



It Takes a Village to Promote Children’s Digital Rights: A Comparative Study of Norway and Uganda

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Abstract

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Children's online presence has grown rapidly. Today, one in every three internet users is a child, with 93% of children online by the age of 12. Children now have more opportunities to broaden their horizons and fully exercise their digital rights and freedoms because of digitalization. These rights include both protective and participatory rights and are based on UN General Comment No. 25, which advocates for children's rights in the digital environment. Street-level bureaucrats are government employees tasked with promoting both protective and participatory rights. The fulfillment of children's rights is shaped by bureaucratic promotion strategies and challenges to rights promotion. However, different countries have different state capacities, resources, and policy implementation strategies, all of which have an impact on rights promotion. As a result, this study sought to examine existing promotion strategies and challenges in advancing children's digital rights faced by street-level bureaucrats in a comparative context between Norway and Uganda. Six interviews were conducted with six bureaucrats who were purposively chosen based on their professions using a comparative qualitative collective case study design. Three bureaucrats in Norway (1 social worker, 1 teacher, and 1 police officer) and three bureaucrats in Uganda (1 social worker, 1 teacher, and 1 police officer). The theoretical framework of the study was Lipsky's street level bureaucracy theory and Pogge's institutional conception of human rights. The findings revealed that bureaucrats in both countries used education and empowerment of children with digital skills as common promotion strategies. Through their support, parents were seen as enablers of both protective and participatory rights. Norway strives for a balance of protective and participatory rights, whereas Uganda prioritizes protective rights. In terms of bureaucratic roles, the results show that police in both countries are concerned with risk and control, whereas social workers and teachers empower children with digital skills, knowledge, and support regarding online experiences. Both countries face challenges such as limited resources, a generational digital divide, and difficulties navigating international laws and frameworks. The study concludes with recommendations that call for collaboration and harmonization of promotion strategies by street-level bureaucrats, with the UN supporting rights promotion in low-income countries if children's digital rights are to be realized. It is also necessary to bridge the generational digital divide. This will be accomplished through digital literacy programs and the development of a multilingual digital environment that encourages active participation by all individuals.

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List of acronyms used in the report.

ECPAT	End Child Prostitution and Trafficking
ITU	International Telecommunications Union
IFSW	International Federation of Social Workers
INTERPOL	International Criminal Police Organization
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
UN	United Nations
UNCRC	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund

Chapter 1. Introduction

In this chapter, I begin my thesis by presenting the study's background, purpose, design and scope, and rights implementation. I follow this up by providing a background on the Norwegian and Ugandan contexts, the main and specific research questions of the study, and the significance of the study. I conclude it with a research outline of the entire thesis report.

1.1 Background to the study

Children's presence online has never been more pronounced than it is today. Worldwide, there is increased use of online spaces over the internet by children due to the technological advancement in the world, which enables children to communicate, create, connect, and learn (OECD, 2022). The digital environment provides opportunities for children to expand their horizons and fully exercise their digital rights and freedoms. Children's digital rights refer to the rights of children online and in the digital environment. These include the right to participate in online activities, expression, protection from online harms, privacy, and information access (Medietilsynet, 2023). Wide and equitable access to the internet and digital platforms is crucial for education, work, and social engagement among children, in addition to enabling children to connect with their cultural identities, language, heritage, and means to develop their civic identity, hence being a channel for enabling children's rights (OECD, 2022).

According to a report by the International Telecommunications Union (ITU) (2022), globally, one in three internet users are children, and 93% of children are online by the age of 12. However, they are not well equipped with the knowledge to safeguard themselves against the associated risks arising from the digital environment or promote their access to safe and quality online content. Without this knowledge, children have been exposed to various harms and online risks, such as sexual exploitation and abuse, pornography, cyberbullying, online hate, the processing of their data and misuse, inappropriate content, among other potential harms. This has considerably undermined their inherent human rights and digital rights and compromised their safety as children (Livingstone, Third, & Lansdown, 2020). This therefore implies that there is a need to ensure the promotion of children's rights online through strengthening promotion strategies and addressing existing challenges that hinder these rights. Consequently, children's responsible and safe use of digital technologies enhances their rights and dignity.

With the increasing rise in online harms and risks for children, the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) in March 2021 adopted General Comment No. 25 (2021) that puts emphasis on children's rights in relation to the digital environment. It provides guidelines for promotion and fulfillment of all children's rights in the digital environment in the best interests of the child, respect for their views, non-discrimination in terms of participation, and access to justice (UNCRC, 2021). According to the ITU, this provides a foundation for upholding children's digital rights as it is "the first authoritative international legal document that recognizes that children's rights apply both online and offline" (ITU, 2022). The OECD (2022) further asserts that online and offline lives are intertwined, creating gaps and concerns in policy regarding the needs and interests of individuals in the digital age. Despite the digital age creating opportunities for young people to exercise and enjoy their rights, it also facilitates and creates avenues in which those same rights are infringed upon.

Aside from the protective rights, General Comment No. 25 also provides for children's rights to meaningful participation and engagement within the digital environment. These are referred

to as participatory rights (Verdoodt, 2021). Internet access plays a great role in the realization of children's participatory rights. However, with one in three internet users being a child, it means that 346 million children globally are not connected. For example, 60 percent of children in Africa are not connected, compared to only 4 percent in Europe (ITU, 2020). This has created digital divides of access and gender, a challenge to participatory rights for children.

In addition, not all children have digital devices like mobile phones and computers to enable access to the digital environment (Verdoodt, 2021). This is exacerbated by limited digital skills for navigating the digital environment, and children who speak minority languages struggle to actively engage in the digital environment, preventing meaningful participation (ITU, 2020). Yet, participatory digital rights enable children to access health and education services, build social relationships, and share their opinions and information with others (Verdoodt, 2021).

However, participatory rights are always in conflict with protective rights since, with access to the digital environment, children have faced various risks to which the response of protective efforts by stakeholders has posed a threat to their participatory rights (Livingstone & O'Neill, 2014).

Street-level bureaucrats as custodians of state power and frontline public service workers have the mandate to ensure that legislation, policies, and directives by the government are promoted at the lower level of society (Maynard & Musheno, 2000). These professions are crucial to achieving the successful transformation of digital rights for children from good intentions into real-life practice. They include teachers, police, and social workers that work with children, as they have a duty to protect and promote their rights and wellbeing (Lipsky, 2010). Fulfillment of children's digital rights is shaped by the promotion strategies of street-level bureaucrats and existing challenges to rights promotion (ITU, 2020). In conducting their roles to ensure the promotion of children's digital rights, street-level bureaucrats face significant challenges, especially due to the rapid changes within the digital field. Therefore, despite the significant roles street-level bureaucrats play in the promotion of digital rights, these rights are far from being realized (ITU, 2020).

Considering the conflicting tensions between protective and participatory digital rights, as well as the critical role of street level bureaucrats in rights promotion, the purpose of this study was to examine the existing promotion strategies and challenges to the promotion of children's digital rights in Norway and Uganda. To justify the comparison, most available theories and methods on children's digital rights were developed in the global north, even though most of the future growth in young internet users is in the global south (Stoilova et al., 2016). As a result, there is a critical need for knowledge and research on children's digital rights in the global south, particularly on the critical role of street level bureaucrats in translating policies into action (Lipsky, 2010; Evans, 2010). This current situation necessitates the conduct of this comparative study to generate evidence to address existing gaps in scholarship regarding promotion strategies and barriers to children's digital rights advancement by street level bureaucrats in both the global north and south.

1.2 Study Purpose

The main purpose of the study is to examine the existing promotion strategies and challenges in advancing children's digital rights faced by street level bureaucrats in a comparative context between Norway (in Stavanger) and Uganda (in Kampala).

1.3 Design and Scope of the Study

The way the study is designed to address the research questions is through a comparative qualitative methodology approach. It is a collective case study design with semi structured interviews with participants designed in a qualitative manner (Creswell, 2013). The chosen street level bureaucrats for this study are teachers, police officers, and social workers. This is because, in terms of promoting children's digital rights, these play an important role and have a significant impact in this field (Lipsky, 2010). Teachers teach children digital skills and are present in their daily lives, whereas social workers provide support to children regarding child online safety concerns such as cyberbullying, harassment, discrimination, and privacy violations in order to ensure child well-being. Furthermore, police officers play an important role in upholding law and order, promoting child online safety, and prosecuting cyber criminals and perpetrators who endanger children online.

The study's geographical scope is limited to Stavanger, Norway, and Kampala, Uganda.

1.4 Study Context and design

Concerning my own motivation for conducting this research, I was interested in identifying promotion strategies and challenges to the promotion of children's digital rights based on my experience working as a child online protection intern at ITU, as well as my background as a Ugandan. This is because I am passionate about digitalization among children and am interested in identifying workable recommendations to promote children's digital rights from the perspective of street level bureaucrats in two different continents. The findings of this study will guide policy programming pertaining to digital rights and contribute to existing knowledge and scholarship in the field of children's digital rights.

To examine the promotion strategies and challenges to children's digital rights faced by street level bureaucrats in a comparative context between Norway and Uganda, I will first describe how UN rights manifest at a declaratory and implementation level in the following sections. Because the capacity to implement rights varies enormously across regions and among professionals, or "street level bureaucrats," as Lipsky (2010) refers to them, different implementation strategies emerge, despite bureaucratic rules and control (Maynard & Musheno, 2000). As a result, I will consider the context of the compared countries as well as the professions as described below.

1.5 Rights and implementation

Because of the prevalent risks and harms in the digital environment, there is growing concern about the challenges in promoting, exercising, and protecting children's digital rights (OECD, 2022). This has resulted in increased concern among policymakers, government, and other key stakeholders about promoting and supporting children in fulfilling their rights, despite existing challenges (Livingstone & O'Neill, 2014).

The UN's digital rights are at the declaratory level. Governments that have ratified the UNCRC are required to protect children's digital rights as outlined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC, 2021) by enacting policies, legal frameworks, and constitutions that recognize and protect them (OECD, 2022). However, democratic values, government capacity, and interests can all influence how far children's digital rights are implemented. This is determined by their technocratic competencies, available resources, and level of government functioning, resulting in varying levels of realisation across countries (Fukuyama, 2014). These differences in state capacities and democracies validate the conduct of this comparative study to determine the existing promotion strategies and challenges in promoting children's digital rights across countries. Norway ranks high on the state capacity index, while Uganda ranks low, necessitating an examination of the similarities and differences in the promotion of children's digital rights. The study can identify differences and common features in the policy implementation of rights by comparing two very different cases.

As the link between the state and the people, street level bureaucrats have the mandate as custodians of institutional power to operationalize government programs and policies at the bottom of government bureaucracies (Lipsky, 2010). Teachers, police officers, and social workers play an important role in promoting children's digital rights and addressing existing challenges to ensure their fulfillment for children through digital skills training, awareness promotion, and support if children experience harm while online. This assistance can range from psychosocial support and therapy to assisting in the prosecution of perpetrators. As a result, they are central to this study in identifying existing challenges.

Furthermore, for children's digital rights to be realized in practice, these rights must function in the daily lives of children. As a result, understanding implementation challenges is critical for realizing digital rights. Therefore, studies on the extent to which implementation challenges are the same or differ in different parts of the world may shed light on which programs can be effective at the political level. As a result, country comparative studies like this one can only confirm the question of rights promotion in consideration and alignment with the local context versus universal implementation as advocated by international organizations.

To add, the goal of comparative designs in social science is to learn how cases of the same phenomenon contain similar or systematically different, context-dependent traits (Gustafsson, 2017). Comparative case studies like this one seek to investigate how children's digital rights are exercised and promoted, including tensions between the various rights, such as where access means risk exposure and lack of access leads to missed opportunities in the digital age (OECD, 2022).

Finally, the goal of the current study is to determine whether there are common promotion strategies and challenges to promoting children's rights online in Norway and Uganda, despite differences in socioeconomic resources. This is because children all over the world are surfing the internet and using digital media, and one would assume that they face similar challenges in the digital environment regarding their rights due to the internet's global and networked nature, resulting in the creation of a global village (Livingstone & O'Neill, 2014).

1.6 The Norwegian Context

According to Dardanou et al. (2020), 98% of Norwegians used the Internet in the previous three months. Furthermore, 81% of children under the age of four have access to a television and 77% have access to a tablet, with 60% of parents reporting that their children spend up to

two hours per day on a tablet. According to the Norwegian Media Authority's report on children and media 2020, 90 percent of 9-18-year-olds have an online presence on one or more social media platforms. Almost all children aged 9 to 18 use YouTube (95%), Snapchat (80%), TikTok (65%), and Instagram (65%), with Facebook accounting for about half of all users. This means that exposure to digital platforms begins at a very young age, with limited digital skills to navigate these platforms safely.

Personalized devices encourage more intense digital experiences, making children more independent users while making it difficult for parents and teachers to supervise or monitor their online activities (Livingstone et al., 2020). In Norway, for example, 97% of children aged 9-18 own a mobile phone, 80% own a tablet or ipad, and 81% own a game console connected to their TV (Norwegian Media Authority, 2020).

Despite their widespread presence in the digital world, children in Norway have faced some risks and abuses that jeopardize their digital rights. For example, according to the EU online Kids Survey Report (2020), Norwegian children are at high risk of encountering sexual messages, with 32% exposed between the ages of 11 and 17 (Smahel et al., 2020). It's no surprise that more than three out of every ten 13-18-year-olds who use social media have regretted something they've shared online after being cyberbullied (Norwegian Media Authority, 2020). This indicates that children are ignorant about data protection and privacy while online and the impact this can have on their wellbeing.

The prevailing situation has prompted former digitalisation minister Nikolai Astrup to propose a 16-year limit for social media in an op-ed for NRK debate, emphasizing regulations rather than children's self-regulation (Medietilsynet, 2023). In addition, rather than enabling mediation, which is a more positive and active facilitation of internet and mobile use, some parents prefer a high degree of regulation, or restrictive mediation, which focuses on setting rules for what children should and should not do while online. This puts children's participation rights at risk (Medietilsynet, 2023). According to the Norwegian Data Protection Authority, parental surveillance technology endangers children's judgement and understanding of their right to privacy and access. This study therefore aims to identify existing children's digital rights promotion strategies and challenges faced by street level bureaucrats to make recommendations on how to promote both protective and participatory rights without favouring one over the other.

The Ugandan Context

According to the report *Disrupting Harm in Uganda*, a joint research project conducted by the global ECPAT network, INTERPOL, and UNICEF (2021), 40% of children aged 12-17 years are internet users, implying that they have used the internet in the previous three months, and 53% go online at least once a week (ECPAT, INTERPOL & UNICEF, 2021). While going online provides children with numerous opportunities and promotes the fulfillment of their participatory digital rights, it also exposes them to significant harms and risks. The risks are divided into three categories: content risk, conduct risk, and contact risk. To make matters worse, most Ugandan children lack the knowledge and digital skills necessary to avoid these harms, as well as a support or referral system through which they can seek assistance if they encounter online risks or violations of their digital rights (Uganda Communications Commission, 2020). The existence of a generational digital divide causes parents to focus on the negative aspects of the internet, and digital illiteracy prevents adults from supporting their children's use of digital media (ITU, 2020). This impedes the promotion of children's digital rights to participate.

The concept of protecting children online is relatively new in the Ugandan context, with few citizens knowledgeable about the digital environment due to the country's large existing digital divide (Okiria, 2021). This implies that, despite an increase in the number of children engaging in online activities, most Ugandans are unaware of their children's digital rights. To make matters worse, children's digital access is hampered by gender disparities and rural-urban divides (Digital Grassroots, n.d.).

The current approach to protecting children's privacy rights in the digital environment is more protective, resulting in children being denied access to online platforms rather than advocating for an enabling regulatory, legislative, and policy framework that protects children's privacy rights (Okiria, 2021).

In Uganda, the emphasis on protective rights rather than participatory rights dominates legal and policy discourses on children's digital rights. Participatory rights are only emphasized with limitations in the education sector (Okiria, 2021). Existing laws, such as the Anti-Pornography Act of 2014 and the Computer Misuse Act of 2011, for example, focus on harsh penalties for those who engage in child pornography and cyber harassment, but no laws, policies, or strategies are in place to support the promotion of participatory digital rights for children.

Given that children's digital rights is a new field in Uganda, with limited interventions, it calls for increased responsibility on the part of the government, parents, industry, civil society, and children's rights activists to raise awareness and improve children's rights in the digital environment. These gaps necessitate this study to identify existing promotion strategies and challenges to children's digital rights promotion. The comparison of Uganda with Norway, which actively promotes both participatory and protective rights, will result in the development of lessons learned from which Uganda as a country can benefit through policy transferability.

1.7 Main Research question of the Study

Uganda, located in the global south, and Norway, located in the global north, are both signatories to the UNCRC and are both committed to promoting children's rights in accordance with the guidelines and protocols of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. This allows us to compare the two countries in terms of promoting children's digital rights from the perspective of street-level bureaucrats. Considering this and the study's main purpose, this research project seeks to answer the following main research question.

- What are the existing promotion strategies and challenges in advancing children's digital rights faced by street level bureaucrats?

1.9.1 Specific Research Questions

To answer the main question, these were my specific research questions:

- How are children's digital rights promoted in Norway and Uganda?
- What are the similarities and differences in promotion of children's digital rights?
- What are the challenges to promotion of children's digital rights?

1.8 Significance of the Study

In terms of social work practice, this study will build on existing knowledge about child online protection, particularly the implementation of children's digital rights considering the current digitalisation wave. As a result, the findings of this study will be used to guide child online protection implementation by street level bureaucrats in both Uganda and Norway, resulting in better design and strategies as well as policy developments in children's digital rights programming.

This study could help future research on effective children's digital rights implementation. This is because the findings will demonstrate various promotion strategies and challenges faced by street-level bureaucrats in the promotion of digital rights. In addition, recommendations for effective digital rights implementation at the lower levels of government bureaucracies will be proposed. Finally, because of this current study, studies on the best strategies in children's digital rights implementation by street level bureaucrats can be undertaken.

1.9 Relationship of the Study to social work with families and children

Addressing the challenges that children and families face is central to the master's program in social work with children and families. Furthermore, the global agenda for social work and social development emphasizes the importance of promoting human dignity and worth through the universal implementation of social, economic, cultural, and political rights for all people. These rights include children's rights (IFSW, 2012). As a result, it is our responsibility as social workers to ensure that children's rights are promoted and protected both offline and online (digital rights). Therefore, this study contributes to the advancement of research and knowledge related to the promotion of children's digital rights to improve their well-being in the current digital age. The study is consistent with the program's primary goal of improving children's well-being through the promotion of their digital rights.

1.10 Research outline

Following the above introductory chapter, the following chapter focuses on discussions of human and digital rights and previous literature on digital rights promotion and challenges. I conclude this chapter with the theoretical framework of the study. The methodology chapter follows, in which I discuss comparative research methodology, data collection methods, analysis, ethical considerations, and study limitations. The findings chapter and subsequent discussions of the findings chapter follow. Finally, the final chapter of the thesis focuses on study recommendations, future research ideas, and study conclusions.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I begin by outlining the broad content of human rights understanding and how it relates to children's digital rights. In addition, I provide a clear overview of how rights are declared in the UN rights system and explain why I focused on protective and participatory rights. This is followed by previous studies on digital rights challenges and promotion, as well as later comparative studies on digital rights. The theoretical framework of the study concludes the chapter.

To ensure that this study is focused, I focused on the participatory and protective nature of children's digital rights, which guided the entire study's literature and knowledge base as discussed below.

2.2 Understanding human rights and digital rights.

Digital rights are an extension of human rights, but in a different context, the digital environment. Practices in the digital environment should adhere to human rights standards and principles, thereby establishing a link between human rights and digital rights (United Nations General Assembly, 2020). A violation of digital rights constitutes a violation of human rights and is prohibited by international law because digital rights are an extension of the universal and inalienable rights outlined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (World Economic Forum, 2015). According to the institutional conception of human rights, governments have the obligation to fulfill digital rights. When governments restrict access to digital rights, this constitutes a violation of those rights. The promotion and fulfillment of children's digital rights is dependent on governments' social and economic capacity (Pogge, 1995).

2.3 Children's digital rights: UN rights declaration and understanding.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child is a significant agreement signed by countries that have pledged to protect the rights of children. The Convention on the Rights of the Child defines children, their rights, and governments' responsibilities. A child is defined as anyone under the age of 18. All the rights are interconnected, equally important, and cannot be taken away from children. Furthermore, the UNCRC outlines fundamental societal obligations to ensure that children's rights are met, with the belief that greater awareness of rights leads to their realization (Livingstone & O'Neill, 2014).

On March 2, 2021, the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child added General Comment No. 25, which focuses on children's rights in the digital environment, also known as children's digital rights. This is due to the importance of digital technologies in both children's current lives and their future. As a result, children's digital rights refer to children's rights in the digital environment and/or online. The term "digital environment" is defined in the general comment as "information and communications technologies such as digital networks, content, services, and applications, connected devices and environments, virtual and augmented reality, artificial intelligence, robotics, automated systems, algorithms and data analytics, biometrics, and implant technology." (UNCRC, 2021).

It is important to note that rights come with responsibilities, which include children understanding the consequences of their actions, holding themselves accountable for their online interactions, and knowing when to exercise self-control (Third et al., 2014).

2.4 Rights and Freedoms of Children in the Digital Age

Based on the UNCRC pillars, children's digital rights have been divided into three categories: protective, provisional, and participatory rights (Livingstone & O'Neill, 2014). In this research, the provisional rights have been combined with participatory rights.

2.4.1 Protective rights

Protective rights are rights that aim to protect children from exploitation and abuse in the best interests of the child (UK essays, 2018).

The digital rights sphere for children is distinguished by a focus on the risk and harm narrative. This explains why, rather than promoting participatory rights, most stakeholders, and organizations in the field of child digital rights are more informed about the risks and harms associated with the digital environment (Third et al., 2014). It is essential to remember that risk does not necessarily translate into harm.

Protective rights are related to UNCRC Article 19, which emphasizes child protection from all forms of abuse and neglect, as well as sexual exploitation and abuse (Livingstone & O'Neill, 2014). Previously, child online protection was concerned with online sexual exploitation because sex offenders used digital technologies to solicit children for sexual purposes, engage in online child sexual abuse, sexual extortion, sharing of sexualized text, live video streaming and distribution of child sexual abuse materials, and distribute nude pictures of children, among other things (UNCRC, 2021). However, this is changing because of other threats to children's safety, such as cyberbullying, harassment, inappropriate contact, and even online drug sales. The main barrier to the promotion of protective rights is the "internet's astonishing convenience, anonymity, and means to evade law enforcement" (Livingstone & O'Neill, 2014).

Children's digital environment risks and harms have created tensions between protective and participatory digital rights. This is because governments, children's rights activists, and stakeholders have placed a high priority on protection, fearing that children's participation in digital spaces will jeopardize their protective rights (Third et al., 2014).

Children's agency in digital spaces should be encouraged to strike a balance between participation and protection. Children who lack agency are unable to take advantage of online opportunities or develop resilience in the face of danger. Children are empowered digitally with skills, think critically, and develop their own views and interests as users of the digital environment when they have agency (Third et al., 2014).

As a result, stakeholders in digital rights management must engage children and support their empowerment, as well as promote children's digital rights, for them to take responsibility and make the internet and digital environment a better place where they can share expertise and connect with others (Third et al., 2014).

2.4.2 Participatory rights

Participatory rights refer to the right to information, digital devices, the internet, and other digital resources (Livingstone & O'Neill, 2014). The emphasis is on children's equal access to digital and online information and communication media (UNCRC, 2021). According to the Norwegian Ombudsman for Children (2019), this entails providing children with the right to access age-appropriate digital media and information. Children's participatory rights allow them to distribute digital content, communicate, and create information using digital media and mobile technology.

Access to the digital environment encourages children to learn new skills and develop their talents, thereby promoting digital citizenship. Resultantly, children form friendships, connect with others, and maintain family ties, which contribute to child well-being (Third et al., 2014).

However, restrictions on participatory rights should only exist if they are in the best interests of the child. This relates to inappropriate content, contact, and behavior in the digital environment, such as cyberbullying and harassment of other children. Responsibilities may also restrict access rights (Livingstone & O'Neill, 2014). For example, if a child is on the phone instead of paying attention in class, the phone may be confiscated, but this does not constitute a violation of the right to access.

Furthermore, governments must invest heavily in resources to provide digital devices and internet access to improve children's participatory rights. Consequently, there is a digital divide between the haves and have nots, posing a challenge to the promotion of children's digital rights (Livingstone & O'Neill, 2014). No wonder, children in developing countries such as Uganda continue to face access challenges, making it difficult for them to exercise their digital rights due to the existing digital divide and disparities (Third et al., 2014).

Finally, unlike protective rights, participatory rights have received less attention from stakeholders in children's digital rights management due to the emphasis on protecting children from online risks and harms.

2.5 Previous studies on children's digital rights and existing knowledge gaps

Promotion of children's digital rights

Zambia kids' online study by Save the Children (Burton et al., 2022) through a mixed methodological approach focused on online experiences of children in Zambia with findings around how children access the internet, barriers to internet access with a focus on gender segregation, in addition to their level of digital skillset and benefits they are reaping from being in the digital space. The UN General Comment No. 25 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child guided this study. Similarly, the study of children's online practices in Ghana focused on the risks and opportunities associated with children's online practices. It used both quantitative and qualitative data collection methodologies, with a focus on children as research participants (Ghana country report, 2017).

The preceding studies are related to my current study, which is based on UN General Comment No. 25, which aims to promote children's digital rights. However, using a qualitative methodology for my study would imply a comprehensive analysis of the challenges to promoting children's digital rights and the reasons for these challenges, as opposed to the mixed methods used in the previous studies. The Save the Children study (Burton et al., 2022) focused on children's online experiences while leaving out the street level bureaucrats who facilitate

and empower children to have a safe online presence, a gap that will be filled by this current study, which focuses on the challenges faced by street level workers in promoting children's rights.

Other studies involving children online focus on the children's online time and their mental health. For example, according to the findings of an evidence-based literature review conducted by Winther (2017), there is a need to draw a line between healthy and harmful use of digital technologies, with an emphasis on age, because what is considered harmful for a young child may be beneficial for an older child.

Regarding the promotion of children's digital rights, especially the right to safety and protection from harm, existing studies put emphasis on the role played by parents, with a focus on cyberbullying. For example, De Smet et al., (2021), found that parental support protects non heterosexual youth (LGBTQ) from mental health problems after experiencing cyberbullying in a quantitative survey of secondary school children in Belgium. This is supported by a study by Hellfeldt et al., (2020), who asserted that social support systems in the form of family, friends, and teachers played a significant role in enhancing psychological wellbeing in the face of cyberbullying, promoting protective rights for children while online because they had a support system to report to in the event of unpleasant online encounters.

Morgan (2013) examines the roles of parents, teachers, and schools as public organizations in his study on cyberbullying prevention. Teachers are viewed as street level bureaucrats who use classroom activities to raise awareness about peer victimization and the dangers of cyberbullying, respond quickly in cases of cyberbullying, and initiate classroom discussions about cyberbullying. Schools, on the other hand, should collaborate with parents by providing education, training teachers, and incorporating an anti-cyberbullying policy into school rules.

All these strategies implemented by teachers, schools, and parents aim to provide children with a safe online experience, thereby promoting protective rights (Morgan, 2013). However, as indicated by the preceding studies, a focus on cyberbullying only focuses on protective rights, leaving a gap concerning participatory rights, which this current study seeks to address as well. Furthermore, by focusing solely on cyberbullying, other aspects of abuse of protective rights, such as sexual grooming and inappropriate contact that endangers children's safety online, are overlooked. Therefore, in conducting my research, I considered all the different dimensions of harm that children face online.

Challenges to children's digital rights

Parental perspectives on digital technologies

Dias et al. (2016) discovered that parents preferred restrictive mediation for younger children, as well as close monitoring of their online use. However, some parents claimed that this had a negative impact on the child-parent relationship and violated the children's right to privacy. Parents are viewed as gatekeepers for younger children, limiting their access to online technologies (Dias et al., 2016). Parents' restrictive approach to protecting children from online harms impedes the promotion of children's participatory digital rights.

Parents expressed concerns about the potential harms of technology, such as online addiction and exposure to violent content (Plowman, 2015; Dias et al., 2016). As a result, access to digital devices was determined by parents' perceptions of whether it was for entertainment or

education. Children would sometimes put pressure on their parents to ensure access and participation.

According to Dias et al., (2016), parents preferred offline, traditional activities for their children over online ones. However, it is important to note that the lines between online and offline activities are becoming increasingly blurred as we see that what happens online usually affects offline life, resulting in interconnectedness (Plowman, 2015). Furthermore, children's participation in the digital environment better prepares them to protect themselves, as lived experiences lead to the development of better protection strategies for children's online safety (UK essays, 2018).

Parents and other family members were very supportive of younger children who used digital devices by monitoring them, assisting them in dealing with emotional frustration caused by the devices, and teaching them how to use the devices (Plowman, 2015). However, the findings also indicated that parents would limit access and participation by denying children's devices, using home computers for work, and older siblings taking over devices such as game consoles and phones, among other things (Plowman, 2015).

Digital divides

Technological advancement as a process is not egalitarian in nature, with developed countries developing faster than developing countries. This has created the notion of a digital divide. According to Ragnedda (2017), the digital divide refers to the existing gap between people, households, regions, and countries with varying socioeconomic resources and levels of access to information opportunities, communication technologies, and internet use for various purposes. The digital divide is multidimensional in terms of age, gender, geographical location, and social status. The digital divide exacerbates existing inequalities and has an impact on children's digital rights promotion.

Internet access and digital device use are influenced by socioeconomic factors such as income, gender, level of education, and age. This has resulted in digital exclusion of those who are not financially well-off or supported by governments in terms of internet access, resulting in a digital divide (Friemel, 2016). Findings from the study on the factors that prevent older adults from using the internet revealed that a negative evaluative perception of online content, a lack of adequate support, and limited financial resources prevented many older people from using digital technologies. This has resulted in a generational digital divide, with younger people adopting digital technologies while older generations remain offline (Friemel, 2016). Furthermore, the older generation's lack of digital literacy is to blame for the generational digital divide. As a result, age-appropriate digital skills training for the older generation of parents is required to equip them with the digital skills and knowledge needed to adopt technology (Ma et al., 2020). Changing older generations' perceptions of the importance of digital technologies and the internet is critical to closing the digital divide. However, the generational digital divide is viewed as temporary due to the belief that the older offline generation will fade away as the younger online generation ages, having grown up in an internet era with computers and other digital devices (Friemel, 2016).

Comparative studies on children digital rights

One significant comparative study, conducted in 19 European countries from 2017 to 2019, mapped online access, practices, skills, and current risks and opportunities of internet use

among European children. In terms of support systems, the findings highlighted the critical role that parents play in mediating children's online safety, although there was reverse mediation among minority families, where children assisted their parents if they encountered any difficulties online (Smahel et al., 2020).

However, the survey results also revealed that one in every ten children has never felt safe online, and most children do not find other people on the internet to be kind or helpful (Smahel et al., 2020). Such findings suggest that there is a need to empower children with the necessary digital skills, as well as create supportive systems in the event of online harm, a role that can be facilitated by street level bureaucrats who work with these children. Therefore, more research is needed to determine how street-level practices can improve children's safety in the digital environment, which is the purpose of the current study.

Furthermore, given the survey findings indicating parents' key role as mediators in children's digital rights promotion, it is critical to assess how these are supported by street level bureaucrats to effectively perform this role of enhancing child wellbeing through participatory and protective rights promotion (Smahel et al., 2020).

Finally, given that this was a quantitative survey of children, it is crucial to ascertain what street level bureaucrats (educators, police, and social workers) are doing to ensure children's online access and safety, as well as the challenges they face in doing so in a qualitative manner. Furthermore, this comparative study was conducted in European countries with similar contexts, state capacities, and levels of development. As a result, a comparative study between countries in different contexts and regions (global north vs global south) is required to aid in the generation of effective comparability of findings. This is why the comparative study between Uganda and Norway is so important.

2.6 Theoretical Framework of the study

I used the following theories as a foundation for my research questions, interpretation, and analysis of the collected data.

Street Level bureaucracy Theory

According to Lipsky (2010), the phrase "street level bureaucracy" is derived from the words "street level," which means "a distance from the center of authority," and "bureaucracy," which means "a set of rules and structures of authority." They form the street level bureaucracy, which is the main theory guiding this current study.

Street level bureaucrats are public servants who interact directly with citizens and act as intermediaries between the government and the people by implementing government policies and providing related services at the lowest level of governmental organizational hierarchies where public policies are implemented (Hupe, 2019; Aidoo, 2016). These include social workers, teachers, police officers, judges, and health care providers.

According to street level bureaucracy theory, street level bureaucrats are responsible for simultaneous policy implementation and interpretation, as well as meeting the expectations of both the state and society (Hupe, 2019; Evans & Harris, 2004). As a result, bureaucrats have a dual role of serving as both helpers and state officials, assisting service users while also

enforcing state policies with force if necessary (Lipsky, 2010). This implies that their position involves dilemmas and tensions stemming from the organizational structure of their roles.

Furthermore, street-level bureaucrats use discretion in carrying out their duties. This is due to the unique nature of the individual cases they handle, and with discretion, they can figure out how to respond appropriately on the "street." As a result, they are both bureaucrats and street wise (Evans, 2010; Lipsky, 2010).

However, the work of street level bureaucrats is constrained by organizational conditions such as resources, limiting their ability to fully respond to the needs of the service users with whom they work (Brodkin, 2012; Evans & Harris, 2004). In a faceless online world, this is exacerbated by bureaucrats' limited digital skills and unclear international laws, which affect the outcome of their work. When public servants lack adequate digital skills and training, they are unable to respond to concerns or even promote policies in the digital arena. It is also worth noting that, because of computerization, street-level bureaucrats have been transformed into screen-level and/or system-level bureaucracies (Hansen et al., 2016). In the context of children's digital rights, the street level approach investigates how the street level practices of teachers, police, and social workers shape rights promotion strategies and interventions.

Using the street level bureaucracy theory, I identified the street level bureaucrats who participated in my study, as well as the promotion strategies for children's digital rights and the challenges they face in implementing street level policies for digital rights promotion (Lipsky, 2010).

Institutional Conception of Human Rights

The above theory was supplemented by Thomas Pogge's institutional interpretation of human rights. This is because street-level bureaucrats perform their roles within institutions like schools, police, and social welfare departments (Pogge, 1995).

Thomas Pogge's institutional interpretation of human rights states that human rights are first claims on coercive social institutions and then claims on the people that uphold such institutions (Pogge, 1995). Pogge's institutional interpretation assumes the existence of coercive social institutions, implying the legal nature of human rights (Ali, 2016). Coercive social institutions refer to government bureaucracies within which street level bureaucrats operate. Such institutions play administrative and organizational roles in the promotion of rights. Hence, a human rights violation occurs when coercive social institutions fail to perform their roles in rights promotion in an appropriate and effective manner (Ali, 2016).

Secure access to right objects is a criterion for right fulfillment. However, institutional capacity varies across countries, which has an impact on rights implementation. Furthermore, agents can violate human rights by contributing to development and upholding institutional arrangements that are anti-human rights (Pogge, 1995).

It recognizes the concept of official violations and disrespect for human rights. For example, when the government is committed to non-violation of rights but tolerates instances where public officers abuse these rights, that is an official violation (Pogge, 1995). Hence, it demands protection from official violations and disrespect from officials and the government for which the officials work. This means that citizens are only protected against institutional misconduct, not from non-institutional sources (Ali, 2016).

Finally, citizens do not have the duty personally or privately to fulfill their rights because this is the responsibility of the institutions. However, citizens have obligations to ensure that institutions are fair (Pogge, 1995). This will ensure that everyone has access to the objects of their rights (Alì, 2016).

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I present the study's research design, data collection methods, study population description, sample size, and participant selection. This is followed by data analysis and management, an interpretative framework, ethical considerations, and a discussion of the study's limitations.

3.2 Research Design

This study used a comparative methodology approach to compare the differences and similarities in promotion strategies and challenges to digital rights promotion by street level bureaucrats in Norway and Uganda.

Specifically, a collective case study design was used because the study's intent was to focus on promotion strategies and challenges to promotion of children's digital rights in two countries as case studies. A case study, according to Yin (2018), is an empirical method that engages in detailed exploration of a contemporary phenomenon within its real-world context. Because the study focused on two countries as case studies, Norway and Uganda, a collective or multi case study was conducted.

The design of the collective case study allowed for case comparison, which was the primary focus of the current study. This allowed for the illustration of various perspectives and contexts on the research problem in terms of description of promotion strategies and challenges to the promotion of children's digital rights in Uganda and Norway (Creswell, 2013). Furthermore, the use of case studies aided in the generation of intensive, thorough, in-depth descriptions of the findings pertaining to children's digital rights management, thus contributing to existing knowledge in child online protection (Flyvbjerg, 2006; Bryman, 2016).

The study used a qualitative research approach to make sense of the existing promotion strategies and challenges in promoting children's digital rights. Furthermore, according to Creswell (2013), the qualitative approach enables contextual and detailed discovery of the promotion strategies and challenges to children's digital rights, which was accomplished by speaking with professionals who work and support children's well-being. In this study, a qualitative research design was used to promote exploration and understanding of the meaning that individuals or groups ascribe to children's digital rights, which is critical to this study (Creswell, 2013).

The study was inductive in nature, which is synonymous with social constructionism, the study's interpretive framework. Under social constructionism, researchers do not start with a theory but rather inductively develop the theories (Creswell, 2013). The social constructivist approach was chosen because it accommodates a case study design and allows for the capture of perspectives from various street level bureaucrats, which is the main purpose of the study (Yin, 2018).

The study included some aspects of deduction because it involved the use of pre-existing theories in the analysis and discussion of findings, as indicated in chapter five of this report

(Bryman, 2016). The study was cross sectional since it was carried out at a single point in time due to time constraints (Bryman, 2016).

3.3 Methods of Data Collection

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with street level bureaucrats in Uganda and Norway to investigate the promotion strategies and challenges to children's digital rights faced by street level bureaucrats. The interviews were conducted in a conversational format with selected street level bureaucrats who are involved in the promotion of children's digital rights in their day-to-day roles. Semi-structured interviews were chosen as the best method because they are synonymous with the interpretive framework of social constructionism that underpins this study. This is due to the open-ended nature of the questions, which allowed participants to express their opinions and construct the meaning of children's digital rights (Creswell, 2013). The interviews were guided by the research questions, and the fact that they were semi-structured allowed for the identification of new themes and ideas as they emerged from the interviews (Creswell, 2013).

The interviews were conducted in person in Stavanger and online in Kampala, Uganda, using Zoom and Google Meet. The interviews took an hour and 30 minutes on average because taking notes and seeking clarification took time. The police officer and teacher in Uganda chose Google Meet and Zoom as their preferred platforms due to their ease of use and official status in the workplace. Only the social worker in Uganda provided written responses to the questions due to an unstable internet connection as she was upcountry in field operations.

Before conducting actual interviews, a pilot interview with a teacher in Kampala was conducted to ensure the reliability of the questions, access to the Zoom platform, and connectivity. Six interviews were conducted in total, three in Norway and three in Uganda.

Document analysis through document reviews supplemented the interviews to incorporate statistics into the study and for documentary evidence to increase the study's credibility (Bowen, 2009). Furthermore, as noted by Bryman (2016), document reviews enabled the discovery of deeper meanings and understandings of children's digital rights, promotion strategies, and challenges. Document reviews also provided more insight and background information relevant to my study (Bowen, 2009).

During data collection, interview guides and documentary review guides were used.

3.4 The Study Population

The study population included street-level bureaucrats who are actively involved in the promotion of children's digital rights in both Norway and Uganda. For the study, three types of bureaucrats were chosen: social workers, teachers, and police officers. This is because promoting children's digital rights is a collaborative effort, and thus these different professions were chosen for validity and to promote comparison.

To facilitate comparison, unifying factors among professions in both countries in terms of their roles in promoting children's digital rights were considered. Teachers, for example, had to be primary school teachers with knowledge of children's internet use and have taught for at least five years. Both police officers had to have worked in child protection units and have at least five years of experience dealing with children's online cases and concerns. Furthermore, the

social workers had to have worked with children and helped with digitalization and online safety concerns. To be considered a study participant, one had to work in a government institution, as the study focused on street level bureaucrats.

Teachers were included in the study because of their important and responsible role in teaching children's digital skills and knowledge. Social workers, on the other hand, work with children and have the responsibility to ensure that children's rights are upheld, which is why they were included in the study. The police are responsible for maintaining law and order as well as protecting citizens. Given the nature of their roles and the fact that promoting children's digital rights is not a one-man job, their participation in the study was crucial.

Therefore, the study was able to generate findings on children's digital rights promotion strategies and challenges from the perspective of those who assist children in the fulfillment of their rights.

3.5 Sample size and Selection of Participants

Purposive sampling specifically criterion was used to select the participants to gather the necessary information. Criterion Sampling means that the selected cases, or participants, meet some criterion to enable quality assurance (Creswell, 2013). Purposive sampling is compatible with qualitative research (Palys, 2008). The participants were purposely selected from Stavanger in Norway and Kampala in Uganda based on their professional roles in child protection, security, and education (Creswell, 2013). Due to the study's focus, only participants with knowledge of children's digital rights were included.

In Norway, three street level bureaucrats (1 social worker, 1 teacher, and 1 police officer) were chosen, while three street level bureaucrats (1 social worker, 1 teacher, and 1 police officer) were chosen in Uganda. The study included a total of six participants. Because this was a comparative study, the small number of participants allowed me to engage in theme identification in the selected cases and conduct cross case theme analysis (Creswell, 2013).

Participants in Norway were recruited on purposively with the assistance of my supervisor due to his extensive knowledge of Norwegian society, whereas participants in Uganda were recruited on purposively through the ministry of gender and social development and the interviewer's professional networks.

3.6 Data Analysis and Management

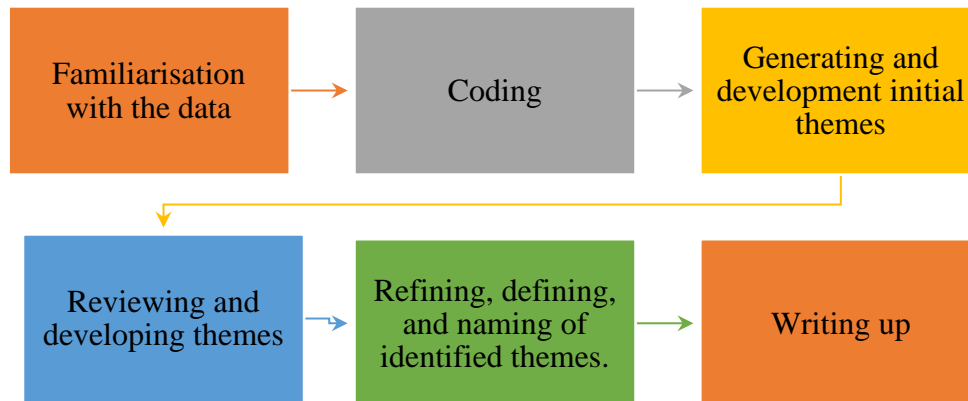
I used a thematic analysis approach with a specific focus on reflexive thematic analysis to analyze the data collected.

Thematic analysis is a method of analyzing that involves the exploration, analysis, and capture of patterns (themes) in qualitative datasets (Clarke et al., 2019).

Reflexive thematic analysis approach was utilized as the method of data analysis to understand meanings of patterns across the data. This is because it aligns with the values and principles of qualitative research, embraces subjectivity, reflexivity, and data collection methods based on qualitative data. Furthermore, the reflexive thematic approach is compatible with the study's small, selected sample and allows for data interpretation using a theoretical framework (Braun & Clarke, 2019).

Using reflexive thematic analysis, I created themes from codes and patterns found in my data that corresponded to my specific research questions. As a result, identified themes were developed through my engagement with the data, which was mediated by my research skills and experience conducting qualitative research (Braun & Clarke, 2019). I also created patterns within the data to identify similarities and differences within and between countries using themes (Creswell, 2013).

Reflexive thematic analysis entailed the six repetitive steps depicted below (Braun & Clarke, 2019).



During the data familiarisation stage, I manually reviewed the written notes from the interviews for codes and similar patterns across the data, allowing me to identify emerging themes. This was done at the individual level of each country. Similar words found in the written notes enabled me to develop themes based on the research questions' topics. For example, in identifying the theme of empowerment and education as a strategy to promote children's digital rights, words like **teach, educate, talk to them about, and show them how** appeared several times across the different written interviews, resulting in the development of the empowerment and education theme as shown in the findings chapter.

The analysis was done at the individual country level and compared across countries, but within countries, I also compared the roles of street level bureaucrats in promoting children's digital rights.

3.7 Interpretive Framework and Philosophical Assumptions of the Study

Social constructionism was used as the interpretive framework in this study. The interpretive framework explains the philosophical assumptions of reality's nature (ontology), epistemology, the roles of values in research (axiology), and study methodology (Creswell, 2013).

Creswell (2013) defines social constructionism as "individuals seeking understanding of their world through developing subjective meanings of their experiences through interaction with others and the historical and cultural norms that occur in their lives." This was relevant to the current study because it sought to describe the promotion strategies and challenges to the promotion of children's digital rights from the perspective of street-level bureaucrats who work

with children. It is based on their roles in knowledge dissemination, policy development, and program implementation in ensuring children's rights and well-being.

3.8 Trustworthiness and Honesty

According to Bryman (2016), trustworthiness is a measure of the authenticity of qualitative data collected and is based on the principles of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. To ensure credibility of my findings, I conducted a literature review and interviewed participants from various professions and locations, allowing me to avoid subjectivity. Furthermore, while taking notes, I sought clarification on points that I did not understand, and quotes from the interviews were used in the findings.

I used the same data collection tools in both Norway and Uganda to ensure transferability, and I detailed the demographics of my study participants.

For dependability, I used scientific data collection methods and adhered to my supervisor's checks and guidelines throughout the entire research process.

For conformability, I was my own critic during the research, recognizing my own perceptions on children's digital rights promotion, especially since I conducted the research while working as a child online protection Intern at ITU. To ensure that this did not bias my work, my work was constantly reviewed by my supervisor, whose input I implemented where necessary, thus keeping my bias in check.

3.9 Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations were maintained throughout the research process, beginning with the planning phase, and continuing through data collection, analysis, and report writing (Creswell, 2013). The research involved the protection of the respondents' rights, which was a priority in my study, as indicated below.

Respect for my research participants through voluntary consented participation characterized by informed consent (Homan, 1992; Bryman, 2016). This was conducted through clear explanations of the purpose, means of dissemination, likely risks, and motives of the study (Homan, 1992). The participants were given and signed a consent and information form outlining the research's purpose, benefits, and risks. Participants were informed that they could refuse to participate in the study or withdraw consent at any time without fear of repercussions (Creswell, 2013).

Throughout the research process, I attempted to ensure privacy and confidentiality to the greatest extent possible within my limitations, which included the use of pseudonyms in my research findings (Bryman, 2016). To avoid causing harm to the reputations of the street level bureaucrats interviewed, I did not use their names in my research because they are custodians of institutional power, as required by the study. To further protect their identities, they were chosen from large institutions with many street level bureaucrats in Stavanger municipality and Kampala city to reduce the possibility of easier identification when findings are published.

To promote the well-being of my participants, I adhered to the do no harm principle. This was accomplished by ensuring that the research topic and data collection tools were approved by my supervisor and the course coordinator prior to data collection. Furthermore, I acknowledged

that my role as an outsider conducting a study in Norway demanded respect for Norwegian culture and norms, which I followed when conducting research in Stavanger (Creswell, 2013).

3.10 Limitations of the study

The online interviews conducted in Uganda were one of the study's limitations. I encountered connectivity issues because some of my participants were in areas with unstable internet connections. This extended the interviews past the allotted time, and for one respondent (a social worker), we opted to have her send in written responses because her connection was unstable and thus unable to sustain the interview.

Furthermore, obtaining permission from Uganda, specifically to interview the police, was difficult. Due to police red tape, I had to write to the police chief to get permission to interview a police officer, which took time and delayed the data collection and analysis process.

Finally, time constraints impacted my study in the sense that, while I had promised to send my participants the written findings for their review, clarification, and confirmation before submitting them to my supervisor, I was unable to do so due to time constraints. This impacted my earlier plans to involve my participants in the entire research process until submission. Furthermore, the sample of street-level bureaucrats was too small to allow for population-wide generalizations. However, the small sample size allowed for a detailed examination of the promotion strategies and challenges to children's digital rights advancements, as well as their relationships to the study's theoretical propositions (Yin, 2018; Creswell, 2013).

Chapter 4: Findings

4.1 Introduction

Street-level bureaucrats who took part in the study shared their perspectives on their understanding of what children's digital rights are, the strategies they use to promote these rights, and the current challenges they face. The chapter begins with information about the study's participants to provide context for the findings' origins.

The Norwegian and Ugandan contexts are then discussed separately. Within individual contexts, there is a comparative role analysis of bureaucrats in promoting children's digital rights. This is followed by a country-by-country comparison of digital rights promotion. The study's themes were discussed using quotes from the interviews, but these were anonymized by the participants' professions to protect their identities and allow for better comparison in terms of their professional roles. Participants in the study are referred to herein as "street level bureaucrats" and "public officers."

4.2 Socio-demographic information of participants

The study included six participants, three from Norway and three from Uganda. Each country was assigned one police officer, one teacher, and one social worker. To ensure comparability, the participants had to be street-level bureaucrats with comparable professions, years of experience, and work contexts. Teachers, for example, had to be primary educators with at least five years of teaching experience and knowledge of internet use among children. Both police officers involved had to work in the child protection unit, have at least five years of experience, and have handled child cases involving online experiences. Finally, the social workers who were selected had to have at least five years of experience working with children on online experiences and handling cases involving online harm. The unifying factors allowed for comparison in both countries. The table below summarizes the participants from both countries.

Socio-demographic characteristics for street level bureaucrats in Norway

Participant	Sex	Profession	Years of experience	Department
Tr	Female	Teacher	23	primary school
Sw	Female	Social worker	6	child online protection (digital safe space)
Pl	Male	Police officer	7	child protection crime prevention unit

Socio-demographic characteristics for street level bureaucrats in Uganda

Participant	Sex	Profession	Years of experience	Department
Tr	Female	Teacher	21	primary school
Sw	Female	Social worker	5	Child protection

				in the children's affairs unit
PI	Male	Police officer	6	child protection unit: children and family division

4.3 Norwegian Context: Main Findings

Introduction: Overview

In Norway, the political authorities guarantee children's digital participatory rights. This is accomplished through supportive political decisions and policies that promote digital access and participation. The findings also show that all children in school are taught about digitalization and are given free chromebooks (personal computers) to ensure their participation in the digital environment. Furthermore, online access and participation is socialized in children from an early age. Participatory rights are thus publicly supported and promoted by the government through the provision of digital devices and internet (public wifi) at schools and public institutions.

However, the promotion of protective rights, or the right to be safe from online harms and risks in the digital environment, is largely privatized. This is because authorities have no control over what children and families do in their private lives. Schools and police only have control over what children can access via public wifi. Some social applications that are considered potential risks to children's online safety cannot be accessed via public wifi. In addition, children's chromebooks are filtered and censored to protect them from online risks, but they still have access to some parts of the internet. It is clear from the findings that parents and/or primary caregivers play an enabling role in the promotion of protective rights in the digital environment because it is only, they who can censor access or monitor children's online activities in their private time, which is spent the most with them.

The study's elaborative findings are presented in the following sections. I begin with street level bureaucrats' understanding of children's digital rights, then move on to promotion strategies for both participatory and protective digital rights, a comparative role analysis of street level bureaucrats in promoting these rights, and finally the challenges associated with promoting children's digital rights in Norway.

4.3.1 Understanding and knowledge of children's digital rights.

Associated with parental control.

The findings suggested that parental restrictions on when and how children should access the digital environment are associated with children's digital rights. It was stated that parents and/or primary caregivers are first- line adults with sole responsibility for the children. Depending on their parenting styles, parents make decisions for their children. For example, one participant supported this by saying,

I'm not sure what rights they have because it's more under parental control. (police).

When it comes to children's digital rights, parents are viewed as enablers of these rights because they provide digital devices and access to the internet, allowing children to exercise their

participatory rights in the digital environment. This is confirmed by a participant that had this to say,

Parents simply provide their children with cell phones and iPads, as well as internet access at home (police).

However, the findings also suggest that lax or vigilant parental monitoring of children's online activities can have an impact on children's protective rights in the digital environment. For instance, one participant asserted that,

Some parents exercise stricter control than others, but most parents have no idea what their children are doing online, and children have access to a wide range of information that they are not mature enough to handle (social worker).

The preceding statement implies that careful parental monitoring reduces children's exposure to online harms because parents choose which digital sites they visit. However, with parental laxity, the findings show that children tend to explore while in the digital environment. This exposes them to inappropriate digital sites and content, inappropriate internet contact with 'bad people,' and cyberbullying incidents. Such instances, as evidenced by the data, jeopardize children's protective rights and highlight the crucial role parents play in assisting children in exercising their digital rights.

Children's digital rights are viewed as declaratory but not practical.

Data responses show that children's digital rights are also understood and associated with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). According to this viewpoint, children's digital rights exist on paper and are supported by politicians because of their focus on child welfare, but it is difficult to ensure their promotion and fulfillment by children due to the online nature of the digital environment. One participant asserted that,

Children's digital rights exist, and when I think of them, I think of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. However, here in Norway, politicians are ensuring access through the provision of chromebooks and public wifi, but I believe they are difficult to realize (social worker).

Participatory rights were identified as the most realized rights in the study because they are related to education, which is a critical aspect of all children's rights. This is confirmed by a participant, who stated when asked about children's digital rights,

Children have rights to education, and the internet through digital media plays a big part of their life for them to achieve this (teacher).

4.3.2 Promotion of children's digital rights by street level bureaucrats.

The street-level bureaucrats interviewed in Norway described the various ways in which they support the promotion of children's rights as public officers. This is consistent with their role of promoting child well-being, particularly in terms of children's use of the digital environment. Because the study focuses on participatory and protective children's digital rights, I have listed the various ways street-level bureaucrats promote these rights below.

Participatory rights

In this thesis, the term participatory rights refer to participation rights. In this context, participatory rights refer to children's rights to access and actively participate in the digital environment.

The findings suggest that to promote children's participatory rights in the digital environment, this right is promoted in a variety of ways. The following are the various ways in which street-level bureaucrats promote this right.

Provision of digital devices to aid access to the digital environment.

According to the findings, children are given digital devices and internet access to enable them to access and participate in the digital environment. Children are given chromebooks in school and have access to free public wifi both at school and at various public institutions such as hospitals and after-school activities. A Chrome book is a personal computer (PC) that students receive at school and can take home with them. The research participants confirmed this, as stated below.

When children enter first grade, they receive an iPad or a computer. They can take them home and use them as their own (social worker).

Children use the provided chromebooks, one for each, and we use them almost every lesson in school. They also take them home and have access to free internet while at school (teacher).

According to the statements above, street level bureaucrats play a facilitative role in promoting children's participatory rights and online access. However, one participant claims that they do not educate children about their right to access because children use the internet at a young age. This predisposes them to many online risks that jeopardize their right to access and participation. He had this to say.

Children already have access to the internet when they are very young, right from the iPad at home, and they have access to a lot of things that they are not mature enough to understand. It's like getting a car when you're 10 years old; you have access to so much, but you don't know how to use it properly. Our issue is the control and safety of children on the internet, particularly in Norway (police).

Other participants agreed with this, and they had this to say in support.

The internet has many hidden enemies and problems, and children are especially vulnerable because they don't know what to do, so online safety should be prioritized given that children have widespread access (social worker).

They are already online because they have phones and iPads at home, so by the time they arrive at school, they already know a lot. So, access is fine, but we want to encourage them to think about their personal choices, protect themselves from unwanted attention, and refrain from sharing their names, phone numbers, and pictures. (teacher).

Advocacy for equal access to digital platforms for all children.

Advocacy was identified as an important pathway to ensuring the promotion of children's digital rights. According to the participants, digital rights were viewed as a new emerging field, which explains why both professionals and the government had low digital knowledge awareness. As a result, street-level bureaucrats participated in advocacy campaigns in which they lobbied for increased funding and prioritization of the promotion of children's digital rights. Street-level bureaucrats expressed concern about the need to bridge the digital divide that exists between children from low-income families where digital devices are considered a luxury and children from high-income families where parents provide all the digital devices desired by a child. As one participant put it,

Lobbying politicians for funds for youth clubs so that we can purchase equipment that is accessible to all (social worker).

According to the social worker, advocacy allows for equal access to the digital environment. To her, rights are not rights unless they are enjoyed by all, regardless of social status.

Establishment of national digital spaces for youth.

According to the study, the government established a national digital space for youth in its efforts to promote access and participation in the digital environment for children. Children can come to this area to access computers, high-end gaming equipment, learn digital skills, and seek assistance in the event of online dangers. According to one participant, the national digital space is as follows.

They hired youth workers, provided gaming computers, and did non-monetary activities, because you know some people have old phones that don't work well, and equipment is expensive, so such spaces provide free access to great equipment.' In addition, youth workers teach digital skills and provide youth with access to gaming activities (social worker).

Protective Rights

Protective rights are those that protect children from online exploitation, abuse, and other harms. The principle of the child's best interests is emphasized. The emphasis in the promotion of protective rights is on educating children and adults in their lives, as well as on risk control. The emergent themes from the data are indicated below.

Sensitizations and campaigns

According to the findings, the most used strategy by public officers to promote children's digital rights is sensitization and education programs for children, parents, and public officers themselves. It was noted that children's digital rights are a new field for even bureaucrats that is rapidly changing, and thus if professionals are to promote children's digital rights, they must also have significant knowledge about the same rights that they passionately promote.

Sensitizations and education programs for children

To ensure that children's digital rights are fulfilled, it was discovered that street level bureaucrats engage in a lot of sensitization and empowerment about children's digital rights and ways children can ensure these rights are fulfilled. For example, one officer discussed some

of the programs they run to educate children about what they should and should not share while online.

We talk about "delbart?" (shareable), which is an awareness program about sharing videos on devices. It maintains that sharing nude, violent videos is punishable, so we go to schools and talk about it, as well as laws and consequences (police).

Furthermore, actual digital skills training and knowledge are provided. To ensure responsible online citizenship, children are taught about the digital environment, devices, and general online etiquette. One person who concurs with this said this:

We teach them how to use the internet properly, to be critical and think, how to use search tools, sites, and sources to find information, how to email, chat, and process digital information (teacher).

All these strategies promote protective digital rights of children. Additionally, participants stated that digital skills empowerment and awareness programs provide children with the knowledge they need to prevent and effectively respond to online harm or unwanted contact.

Sensitization programs for adults/ parents and caregivers

Because children are minors under the age of 18, they require assistance in all aspects of their lives as they navigate growing up and their surroundings. Adults in children's lives are viewed as enablers of children's rights. According to the data, it is the responsibility of parents, teachers, and other key primary caregivers of children to ensure that children are protected, their dignity is upheld, and their welfare is improved. To effectively support children, awareness education programs target adults in their lives. The assistance includes responding to unsafe incidents that children encounter online as well as teaching children how to stay safe while using the internet. This allows children to exercise their protective rights while online without jeopardizing their participation rights.

One way for parents to promote their children's digital rights is through parents' meetings at schools, where parents are taught about digital device operations, the internet, and how they can support their children to be responsible digital users. In support of this, two participants had this to say,

We have parent meetings where we tell them how to support their children's use of chromebooks, we encourage them to have rules at home, how many hours but it is only guidance, they make the final decisions at the end of the day (teacher).

Although it is not required, parents may attend courses on internet safety for children (social worker).

Additionally, youth and social workers who work with children are empowered and trained in digital management. This is because social workers are key responders to violations of children's rights. According to the social worker, to perform their duties effectively, professionals must have the necessary skills and knowledge. As a result, as indicated by the findings, youth workers can provide meaningful support to children using this approach, as shown below.

Teaching the adults how to engage in online activities with the children so that they have a grown-up person they trust, to whom they know they can bring problems, and who will take responsibility for contacting people who have knowledge about certain areas that they do not have themselves' (social worker)

Teachers are also included in digital empowerment campaigns by taking mandatory courses on how to use computers and other digital devices so that they can help children use their own.

Monitoring, restrictions, and updating digital devices used by children.

In the digital world, digital devices are constantly updated to ensure smooth operation, personal information security, and anti-virus compliance. As a result, the data indicates that street-level bureaucrats are involved in ensuring that digital devices used by children are frequently updated and running smoothly. According to the social worker, this protects children from unwanted advertisements and virus tracking systems that endanger online safety.

Updating computers removes commercials not intended for children, antivirus software that removes money-laundering schemes and advertisements, as well as other inappropriate contact (social worker).

This was supplemented by restrictions on harmful applications for children, particularly when using public wifi. It has been reported that children's access to public wifi is restricted to certain applications and social media platforms that are considered a risk to children's online safety. Omegle was one site that stood out as a threat to all the participants. Omegle is a website where people can chat anonymously with strangers.

Participants in the study, for example, confirmed this, as stated below.

Chromes books given to children are filtered, controlled, and censored, so it is less likely that people from outside can contact them, in addition children cannot use internet sites that are not appropriate for them in terms of age and content, these are blocked over the public school wifi (teacher).

In all schools in Stavanger, children cannot access Omegle over local public wifi because there have been problems with it where children share their nude pictures or meet guys who have shared their private parts to them. They converse with strangers, which is inappropriate (police).

Despite these safeguards, street-level bureaucrats are concerned that children will access these sites at home or via private wifi and internet, exposing them to online dangers. Monitoring children's digital social media use, according to the participants, is difficult in this age of advanced technology.

In other cases, when children are the perpetrators of online harms such as cyberbullying, harassment, or sharing inappropriate content with other children, their devices are taken away as punishment.

If a child report being cyberbullied by another child at school, we usually take the chromebook away for a period of time and involve the parents (teacher).

4.3.3 Common points and differences among the street level bureaucrats concerning promotion of children digital rights.

According to the findings, the teacher and social worker facilitate participatory children's digital rights, which include access and participation in the digital environment. In their facilitative roles, teachers engage in digital skills training for children and provide access through the child's personal chrome book. Because of the nature and responsibilities of her job as an educator, which is to help children learn and impart knowledge in this case, the teacher plays the most important role.

The social worker, on the other hand, helps children gain access to digital youth spaces where they can participate in gaming and educational programs. This is more of a supplement and support role to what the teacher does, but it extends the support outside of the school setting and into the community where the children live.

However, both the teacher and the social worker can only offer advice, whereas parents play a more authoritative and supportive role in promoting participatory rights outside of school and in digital youth spaces.

The data show that when it comes to the promotion of protective rights, the police play a critical role. According to the data, the police officer is more concerned with online risk and control. This is due to the nature of the police's work, which is to maintain law and order. It is no wonder that the police's work revolves around raising awareness about the dangers of sharing violent or nude videos online, tracking perpetrators who have violated protective rights, and counseling and speaking with the parents of victims and perpetrators of online abuse.

Similarly, all three officers, teacher, police officer, and social worker, have similar approaches to their roles in digital rights promotion, which is empowerment. According to the findings, all officers, for example, educate and sensitize children on their participatory and protective rights through courses and awareness programs.

4.3.4 Challenges to the promotion of children's digital rights.

The street-level bureaucrats expressed concern that, despite their best efforts to promote participatory and protective children's digital rights, they face obstacles that impede rights promotion. These are discussed further below.

Digital generation gap between adults and younger children.

According to the findings, parents of children are critical social supports for children in all aspects of their lives and enablers of their rights. However, the data also shows that some parents and caregivers are digitally illiterate, leaving them unable to effectively support their children with online concerns and risks. Participants attribute this to different generations and childhoods. For example, one participant had this to say in support,

Parents had different childhoods when technology was not as strong, making it difficult for them to support children in cases of online harms and challenges, causing children to suffer in silence or go to their friends, but are the friends providing accurate information? (Social worker).

Because of the digital generation gap, children seek help from friends when they face online challenges. However, the friends are also insufficiently knowledgeable to provide adequate support that strengthens children's protective rights. Furthermore, it was stated that parents' digital ignorance made monitoring their children's social media use difficult. It's no surprise that children are exposed to inappropriate content and platforms.

Faceless and non-physical environment.

Because it is a virtual world, the emerging data shows that the digital environment is characterized by anonymity and non-physical boundaries. According to the participants, cyber-attacks and manipulation by tech-savvy individuals makes many online safety laws, guidelines, and implementations difficult to be followed. It is difficult for public servants to carry out their digital rights promotion duties in this environment. As a result, monitoring deterrence and challenges related to laws and data protection impede effective promotion of children's digital rights.

One participant, for example, compared the online environment to the physical one in which they have more control.

Well, I believe the issue is one of protection; how can we protect them from online harms? Because there are no physical limits. Unlike when I take my kids to a water park, where there are age and height restrictions, and children are unable to participate in certain activities due to physical requirements and guidelines, there are no such restrictions on the internet. It's as if they're on their own, making it difficult to ensure the right to safety, for example (police).

Furthermore, the virtual nature of the internet makes it difficult to track down who is behind accounts that engage in activities that threatens children's online rights. The following statements from study participants confirm this.

The internet is so vast and easy to manipulate, and social platforms like Snapchat and TikTok allow people to hide behind a screen anonymously and do horrible things that are difficult to track down. Consider a situation in which children are harassed or bullied, but you are unable to determine who is responsible (teacher).

For example, on Snapchat, you can create accounts that have nothing to do with you, which causes a lot of issues. I believe that if the children had to identify themselves, they would behave better, and this would make it easier to find the perpetrators (police).

Limited resources both financial and human resources.

All participants agreed that all policy activities and interventions by the government require resources, both financial and human resources, to be carried out. This allows for more effective implementation and monitoring. The findings show that promoting children's digital rights necessitates significant investments in accountable public institutions. The study's findings suggest that limited financial resources, particularly from parents and caregivers, impede children's participatory rights. This is especially true for children from low-income families where parents cannot afford to buy personal devices such as phones for their children. In support of this, one participant had this to say,

Some low-income parents cannot afford to purchase digital devices such as gaming consoles or phones, limiting equality in terms of access to the digital environment (social worker).

This suggests that there is a digital divide in Stavanger between children from families with more socioeconomic resources and those from families with few socioeconomic resources.

Children use digital media at early ages.

According to the findings, children's introduction to digital media begins at an extremely young age through game iPads, which later translates into telephones, game consoles, and even having their own social media platforms as early as 5 years. This poses a challenge to the promotion of children's protective rights because most children access the internet without any knowledge of digital rules, workings, or skills. This has exposed many children to online risks and harms. One participant agreed, saying,

From our perspective, children are exposed to far more information on the internet than they are mature enough to handle. It's like getting a car at the age of ten (police).

This is exacerbated by the assumption that children are well-versed in the use of digital media because they were born in the digital age. This exposes children to online risks in an uninformed manner. For example, one participant stated,

News media, and all sorts of media are like children are so great at using computers, they're a lot better than adults. They are, indeed. However, their brains are still developing, and they are far more impulsive than adults. So, we can't trust them to make good decisions or that all these bad guys on the internet will make good decisions for them (social worker).

In summary, when it comes to promoting children's digital rights, street-level bureaucrats strive to strike a balance between protective and participatory digital rights. Parents are critical enablers of children's digital rights, and the findings indicate that existing challenges to digital rights promotion must be addressed for children's digital rights to be fully realized.

4.4 Ugandan Context: Main Findings

Introduction: Overview

The findings in Uganda show that participatory digital rights, particularly through internet use, are primarily privatized. Government assistance is limited to providing computers to schools. Teachers and social workers are seen as enablers of participatory rights through sensitization and empowerment, digital skills training, and lobbying for the provision of computers and cheaper internet access to all children in schools. Computers are primarily accessible through public institutions because most parents cannot afford to purchase digital devices due to high costs and the prioritization of other pressing basic needs. However, because computer studies are not required at the primary level, few public institutions, such as schools, have computers and digital devices. This has resulted in a digital divide between children who attend schools with computers and those who do not, resulting in unequal access.

According to the data, the government is primarily responsible for promoting protective rights. This is accomplished through police monitoring and prosecution of perpetrators of child online abuse in court. Because of the generational digital divide and limited awareness of the digital environment, parents are digitally illiterate. Furthermore, the data shows that online spaces are viewed as unsafe for children, thus the government's emphasis on protective rights. Social workers and teachers complement one another by reporting cases of online abuse and child harassment to police.

The study's detailed findings are presented below. I begin by demonstrating the participants' understanding of children's digital rights, followed by promotion strategies of participatory and protective rights, common points and differences among street level bureaucrats regarding promotion of children's digital rights, and conclude with challenges to promotion of children's digital rights.

4.4.1 Understanding of children's digital rights

Utilization of the internet

The findings suggest that children's digital rights are defined as their ability to freely interact and navigate the internet without being exposed to offensive content. All participants viewed children's digital rights from a protective standpoint. Children's digital rights, according to them, should serve to protect children from online risks and harms.

Equal access and effective use of the digital environment

All participants interviewed defined children's digital rights as unrestricted access to the digital environment. However, the emphasis was on how the internet is used for educational purposes. According to one participant,

Children's digital rights basically mean access to the digital environment in a way that is useful to the children (teacher)

Another claimed that access meant children could only share information with the people they wanted.

According to the emergent data, the way children's digital rights are conceived above indicates unanimous agreement among study participants on the need for control of children's internet use if children's digital rights are to be realized. Essentially, online spaces are considered safe for children only when certain restrictions are in place. As a result, the findings suggest that the absence of these controls and monitoring mechanisms makes the digital environment unsafe, resulting in a protectionist view of children's digital rights in Uganda.

4.4.2 Promotion of children's digital rights by street level bureaucrats

Participatory rights

Sensitization and empowerment through education programs for children

According to the interviews, most Ugandan children are unaware of the existence of children's digital rights. According to public officials, many children regard the use of digital devices as

a luxury. Therefore, in the digital environment, participatory freedoms are merely rights on paper, with little acceptance by those they were designed to protect. As a result, to promote participatory rights, public officers engage in sensitization and empowerment of children with knowledge of these rights. This is clear from the interviews listed below.

One of the most important things we do here is educate children about their rights online. Most children are unaware that they have rights online (social worker)

Furthermore, the data shows that public officers supplemented their sensitization and empowerment with actual digital empowerment via digital skills and knowledge training. This enabled children to use digital devices such as phones, computers, and tablets. This was supported by the teacher's statement, which stated,

We practice digital literacy by teaching children the skills and knowledge they need to use digital devices such as computers. We have a computer lab at school where students can take computer classes, but not all schools are as fortunate as we are. So where does that leave the other kids? (teacher).

As per the above statement, children in Uganda do not have equal access to digital empowerment and participation. As will be explained later in the thesis, this has created a digital divide that undermines the promotion of children's digital rights.

Providing them access to computers

The findings suggest that providing computers to schools and having computer teachers was one way to promote participatory rights. This is due to the fact that most parents cannot afford to purchase digital devices for their children. According to the teacher and social worker, most children see the computer for the first time at school, and most are not allowed to have mobile phones until they reach university.

As a social worker, I lobby and advocate for the education ministry to purchase and distribute computers to public schools. I have handled cases of online sexual exploitation that could have been avoided if children were exposed to computers or other digital devices at a young age (social worker)

Furthermore, the teacher confirmed that providing computers to schools allows children to exercise their right to participate in the digital environment.

We applied to the government to receive computers as part of their pilot program; when we received computers, everyone was excited; children began to learn about digital technology; and today, most children look forward to computer lessons because they can search for information, have Facebook accounts, go on YouTube, and even WhatsApp. Having computers in schools, in my opinion, is one step toward realizing children's digital rights (teacher)

The findings also indicate that computer lessons are not required as part of the primary school curriculum, which could explain why most schools lack computer rooms and teachers. As a result, the current primary school curriculum endangers the promotion of children's digital rights.

Protective rights

In line with promoting protective rights, the findings demonstrate the various ways in which research participants promote these rights for children, as evidenced by the data themes identified.

Reporting cases of online abuse to the police

The findings show that police play an important role in promoting protective children's digital rights. When it comes to protecting rights, all of the interviewees agreed that the police are at the forefront. This is due to the police's assistance in locating and prosecuting perpetrators of digital rights abuse against children. Both the social worker and the teacher play a supportive and referral role in that they report cases of child online abuse to the police, as explained further below.

We report cases of online abuse to the police as teachers, but only if the parents or children come to us. We usually focus on cases of online sexual exploitation, such as asking for nude pictures, but in other cases, such as rude comments on social media, we simply talk to the children, but we rarely hear about such cases because they are done privately by children (teacher).

We notify the police when we receive calls or direct reports from parents or children. However, because parents are the ones who give their children digital devices to use online, they also report cases to the police. But, as you may know, the police do not always take it seriously, especially when it comes to bullying or threats; they claim that children rarely act on them (social worker).

Yes, when we receive a report of a child suffering online harms such as the leaking of their nude photos, we try to track down the perpetrators and work with the IT department to ensure that the photos are removed, but this takes time. Processing the file until it reaches the IT department may take some time. Furthermore, because most of us are unfamiliar with these online harms, we prioritize those involving photo leaks and those involving video evidence. As you know, without evidence, there is little we can do under the law (police).

According to the information provided above, the police are promoting justice for victims of online harms. However, as evidenced by the data, a lack of knowledge about digitalisation and rights has created a gap, making promotion of protective rights difficult to achieve.

Prosecution of perpetrators

All interviewed participants mentioned prosecuting perpetrators as a great way to promote protective rights. All agreed that the computer misuse act can be used to punish rights violators. The Computer Misuse Act focuses on ensuring the safety and security of electronic transactions and information systems, preventing unauthorized access, abuse, or misuse of information systems such as computers, and ensuring secure electronic transactions that are honest (Computer Misuse Act, 2011). According to public officials, this legislation is a legal safeguard for children against online harm and abuse. It punishes online risks like child pornography, cyber harassment, cyberstalking, and offensive communication, among others. In accordance with the Computer Misuse Act (2011), the police ensure that those who violate this act are

prosecuted. Therefore, as the interviewee below confirms, the police play a role in promoting children's protective rights in the digital environment.

When we receive a report under child protection and family division, we investigate and try to find the perpetrator to prosecute them in court and deter others from doing the same. We have handled cases involving child pornography, the distribution and request of children's nude pictures, and offensive communication for both children and adults (police).

According to the preceding statement, children who commit acts contrary to the computer misuse act are also punished as required by law. These are taken to remand homes for rehabilitation. To the police, this discourages other children from committing the same crime. However, police claim that these are uncommon because children's access to computers and/or phones is limited.

When children are found guilty, we send them to remand homes, but this is uncommon. Because, as you can see, adults are the most likely perpetrators, while children are victims because they have access to digital devices. However, very few children have this access. You understand that it is a luxury, and you should come from a wealthy family, but there aren't many (police).

Punishment of violators of children's digital right to safety from harm online discourages others from engaging in them, thereby promoting the right to safety from harm online.

Toll free helpline for responding to online risk concerns.

The findings also revealed that public officers use toll-free helplines to promote children's digital rights. According to the research participants listed below, toll-free helplines have been found to be effective in rights promotion.

I am also in charge of the SAUTI-116 Helpline, a toll-free hotline where we receive calls from victims and provide support to those who have been victims of online exploitation and sexual abuse (social worker).

When a child is subjected to online harm, such as sexual harassment, grooming, or child pornography, we can call a number provided by the government for assistance (teacher).

As police, we collaborate with the ministry for children and non-profit organizations that have toll-free phone lines. So, when they receive the cases, they refer them to us, and we handle them in accordance with the law (police).

Helplines were indicators of a collaborative response in the promotion of digital rights because the findings show that all the public officers interviewed were aware of their existence and used them. Such collaborative and coordinated responses helped to protect children from online harm.

Dissemination of print materials on ways to keep safe online and related legislation.

According to the data, most children do not have personal digital devices from which to access the internet, but instead use computers provided by schools or internet cafes around them. This exposes them to a variety of online risks, necessitating the need for online safety education.

Public officers who work with children create, print, and distribute legislative materials such as flyers on online abuse prevention and protection. These are distributed in schools, churches, internet cafes, and other public places frequented by children. This is confirmed by the social worker who notes that,

We developed materials on sexual online harassment prevention and legislation through the ministry of gender and social development's department for children, which we printed and distributed to schools, churches, and internet cafes to educate children (social worker).

This approach teaches children theoretical knowledge about staying safe while navigating the digital environment. This is supplemented by education in schools, where teachers teach students about online risks and how to protect themselves, as shown below.

We teach them theoretically in primary school about the risks children face online and how they can make responsible decisions to promote their own safety while online. We encourage them to report unwanted sexual harassment online because most children are unaware of what constitutes sexual harassment online (teacher).

The findings indicate that all actors are working together to promote children's digital rights.

4.4.3 Common points and differences among the street level bureaucrats concerning the promotion of children's digital rights.

The findings show that both social workers and teachers are actively involved in the promotion of participatory rights. This they accomplish by raising awareness through various approaches and strategies. The teacher teaches digital skills both theoretically and practically through computer lessons, whereas the social worker disseminates information and develops policy around children's digital rights.

However, both the teacher and the social worker lobby and advocate for support from higher government offices. These advocate for the provision of computers to enable access to the digital environment to promote children's participatory rights.

The police, on the other hand, are only concerned with protective digital rights. The police, as enforcers of law and order, engage in the tracking of suspects and the prosecution of perpetrators of children's digital rights abuse in the courts for law to ensure justice. Both the teacher and the social worker support and collaborate with the police in terms of protective rights. As evidenced by the findings, they accomplish this by reporting instances of child online abuse to the police and providing psychosocial support to child victims.

4.4.4 Challenges to promotion of children's digital rights.

Promoting children's digital rights requires collaboration and coordinated efforts from all actors in the field, as identified in the previous findings. However, the street level bureaucrats stated that promotion was deterred by challenges they faced in conducting their roles. I go into greater detail below about the identified barriers to promoting children's digital rights.

Internet and social media shutdowns

All of the bureaucrats interviewed identified internet and social media shutdowns as a major barrier to promoting children's digital rights in Uganda. According to the findings, the government began shutting down the internet in 2021, just before the general presidential elections. As a result, the government blocked Facebook and Twitter. According to study findings, government censorship of the internet and social media deprives children of their right to information, socialization, and education.

As of now, Facebook can only be accessed via virtual private networks (VPNs) while the government reconsiders its decision. Nonetheless, research shows that children use Facebook as a primary social media platform for socialization and education. Participants in the study stated that they were unable to handle cases that arose on Facebook due to the Facebook ban. This is because Facebook is deemed illegal under the country's laws. As stated by one of the participants below, this created ethical quandaries about whether to support the children or to follow the government's directives on the subject.

Of course, children and teenagers use virtual private networks (VPNs) to access Facebook. However, Facebook's ban creates a dilemma in which you receive a report of abuse a child has experienced on Facebook while they are not supposed to be using it. You are caught in the middle, deciding whether to assist or report violations of existing legal laws (social worker).

Censorship of the internet and social media platforms has been found to deprive children of their participatory rights. Furthermore, it exposed children to online risks for which they could not receive assistance due to unauthorized access to these platforms and limited monitoring by government actors.

Uganda has high internet taxes and poor connectivity.

The findings suggested that the government's high social media taxes have severely hampered the promotion of children's participatory rights in the digital environment. According to the street level bureaucrats, the high internet taxes in place, which include a 12% tax on internet bundles plus an 18% value added tax, limit children's access to the internet. According to them, most parents cannot afford internet access for themselves, and thus the same is true for their children. It was stated that internet access is mostly privatized, and with high taxes, this isolates many Ugandans from internet and social media access due to the high costs and limited public internet.

Even for those who can afford the high internet costs, it has been discovered that such children face connectivity challenges due to the country's poor internet connections. Due to the inability to afford the internet, schools were forced to focus on the theoretical transmission of online safety and digital skills knowledge. The following statements corroborate this.

Satellite internet coverage is poor in most parts of Uganda, including Kampala, making digital connections a pipe dream for many, resulting in an inability to access the digital environment (teacher).

To make matters worse, the internet is prohibitively expensive, and most schools only teach the theoretical aspects of computer use and technology because they cannot afford it (social worker).

Limited resources both human and financial resources

According to the data, promoting digital rights necessitates adequate resource investment in both human and financial resources. The findings, however, indicated that the existing resources were insufficient to enable effective promotion of digital rights. Furthermore, the police forces and the ministry of children's affairs' child and welfare departments are underfunded, forcing public officers to prioritize offline child protection concerns. It was thought difficult to ensure both protective and participatory rights for children because public officers not only lacked the necessary digital skills but were also understaffed in addition to having limited funds. This necessitates the private investment of resources by the parents or families of victims to ensure effective investigation and handling of child online abuse cases. One participant had this to say in support of this claim,

Finding a perpetrator, particularly on social media platforms, is difficult; it necessitates resources such as financial, human, and technological resources, all of which we lack. However, when the victim's family contributes resources, we frequently try to bring the perpetrator to justice, but as I previously stated, it is difficult (police).

Difficulties in navigating complex international laws and frameworks.

Most social digital media and educational platforms used by children in Uganda are owned by companies based outside of Uganda and the African continent. According to the findings, children mostly use Facebook, TikTok, Instagram, WhatsApp, Google for browsing, and a few use YouTube. Given that these companies are globally owned, public officers stated that it was difficult to fully investigate cases to completion, lodge complaints about online abuses of children to these companies and receive the support they sought.

According to the social worker, when the department receives a report of a child's nude pictures being uploaded online, they frequently report to Facebook, but it can take up to 24 hours for the report to be addressed and the picture removed. But this has repercussions because,

24 hours online is a lifetime; imagine how many people saw, screenshotted, or even shared the images during that time. In terms of their digital footprint, that child's life has already been ruined (social worker).

The police also stated that they only act within national boundaries, that is, when the perpetrators are within the country. It is difficult for the police to follow up on cases where the perpetrators are located outside of the country. This is due to the complexities of the international laws and frameworks in which these companies operate. When children's digital rights are violated, they do not always receive the justice they deserve. Furthermore, navigating international laws is difficult, especially for a country like Uganda with limited resources that are prioritized for other basic needs interventions such as health and education. This creates a gap in the implementation of children's digital rights because it is not one of the government's priority areas, affecting the subsequent promotion of children's digital rights.

Digital generational gap and digital illiteracy

As previously stated in the promotion, parents are crucial in any child rights promotion because they are primary caregivers. However, the findings suggest that many parents are uninformed about technology and digital device use. This is due to the generational gap, as most parents

grew up in a pre-digital era, are digitally illiterate, and thus unable to support their children's use of social digital media.

The findings also indicated that parents view social media as harmful to children, which is why many parents would not allow their children to use phones or computers to protect them from the 'unknown' bad online world. Considering the ostensible protection from the ills of the online world, this limits children's participation in the digital environment.

Finally, Uganda clearly prioritizes protective rights in promoting children's digital rights. This is because, as stated in the findings, protective rights protect children from online harm, which conflicts with participatory rights. Children's access to the digital environment is hampered by the emphasis on protection, and it is no surprise that internet access is widely privatized in Uganda.

4.5 Comparison of Norway and Uganda in children's digital rights promotion

Below, I compare the promotion of children's digital rights in Norway and Uganda.

Similarities in children's digital rights promotion

The findings indicate that both countries clearly understand what children's digital rights are, particularly the public officers involved in their promotion. As a key strategy for promoting children's digital rights, both Norway and Uganda engage in sensitization and empowerment of children. In Uganda, for example, this is accomplished through the distribution of printed materials and classroom lessons on the digital environment. In Norway, as in Uganda, teachers and social workers provide digital skills training and support to children, empowering them digitally.

In terms of the roles of street-level bureaucrats, in both countries, police officers are concerned with control and risk when it comes to promoting children's digital rights. Because the nature of their profession is to promote law and order in the country, their focus is on protective rights. In both countries, police are actively looking for perpetrators and violators of children's digital rights.

It is clear in both countries that teachers play a critical role and are at the forefront of promoting children's digital rights. This is because teachers teach children digital skills and knowledge that allow them to effectively use online resources and operate digital devices such as computers and chromebooks. This is due to the nature of their job as educators, as opposed to social workers, who play a supportive role in children's education and well-being.

Differences in the promotion of children's digital rights

According to the findings, participatory digital rights for children, particularly at an early age, are regarded as a privilege rather than a right in Uganda. This is demonstrated by the privatization of access via high internet costs and non-mandatory computer classes at the primary level. Furthermore, the data show that access is heavily influenced by one's parents' socioeconomic resources and the schools one attends. This has resulted in a digital divide between those who have and those who do not.

Norway, on the other hand, actively promotes participatory rights, with access socialized as early as grade one, when all children receive a personal computer (chrome book). Access is also widely provided and granted by politicians, as evidenced by free public wifi in schools and other public institutions.

In terms of promoting protective digital rights, the results show that children who violate the digital rights of other children, such as leaking nude pictures or harassing them, are punished under Uganda's computer misuse act. Such children are taken to remand homes for rehabilitation, and their digital devices are permanently confiscated. However, because the law in Norway does not believe in punishing children, children who violate their digital rights have their phones and computers taken away for a period. Furthermore, the public officers counsel the children and speak with the parents to ensure better monitoring of their children's social media use to improve safety.

When it comes to the promotion of digital rights in Uganda, the emphasis is primarily on protective rights. Norway, on the other hand, promotes both participatory and protection rights and strives to strike a balance between the two. This is evident from the outcomes in which street-level bureaucrats engage in digital skills training, parent training, managing a digital space in the community, and responding to concerns that children have while online.

It was clear that in Norway, public officers actively involve parents of children in promoting both protective and participatory rights. This is because of parental responsibility laws, according to study participants. These laws give parents the duty and right to make personal decisions for their children. This means that for any decision to be made, the street level bureaucrats would have to involve the child's parents in carrying out their duties. However, in Uganda, parents are largely ignored because most parents are not digitally literate and see online space as a negative influence on children, as evidenced by the findings. As a result, parents are unable to support their children in both access to the digital environment and protection from online harm. Rather, as stated by the social worker, we see reverse support, in which children assist parents with social digital media concerns.

When parents have problems with their phones or apps like Facebook or WhatsApp, they frequently turn to their children for assistance. How will such a parent monitor their children's use of social media? (social worker).

In summary, the findings show that Norway and Uganda have different implementation levels and priorities when it comes to promoting children's digital rights, and the reasons for this will be discussed in the following chapter on findings discussion.

Chapter 5: Discussion of Findings

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I discuss my findings in relation to previous research and the theoretical framework of my study. I discuss the findings in relation to the main research question, which is, what are the existing promotion strategies and challenges in advancing children's digital rights that street level bureaucrats face? The main question is thus answered by the study's specific research questions. First, I focused on how street-level bureaucrats promote children's digital rights, followed by challenges, and then I expanded on the comparative analysis of Norway and Uganda using the theories that guided this study.

5.2 Promotion of children's digital rights by street level bureaucrats in Uganda and Norway

According to the findings, both Norway and Uganda have strategies in place that street level bureaucrats use to promote children's digital rights. Because both countries are signatories to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, they recognize and promote both protective and participatory digital rights. This is consistent with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and the UNCRC General Comment No. 25 on children's rights in the digital environment, which advocates for the protection and promotion of children's digital rights (UNCRC, 2021).

The findings in Norway revealed the critical role of parents in promoting both children's participatory and protective rights. This was accomplished by monitoring children's online activities and providing advice in the event of difficulties; no wonder, parents were involved in digital empowerment programs by street-level bureaucrats. This is consistent with a quantitative study conducted in Belgium, which found that parental support protected LGBTQ youth from mental health problems following cyberbullying (De Smet et al., 2021). It also confirms Plowman's (2015) findings that parents, and older siblings were very supportive of their younger children's digital use. However, due to low digital awareness among parents in Uganda, the findings show that parents frequently seek assistance from their children in the event of digital difficulties. This supports the concept of reverse mediation among minority families, in which children assisted their parents with problems online (Smahel et al., 2020). This highlights the importance of digital skills training and awareness for parents if we are to effectively promote and fulfill children's digital rights.

Education and the empowerment of children with digital skills and information were strategies used by street-level bureaucrats in both countries to promote both the protective and participatory rights of children. This was deemed effective because digital empowerment increased children's ability to deal with online threats and harms. Furthermore, digital education empowers children to be active agents in better protecting themselves while using technology (UK essays, 2018). This is because, according to previous research, children do not find other people on the internet to be kind and helpful (Smahel et al., 2020).

Previous research on cyberbullying indicates that teachers play an important role in assisting victims of cyberbullying and ensuring a safe online experience for children (Morgan, 2013; Hellfeldt et al., 2020). Teachers are viewed as part of the social support system for children, and schools are viewed as institutions where children should receive the necessary skills and training. No wonder, even in the current study, it was discovered that teachers were important

and a foundation for the promotion of digital rights because they taught children digital skills and rights, provided internet access, and taught children how to use and operate digital devices. Teachers in Uganda went ahead and lobbied the government for computers, and even in the absence of computers, teachers engaged in teaching the theoretical software part so that children are at least empowered with digital knowledge. This is a common practice in Africa to teach computer theory, as shown in the image below, which was captured in Ghana and shared globally.

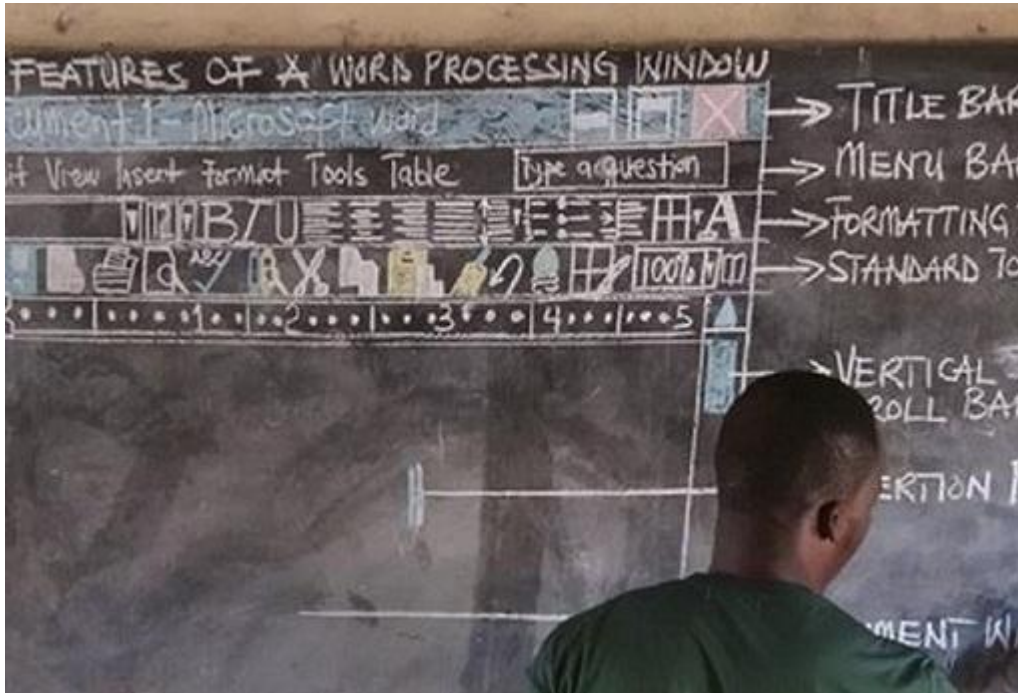


Figure 2: A blackboard is used by the teacher to draw the microsoft word display: Photographer: CNN(2018).

5.3 Challenges to promotion of children's digital rights

Similarly, one key challenge identified in both countries was the digital generational gap, which impacted the promotion of digital rights for children. The older parents were unfamiliar with technology and thus unable to effectively support their children's use of digital media. According to the street-level bureaucrats involved, some parents regard the digital environment, particularly the use of the internet, as unsafe and harmful to children. Such parents-imposed restrictions on their children's participation rights. Such parental perceptions are common in digital rights scholarship, as evidenced by previous studies in which parents were more comfortable with their children engaging in traditional offline activities over which they had more control than online activities (Plowman, 2015; Dias et al., 2016). This implies that, to effectively promote children's digital rights, parental attitudes toward digital technologies must change in addition to bridging the digital divide between generations. This could be accomplished through age-appropriate digital skills and knowledge training, as well as sensitizations about digital technologies and parental rights to change parents' mindsets.

The findings also revealed a digital divide between children from households with more social economic resources and those from families with few social economic resources. This was more visible in Uganda, where participatory rights are increasingly privatized and provided by individuals, particularly through digital devices and the internet. This creates a digital divide based on social status. According to the literature, this exacerbates existing inequalities and contradicts the notion that rights should be available to all (Ragnedda, 2017; Livingstone &

O'Neill, 2014). As a result, digital divides caused by different levels of income should be bridged by governments and institutions by providing digital devices and subsidizing internet costs for such households.

The study found that complex international laws and regulations hampered the promotion of digital rights in both Uganda and Norway. The findings show that the faceless and non-physical environment makes monitoring and tracking down individuals that abuse rights difficult. According to Livingstone and O'Neill (2014), the anonymity and transnational ownership of digital media platforms makes monitoring and tracking perpetrators difficult. This would necessitate sufficient resources to hire lawyers within the countries where these social media platforms are based, as well as involving Interpol, a process that could take years to track down the violators and serve justice, especially when it is beyond national borders. Such legislative constraints necessitate government action to regulate the digital environment.

Limited resources, both financial and human, posed a challenge to the promotion of digital rights in both countries. This supports the view that promoting participation rights through the provision of digital devices, the internet, and providing support to all children with online concerns is a costly endeavour for governments (Livingstone & O'Neill, 2014). Governments must invest heavily in skill training for bureaucrats, children, and even parents, who are the primary caregivers.

5.4 Relationship of the findings to the theoretical framework of the study

The theories that guided this study were Lipsky's street-level bureaucracy theory and Thomas Pogge's institutional interpretation of human rights. These two theories were used in the discussion of findings, as indicated below.

In general, the findings indicated that street level bureaucrats (teachers, police, and social workers) in both Norway and Uganda used their positions to promote children's digital rights. This is consistent with the street level bureaucracy theory, which regards street level bureaucrats as intermediaries between the government and the people charged with the implementation and delivery of government policies and services (Lipsky, 2010; Aidoo, 2006). In this case, being a link between citizens and the state in promoting child welfare through rights promotion.

Furthermore, emerging data shows that public officers worked within government institutions, followed governmental directives and legislation, and promoted participatory and protective rights for children. This is consistent with Lipsky's theory, which states that street level bureaucrats work within government organizations such as police, schools, and social service departments to directly work with service users, in this case children, and other key stakeholders (Hansen et al., 2016). Similarly, this confirms Pogge's institutional interpretation of rights, which assumes the existence of social coercive institutions within which rights are promoted (Pogge, 1995; Ali, 2016).

Furthermore, the findings indicated that public officers faced some conflicting dilemmas while performing their duties. In Uganda, for example, where Facebook was banned by the government, social workers and police faced ethical quandaries over whether to address cases arising from Facebook usage or to follow government legislative laws and report violations of those laws. This is consistent with the street level bureaucracy theory, which holds that the work of public officers is characterised by conflicting dilemmas due to their dual role as both

helpers and government officials with the mandate to follow government directives (Lipsky, 2010; Brodtkin, 2012). As a result, public officers' discretion in carrying out their duties has increased. For example, to ensure child wellbeing, street level bureaucrats provided support to the children, as evidenced by the findings bending the laws, focusing on individual circumstances, and choosing to support to promote the protection of children's digital rights.

In terms of challenges to the promotion of digital rights, the findings show that limited resources, both financially and humanly, are a major impediment in both countries. This supports Lipsky's theory views, which assert that limited resources have an impact on public officers' work and their ability to fully respond to the needs of service users (Brodtkin, 2012). Furthermore, a lack of personal resources, such as inexperience or undertraining, affects the outcome of public officers' work, leading to unresponsiveness (Lipsky, 2010). This was confirmed by the findings, which stated that digitalisation is a relatively new field, and they have limited expertise, which limits their ability to effectively support children when they face online challenges.

In a comparison analysis of digital rights promotion, the findings indicated that Norway promotes both participatory and protective rights. Their approach is distinguished by significant investment and political support, such as the provision of personal computers, wifi, and digital safe spaces. According to Pogge's institutionalist view of human rights, Norway believes that it is the responsibility of public institutions to ensure that children have digital rights, which explains the respective support for rights promotion (Pogge, 1995).

Uganda, on the other hand, focuses on protection, and access is heavily privatized and characterized by restrictions and censorships. Due to the government's limited resource investments, participatory rights are mostly privatized. As a result, even if rights are claims on coercive social institutions such as schools, police, and welfare departments, as Pogge suggests, the capacities of these institutions may vary, affecting the promotion and implementation of rights (Ali, 2016). This could explain why Uganda, which has fewer resources, has largely privatized participatory rights, whereas Norway, which has more resources and is more developed, has the capacity and resources to provide participatory and protective rights.

Furthermore, Norway's status as a democratic state translates into democratic institutions that work in the best interests and welfare of its citizens. No surprise, Norway engages in secure digital rights access for children, a benchmark that promotes children's digital rights fulfillment (Pogge, 1995). Uganda, on the other hand, is an authoritarian state with a very low percentile rank in government effectiveness of 29.8%. This implies that the quality of public services, independence from political pressures, and credibility of the government's commitment to policies are all extremely low (World Bank, 2023). This explains why social institutions cannot act in the best interests of children but must instead obey the government's unfair laws and policies, resulting in violations of children's digital rights, particularly participatory rights.

As shown in the challenges data, Uganda faces internet shutdowns, high internet costs characterized by high taxes, and government censorship. As evidenced by the findings, this has hampered children's access to the digital environment, thereby impeding their participation in the digital environment. This necessitates citizen action through advocacy and lobbying, as well as holding social institutions accountable. This is consistent with Pogge's view that it is the responsibility of citizens to ensure that institutions are fair and perform their roles in promoting human rights (Ali, 2016). Citizens must therefore correct Uganda's social institutions so that all children, regardless of status, to have access to their rights (Pogge, 1995).

Furthermore, Uganda focuses solely on protective rights and the prohibition of social media platforms used by children, with little support for their participatory rights, as evidenced by the findings, demonstrating official violation and disrespect for human rights. According to the institutionalist interpretation of rights, public officials violate rights through noncommitment and unfavorable laws. This means that citizens need to be protected from institutional misconduct, and it is up to them to demand it if rights are to be promoted (Pogge, 1995). However, in an authoritarian state like Uganda, this may be difficult due to an unfavorable political environment in which changes are difficult to implement.

As I conclude, given that children's digital rights are UN declarations that signatory countries must implement, the findings suggest that countries capacity in terms of resources largely determines implementation levels. This means that the UN should not expect countries to have the same levels of implementation. We expect Norway, for example, to do more in terms of promoting digital rights since they have more capacity in terms of resources. However, because of limited resources, we do not expect Uganda to deliver personal computers to all children. Therefore, if digital rights are to be realized in low-income countries, UN policies should be followed with funding. This is accomplished by providing financial resources, technical expertise, and advocating for budgetary allocations for rights promotion in the national budget. Otherwise, such UN policies will be signed but not implemented in low-income countries like Uganda. This is consistent with Pogge's view that institutional protection and justice cannot be achieved unless institutions are supported, even if rights are asserted against such institutions (Pogge, 1995). Governments in poor countries should at the very least ensure access by teaching children how to use digital media, as evidenced by the data, which shows that both Norway and Uganda promote educational programs to make children aware of their digital rights.

Chapter 6: Conclusion and Recommendations

6.1 Introduction

This is the final chapter that brings the thesis to a close. I begin by discussing the study's recommendations, then move on to future research recommendations, study limitations, and finally the overall report.

6.2 Recommendations from the Study

According to the findings, various street level bureaucrats use different and similar strategies to promote children's digital rights. As a result, multistakeholder and broader collaboration among street-level bureaucrats and other key stakeholders in rights promotion is required. This will reduce strategy duplication and lead to the development of more harmonized interventions aimed at promoting digital rights.

UN agencies responsible for child welfare, such as UNICEF, should develop local solutions to the challenges through careful implementation, with a focus on aligning solutions to a country's contextual conditions. For example, in low-resource countries with limited internet and access, such as Uganda, develop user handbooks that teach children about online safety and digital rights, whereas in high-resource countries, such as Norway, develop online tools that can be used for both support and entertainment. For example, online games and videos that teach children about the various risks they may face and how to overcome or prevent them. These should be child-friendly and adapted according to age groups.

There is also a need to encourage digital participation, particularly among older parents and children from low-income households. This can be accomplished for older parents by creating a multilingual online environment that reflects cultural and linguistic diversity. This is because in a country like Uganda, the generational digital divide exists because parents cannot read or write in English, which is used in digital social media platforms, and thus are unable to support their children in the event of a problem.

Given that we live in a digital age where almost everything is done online, the UN should support countries in developing national child online protection policies and guidelines to guide the implementation and promotion of children's digital rights. Child online protection should be included in safeguarding components for government institutions and street level bureaucrats working with children to co-create interventions that promote online safety.

In terms of social work practice, protective and participatory frameworks must be developed with (and for) children. Social workers must collaborate with other child practitioners such as teachers, psychologists, school counselors, police, and parents to develop context-specific interventions and frameworks to promote/protect children as they navigate the digital world.

Finally, to address the challenge of complex international laws and frameworks, governments must impose legal requirements and regulations on international industries that manage digital platforms. Therefore, global digital collaborations between countries and industries are required so that at least countries can be authorized to manage digital platforms within national borders and address any challenges that may arise.

6.3 Recommendations for future research

This study focused on the promotion and challenges to children's digital rights by street-level bureaucrats. As a result, future research should investigate the fulfillment of children's digital rights by interviewing the children themselves. This is because rights can be promoted but not implemented by the intended beneficiaries. Furthermore, it is critical to focus on children's voices to learn more about their perspectives on digital rights and suggestions for how they can be protected.

Given that my research is a cross-sectional study. Future research could include longitudinal studies or surveys to collect more generalizable data.

Furthermore, as the findings indicate, parents play an important role in promoting children's digital rights. Hence, future research should investigate parental perspectives on children's social digital media use to determine perspectives and ways in which parents can support safe use of the digital environment.

6.4 Conclusion

The purpose of this comparative case study was to investigate the promotion strategies and challenges faced by street level bureaucrats in promoting children's digital rights. The study focused on child protection and participatory digital rights, as these are frequently at odds when it comes to child online safety. Norway and Uganda were used as comparison countries, with a focus on police, teachers, and social workers as street level bureaucrats tasked with promoting children's digital rights.

The findings indicated that promoting digital rights requires collective responsibility and collaboration, as evidenced by the various roles played by street level bureaucrats to ensure promotion. Street level bureaucrats used strategies such as providing digital devices, empowering children and parents with digital skills and knowledge, tracking down violators of digital rights, and providing support to victims of digital rights abuse.

Norway actively promoted both protective and participatory rights, whereas Uganda concentrated on the protective aspect of digital rights. Concerning street-level bureaucrats, both countries' police were concerned about protective rights, whereas teachers and social workers were concerned about both participatory and protective rights. This is caused by the nature of their professions.

Limited resources were a significant challenge in both countries, as was the generational digital divide, which hindered parents' ability to support their children's online experiences and respond to emerging concerns due to insufficient digital skills and knowledge. Furthermore, the anonymity and non-physical nature of the digital environment made rights promotion difficult, which was exacerbated by complex international laws and frameworks.

In conclusion, the study findings show that the UN declaring children's digital rights does not translate into their realization in all countries, as expected, due to differences in state capacities. As a result, rights declarations should be accompanied by actual technical and resource assistance, particularly in low-income countries. For example, in Uganda, policies must prioritize affordability, accessibility (language and format of digital content), and digital skill training if digital rights are to be realized. Norway, on the other hand, has been actively

promoting both protective and participatory digital rights for children. Therefore, the emphasis should be on strengthening existing promotion strategies and closing existing digital divides among children in high resource countries.

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Appendix 1: Interview guide

Demographic information

- **Profession**
- **Gender**

Opening Context questions

- Can you shortly describe your work and how it relates to children and youngsters?
- How do you think internet and digitalisation are important to children?
- What do you think it is important that children and youngsters learn about using internet/digitalisation?
- What risks do you see?

Open Ended questions

1. When we talk about children's digital rights, what comes to your mind? (Probe for meaning and examples, Inform the participants of the 2 selected rights and probe for their understanding of those rights)
2. How do you make pupils/children aware of their right to safety from online risks or while online? (Probe for ways they promote this right, methods, strategies)
3. How do you make pupils/children aware of their right to access and participation in the digital environment? (Probe for ways they promote this right, methods, strategies)
4. What do you think are the main challenges when promoting these rights? (Right to safety from online risks and the right to access and participation online)
5. How are these challenges obstructing the implementation of children's digital rights?
6. What do you think can be done to ensure effective implementation of children's digital rights?
7. Would you like to say anything else concerning promotion of children's digital rights?

Thank you for your time and have a great day!!

Appendix 2: Information and Consent Letter

Do you care about children's digital rights, especially in this digital age? Then check out this research project: "It Takes a Village to Promote Children's Digital Rights: A Comparative Study of Norway and Uganda."

This is a request for information about taking part in a research project whose main goal is to examine the existing promotion strategies and challenges in advancing children's digital rights faced by street level bureaucrats in a comparative context between Norway (in Stavanger) and Uganda (in Kampala). More information about the research project's purpose and what your participation entails can be found below.

Purpose of the project

The study's main goal is to compare the existing promotion strategies and challenges in advancing children's digital rights faced by street level bureaucrats in Norway (in Stavanger) and Uganda (in Kampala). The primary research question addressed by this study is, "What are the existing promotion strategies and challenges in advancing children's digital rights faced by street level bureaucrats?"

This will be accomplished through a qualitative comparative collective case study design that includes interviews with street level bureaucrats such as teachers, police officers, and social workers.

This research is being conducted as part of my master's thesis project for a master's degree in social work with families and children. Thus, the findings of my study will be published in a dissertation, but no personal data that can be used to identify the participants with whom I worked during data collection will be included.

Who is responsible for the research project?

The project is overseen by the Department of Social Studies at the University of Stavanger in Norway.

Why are you being asked to participate?

You have been asked to take part in this study because you work with children and are a public employee in Uganda or Norway. Participants for this study were purposefully chosen from the researcher's and my supervisor's professional networks to examine the promotion strategies and challenges faced by street level bureaucrats in promoting children's digital rights. Six people will be chosen to take part in this study, three from Uganda and three from Norway.

What exactly does participation entail for you?

If you choose to participate in this project, you will be required to attend a zoom/Google Meet interview in Uganda and a physical interview in Norway. It will take approximately 1 hour and 30 minutes. Although the interview will be semi-structured to allow for free discussion, an interview guide will be used to assist the researcher in navigating the interview process and remaining focused on the research aim and question. The interview will include questions about

children's digital rights (protective and participatory rights), risks in the digital environment, bureaucratic promotion strategies, challenges to digital rights promotion, and suggestions for ensuring effective implementation of digital rights.

Voluntary participation.

Participation in this study is completely voluntary, and consent can be withdrawn at any time during the interview without consequence. No personal information, such as your name, that could be used to identify you will be included in the final thesis. Only the institution where you work will be included for easier comparison of the results.

Your personal data privacy - how we will store and use it.

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

To protect your personal identities, you will be given pseudonyms, and the only information shared will be the nature of your work and profession, especially if you work with children in the field of digital rights promotion.

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

The project is set to conclude on June 30, 2023. The interview data could also be published as a journal paper(s).

Your rights

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

- access the personal data that is being processed about you.
- request that your personal data is deleted.
- request that incorrect personal data about you is corrected/rectified.
- receive a copy of your personal data (data portability), and
- send a complaint to my thesis supervisor or the University of Stavanger in Norway

In case further clarification is required.

If you have any questions about this fascinating project or wish to exercise your rights, please contact:

- **Researcher:** Teddy Nambaziira, tnambaziira@gmail.com, t.nambaziira@stud.uis.no University of Stavanger, Norway
- **Supervisor:** Svein Erik Tuastad, svein.tuastad@uis.no, University of Stavanger, Norway

Yours sincerely,

Svein Erik Tuastad (Supervisor) Teddy Nambaziira (Student researcher)

Consent form

I received and comprehended information about the project *It Takes a Village to Promote Children's Digital Rights, a comparative study of Norway and Uganda*, and the opportunity to ask questions. I give consent:

to participate in an interview where notes will be taken.

for the processing and publication of my personal data (profession, nature of work with children pertaining to digital rights).

I consent to the processing of this information until the project's end date, which is estimated to be June 30, 2023.

-
- (Signed by participant, date)

Appendix. 3 Non-plagiarism declaration

I hereby declare that the Master Thesis titled. **"It Takes a Village to Promote Children's Digital Rights: A Comparative Study of Norway and Uganda."**

submitted to the Erasmus Mundus master's Program in Social Work with Families and Children:

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

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

Date: **05/06/2023**

Signature: **teddy nambaziira**

Name: **TEDDY NAMBAZIIRA**