them I took over and arranged dates for interviews. Since the Pandemic we decided to do interviews on WhatsApp audio call. My informants were excited and they provided me a lot of information. I spent one hour on each interview. The social workers had a lot of experience working with unaccompanied minors. They had very relevant answers to all my questions, which helped me understand the system and their work more. It was very interesting when they were constantly giving me examples and stories about different incidents or situations. The informants were very

open about how they deal with personal issues colliding with work life, their emotions and feelings while working with these children. I did not think that I faced any kind of problem working with my informants. They were interested in my project and asked me if I will send them a copy of my work. My informants were all open to providing more information that I may need. It was a very positive experience of interviewing my social worker informants.

Individual Semi-structured interviews:

Semi structure interviews are done with a predetermined topic but the questions are open ended. This type of interview method is more flexible in nature (Frances, Coughlan and Cronin 2009). The semi structure interview with open-ended questions gives the room for random new spontaneous questions rising from on going conversations. The interviewer enjoys more freedom to express views in a more expressive manner. This is more like story telling by the interviewee expressing their experiences regarding the questions asked. The answers are based on individual perspectives (Frances, Coughlan and Cronin 2009).

One on one interviews are done in person so the researcher can keep note of the non verbal clues during interview however the trend of doing interviews on phone or email is also increasing in qualitative research. Face to face interviews are very expressive a researcher can get many hidden clues from changes in voice tones, body gestures, face expressions etc. telephone interviews are economical it can save costs of travel (Frances, Coughlan and Cronin 2009). For more sensitive topics email interviews are more considered less dictating. At times there are some problems with face-to-face interviews that could be avoided with email or phone interviews.

Interviews should be properly scheduled keeping in consideration of availability of interviewer and interviewee.

Thematic analysis

Thematic analysis is a very common and popular methodology in qualitative data sets for different fields. There are different ways thematic analysis can be used. Thematic analysis is a method that looks for different patterns in a dataset (Braun & Clarke 2006). Thematic analysis sets the foundation for qualitative research analysis; qualitative research is very complex, diverse and full of nuances. Braun & Clark

(2006) in their writings about thematic analysis put stress on the understanding of thematic analysis for doing qualitative research, this allows researcher to discover many more core skills for doing research.

Thematic analysis is a method in which data is identified, analyzed and creating patterns. Thematic analysis gives a very rich description of data collected. Thematic analysis is not only limited to codes it also gives the researcher many other aspects of looking at the topic of research. There is no one set way of doing thematic analysis though thematic analysis is used commonly (Braun & Clark 2006). Thematic analysis is not as famous or well talked about like other grounded theory or narrative analysis. Braun & Clark (2006) argue that most analysis is usually thematic but the credit is not given to thematic analysis.

Thematic analysis has a developed six-phase method to be followed for data analysis

- Familiarizing yourself with data.
Transcribing the verbal data.
- Generating initial codes.
- Searching for themes.
- Reviewing themes.
- Defining and naming themes.
- Producing the report.

In my analysis of data I used thematic analysis. Thematic analysis gives importance to emerging codes, the slightest details from data set. I will use thematic analysis for my data analysis in next chapter.

Ethical considerations and limitations

First of all the protection of my informants rights is my foremost duty. The informant's consent is very important for conducting interview (Frances, Michael and Patricia 2009). I paid importance to this I made sure that all my three informants give their written consent to me. In the invitation letter to my informants I explained the topic of my thesis research, my timeline. The rights of the informants like withdrawing support at any time, requesting to delete audio recording, anonymity of identity etc. the recordings of the interviews were deleted right after transcribing the interviews as informed in the invitation letter. My informants placed trust in me by

agreeing to become part of my research project so it was my duty to hide their identity in the analysis section of my thesis.

There were many limitations that I would like to talk about here. I as a researcher wanted to conduct face-to-face individual interviews for my data collection. They are more expressive, gives more clues and understanding of the informants. My thesis started in beggaring of February after the time received the NSD approval it was end of February. The COVID-19 had hit the world very hard by that time and social contacts were not desired things at that time. The lockdown then further reduced my chances of doing one on one interviews. This was the reason I opted for phone interviews.

Chapter 7 Analysis

In this chapter I will analyze the empirical data that I have collected through individual interviews. I will also use different literature to support my analyses. I will look into the final themes that emerged after following the six-step process of thematic analysis. The themes will be connecting my research questions to my empirical data to see the outcomes and results. Different theories will be also discussed relating the themes to get a better understanding.

Barriers that minors experience:

During my empirical data collection I have talked about the barriers and challenges to integration, I have combined them all under the umbrella theme of barriers where I will touch upon all of them, which my informants reflected upon.

Language barrier

My social worker informants talked about language barrier, especially informant one and two touched upon this barrier. Informant number two did not talk much about language barrier. Integration theory is focused on the political and social both aspects on integration. Not many integration theorists include both political and social aspects on integration in their discussions. It is inevitable that the minors will have to learn the local language, a social worker said;

“They have to learn Norwegian as well as English” (Informant 3).

During the interviews for empirical data collection my participants had a common beginning to the question regarding the barriers and challenges, language barrier. Norwegian is a very different language and it’s not an easy task to learn it easily. The participants talked about how the language barrier affects the daily lives of these unaccompanied minors. The language barrier creates a hindrance in their smooth integration. A participant said;

“I guess the first problem they face is the language barrier, Norwegian is different than any other language, they often speak quite few languages and obviously Norwegian is nothing close to English” (informant 1)

When a person arrives in a new society communication is the basic first response, it's a plus point that the Norwegians can speak very good English but knowing English is not enough to survive in this society. Language barrier has very wide-ranging effects on a person's life; it is connected with education, with social connections and with economic activity. It impacts all. The unaccompanied minors are very young and alone, they have to get education, they have to form friendships, look for employment and without having the local language skills it is almost not possible. The school education in Norway is in Norwegian. The informant at one place said,

“It could be a bit difficult when it comes to learning language” (informant 3).

The participants talked about how hard it gets for these children to make friends or become part of a group in school if they cannot speak Norwegian. The municipalities provide language-learning education to these children, some are even given extra courses but every individual has different learning abilities. A participant mentioned

“Its very difficult for them to make friends or socialize in school because the other Norwegian ethnic children speak Norwegian and they feel themselves as non fits among them” (informant 3).

Language can also effect the daily life of these children for example if the language skills are very poor then daily routines tasks will be difficult to execute also like filling forms, reading and understanding official documents, watching local TV, doing grocery etc. one thing has its effect on so many other different things (Summers 2016).

Social networks

While discussing barriers it's very important to discuss the cultural barrier.

Participants were mentioning culture as a barrier in the way of the minor's integration in Norwegian society, one of them said,

“The first thing is I think the cultural barrier, they come from a place where there is a lot of focus on family whereas in Norway we do not have the same focus on family” (informant 2).

The unaccompanied minors arrive from different countries of origin, they have all their lives lived in a very different society where the traditional values held high place, family was an institute with the male member as the head of the family. The traditional theory I talked about above in the theoretical framework refers to this point that it is culturally very difficult for these children to accept this sudden change. It's also possible that the social background is acting as a barrier in adjusting to new society, an informant reflected

“When it comes to cultural and social side I would say that it depends if you're from city or rural areas” (informant 2).

Stress can be attributed to cultural shock also; the mental wellbeing of minors can be affected by the sudden change in cultures (Hughes 2016). While discussing this social worker mentioned

“For some it can be difficult to get their personal network some can have difficulties in understanding in the social structures so different from what they are used to” (informant 3).

The norms and values that they have been socialized to all their lives are no more practiced in the same manner as they are used to. In Norwegian society its more individual oriented where the individual is independent to run his life. No strict family commitments are attached here. An informant while talking about societal barriers said,

“Foremost its cultural and social barriers, coming from a country which is quite different, from society and how things work is difficult for them to understand. Its difficult to understand cultural and social norms, what to do what not to do, coming from a country which is family oriented to a country which is very individually oriented” (informant 2).

The new system in Norway acts as a challenge for them. These children are not used to independent decision making because they are mostly coming from patriarchal systems where families are the decision making bodies, elders have the right to make decisions based on best interest of child and most of the times the opinion of the child is not taken. When the child comes to Norway it is a new structure he is in now.

The unaccompanied minors are dependent on their families for important decisions mostly so when they come to Norway they are put into a position to make important decision although the minors are given a legal guardian who helps them in every matter but still looking at the bigger picture these children are on their own to decide for their lives in the long run. These children are faced with multiple challenges they are at crossroads in terms of right and wrong as the participant said:

“They are pulled in different directions they don’t know what to do what not to do and this is very difficult in integration aspect” (informant 2).

Education Among other factor is an important barrier in integration. The children come with different academic backgrounds, these are not similar with Norwegian educational standards but they have to in a few years to match the same level. Some children have no education at all; they have never been to school so for such a minor it is extremely difficult to adjust to the Norwegian educational system. A participant said

“Some of the minors from Afghanistan do not have any educational background they have been to a madrassa for Quran education, those kids have bigger barriers” (informant 2).

The data showed that the educational background plays an important barrier in integration process. The children have to work double the effort compared to their Norwegian peers to match their educational level. Many children coming from Muslim countries like Iraq, Afghanistan, Syria have only had religious education from religious schools called 'Madrassa' where they are taught 'Quran' the holy book of Muslims. These children have not been to school so when they come to Norway with the religious education background only then it is extremely difficult for them to do well in normal Norwegian school. The participants talked that there are some children who come from a good educational background but its still difficult for the children to compete easily I will quote a participant saying,

"The boys from Syria have very good educational background, they have been very well educated in Syria but when they come here even they have to struggle in school"(informant 2).

The data showed that participants talked about how they take help from different organizations like Red Cross or others to arrange retired teachers for these children. These teachers help the children with studies as extra help outside school to help them manage studies. A social worker was talking about how these minors have to work double compared to their peers and yet they are behind. She said,

"Levels of knowledge will be always different. Even though some of the clever uam they still struggle and they work harder then their peers of Norwegian background. That means they work a lot with their schoolwork to be able to compete to reach the level of Norwegian ethnic kids" (informant 2).

Social workers have many responsibilities related to the minor children they are working with. They have to identify the needs of these children and figure out ways to help them. Some children have learning disability so the social workers arrange different means through which they can be helped. The children who are unable to do well in school are provided adjusted teaching tailored to their individual needs. The participant said

“We talk to the school and we talk to the child to figure out a way out, maybe practice along side education” (informant 1).

The children who have very strong problems regarding education they can be placed in practice work or maybe some skill education, they have been very happy in their practice work as per the participants in my research. There are also children who are very enthusiastic about getting higher education, the participants talked about how some boys that they worked with were very keen on doing better in school, they wanted to establish a career for themselves which would enable them to have a good life for themselves and their family. They mentioned that these children also struggled but they were not giving up on their efforts. Some children are doing a lot of effort but its still not working out for them, a social worker mentioned,

“The school, if they are having a tough time and its hard for them to get the difficult studies in the school it doesn't mean that they don't have the ability but it can be a bit hard because some don't have school from before and there is a lot to learn here in the school” (informant 3).

This quote refers to the background of a minor in education. It talks about how difficult it gets for some children to do better in school, they get over stressed and are unable to cope with the level of Norwegian ethnic children. It is not that they are less intelligent or have less interest but rather it is because they have come from very different education systems that are not on similar levels of Norwegian educational system. Many children have no educational background as well or some have had religious education that is why they find it difficult to compete.

Family reunification, a facilitator or barrier in integration

Family reunification can be both a facilitator in the integration process also a barrier in the integration process for the minor child. Almost all the minors try to have their family with them, informant number one in the interview said,

“They do talk about reunification, some times they do. At some point all of the boys have used the organization that is helping the kid to apply for reunification (SAFE). So at some point most of the kids have been through and apply but its not always possible, but they do talk about reunification” (informant 1).

They have the right to apply for family reunification before they turn eighteen years but it is very difficult to get reunified, Norway has very strict immigration rules. An informant discussed how they hear from many boys that they want their family to be with them, she mentioned

“We always have some minors talking about reunification with the family it’s a difficult process and very few gets it the, Syrians who applied they got it but that depend on the situation and Norwegian of law of immigration” (informant 2).

She also told about her experience

“I started in 2011 and only 6 or 7 Afghanistan minors got reunified” (informant 2)

There have been many who have got their family reunified with them but once they get their family then they are no more unaccompanied, like a participant said,

“Some of the boys did get their family here but once they get their family in Norway then they are part of a different system, we no more deal with them because they are not unaccompanied anymore” (informant 1).

These children have been away from family for very long at times and it upsets them when they are not successful in family reunification, a social worker during the interview talked that,

“Ones who do not get family reunification go through a hard time because it is emotional for them some time they haven’t seen their families for years” (informant 2).

Data seems divided on this theme some participants talked about how it can be stressful for the minor children to deal with everything once their family arrives, they all through their experience agreed that its good that children can have their family with them but al of them talked about the baggage it brings with itself and its impact on the child. One of the participants during the interview said,

“Because the child has been here and he knows the system so when the family arrives it is the responsibility of the child to do everything which can be very stressful for the minor, I don’t think it helps them in better integration but yes its good for their mental well being somehow” (informant 1).

Going back to the cultural and traditional debate above, when the family comes here they have the very traditional cultural orientation compared to Norwegian culture. An informant said while talking about traditional clash between country of origin and Norway,

“These kids have been living here for a while at least three four years, got used to doing things in a certain way, when the family comes they might not necessarily like so we actually did have a case where the family was really against something that EMbo or the young boy was doing. And that can be quite difficult situation. Because it goes with the typical dilemma western vs. eastern Type of upbringing. What should I go with It can go both ways” (informant 1).

The child has been already socialized to this culture but the family is not so this might create challenges for the child also as he will be again under stress in terms of culture. The economic pressure on the minor is also very important to discuss, a participant said,

“We see that if they get reunified they have to struggle a lot and that doesn’t help in the integration process because when the family arrives the minors have to the some kind of interpreter of the Norwegian society because they know how things work, I have see kids taking on two jobs stop going to school and support their family” (informant 2).

It is a good thing that these children can have their families around them, it gives them relief that their family is safe and near him but it is a constant reason of stress also for the unaccompanied minor who already has his own many issues going on in academic performance, mental well being etc. family reunification is a complex process, involving so many factors, integration on the other hand has also many factor that effect it. During an interview an informant was talking about her opinion based on her experiences with minors trying for family reunification, she talked about a young girl who few years back succeeded in bringing her three brothers and mother to Norway, she said further,

“I remember one girl that she was getting her family here, she needed to get a lot of help from our colleague, she is an x collogue now but she was helping a lot because the girl herself wasn’t able to take care of her new family. Mother with three brothers you know.it was several years back now its fine. It wasn’t an easy process it was like the parents come here its good but no it’s a bit more complex” (informant 1).

Social workers say that when the families arrive in Norway they have very different and at times very difficult response to the system in Norway. The minors are stuck between their parent’s opinion of right and wrong and what is appropriate or inappropriate and the Norwegian system. She mentioned about a boy who had faced a lot of problems regarding his mental health treatment, which was not correct in the opinion of his parents, she said

“I do know a case that the boy was having a mental problem and he was in the Norwegian system and after the family has arrived but the way he was treated here in Norway they disagreed with it pretty much. I don’t know any details but this has been a problem. Because their view on mental health was different then ours obviously” (informant 1).

My social worker informants in majority said that it’s not helpful in the integration process if the child is reunified. These social workers clearly talked about how much stress it can cause to the minor, one of them said

“I think is difficult answer because we don’t have so much research on it I am here when they are with out their parent and we have not had many boys who have had

their family reconnected I can not give you the best answer because I think that it has to go few years of if it was good or bad, I think it depends on the family structure because it is a lot of responsibility when they get their family here then the minors have the main responsibility, they have to go through a different systems, and then they are responsible for everything specialty the economical side even though the parent are with them the child has they main responsibility when the family comes. A lot of responsibility for the boys comes with having your family living with you” (informant 3).

When the family reunification is granted to the children they are then under different system. The care structure changes for them because they are no more unaccompanied. The social workers talked about how it is stressful for the children because they have been in Norway for some years before their families join them. These children are undergoing some care processes already like medical treatments, psychological help or learning assistance, when the family joins the child it can be sometime difficult for the family to understand the new system based on their previous understandings. The child is the one who has been living here and has the know how of the systems so it will be his responsibility to help the family get familiar with the new society and understand systems. When the child is already having hard time managing studies and other psychological problems he then has to have an added problem of helping his family financially. To do job he might leave his studies or struggle more in studies. Its not a blanket case that every child will be having problems after family reunifications but it does add to the responsibilities of the minor.

As resourceful citizens

I asked my informants questions about the unaccompanied minors in the sense that when they come to Norway and get residence card, do they have something to offer to the society also or they are just dependent on the welfare system for everything. The social workers to my surprise had all very positive answers. One of them said while answering my question,

“Hmm they are very eager to learn, I feel they are very open. They have a lot of baggage when they come but there are a lot of resources in it. The fact that they have

traveled so far, on their own and trying to fix things on your own means that the person has a lot of resources. You go through a process with yourself you can find your inner motivation. It takes a lot of a person's, a person who does that has a lot of resources and people should not take them for granted" (informant 3).

It is very hard to survive in so many hard situations at such a young age, these minors go through so many hardships during their journey, they meet so many people who can be dangerous but these children face every situation with their full strength. These children come from different backgrounds but mostly very poor, they have the motivation to do something to improve the living standard of their family. One participant talked about this she said,

"Most of them are eager to work. Some of them really want to get a job. They have a strong wish to be part of society. I think there are a lot of resources" (informant 3).

Another informant shared her opinion when I asked her about the unaccompanied minors being resourceful citizens in the new society she said,

"All of the kids are very resourceful they manage to travel this far from their home and that itself is a resource and they are resilient when you think of them what they have been through there is a small minority who struggle really hard with their mental health issues or traumatic experience, I think they are very good in using each other's support that has been both emotional and economical and the economical part can be both good and bad they help each other I think it's a resource in general and also they are motivated to create good future for their families I think that's a resource that we could learn a lot from" (informant 2).

She also added,

"They manage to navigate into the Norwegian society despite the challenges a lot of these minors do well actually and that's good to see, majority of them they go to school get an education they get jobs on the side, it's also a challenge to get a job but many of them have jobs they save money to send back money to their home when they come to the language most of them are young they learn the language to fit into the

Norwegian society and most of them do quiet well off course you have the ones who haven't been to school they will struggle a lot they have a lot of resources despite what they have been through and the challenges they are facing here" (informant 2).

My third participant added as her answer to the question and I found her answer very interesting, she said

" The kids that we have I don't recall that they have resources in this way that they can do something special but they play football and even if there are in haven't came across but they can cook really well that could be consider a good skill" (informant 1).

She also talked about how well these minors speak few languages, she also acknowledges the effort these minors put in learning Norwegian, she said for these minors its just like other tasks. She said,

"Yeah there are actually quiet few resources they have firstly is the language they can speak several languages, learning Norwegian is a challenge for them but for them it's like another thing to do. Another resource is that traveling from Afghanistan and Pakistan they know how to navigate in to the society which strings to pull which people to contact and that off course can be negative as well in a criminal way that they are contacting people which might not be good for them it's a resource that they are street smart they know how to survive and often they quite mature to their age because they know who to navigate into the society" (informant 1).

Social workers experiences

Norway has recently seen a very sharp drop in the unaccompanied asylum seekers arriving in Norway. This has led to the closure of many reception center also, this has effected the social workers also who were working with these children. The organization have had to cut down on their staff which create an uncomfortable situation for the social workers working with their colleagues. One said,

“There has been less unaccompanied minors that are coming to Norway so they had to let some employees go and then naturally the group dynamics changed. And you get new colleagues and the dynamics change. Its not always negative it’s also been positive but personally for me it’s been difficult so in a way it comes from administration. These changes are given by administration. Its because of the structural system Norway is taking less unaccompanied minors and we had to cut half of the staff” (informant 1).

The informant talked about how their teams have been reshuffled and how this affects their mindset at work. The informant talked about how much mental stress they face. She said that they do not have enough psychological help to help them cope with difficult situations. It’s important for a healthy mindset that they are provided with appropriate help. She said

“We do have a psychologist at the organization that is suppose to help us with these things, she has been there but it hasn’t been a continuous process. It’s more like on and off” (informant 1).

The teams they were working with acted as a support group for them, they all helped each other cope with difficult situations. One of the participants said while talking about her experience after the layoff of many employees working at their organization The participant social workers also talked about how they have to face very difficult situations at work. The participant social workers that I interviewed for my data collection were working with the unaccompanied minors living with them and helping them out in everything, they have personally been witness to so many incidents of physical violence, not intended towards them but in their presence. The frustration these children display in front of their care givers can be the outcome of many different reasons like a friend not wanting to talk to you or other social reasons, a participant during the interview mentioned

“What I have experienced personally lately is aggressive behavior but not necessarily just physical but also psychological violence. When The other boys are ignoring you do not talking to u or simply unfriendly and impolite to you, and you cannot talk it out because they simply refuse, so that’s a challenge that I have faced together with

physical violence not necessarily towards me but objects while I was present, kicking the doors throwing the chairs obviously there is something behind it but we are unable to find it out what it was or the boy who was having the problem” (informant 1).

The social workers talked about how the behavior affects them emotionally and its effect on their work efficiency. They talked about how they needed their colleagues to support them but the downsizing has taken away their support system, one of the participants talked about how the physical violence by these boys had emotional effects on her, she said,

“I felt that these problems, physical and psychological violence was a bit harder for me to deal with it, I was bit more scared while at work. I off course went to work but I wasn't like yayyyy I am going to work, it was little harder for me and I think it has a lot to do with support network around u. if you have colleagues around you that can support you and go along with u and understand what your going through then as a social worker you can deal with it” (informant 1).

We talked about the barriers the unaccompanied minors face but we also have to look at the issues caregivers face during their time with the minors. The tough situations can have a toll on them as well like the above-mentioned quotes suggest. The social workers are very resilient despite tougher situations they work with the children trying to help them out in every possible manner. The minors are often very thankful for their caregivers, they think that the help of social workers was very important for them and it helped them adjust in to the Norwegian society. Setting boundaries is very important in every relationship. In this service provider and service user relationship also it is important that the social workers maintain their professional limitations, it can also create dependency by the minors on the social workers. One of the informants said,

“In the beginning when you start working you are too excited and want to give everything and as the time goes by you understand that at some points you have to be a bit more reserve for my sake and for the child sake” (informant 3).

The social worker talked about how it can be very difficult to keep emotions in control while working with these minors for so long, she said it's tricky. She also talked that how unfair it will be for the new coming children if the old ones get all the attachment and affection, she said,

“The kids who are after (future service users) they get the bad result because you don't know how to keep the boundaries, it is very tricky because you can't help getting emotionally attached when you work with some one for may years. You have to be conscious about how far you push the line they are moving on and it will be unfair for the ones coming after as much love as they need” (informant 3).

Chapter 7 Discussion

This chapter of my thesis is about the discussion on results of empirical data that I collected. This portion will be in two parts first about the experiences of the minor asylum seekers through the social workers and second part will be the experiences of social workers. This division will give us a better understanding of both different aspects of my research, this way I will also be able to address the research questions that I had.

The situation unaccompanied minors are facing

The unaccompanied minors are taken care of by social workers in their integration process. From their accommodation to school adjustment they are taken care of by care givers (social workers). The minors have different caregivers at different points in their asylum process and later settlement. The social workers are the closest these children have to their family in the new society. It was interesting to hear about the experiences of the minor children through the participants in my research. The literature in the field shows the problems these minors face in integration process.

What are the possible barriers and challenges that play their role in creating hurdles in integration? Systems theory explains about how many factors of the person's environment contribute to the behavior of a person. In systems theory the collective sum or the holistic perspective are emphasized, however the different parts and the study of different aspects or reasons contribute to a better understanding of the situation of a person. There are many different reasons such as past experiences and current factors that shape the person's environment writes Anthony Forder (1976). To relate this to my research topic it can be seen that the integration barriers cannot be looked upon in isolation, rather they are created by the interaction of many different factors like trauma, experiences of past, difficulty settling down in new society, lack of social network.

The minor asylum seekers go through a process after which if they are granted residence permit when they settle into different municipalities in Norway and where this part of their integration begins. The society is a variable in the integration process, and impact on the minor and how the minor experience how the host Norwegian society welcomes him/her. A neo-functionalist integration theorist Ernst Haas (1961 in Diez & Wiener 2018) talked about 'integration' it's a process where the political elite in any domestic settings change their loyalties and they start expecting returns from the new power position which has power over the pre existing national states (Haas 1958 in Diez & Wiener 2018). Integration is a two-sided process where the refugee and the host society have to be accepting of each other's diversity. The integration is a very tricky process, which cannot be measured correctly (UNHCR 2014). Many problems arise during the integration process. Every unaccompanied minor will not be facing the same problems of integration, however there are commonalities that can be highlighted. Process of integration is a very slow and gradual process, which has many dimensions to it like the economic, social and legal parts.

There are successful integrations when people are doing well economically and have received citizenship, but there are many who are unable to follow up with the integration process, they are lacking economic activity as well as social networks (UNHCR 2014). At the university of Sussex they studied 280 refugees who came to United Kingdom through the gateway protection program conducted a study in UK; and these refugees were settled in different areas of the United Kingdom. Researchers in that study compared the integration of refugees from different countries. The study found that the language barrier is affecting the lives of people and its effects on their economic condition (Summers 2016).

Many unaccompanied minors are resilient; when they despite going through tough situations continue their struggle. The empirical data shows that the unaccompanied minors face many challenges like loneliness, they don't have their family with them, they might be missing their home or/and they can be going through mental stress, anxiety or depression. There are other challenges like academic performance, failing to build social networks and to reach societal acceptance. Referring to the ecological

systems theory by Bronfenbrenner he talks about how different environments affect the human being (Lunstad & Lefler 2020).

The minors face expectations from themselves and from their families (Zwebathu 2018). These minors want to improve their lives as well as their family lives. These children do not look at themselves as left by their own being just “one part alone”, but they look at themselves as being together with and part of their families. They are very young to do all these tasks and take all these responsibilities, compared to other children of their age. Resilience is a characteristic that needs to be talked about when discussing these children (Zwebathu 2018). The empirical data suggests that the past socialization of the unaccompanied minors has a very deep-rooted impact on the lives of these children.

The traditional ways in which these minors are brought up has set their personality traits; this itself acts as a barrier to integration for these children. The unaccompanied minors get affected by the response they receive from the host society. They make interpretations regarding if their presence is welcomed or not welcomed, through the behavior of their receiving society fellows. My research emphasized that the unaccompanied minors face multilayered issues while they integrate into the new society and overlapping issues arise from the trauma of the past, poor educational background or lack of social network which impacts their daily life (Zwebathu 2018). Language and educational barrier are examples of problems these minors face in the society. It is stressful for them to work hard to catch up to their peers of Norwegian ethnic background.

I have come to a conclusion in this part of the discussion that the unaccompanied minors are not just a group of children with problems that are mostly dependent on others for help. I have learned that these children are very resilient and rather independent in their decisions. They need assistance, but they have the will and ability to improve their life for the betterment of themselves, their families and relatives.

The experience of the social workers

In the second part of the discussion I will talk about the experiences of the social workers that work with these unaccompanied minors. When I look at the empirical data regarding the experiences of social workers I can see that different the social workers were talking about the same issues., They have been affected emotionally like one of them talk about having professional bounders, while the other said that a social worker learns with time and experience.

In my research the results show that the social workers that work with unaccompanied minors look at these children as full of new resources and skills (Zwebathu 2018). The social workers during the interviews mentioned that the needs of each unaccompanied minor are different, they cannot be described as assuming that it is the same for all of them. The social workers were very careful when I asked them questions regarding the behaviors of these minors; they avoided giving unnecessary details rather they called them resourceful and that we could learn from them (Zwebathu 2018).

The social workers had been faced with structural changes due to the decline in asylum arrivals in Norway; this decline has caused that many social workers working with asylum seeking minors have lost their jobs. The downsizing has changed team dynamics. There were less people who were acting as support groups to each other. The social workers are exposed to a lot of emotional and psychological impactful events while working with unaccompanied refugee minors and they need each other for creating strength, but they lost this when their team members left and then the support system was no longer in place. The psychologist was also not made available on regular basis to these social workers with which they could talk their struggle at work (Zwebathu 2018).

The social workers do not have a lot to say in the matters of team changes etc. The social workers who work with housing and schools of unaccompanied minors get to spend more time with them which gives them more exposure to these children. The social workers are working for certain organizational and that organization is the main body for decision making. However in Norway the different organizations working with unaccompanied minors are all reporting to “Barnevern” the child welfare

services. They take the decisions related to the child. They consult with the social workers and organizations, but the final decisions belong to the child services.

Social workers are resilient (Collins 2008) when they work with children of different ages, mental issues and social perceptions. They experience many different behavior's, they are at times are in very tough situations which can impact on their own mental health. Despite this they are working to ensure the best interest of the child. Social work is among the most rewarded jobs writes Rose (2003) in Collins (2008). The social workers believe in bringing a positive difference in the lives of their service users but they also undergo many difficulties like stress, over worked etc. (Collins 2008).

The social workers in my research revealed that they are affected by the behavior of the children; they want to help them as much as possible. They give them love and encouragement, and at times the children develop unrealistic expectations from them which can make the child dependent. One of the roles of social worker is to help the minor become independent. They try to draw a line related to what they can contribute with, and what support is needed to be able to help these children and form relationship with them. The social workers work very closely with the unaccompanied minors and they are well aware of the children vulnerabilities, which is why it's a very big responsibility on them to keep the dignity of the child intact. The minors also are very close to their caregivers (Zwebathu 2018).

To conclude this part I would like to reflect on the data. The data I collected provided me with so much new knowledge that I was not aware of before. I came to know about the different processes that take part in building an environment for integration, the actors in this process and facilitators plus barriers. It's a multi-layered process that needs careful understanding.

Chapter 8 Reflections on my research process

In this last part of my thesis I will look back at my research questions where I set the aim of my research that what am I looking for. My research questions were, experiences of social workers working with unaccompanied minors and their understanding of the barriers and challenges these children face, I was also looking at the sub question of the resources these children have which can help them integrate in to the Norwegian society. I started with reading literature relevant to the topic for my literature part of the thesis. I read about the reasons why people take flight from their country of origin to settle in a new host country. There were many reasons like war, violence and fear of persecution. I also looked at the history of the conflicts that has contributed to mass refugee movements around the world. It was important to look at these details to form an understanding of the topic. Social workers were the main persons in my research from whom I was going to get answers to all my questions. I have used many studies articles in my literature part to support my argument for the thesis. It has been a very important learning experience for myself. In the empirical section of my research my focus was to develop appropriate themes, which caters to many similar codes from the interviews. I fortunately gathered very comprehensive data that helped me understand the topic. I tried to put all my important quotations in the analyses chapter to give the reader a detailed understanding. The data that I collected helped me answer all my research questions, the experiences of the social workers. What are the problems these social workers face while they are working with these unaccompanied minors, what are the support systems that help them carry on their jobs. The social workers have been very expressive about what challenges their work with the minors. The social workers were also very expressive about the unaccompanied minors that they face many challenges when they arrive in Norway. The cultural shock impacts their understanding of the new society; they also face difficulty in education and coping with study stress. Themes like family reunification was discussed in detail where it was observed by the social workers who work with the unaccompanied children that it can be both a positive and negative factor in the

life of the minor in terms of societal integration. The social workers also talked about how these children are resourceful.

Over all it was a productive study where I was able to answer all my research questions through literature and empirical data. For future studies I will suggest to look at the barriers these social workers face while working with service users. It will be an interesting area to look at.

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Attachments

Interview guide

Interviewing social workers

For the theme: "Social Workers experience working with immigrants as unaccompanied minors"

The experience of unaccompanied minor asylum seekers in Norwegian society and the way social workers approach them what consideration they follow when dealing with these unaccompanied minor asylum seekers.

1. What are the challenges and barriers these unaccompanied minor Asylum seekers face?
2. Are there any resources these unaccompanied minor asylum Seekers bring with them and how these resources help them adjust To the Norwegian society?
3. What are the important steps and measure for social worker while working with these unaccompanied minor asylum seekers?
4. Challenges social workers face while working with these unaccompanied minor asylum seekers (emotionally)?
5. Do these unaccompanied minors talk about reunification? If they were reunified would that have helped them integrate in the society better?
6. What education/skills are taught to these unaccompanied minor asylum seekers that can help them grow on personal level as well as on societal and professional level?
7. As social workers working with unaccompanied minor asylum seekers; how and with which collaborative partners do you work with (both internal at the institution and external as NGO, family and other institutions)?

Consent form

Consent form regarding Master Thesis project

I have received and understood information, according to the invitation letter, about the project *Social workers experience working with immigrants*, researched by Sardar Ali Khan, University of Stavanger. And I have been given the opportunity to ask questions. I give consent:

to participate in an interview

I give consent for my personal data to be processed until the end date of the project, 31.08. 2020

(Signed by participant, date)