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# IMMIGRANT ADOLESCENTS IN OUT-OF-HOME CARE

## **Abstract**

In Norway, first generation immigrant adolescents are overrepresented in out-of-home care by Child Welfare Services (CWS). More than Norwegians, immigrant adolescents themselves take the initiative to contact CWS. In this, immigrant girls seek more CWS help than boys. In this paper, a light is shone upon the lives of immigrants who were once in out-of-home care. The studies presented point to a large impact of migration and family breakdown. Many depict a chaotic family situation with a single mother, large household responsibilities and family relations filled with generational conflicts and violence. The immigrants describe an overall positive out-of-home care experience yet are hesitant to recommend others to take the same step. The possible influence of the child-centric focus of Norwegian CWS workers is discussed. As well as the need for prevention measures such as building a support network for immigrant mothers and organizing school support for immigrant adolescents. This paper concentrates on the need to put the overrepresentation of first generation immigrant adolescents on the policy agenda. More studies are to be carried out to point out the most appropriate and least harmful care for immigrant adolescents.

*Keywords:* immigrants, CWS, out-of-home care

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### Immigrant Adolescents in Out-of-Home Care in Norway

Norwegian Child Welfare Services Barnevern (CWS) have been under fire for their interventionist approach to immigrant families. In recent years, several cases of immigrant parents whose children were placed in out-of-home care by CWS caused protest and even diplomatic issues between Norway and the countries of origin of the immigrants. Data from Statistics Norway affirm a potential problem: immigrant children are 2.6 times more likely to be placed in out-of-home care than their Norwegian counterparts (Kalve & Dyrhaug, 2011). The cases that reach the media mostly concern young children placed in out-of-home care. Yet data from Statistics Norway show that for the younger age groups (0 to 2 years; 3 to 5 years; 6 to 12 years), out-of-home care numbers for first and second generation immigrants are similar to Norwegian numbers. The only striking difference is found in the adolescent group (13-17 years): first generation immigrant adolescents are significantly more likely to receive out-of-home care than second generation immigrants and Norwegians (Kalve & Dyrhaug, 2011).

In this paper, a light is shone upon the specific situation of first generation immigrant adolescents in Norwegian out-of-home care. For this, some background information is presented on Norwegian context, Norwegian CWS and immigrants in CWS and more specifically in out-of-home care. Two theoretical approaches are presented: acculturation, adaptation, identity theories and cultural different parental practices. This is followed by a presentation of studies that focus on immigrant youngsters who experienced out-of-home care during their adolescence. Even though they show an overall positive experience, it also had a drastic influence on their lives and contact with their families. Their experiences are discussed as well as recommendations for action and the need for more research.

## **The Norwegian Context**

Norway is often named one of the top countries to live in the world. They lead the Human Development Index, have one of the highest GDP per capita (UNDP, 2013) and an unemployment rate of only 3.6% (Statistics Norway, 2013). The country follows the social democratic Nordic Welfare Model and intends to serve its population according to universal principles of human dignity and justice.

As an introduction to this paper, some details are provided on the Norwegian context as this will be useful to understand the environment Norwegian CWS works in. To start with, the Norwegian focus on gender equality, the rights of the child and the immigrant situation are explained. Next, the organization of Norwegian CWS is accounted for, followed by a more detailed overview of the situation of immigrants in CWS.

### **On Rights and Equality**

Like in other Scandinavian countries, equality is a cherished ideal in Norway. When investigating the out-of-home care numbers for immigrants, it is useful to discuss at least two equality spheres, namely gender equality and the rights and participation of children.

**Gender equality.** Norway holds the fifth lowest position on the Gender Inequality Index (United Nations Development Program [UNDP], 2013). A Gender Equality Act came into life already in 1979 and encompasses all areas of society. Examples are quotas in education and employment such as a gender balance rule for publicly appointed committees, boards and councils. Women's labour market participation in Norway is among the highest in Europe. Women occupy 40% of the seats in Parliament and one third of the seats in local government (Gender in Norway, 2013). This gender equality is also visible in many aspects of public life and efforts

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are made to enhance gender equality for example though providing fathers with 10 weeks parental leave.

**The right of the child.** Children in Norway receive strong formal rights to participate in society. A first Child Protection Act was established early as 1896 and the UN Convention on Rights of the Child (UNCRC, 1989) was signed in 1991 and incorporated in Norwegian law in 2003. Norway was the first country to assign a commissioner or ‘Ombudsman’ for the protection of children and their rights. Since then, numerous projects have been carried out widespread throughout Norway in order to increase child participation (Kjørholt, 2002).

### **On Immigration**

**Immigrants in Norway.** Today, immigrants make up 13.1% of Norway’s population. Of this total amount, 547 000 are first generation immigrants and 108 000 are second generation immigrants (Statistics Norway, 2012). In Norway (and Norwegian statistics) the term second generation immigrants is no longer used but this group is referred to as ‘Norwegians born to immigrant parents’. Since most international research still refers to first and second generation immigrants, these terms will be used throughout this paper. The largest first generation immigrant groups in Norway represent Poland, Sweden, Germany and Lithuania, second generation immigrants mostly come from Pakistan, Somalia, Vietnam and Iraq (Statistics Norway, 2012).

A rather large group of 163 500 immigrants (or 30% of the total amount of immigrants) has a refugee background (Statistics Norway, 2012). Similar to international results, first generation immigrants in Norway appear to have a lower household income (Statistics Norway, 2008) and are significantly more likely to live in poverty than Norwegians (Øia, Grødem, & Krange, 2006). Immigrants have a

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lower employment rate, are overrepresented in jobs with no education requirements and experience more problems at work (Statistics Norway, 2008). First generation immigrants in Norway take to a lesser degree part in upper secondary (70.8% compared to 88.4%) and higher education (18.8% compared to 33.9%) compared to second generation immigrants (Daugstad, 2008).

**Attitudes towards immigrants.** In Norway, general attitudes towards immigrants are rather positive and have become increasingly so (Blom, 2012). Especially immigration that contributes to Norwegian economy is viewed positively: 80% of Norwegians agrees or strongly agrees that ‘Most immigrants make an important contribution to Norwegian working life’ and 86% finds that immigrants should have equal work opportunities as Norwegians (Blom, 2012, p. 10). On social and political level, the opinion of the Norwegian population is less positive. Even though the majority of Norwegians (67%) believe Norway should continue admitting refugee and asylum seekers (Statistics Norway, 1998), one out of three finds that most immigrants abuse the Norwegian welfare system (Blom, 2012). Almost half (43%) of the Norwegians finds that it should be made more difficult for refugees and asylum seekers to obtain residence permit in Norway (Blom, 2012). Even though nine out of ten would not mind having an immigrant as a neighbour, one out of four would feel uncomfortable with an immigrant son- or daughter-in-law (Blom, 2012).

In acculturation research, Norway is often named an assimilationistic rather than a pluralistic society (e.g., by Berry & Kim, 1988). Results from a recent population study on attitudes towards immigrants and immigration in Norway affirms this. Fifty-two percent of the Norwegians in the study agrees ‘Immigrants in Norway should endeavor to become as similar to Norwegians as possible’. A smaller 36%

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disagreed whereas 11% neither agreed nor disagreed or did not know (Blom, 2012, p.12).

### **Norwegian CWS**

Similar to other Nordic countries, the Norwegian Child Welfare System is classified as a family service oriented- mandatory reporting system (Skivenes, 2011). In family oriented systems, contrary to a child-protection orientation, child abuse is conceived as a problem of family conflict or dysfunction arising from social and psychological difficulties. For an overview of Nordic, Anglo- American and Continental CWS systems see Gilbert, Parton, and Skivenes (2011).

The Norwegian CWS approach is based on a mandatory reporting system where all public (teachers, day care centre workers, health care professionals) as well as some private employees (e.g., psychologists) are obliged to report any suspicion of child maltreatment (Skivenes, 2011). Since 2007, CWS is also responsible for unaccompanied minors under 15 years and since 2009 also for those until 17 years old (Ministry of Children, Equality and Social Inclusion, 2008).

**Organization of CWS.** Under the umbrella of one central and five regional child welfare authorities Bufetat (Child, Youth and Family Affairs), a responsible for CWS administration can be found in each of the 430 Norwegian municipalities. This is good for 3 300 child welfare professionals on municipal level (Skivenes, 2011). In practice this means that in more than half of the municipalities (having less than 5 000 inhabitants) no more than three CWS workers are employed. As a support person and an agent of change, the role of these CWS workers in their municipality is complex (Christiansen & Anderssen, 2010).

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A general legal framework that guides Norwegian CWS is the UNCRC that was ratified in 1991. According to the UNCRC, State Parties who sign the Convention should take following into account in their legislation and actions:

The child, for the full and harmonious development of his or her personality, should grow up in a family environment, in an atmosphere of happiness, love and understanding... States Parties undertake to respect the right of the child to preserve his or her identity, including nationality, name and family relations ... Due regard shall be paid to the desirability of continuity in a child's upbringing and to the child's ethnic, religious, cultural and linguistic background... The child shall not be denied the right, in community with other members of his or her group, to enjoy his or her own culture, to profess and practice his or her own religion, or to use his or her own language (UNCRC, 1989, art 8-14-30).

A more specific legal ground for the work of CWS professionals in Norway is defined by the Child Welfare Act of 1992. This act states it is the duty of CWS to follow up on parents struggling in the upbringing of their children. In this, CWS is required to act upon the 'best interest principle':

Decisive importance shall be attached to framing measures which are in the child's best interest. This includes attaching importance to giving the child a stable and good contact with adults and continuity in the care provided (Child Welfare Act, § 4-1).

In the course of 2009, 46 487 children (or 32.6 per 1000) in Norway received a form of CWS care (Kalve & Dyrhaug, 2011). This care can take multiple forms. Not only does CWS offer families economical help and give them advice and guidance. They also have an own child care offer consisting of kindergartens (0- 6 years) and



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after-school care (6-10 years). They organize leisure activities and have an offer of therapeutic sessions for parents and children. They also hold the responsibility for the placement and follow up of children in out-of-home care and give guidance and approval in the placement of children with foster families.

**Out-of-home care.** For the majority of families, CWS support is provided in the home environment of the child. Yet when this deems insufficient, the child is placed in out-of-home care for a short or longer period. On 31<sup>st</sup> of December 2009, 11 355 children were in out-of-home care in Norway (Kalve & Dyrhaug, 2011). In this, Norwegian out-of-home care numbers are similar to the ones in UK (Skivenes, 2011), yet lower than Danish and Finnish numbers (Hestbæk, 2011). Out-of-home placement is considered when there is reason to fear for the child's health or development. Following the Child Welfare Act § 4-12, CWS can make a care order in the next cases:

- a) if there are serious deficiencies in the everyday care received by the child, or serious deficiencies in terms of the personal contact and security needed by a child of his or her age and development,
- b) if the parents fail to ensure that a child who is ill, disabled or in special need of assistance receives the treatment and training required,
- c) if the child is mistreated or subjected to other serious abuses at home, or if it is highly probable that the child's health or development may be seriously harmed because the parents are unable to take adequate responsibility for the child.

The decision for out-of-home placement is taken by the county social welfare board, based on a report by CWS. In case of emergency, an order for interim out-of-home placement can be taken by the head of CWS administration.

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Out-of-home care by CWS comprises four types of care. Most popular is foster care (72%) followed by care in a CWS institution (12%) and housing with support (12%; Kalve & Dyrhaug, 2011). A small portion of children (4%) is placed in a more specific form of care, for example emergency housing or a specific treatment centre. In Norway, foster care is found in four forms: non-kinship foster care, kinship foster care, non-kinship enhanced foster care and kinship enhanced foster care. In enhanced foster care, extra benefits and services are provided to the foster parent(s), for example extra pay benefit so that one or both foster parents can reduce job time to give more attention to the child.

Out-of-home care can be voluntary (with parent consent) or involuntary. According to the Norwegian Child Welfare Act (1992), achieving voluntary out-of-home placement is always the first goal. In this case, the parents remain in custody of the child. When parents refuse the voluntary placement, the child can be placed in out-of-home care without parent consent. On 31<sup>st</sup> of December 2009, 6 590 children were in involuntary care by CWS (Kalve & Dyrhaug, 2011). This means about half of the out-of-home placements are voluntary.

**Child-centric approach.** Norwegian CWS has been assigned a child-centric approach in their work (Skivenes, 2011). This is similar to other Nordic countries but differs from Continental and Anglo-American approaches (for an overview see Gilbert, Parton, & Skivenes, 2011). This child-centric view entails seeing the child as an individual with opinions and viewpoints which they should be allowed to express (Skivenes, 2011). As can be read in this quotation of the Norwegian Minister of Children and Equality:

[T]he child (shall) be put first in all assessments the Child Welfare Agency

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undertakes ... the aim is to give children in need equal opportunities compared with other children in Norway (Minister of Children and Equality, April 24, 2009)

According to the Child Welfare Act of 1992, children are to be involved in the first contacts with CWS:

A child who has reached the age of 7, and younger children who are capable of forming their own opinions, shall receive information and be given an opportunity to state his or her opinion before a decision is made in a case affecting him or her. Importance shall be attached to the opinion of the child in accordance with his or her age and maturity (Child Welfare Act, § 6-3).

A child with serious behavioural problems may be admitted to an institution ... also on the basis of his or her consent and the consent of those who have parental responsibility for the child. If the child has reached the age of 15, his or her consent is sufficient. Child Welfare Act, § 4-26)

The paradigm of the child-centric framework consists of three aspects: (1) children's legal rights and organizational procedures; (2) adult's recognition of children as individuals with particular interests and needs in interactions with adults; and (3) the use of the individual child's viewpoint as a way of interpreting what the world means to children (Skivenes, 2011). A large extent of these terms comes down to regulations in the Child Welfare Act of 1992. Even though some specialist (e.g., Skivenes, 2011) state the child-centric perspective is guiding the work in Norwegian CWS, other researchers say that in the decision of out-of-home care placement still too little focus is put on the child, problems in parenting and the qualities of the parent-child relationship, and too much on parent's shortcomings and personal problems (Christiansen & Anderssen, 2010; Kähkönen, 1999).

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### **Immigrants in Norwegian CWS**

Out of the 46 487 children who received CWS support in 2009, 21% have an immigrant background (so first and second generation taken together), even though children with an immigrant background make up only 11% of the total child population in Norway. Moreover, their share is rising, going from 16% in 2004 to 21% in 2009 (Kalve & Dyrhaug, 2011).

Immigrants receiving CWS support in Norway represent a variety of countries. The largest groups of first generation immigrants in CWS come from Afghanistan, Iraq and Somalia. Taking into account the size of their populations in Norway, the highest client rates are for Afghanistan (163 per 1000 children), Eritrea (96 per 1000), Iraq (94 per 1000) and Russia (91 per 1000; Kalve & Dyrhaug, 2011). Second generation immigrants in Norwegian CWS mainly come from Iraq, Pakistan and Vietnam. Relative to their actual population in Norway, above all Russia (85 per 1000), Iran (77 per 1000), Iraq (71 per 1000) and Afghanistan (71 per 1000) have high client rates (Kalve & Dyrhaug, 2011).

**Types of care.** First and second generation immigrants differ from each other and from Norwegians in the type of CWS support they receive. Both immigrant groups receive significantly more advice and guidance from CWS than Norwegian families. First generation immigrants receive more economical help and participate more in leisure activities organized by CWS. Whereas second generation immigrants make more use of CWS kindergarten and leisure activities for young school going children (Kalve & Dyrhaug, 2011). Concerning out-of-home care, first generation immigrant children make up for the biggest group in all four out-of-home care types (Kalve & Dyrhaug, 2011). For the younger age groups, the proportion of voluntary/involuntary care is similar for first generation immigrants, second

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generation immigrants and Norwegian adolescents. Yet at adolescent age, a large difference appears and shows how for first generation immigrant adolescents, the proportion involuntary care is significantly higher than for second generation immigrant and Norwegians (Kalve & Dyrhaug, 2011).

**Child-centric approach.** Norwegian CWS workers appear to pursue a similar child-centric approach to immigrant families as to Norwegian families (Križ & Skivenes, 2011; Križ & Skivenes, 2012). As can be read in the words of this CWS worker:

This is about how we give children an upbringing that makes a child feel like s/he has a place in society. The child must feel able to have a place! That is my aim, no matter where children come from. I believe that must be our aim; how to get humans to accomplish that (Križ & Skivenes, 2012, p. 450)

In this, the Norwegian CWS approach to immigrant families is different from the approach in other European countries. For instance, a recent comparative study by Križ and Skivenes (2012), documents how the way the social democratic Norwegian CWS approach immigrant families differently than CWS workers from a more liberal British welfare regime. When approaching immigrant families, CWS workers from UK mainly have a family oriented view (19 out of 25). In Norway, on the contrary, the majority of the CWS workers interviewed (21 out of 27) have a child-centric view (Križ & Skivenes, 2011; Križ & Skivenes, 2012).

Norwegian child welfare workers in the study of Križ and Skivenes (2012) perceive more problems related to the minority background of immigrant children than CWS workers in UK. Twenty-two CWS workers (20 Norwegians and two British) report to be worried that immigrant parents provide insufficient support to their children, as can be read in this citation:

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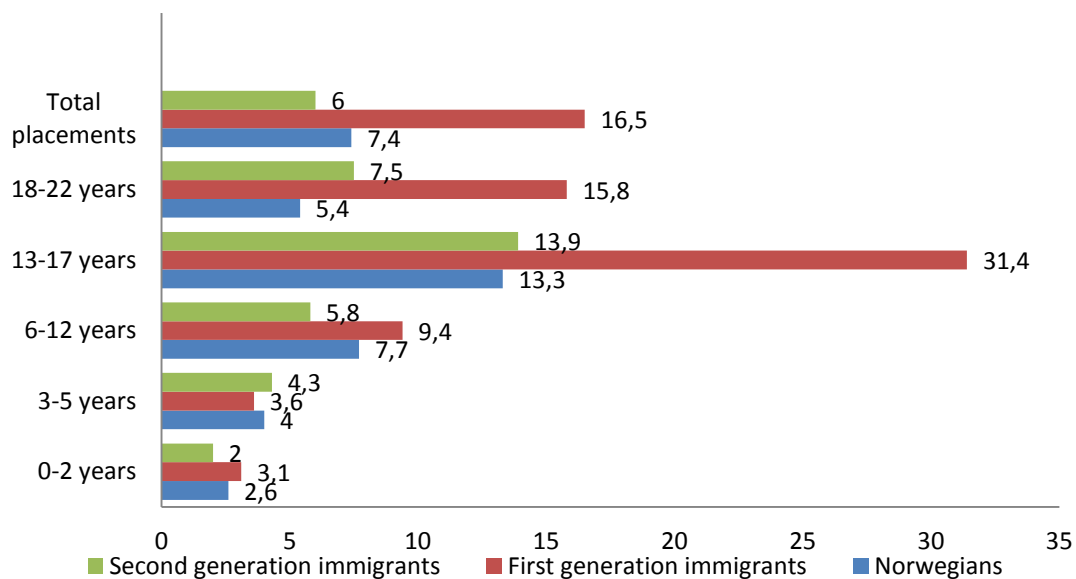
I've met with a lot of people who want to bring their children up as though they haven't left their own country, and that's virtually impossible because once the child goes out on its own into the UK world, they learn things that their parents don't know a good deal about. [ ... ] They want to maintain what they've had but the culture in the UK—there may be bad parts about it but it's extremely attractive. And the children welcome the freedom, and I think it's very difficult for parents to keep a handle on what their children are doing, and their children will not be the same as they are (Križ & Skivenes, 2012, p. 451).

Many Norwegian CWS workers also find the language barrier of the immigrant parents a problem for the child as the parent cannot assist their children with homework or social life (Križ & Skivenes, 2012). Possible consequences of this child-centric view on working with immigrant families will be discussed further on in this paper.

### **First Generation Immigrant Adolescents in Out-of-Home Care**

Data from Statistics Norway show that first generation immigrants are clearly overrepresented in Norwegian out-of-home care (Kalve & Dyrhaug, 2011). With 19.3 per 1000 (0-22 years) placements in out-of-home care, first generation immigrants score significantly higher than the 7.4 per 1000 for Norwegians and the 6.0 per 1000 for second generation immigrants (Kalve & Dyrhaug, 2011). Even though placements increased in all three groups since 2004, the strongest increase is for first generation immigrants where numbers went from 14.4 to 19.3 per 1000 (Kalve & Dyrhaug, 2011). The overrepresentation of first generation immigrants is mainly caused by the large number of adolescents in out-of-home care. Yet attention should be paid to the official out-of-home care placement data provided by Statistics Norway. Since 2007, CWS took on the responsibility for unaccompanied minors under 15 years and since 2009 also for those until 17 years (Barne og likestillings departementet, 2008). And these unaccompanied minors make up a part of the group of first generation immigrant adolescents. Even though Statistics Norway has no exact data on the number of unaccompanied minors in CWS, it is known that on 31<sup>st</sup> of December 2009, 214 unaccompanied minors were in residential care (T. Dyrhaug, personal communication, October 15, 2012). When unaccompanied minors are not included in Kalve and Dyrhaug's dataset (2011), the overrepresentation of first generation immigrant adolescents goes from 42.3 per 1000 to 31.4 per 1000; a number still more than triple the amount of the other two groups (see Figure 1). Interestingly, second generation immigrants are significantly less likely to be placed in out-of-home care than first generation immigrants, and score even lower than Norwegians. An image that is similar in Swedish CWS (Socialstyrelsen, 1995; Vinnerljung, Franzen, Gustafsson, Johansson, 2008; Franzén, Vinnerljung & Hjern, 2008).

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*Figure 1.* Out-of-home placement rates per 1000 children according to age and immigrant background on 31<sup>st</sup> of December 2009. Data without unaccompanied minors

*Note:* Adapted from *Barn og unge med innvandrerbakgrunn i Barnevernet 2009*

[Children and youth with immigrant background in CWS in 2009] by T. Kalve, & T. Dyrhaug (2011). Oslo: SSB rapport, p. 24.

When exploring the overrepresentation of immigrants in CWS, a vast amount of international research points to socioeconomic status (SES) variables as significant contributors leading to CWS care. Some researchers (e.g., Sedlak & Schultz, 2005; Vinnerljung, Franzen, Gustafsson, & Johansson, 2008) even state that controlling for income and family structure can abolish the overrepresentation of immigrants in CWS. An increasing pile of research adds to this the vulnerability of a refugee history. A recent study from The Netherlands (Euser, van IJzendoorn, Prinzie, & Bakermans-Kranenburg, 2011) for example shows how the overrepresentation of immigrant families who recently fled from their home country stays after controlling for parents'



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education. On the contrary, for traditional labour migrants this controlling reduces their overrepresentation in the Dutch CWS.

Yet for the overrepresentation of immigrant adolescents in out-of-home care, results seem less clear-cut. An interesting large cohort study was carried out in Sweden by Vinnerljung and colleagues (2008). Their results point to something particular in the situation of immigrant adolescents leading to CWS contact. The researchers analyzed the influence of SES factors for the different ages when children get into contact with CWS. In the age group 7 to 12 years, the overrepresentation of immigrants disappeared after controlling for SES (mothers region of residency, mothers education, mothers employment, mother single, and mother receiving social assistance). For those from Sub-Saharan Africa and Asia outside the Middle East in the age group 13 to 17 years, the overrepresentation remained the same after controlling for the same SES factors.

### **Adolescents Themselves Seek Help**

A Norwegian study carried out by Bø (2004) shows another interesting difference between adolescents with immigrant background and Norwegians. In her study, Bø (2004) compared applications for CWS institutions in Oslo for 100 adolescents with immigrant background (so first and second generation) of 12 years or older to 100 applications for Norwegian adolescents. Her results show a remarkable difference in who contacts CWS. For Norwegian adolescents, half of the applications are done by their parents, often the mother. Parents taking this initiative are a lot more seldom for immigrants. Yet more adolescents with immigrant background seek CWS help themselves (see Table 1). Results from the study of Bø (2004) and experienced welfare workers (e.g., Aannestad, 2004), state that in Norway especially adolescent immigrant girls turn to CWS for help.

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Table 1

*Person contacting CWS in care applications in Oslo 2002-2003*

	Immigrant ado	Norwegian ado
Adolescent self	18	7
Parent	16	45
CWS	10	6
School	14	8
Police	16	10
Neighbours	2	2
Not named	24	22
<b>Total</b>	100	100

*Note.* From *Overrepresentasjon av innvandrerungdom i barnevernet- realitet eller fiksjon* [Overrepresentation of immigrant youth in CWS- reality or fiction]? by P. B. Bø, 2004, Oslo: HiO-rapport 2004 nr 20, p. 47.

The aim of this paper is to gain more insight into the particular situation of first generation immigrant adolescents (as described by Vinnerljung et al., 2008) in Norwegian out-of-home care. In this, the following questions will be addressed: (1) What makes first generation immigrant adolescents get into contact with CWS? (2) Why do first generation immigrant adolescent girls seek more help from CWS than boys? (3) Is out-of-home care the preferred solution for the difficulties first generation immigrant adolescents face? Answers to these questions will be provided through a presentation of findings from studies focusing on the lives of immigrant adolescents in Norway.

## **Theoretical Background**

Before the specific research questions will be addressed, a theoretical background is provided on the thoughts that will lead this discussion. As this paper wants to focus on the particularity of immigrant adolescents, general explanatory models on the overrepresentation of immigrants in CWS such as SES will be disregarded. Instead two alternative modes of thought will be presented.

A first theoretical approach zooms in on the acculturation, adaptation and identity formation of immigrant adolescents. Not only has acculturation been associated with significant amounts of stress and mental health problems in immigrants. Adolescence is the time period when the identity takes form. A good exploration and experimentation in that period will lead to an achieved identity (Erikson, 1968). In this, both ethnic and national identity are critical components in the development of the self concept and crucial to the psychological well-being of immigrant adolescents (Roberts, Phinney, Masse, Chen, Roberts, & Romero, 1999; Bar-Chava & Steen, 1995 in Phinney, 1990). It is likely immigrant adolescents encounter difficulties in developing both a positive ethnic and national identity.

The second theoretical approach presented is distinct parental practices used by Norwegians and immigrants from non-western countries. First generation immigrant adolescents grow up in a world where both Norwegian and non-western child rearing believes and parental practices are present. It is plausible that the two worlds get into conflict. This is also the experience of Norwegian CWS workers who state that a different view on the child is a major challenge for their work (Križ & Skivenes, 2009). Large differences between both viewpoints can cause conflict for immigrant adolescents. These theories will be used later on for the interpretation of the findings.

### **Acculturation, Adaptation and Identity Theories**

Considerable research has been devoted to the understanding of the consequences of immigration. Factors influencing the acculturation of immigrants have been identified and their influence on the psychological and sociocultural adaptation and identity formation of immigrants has been documented. Next, these theoretical perspectives are presented, where possible focussing on studies that document the situation of first generation immigrant adolescents in Norway.

**Integration of immigrants.** Although integration is a term that gained prominence in the debate on immigration, the notion often remains vague and therefore politically popular as well. A clear explanation of this concept can be found in the comprehensive work of Berry (1997, 2011; Sam & Berry, 2010). According to Berry, integration is one of the possible ways of acculturation; a process of cultural and psychological change that takes place when cultures meet (Sam & Berry, 1995). Following Berry, immigrants settling in a host country must confront two basic issues: (1) *Is it considered to be of value to maintain cultural identity and characteristics?* and (2) *Is it considered to be of value to maintain relationships with other groups?* Crossing these two dimensions creates four ways of acculturation: integration, assimilation, separation and marginalization (see Figure 2). To measure the acculturation of immigrants, Berry developed the Immigrant Acculturation Scale (IAS) tapping the two dimensions in life domains such as education, employment, community involvement, etc.

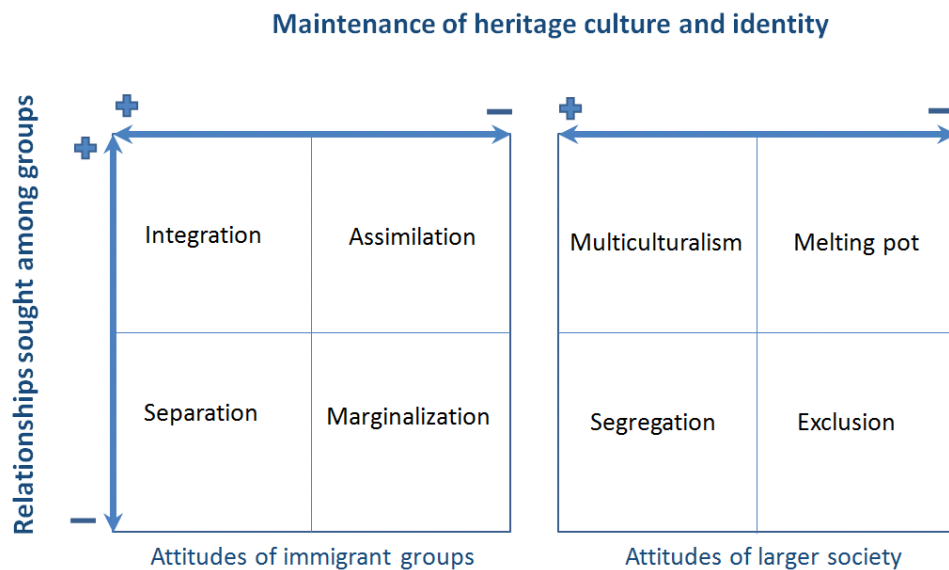


Figure 2. Acculturation strategies in immigrant groups and the larger society

Note: Adapted from Acculturation: when individuals and groups of different cultural backgrounds meet, by D. Sam & J. Berry, *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 5, p. 477.

The opinion of the host society members on how immigrants should acculturate will influence the outcome of the acculturation process (Bourhis, Moise, Perrault, & Senecal, 1997). Using their opinion to answer the same two questions also yields four strategies: multiculturalism, melting pot, segregation and exclusion (see right side of Figure 2). In the past decades, many researchers used the influential model of Berry to conduct studies on the different acculturation styles. Results generally point out integration as the preferred mode of acculturation by immigrants and their host society (Berry, 2011; Zagefka & Brown, 2002; David, Okazaki, & Saw, 2009). This first position is followed by either assimilation or separation.

Even though most acculturation studies focus on the situation of immigrant adults, some recent studies zoom in on the lives of immigrant adolescents. An example of this is a large study in 13 immigrant-receiving countries including Norway

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carried out by Berry et al. (2006). In this study, the researchers identified four acculturation profiles for immigrant adolescents: integration profile, ethnic profile, national profile and diffuse profile. Most common (36.4%) among immigrant adolescents was the integration profile. The second largest group (22.5%) had an ethnic profile indicating a strong orientation towards the own ethnic group, similar with the separatist acculturation style. Less immigrant adolescents (18.7%) had a national profile or the tendency to assimilate with the host culture. A rather large amount of immigrant adolescents had a diffuse profile (22.4%), in compliance with marginalization acculturation.

Several factors influence the acculturation pattern of immigrant adolescents. One set of influencing factors is immigrant related. A first factor in this set is the difference between first and second generation immigrants. Adolescents born in the host country (hence second generation immigrants) are more likely to have an integrated acculturation style. Associated with this finding is the effect of the length of residence of first generation immigrants in the host country. When years of residence augment, more integration profiles appear (Berry et al., 2006). Third is the part played by the gender of the adolescents: more integration profiles are found for girls than for boys (Berry et al., 2006).

In a recent qualitative study, Valenta (2009) offers insight into the acculturation experiences of non-western first generation immigrants in Norway. Valenta (2009) describes how avoidance is a widespread strategy among immigrants to cope with stigmatization. According to Valenta (2009), first generation immigrants tend to use avoidance in situations where they get in contact with host society members they do not know in order to avoid potential humiliations, patronizing and rejections. As can be read in the words of this man from Croatia:

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I try to avoid conversations with people who do not know me well... It is difficult to lower one's guard when you know that even total strangers may allow themselves to patronize and humiliate you... For example, they will inevitably ask where I come from, whether I like to live in Norway, etc. Their comments may be irritating-things like 'war is a terrible thing, poor you'... or 'you speak very good Norwegian' and other patronizing comments (Croatian man, Valenta, 2009, p. 183).

Yet, reflecting on the interviews he did, Valenta (2009) states that contact with significant Norwegian others are central in achieving a sense of being part of Norwegian society. However language difficulties make contact with Norwegians ask for a serious effort for many immigrants, as can be read in the words of this woman from Bosnia:

We feel tired after our Norwegian friends visited us. We have to speak Norwegian and to think whether we behave correctly or not... We do not get the same quality of time with Norwegian friends as we used to get with our friends in our home country... We feel that we have to show ourselves in the best light.... They are friends, but we are still strangers to each other.. This is not how our leisure time is supposed to be but we are still strangers to each other. We expect to relax and laugh when we are together with our friends (Bosnian woman, Valenta, 2009, p. 187).

As a result of the cultural and language difficulties, Valenta (2009) states many of the immigrants he interviewed tend to prefer having weak ties with a few Norwegians. As is nicely illustrated in the words of this Iraqi man:

I have two Norwegian friends... I prefer to socialize with my compatriots, but I try to maintain friendships with my Norwegian friends... I seldom socialize

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with my Norwegian friends. We do not have a lot in common, but sometimes I have a need to meet them. They are somehow the only emotional connection I have with Norwegian society. If you are with foreigners all the time, you may feel that you are not really living in Norway (Iraqi man, Valenta, 2009, p. 187).

A second set of factors influencing acculturation of immigrant adolescents relates to the host country. A first factor in this set is the immigration history of the host country: in countries with a strong immigration history (e.g., Australia and USA) more integration profiles are reported than in countries where immigration is more recent (e.g., European countries, Berry et al., 2006). Even though research on the opinion of the host societies is sparse, this is also of influence on the acculturation of their immigrants (Zagefka & Brown, 2002). Host country members with an integrationist attitude have been reported to feel least threatened by immigrants and have less strong authoritarian and ethnocentric ideologies (Montreuil & Bourhis, 2001). Yet as mentioned in the beginning of this paper, Norwegians are reported to be rather assimilationistic (e.g, Berry & Kim, 1988) with more than half of the Norwegians (52%) agreeing that ‘Immigrants in Norway should endeavor to become as similar to Norwegians as possible’ (Blom, 2012, p. 12). The opinion of the host society reflects on the acculturation profile of the immigrants. Adolescents with an integration profile report less perceived discrimination whereas youth in the diffuse profile report the most discrimination (Berry et al., 2006).

A second influencing factor related to the host society, is the effect of the neighborhood on the acculturation of immigrant adolescents. Most adolescents in the integration profile and the least in the diffuse profile live in ethnically mixed communities (Berry et al., 2006). Ethnic profile is found more often in ethnic



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homogeneous neighborhoods and adolescents with a national profile are living more in homogeneous neighborhoods other than their own ethnic background. Similar results are also reported in qualitative studies. Some immigrants in the study by Valenta (2009) for example, state to feel more comfortable in multicultural environments. As this Iraqi man explains:

When I am in the restaurant, I used to take the initiative. They eat oriental food and listen to our music. They ask about help and advice. I almost feel that it is cool to be a foreigner. I would feel differently if I worked in some Norwegian restaurant. I will never do that either. I prefer to go to places where there are many foreigners. I feel more relaxed there (Iraqi man, Valenta, 2009, p. 185).

Valenta (2009) describes how immigrants find it easier to socialize with compatriots when living in a city than when living in a small town. In a small town, a get together of immigrant groups can be easily observed by the Norwegians. In the city on the contrary, there is less chance that a compatriot contact will have an influence on their relationships with Norwegians.

A third influence of the host society is the fit between host country religion and the one of the immigrants. In the Judea-Christian host countries in the study of Berry et al. (2006), more integration profiles are found for Judeo-Christian immigrant adolescents and Eastern religions, less for Muslims and non-religion youth. For Muslims in this study, the ethnic profile is the most dominant.

**Psychological and socio-cultural adaptation.** Not only do researchers report integration as the most preferred approach, it has also been found to be the most 'healthy' one. Integrated individuals have been shown to experience less acculturative stress (Berry, Kim, Minde, & Mok, 1987), show higher self-esteem (Phinney, Chavira, & Williamson, 1992), lower depression (Ward & Rana-Deuba, 1999), more

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pro-social behaviour (Schwartz, Zamboanga, & Hernandez, 2007) and are better able to integrate competing tenets from the different cultures they are exposed to (Benet-Martínez & Haritatos, 2005).

Cross-cultural adaptation can be meaningfully divided into two distinct forms: psychological (emotional/affective) adaptation and sociocultural (behavioural) adaptation (Searle & Ward, 1990). The former is defined as the internal psychological outcome of the acculturation process including a personal and cultural identity, mental health, and life satisfaction (Searle & Ward, 1990; Berry, 1997). The latter refers to cultural learning, the ability to 'fit in', the skills acquired to deal with daily issues such as the ability to cope in the areas of family life, and work and school environment (Searle & Ward, 1990; Berry, 1997). Research shows both factors to be empirically interrelated, yet predicted by different types of variables (Ward, 1996; Searle & Ward, 1990). Psychological adaptation can be best understood in the framework of theoretical models in developmental and clinical psychology focusing on stress and coping. Sociocultural adaptation on the contrary, is linked to social learning and cognitive factors (Searle & Ward, 1990). Sociocultural adaptation typically has a linear improvement over time whereas psychological problems often increase soon after contact with the new culture, followed by a general decrease over time (Berry et al., 2006).

When exploring the relation between acculturation and adaptation of immigrant adolescents, Berry et al. (2006) report the best psychological and sociocultural adaptation for those involved in both cultures, hence the integration profile, while not being involved in ethnic nor national culture (diffuse profile) appears to undermine both forms of adaptation. Adolescents with an ethnic profile have a good psychological adaptation yet a lower sociocultural adaptation. The

opposite was true for those with a national profile; they had a high sociocultural adaptation and a lower psychological adaptation.

***Psychological aspects related to adaptation.*** Many international as well as Norwegian studies report lower levels of mental health in immigrant adolescents and adults than in the host population (Abebe, Lien, & Hjelde, 2012). These results are found in cross-sectional as well as in longitudinal studies (Sagatun, Lien, Sjøgaard, Bjertness, & Heyerdahl, 2007). In this regard, a few interesting group differences have been reported. A first one is related to the country of origin of the immigrants. In Norway for example, the highest proportion of psychological distress is found in immigrants from the Middle East (39%) and the lowest among South Asians (18.9%; Thapa & Hauff, 2005). A second difference is gender. This is one of the most reported factors influencing adaptation of immigrants (Berry et al., 2006; Sam et al., 2008; Beiser et al., 1988) and has been observed across cultures (Tanaka-Matsumi & Draguns, 1997). Immigrant adolescent girls are reported to have a lower psychological adaptation (Berry et al., 2006; Sam et al., 2008) and to exhibit more symptoms of psychological distress in terms of depression and anxiety (Ababe et al., 2012). Boys on contrary, have a lower sociocultural adaptation than girls and are more frequently diagnosed with behavioural and personality disorders (Berry et al., 2006; Sam et al., 2008). A third frequent reported observation is the difference in adaptation of first and second generation immigrants. In Norway, second generation immigrant adolescents score higher than their first generation immigrant peers on both psychological and sociocultural adaptation (Sam et al., 2008). A fourth important finding related to the mental health of immigrant groups is the influence of the host country on the mental health of immigrants. An interesting comparative study was carried out by Virta, Sam and Westin (2004). The researchers compared Turkish

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adolescents living in Norway to those living in Sweden and found a poorer psychological adaptation for Turkish adolescents in Norway than for those living in Sweden (Virta et al., 2004). Sam and Virta (2003) used a similar approach to compare variations in self-esteem among Chileans, Turks and Vietnamese youth in Norway and Sweden. Similar to the study by Virta et al. (2004), the authors report a lower self-esteem in minority groups in Norway than for the same groups in Sweden. According to the authors in both studies, this difference can be accounted for by differences in immigration policy and attitudes towards immigrants in both countries (Virta et al., 2004; Sam & Virta, 2003).

Several factors have been reported to threaten the mental health of immigrant adolescents such as a lack of social support, economic deprivation, multiple negative life events and post-traumatic experiences (Ababe et al., 2012). Two factors named to be protective of their mental health are a strong family structure conscious of a tradition and value system, and the influence of the parental supervision (Vaage, et al., 2009). This factor seems closely related to the beneficial effects of an ethnic profile as described by Berry and the reported positive effects of a strong ethnic identity (see further on in this paper).

**Cultural identity.** Adolescence is the time in one's life when concerns about the self are most salient (Erikson, 1968; Marcia, 1966) and a good exploration and experimentation in that period will lead to an achieved identity (Erikson, 1968). In immigration research, the term cultural identity is used to include both ethnic identity and national or majority identity. For immigrant adolescents both ethnic and national identity are critical components in the development of the self-concept and have been shown crucial to their psychological well-being (Roberts, et al., 1999; Bar-Chava & Steen, 1995 in Phinney, 1990). Even though originally thought of as following a

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continuum, there is more and more evidence that both forms of identity vary independently (Phinney, Horenchzyk, Liebkind, & Vedder, 2001). It is possible to identify strongly with both ethnic and national culture and a strong ethnic identity does not mean weakening of a national identity (Sam, 1998).

*Ethnic identity.* Central to the psychological functioning of immigrants is their ethnic identity or their attitudes towards their own ethnicity (Phinney, 1990). The concept of ethnic identity has gained more prominence in immigration research and appears to be dynamic and subject to changes over time and context (Phinney, 1990). Large scale empirical studies identify two distinct yet interrelated dimensions of ethnic identity: ethnic affirmation and ethnic exploration (Roberts et al., 1999). Ethnic affirmation refers to belonging and commitment to the ethnic group, a dimension that can be understood in terms of the social identity theory of Tajfel and Turner (1986). Ethnic exploration on its turn involves the processes through which individuals learn about and become involved in their own ethnic group (Roberts et al., 1999). The two dimensions follow different developmental pathways and are influenced differently. Ethnic affirmation appears to be related to parent child rearing styles while ethnic exploration seems to be mainly related to family ethnic socialization and perceived discrimination (Supple, Ghazarian, Frabutt, Plunkett, & Sands, 2006). Ethnic identity, more specific ethnic exploration is often found to be negatively associated with perceived discrimination (Romero & Roberts, 2003; Sabatier, 2008).

The acculturation style of the host country has been reported to influence the ethnic identity of her immigrants. In a host country where biculturalism is accepted, ethnic identity is likely to be strong. When there is pressure towards assimilation, some immigrants will downplay or reject their ethnic identity whereas others will assert their pride in their own cultural group (Phinney et al., 2001).

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*National identity.* Immigrants also identify to more or less extent with members of the host society. Like ethnic identity, this national or majority identity has been shown to be positively related to self-esteem (Sam, 2000). Several factors have been shown to influence the cultural identity of immigrant youth. A first influence shown is the size of the ethnic group in the host country. The smaller the ethnic group, the more chance that this group will live in ethnic mixed neighborhoods. Effects of same-peer relations on cultural identity of immigrant adolescents are mixed. Some studies find positive effects (e.g., Phinney et al., 2001; Supple et al., 2006) others do not (e.g., Bakalian, 1993). There is also an effect of the host country. For Turkish adolescents in Norway, a positive relation was found between Norwegian identity and life satisfaction (Sam, 1998). Yet Norwegian identity had no effect on the life satisfaction of Vietnamese and Pakistani adolescents. According to Sam (1998), the reason for this difference between immigrant groups can lay in the fact that Turkish identify themselves as Europeans, hence feel more closely related to Norwegians than the other two groups do.

Adolescents' perception of their relation with their parents appears to be an important factor in explaining ethnic affirmation and national identity (Sabatier, 2008). Parents appear to have a complimentary role to the acculturation of their children. Some authors (for example Sabatier, 2008) report special attention to immigrant adolescents' communication with their father. Disclosure to the father as well as perception of disagreement with him is a good incentive for the development and adaptation of the adolescent as well as for orientation towards the host society. Even though this may sound contradicting, Sabatier (2008) argues with Goodnow (1994) that disagreement between parents and adolescents in a secure and friendly climate is a perfect opportunity for the adolescents to test ideas and develop their

identity. Mothers on the contrary, contribute to national as well as to ethnic identity (Sabatier, 2008).

### **Culturally Different Child Rearing**

In their acculturation and adaptation, immigrants have to find a balance between relinquishing the values from their own culture and adapting to the values of the host culture. Not seldom, immigrants rearing their children in a western country find themselves in conflict between teaching their children values they find important and those prevalent in their new society (Kuczynski, Marshall, & Schell, 1997). A process that will be more complicated when the values of the host culture differ greatly from those of the own culture.

Here, the topic of culturally different child rearing between Norway and host countries of immigrants is to be discussed for two reasons. A first reason is the reported discrepancies between values of immigrant adolescents and their parents, partially based on the fact that immigrant adolescents acculturate faster to the values of the host society than their parents (Rick & Forward, 1992). These discrepancies are said to underline some of the adaptation difficulties of immigrant adolescents (Phinney & Ong, 2002). A second reason why the topic of culturally different child rearing is to be discussed here, is the fact that immigrant families and CWS workers experience quite some communication challenges due to cultural differences (Rasmussen, 2004; Križ & Skivenes, 2010). Both parties state this is a huge problem. Immigrant parents in Norway express in the media that they do not feel understood in contact with CWS. They also find themselves judged by the social norms in Norwegian society. Norwegian CWS workers from their side, report experiencing not only implicit differences but also explicit cultural clashes about child rearing methods and the children's needs (Križ & Skivenes, 2011).

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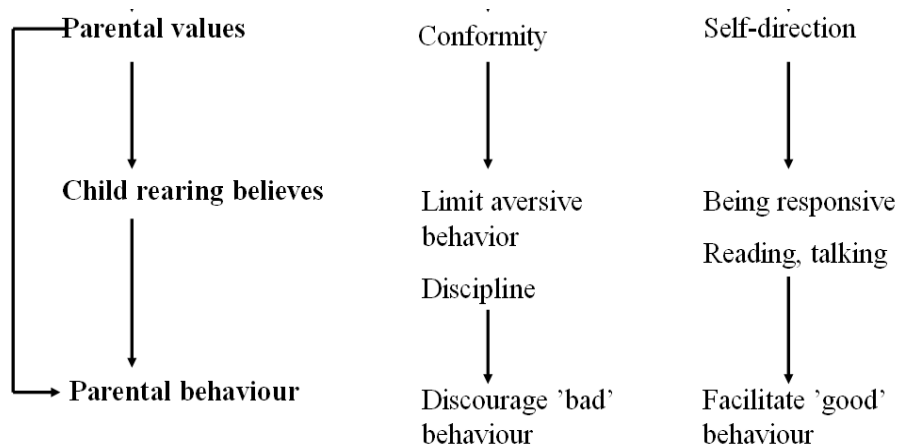
Making judgments about what is good parenting is difficult in socio-culturally diverse societies. For nationals and immigrants to live together in understanding and for CWS to do their work, it is of utmost importance to understand why parents 'do as they do'. As the values parents live by will reflect on their child rearing practices and manifest in the interactions with their child. If members from different cultures want to understand each other, it is of utmost importance to get insight into these value systems or 'the logic behind' certain behaviour. This is important not only because immigrant families get into contact with CWS for different reasons (Kalve & Dyrhaug, 2011) but also because the effects of child (mal)treatment are not necessarily the same for children in different cultures. Corporal punishment for instance, is known in European countries to risk causing externalizing problems such as aggressive behaviour or conduct disorders in children. Surprisingly, some researchers report this effect to be a lot weaker for African children (Deater-Deckard, Dodge, Bates, & Pettit, 1996; Haskett, Allaire, Kreig, & Hart, 2008). Research shows that two factors can play an important mediating role. Not only can cultural different child rearing values play an important mediating role in the relationship between physical discipline and child adjustment problems. Other parental behaviour has been shown to protect children against negative outcome such as parental warmth. Perceived normativeness also plays an important role. Certain parental behaviour such as corporal punishment is less associated with negative outcomes in a child when the child perceives the behaviour as normal (Gershoff, et al., 2010; Taylor, Hamvas, & Paris, 2011).

**Values leading to behaviour.** It can be assumed that all parents want their children to grow up into culturally acceptable adults. Yet what that comprises can be very different as well as the methods used to accomplish this. What a parent believes



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is appropriate parenting, depends upon the outcomes parents value the most for their child (Alwin & Felson, 2010). How a society views a child will have an important consequence on how parents treat their children. The bulk of value research in child development has revolved around self-direction (Hitlin & Piliavin, 2004) and the popular contrast between obedience and autonomy (Alwin & Felson, 2010). This trend was started over 50 years ago by Kohn (1963) and often involved comparing members of high social class to those of low social class. In his pioneering research, Kohn (1963) described a link between occupational complexity and the value system of employees. According to Kohn (1963), high class men in complex jobs with little routine will value independent skills such as responsibility and curiosity. Contrarily, low class men performing in routine jobs with strong supervision value conformity. Luster, Rhoades and Haas (1989) elaborated the work of Kohn by giving insight into the link between parental values and actual parent behaviour. In their study, they present how parental values are related to child rearing believes. In Figure 3, a visual presentation is given based on the research carried out by Luster et al. (1989).



*Figure 3.* Visual presentation of the relation between parental values and parental behavior.

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According to the authors, other parenting styles are used to accomplish self-direction than for conformity. Mothers who value conformity, emphasize it is their role to limit aversive behaviour and discipline their child. Mothers who value self-direction emphasize being responsive to their child and the importance of spending time with them to encourage their own thinking such as through reading and talking to them. It is self-evident that all parents need some form of discipline to guide their children in controlling their behaviour. Yet the techniques used for this can vary largely ranging from positive (e.g., giving rewards) to negative techniques (e.g., corporal punishment) (Peisner, 1989). The choice for a certain discipline method over another one will depend upon parents child rearing believes (Peisner, 1989) as these believes have been reported to mediate the relation between values and behaviour (Luster, Rhoades, & Haas, 1989). In their study, Luster, Rhoades and Haas (1989) also demonstrated how parents holding certain child rearing believes, will chose fitting discipline methods (see Figure 3). Mothers who value self-direction emphasize their role is to facilitate desirable behaviour by engaging in supportive behaviour with their children. Mothers who value conformity on the other hand, tend to place emphasis on discouraging behaviour they don't approve of and by enforcing household rules.

Next, the model by Luster and colleagues (1989) will be used to discuss the parental values and behaviour of Norwegians and non-western immigrants in Norway. For non-western immigrants, a specific focus is put on the Middle East based on the overrepresentation of some of these countries (e.g., Iran and Iraq) in Norwegian CWS (Kalve & Dyrhaug, 2011).

**Child rearing in Norway.** The view on the child in Norway is in accordance with societal values such as: emphasis on independency, equal rights, and value of

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personal opinions (Hofstede, 1991). Self-direction is an important value. Children are seen as their own experts who have the right to be heard. They are treated as small individuals with their own thoughts and opinions. Strict obedience is not longer expected from Norwegian children but parents and children negotiate (Gullestad, 1996). Parents in Norway will include their children in their upbringing, discuss with them, negotiate and find compromises (Gullestad, 1996). In her paper on the changes Norway went through on this topic, Gullestad (1996) describes how there has been a change from external discipline to internal discipline. Children have to find themselves and create their own identity through activities such as dance, sports and music. Parents in Norway don't want their children to obey them just to please them. Following the logic of Luster, Rhoades and Haas (1989), Norwegian parents valuing self-direction will find it important to be responsive to their children and to make time for them.

In Norway parents valuing self-direction for their children, will facilitate and promote 'good behaviour'. Parents will stimulate their children in their search for 'being oneself'. The methods parents use to accomplish this can be called *enriching intimacy* (Stefansen & Aarseth, 2011). This intimacy parents provide is not only physical but an intimacy of the self. Norwegian research evidence demonstrates that parents find it important to share fun activities with their child, in this often following the interest of the child (Stefansen & Aarseth, 2011). Norwegian parents also play an active role in the organization of leisure activities for their children. In sport activities such as football for example, parents assist in a variety of organizing activities such as driving children to matches and be a coach or team leader (Lidén, 2006).

**Child rearing in the Middle East.** Cultural values in the Middle East are quite different to Norwegian values. Power distances are significant: everybody

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accepts that there is a hierarchical order where all members have their place. It is also a collectivistic society, in which loyalty is crucial and members take responsibility for their group members. The society is masculine where people live in order to work and focus on equity, competition and performance (Hofstede, 1991).

The view on the child in the Middle East is in concurrence with their societal values named above: there is a hierarchical order where everyone has his place and all members need to take responsibilities for their group members. When it comes to their children, parents stress values such as conformity, integrity, security, and obedience (Triandis, 1995). Respect is an important value in Middle Eastern societies and young children learn to show respect for the authority of the father, for religion, for food, for family members and hospitality for guests. The child is supposed to learn from his family members, and to obey them, but not to be their friend (Azaiza, 2005). According to parents in the society, the period of childhood is a nuisance, and child activities such as playing are a waste of time. So from a young age, children are given responsibilities. Girls at the age of four-five are taking care of younger siblings, and same aged boys take care of animals, run errands or contribute in the family business (Fernea, 1995). This view on the child is also seen in immigrants in Norway. Studies on this topic report how immigrant parents are more in favour of obligations for children than of rights for children than Norwegian parents (Sam & Virta, 2003). A good child in the Middle East, or one who is *mu'addab(a)*, is a child who is polite and disciplined (Fernea, 1995). This socialization is the task of parents but happens with contributions of the extended family and neighbours. The reputation of the family is important, and child behaviour is often categorized as 'honourable' and 'dishonourable' (Fernea, 1995).

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Contrary to the western world whose child rearing practices are largely influenced by developmental psychological theories and research focused on individual development, child rearing beliefs in the Middle East were until recently based on widely accepted assumptions about the structure of society and the functions of individuals of all ages within that society (Fernea, 1995). Parents valuing conformity will focus on discouraging bad behaviour. According to Fernea (1995) who studied children in the Middle East, often used discipline methods in countries in the Middle East include spanking or beating, as well as teasing and shaming before peers and members of the family. Khoury-Kassabri and Straus (2011) thoroughly investigated the discipline methods used by mothers in the Middle East. They report that non-punitive discipline is more prevalent than punitive discipline, but that the latter was still often used. The type of punishment seems to vary from group to group. Some parents argue that corporal punishment is not condemned by the Quran, but most were in full accord with the "spare the rod and spoil the child" approach (Fernea, 1995).

### **The Particularity of First Generation Immigrant Adolescents**

In the next part, insight is given into the particularity of first generation immigrant adolescents in out-of-home care by CWS in Norway. For this, CWS statistics are completed with quantitative and qualitative studies carried out in Norway. A quantitative study that will be employed was carried out by Bø in 2004. In her study, Bø (2004) compared applications for CWS institutions for 100 adolescents with immigrant background (so first and second generation) of 12 years or older to 100 applications for Norwegian adolescents. It is unknown if and which applications eventually turned out in care. In the same time period, Rasmussen (2004) and Aannestad (2004) carried out qualitative studies. Each interviewed first generation immigrant youngsters who had stayed in CWS institutions in Oslo during their adolescence. Rasmussen (2004) interviewed 11 men and women of whom seven came to Norway as a refugee. Aannestad (2004) interviewed seven first generation immigrant girls, of whom four had come to Norway as a refugee.

Next, the findings of these studies are used to discuss possible causes that can lead to the out-of-home care of first generation immigrant adolescents. Where possible, data are completed with results from other studies focussing on the situation of first generation immigrant adolescents in Norway.

### **Socioeconomic Status**

As described before, SES is an often reported factor in increasing out-of-home care numbers of the host as well as the immigrant population in CWS (e.g., Sedlak & Schultz, 2005; Vinnerljung, et al., 2008). Even though several interesting studies document the relevance of SES in explaining out-of-home care numbers, Vinnerljung et al. (2008) demonstrate how for immigrant adolescents SES offers a relevant yet insufficient explanation.

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A difficult financial situation is also described in the stories of many of the young immigrants interviewed in the studies of Aannestad (2004) and Rasmussen (2004). Sometimes this situation was further complicated with parents' inability to handle money. Two youngsters in the study of Rasmussen describe how their father lost a lot of money on slots. Others exemplify how their parents sent remittances to their country of origin. As a young girl in the study of Aannestad says:

Because when you come here, they all think that you have money and they all come to you to get some. ... My mom has no education herself, but she pays for theirs (mom's two sisters) (Aannestad, 2004, p. 101).

Sending remittances is quite common in Norway, 57% of the immigrants do it (Blom & Hendriksen, 2009) and for some groups (e.g., Somali's) this number rises to 74%, of whom 38% sends money once per month (Carling, 2012).

### **Migration and Family Breakup**

Another common explanatory model for the overrepresentation of immigrants in CWS is the presence of a refugee history (Euser, van IJzendoorn, Prinzie, & Bakermans-Kranenburg, 2011). Data from Norwegian CWS show three important facts regarding refugee background. First, immigrants who fled their home country are 2.6 times more likely to receive CWS support than immigrant families who moved to Norway on the basis of family reunification (Kalve & Dyrhaug, 2011). Second, first generation immigrants from refugee countries (according to the Norwegian Directorate for Immigration) have higher client rates than the same nationals in the second generation (see Table 2).

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Table 2

*Examples of CWS client rates per 1000 from first and second generation immigrants aged 0-22 in 2009*

	CWS client rates (per 1000)	
	First generation	Second generation
Afghanistan	163	71
Eritrea	96	62
Iraq	94	71
Somalia	79	48
Russia	91	85
Iran	83	77
Turkey	49	41
Philippines	45	45
Pakistan	43	39
Bosnia-Herzegovina	30	38
Total $\bar{x}$	67	51

*Note:* based on *Barn og unge med innvandrerbakgrunn i Barnevernet 2009* [Children and youth with immigrant background in CWS in 2009] by T. Kalve, & T. Dyrhaug, (2011). Oslo: SSB rapport, p. 10.

For some countries (e.g., Afghanistan and Somalia) this decrease is more drastic than for others (e.g., Iran). A possible reason for the decrease is the longer period abroad and the time period passed since the migration for second generation immigrants. Third, second generational immigrants with refugee background still have higher client rates than second generation immigrants without refugee background. The ground for this difference is not clear. Maybe the effect of refugee background on CWS is so large that potential negative consequences are carried on to



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the second generation. But it is also possible that this high client rate is caused by the group of refugees who started their own family after few years of living in Norway.

Research shows that besides refugees' physical and mental trauma's caused by pre-flight experiences (for a review see Lustig et al., 2004), extra stress and tense family relations are caused by a staggered migration (Smith, Lalonde, & Johnson, 2004). The separation–reunion experience causes mental health problems in parents (Baptiste, Hardy, & Lewis, 1997; Kotch, Browne, Dufort, Winsor, & Catellier, 1999), adverse behaviour and emotional outcomes in the child (Johnsona, et al., 2002) and has negative implications for parent-child bonding (Smith, et al., 2004).

The youngsters in the studies of Rasmussen (2004) and Aannestad (2004) describe the breakups and reunifications they experienced with family members. Often the father fled pursuit in their home country and moved to Norway first. Mother and children joined a few years later. Two girls in the study of Rasmussen (2004) describe how they lived in fear for years, not knowing if their father was still alive. Other youngsters moved to Norway to be united with family members they did not know or had not seen in years such as an elder brother or grandparents. As can be read in the story of an African boy who moved to Norway together with a stepmom he did not know to be united with his biological father he had not seen in years.

Interviewer: How was it to come to Norway and meet your father?

Boy: That was strange, I didn't know him that well.

Interviewer: Did you know your stepmother before?

Boy: No, not that good. I had lived with her for two months before we came to Norway. I didn't know her that well, and my father neither (Rasmussen, 2004, p. 62).

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The youngsters as well as the CWS staff report how many adolescents strongly miss their mothers or other family members they left behind in their country of origin (Rasmussen, 2004).

### **Single Mothers**

The youngsters in the studies of Rasmussen (2004) and Aannestad (2004) describe how a stressful migration and a difficult family reunion often led to divorce of the parents (Rasmussen, 2004; Aannestad, 2004). Eight out of 11 immigrants in the study of Ramussen (2004) and six out of seven girls interviewed by Aannestad (2004) explain how their parents divorced after living some years in Norway. Often fathers remarried what brought along a stepparent and stepbrothers- and sisters, causing complex family relations. Many youngsters describe growing up in a single parent household with often the mom as a responsible caretaker. Quite some of them (4 out of 11 in the study of Rasmussen and 4 out of 7 in the study of Aannestad) depict a mom who suffered from a physical or psychological illness. Like a young girl from Asian origin explains in the study of Rasmussen:

My mom and dad divorced. There was never any system, a real family—at times a lot of chaos, a lot of fighting, a lot of arguing, so much clutter. There was seldom food in the fridge. Mom was alone with four children. That put a lot of pressure on her. She wanted to leave all from one period, I understand that very well. She gave up a little and then it is always the oldest daughter in the family who takes up the responsibility (in Rasmussen, 2004, p. 63).

Results from a Swedish study show that the odds of placement are higher when a mother receives sickness benefit, disability pension or long term social assistance (Franzén et al., 2008). The family situation of immigrant adolescents also can bring along extra responsibilities in the household for the (oldest) daughters.

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Some of the girls in the studies of Rasmussen (2004) and Aannestad (2004) express they felt like a mother to their mother and to their siblings.

### **Generational Conflict**

Adolescence is often described as a time of increased emotional and physical distancing from parents (e.g., Paikoff & Brooks Gunn, 1991; Steinberg, 2001) and generational conflicts take place in parent-adolescent relationships independent of cultural background (Sam & Virta, 2003; Laursen, Coy, & Collins, 1998). For parents who raise their children in a country where the child rearing values of the majority are different from their own, extra possible causes of conflict between immigrant adolescents and their parents can take place (Maiter & Stalker, 2011; Hyman, Vu, & Beiser, 2000). Especially when non-Western families move to a Western country, changing power relations and the empowerment of women outside the household can contribute to higher levels of family conflict (Zhou, 2000; Prieur, 2002). These conflicts are often enhanced due to different acculturation speed of adolescents and their parents (Kromhout, Eldering, & Knorth, 2000; Hyman, Vu, & Beiser, 2000).

In almost one third of the applications in the study of Bø (2004), there is a generational conflict between the adolescent with immigrant background and their guardian (see Table 3). Both Rasmussen and Aannestad (2004) state it is in puberty that the problems between immigrant adolescents and their parents take form.

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Table 3

*Most important causes named in applications for immigrant and Norwegian adolescents for CWS institution in Oslo in 2002-2003*

	Immigrant adolescent	Norwegian adolescent
<i>1 Adolescent behaviour</i>		
Noise, fighting, truancy	52	42
Criminality	32	13
Substance abuse	25	38
Psychological problems	26	46
<i>2 Generation conflict</i>	29	12
<i>3 Parental neglect</i>		
Substance abuse	5	34
Illness of parent	26	26
Limits problem	22	19
<i>4 Abuse</i>		
Violence	46	12
Sexual abuse	7	7
<i>5 Lacking care</i>		
Thrown out of family	8	1
Guardian gave up/travels	11	15
Parent(s) dead or ill	4	1
Total care applications	97	100

*Note.* From *Overrepresentasjon av innvandrerungdom i barnevernet- realitet eller fiksjon* [Overrepresentation of immigrant youth in CWS- reality or fiction]? by P. B. Bø, 2004, Oslo: HiO-rapport 2004 nr 20, p. 37.

Many of the immigrant youngsters interviewed in the studies of Rasmussen (2004) and Aannestad (2004) describe a bad communication with their parents. This communication is often characterized by discussions concerning the rules set up by the parents such as curfew and contact with other youth outside the house

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(Rasmussen, 2004; Aannestad, 2004). As appears from these two citations of young girls in the study of Aannestad:

I remember one time, for example that I talked about prevention for girls at a very young age. I was 14- or 13 years maybe. It was just a survey that we took part in. I came in the newspaper, and many had seen me and dad reacted very strong to it and it was there where the whole rebellion with dad started. So it was wrong to talk about prevention in the newspaper. He didn't know what I had said, if you know what I mean. He had just seen my picture and the heading, and had taken a conclusion [...]

She [mom] found out I had a boyfriend so she said "Yes but that is not why you are going to school. You are going to school to learn, not to have boyfriends". That is the way she thought. I had been together with him for two years and hid it for her, no I did for 1,5 year. I quit school for her and was home for three months (Aannestad, 2004, p. 117).

Yet how important are generational conflicts as a cause of out-of-home care in immigrants in Norway? As second generation immigrant adolescents have significant lower out-of-home care rates than the first generation, is it likely to assume that they experience less generational conflicts? Or are generational conflicts handled differently in second generation families? International research demonstrates how second generation adolescents tend to disagree more openly with their parents and have earlier expectations for autonomy than first generation immigrants (Fuligni, 1998). Possibly this open disagreement makes second generation adolescents spend more time outside the house, leaving fewer opportunities for conflictual interactions at home. Another possible interpretation is that second generation immigrant parents are

getting more familiar with the new culture and hence become more tolerant to the 'Western' behaviour of their adolescent children.

### **Violence at Home**

Violence is more often the reason for first generation immigrants (6.0%) to receive CWS support than for Norwegians (1.7%; Kalve & Dyrhaug, 2011). The studies from Bø (2004), Rasmussen (2004) and Aannestad (2004) suggest that violence is often a reason for immigrant adolescents to be placed in out-of-home care by CWS. Eight of the eleven youngsters interviewed by Rasmussen (2004) and six out of seven in the study of Aannestad (2004) describe violence in their homes. The youngsters connect the violence to the -in their eyes unreasonable- rules set up by their parents such as a ban to meet with friends, being out after school time or taking part in activities together with other youth (Bø, 2004; Rasmussen, 2004; Aannestad, 2004). Few adolescents explain how they obeyed their parents in order to avoid conflict and being beaten. Others report they rather disobeyed knowing they had to face the consequences of their actions. Rasmussen (2004) explains how the youngsters she interviewed find hitting inexcusable. As seems from the words of one boy:

I know what it is to be hit, it is not good, you begin to develop a hatred in you.

To hate—that is very dangerous. Because it makes you so... it is so painful—you start to hate the one who does it to you (Rasmussen, 2004, p. 67)

According to the girls in the study of Rasmussen (2004), the violence and abuse in their home has little to do with a different tradition in child rearing. In her analysis, Rasmussen (2004) concludes that there are several causes for the violence and that the violence must be understood in the context of economical problems, illness, traumas, a small social network and interaction problems.

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Interestingly and seemingly contradictory, violence is more often the reason for CWS support for second generation (8.4%) than for first generation immigrants (6.0%) (Kalve & Dyrhaug, 2011). This raises the suspicion that violence alone is insufficient in explaining the out-of-home care numbers.

### **Criminality**

The data from Bø (2004) shows that in immigrant adolescents' CWS applications criminality is far more often named as a reason for applying to a CWS institution than for Norwegians (see Table 3, p. 44). This result is in line with the general data for CWS support in Norway. Social deviant behaviour or criminality is a reason for 7.0 out of 1000 first generation immigrant children to get into contact with CWS whereas this is only the case for 3.8 per 1000 for second generation immigrants and 3.6 per 1000 for Norwegians (Kalve & Dyrhaug, 2011). In their CWS report, Kalve and Dyrhaug (2011) state that mainly boys get into contact with CWS for this reason. This is congruent with the often reported gender difference that boys tend to externalize their problems more than girls (e.g., Øia, 2003).

### **Substance Abuse**

In Norway, substance abuse is less often a reason for immigrants to receive CWS support than for Norwegians. Substance abuse of the child is given as a ground for CWS support in 1.7 % of Norwegian cases and only 0.7 % for first generation and 0.4 % for second generation immigrants (Kalve & Dyrhaug, 2011). The same trend is visible in the data from Bø (2004), presented in Table 3 (p. 44). Even though substance abuse is less often given as a ground for contacting CWS for immigrant adolescents, some girls in the study of Aannestad (2004) describe having been in gangs where they experimented with alcohol and drugs. One girl describes that period in her life the following way:

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I was doing a lot there, I was in fights, it was all so unbelievable, we made up so many crazy things, suddenly we were fighting with some girls and yes, we didn't respect no one (Aannestad, 2004, p. 111).

Risk factors for adolescent substance abuse reported in research are high levels of family conflict, low degree of bonding between the adolescents and their parents and lack of maternal involvement in activities of children (Hawkins, Catalano, & Miller, 1992). The difference between immigrant adolescents and Norwegians in CWS is even more clear when looking at parent substance abuse. Substance abuse from the parent is a reason for CWS help in 12.5% of Norwegian cases and 1.4% in first generation and 2.7% in second generation immigrant cases (Kalve & Dyrhaug, 2011).

### **School Difficulties**

The youngsters in the study of Rasmussen (2004) narrate about their school problems when they were still living with their parents. Some explain how a bad schooling in their home country or a period without schooling made it difficult for them to perform well at school. As appears from this citation:

I had school problems, because when you come here (in Norway) priority is given to learning Norwegian and other things are forgotten. You fall behind in other courses and there were already things I had to retake (Rasmussen, 2004, p. 72).

Many youngsters in the studies of Rasmussen (2004) and Aannestad (2004) depict a home situation where there was little interest in their school activities. In addition to this, their home situation was often too distracting for them to focus on their school work. As appears from the story of this girl:



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I did really bad at school when I was living at home. When I lived there (in home country) I had the best grades because there I was doing good, but after all what happened here in Norway I became bad at school. I had so many things to do. I always had to sort out bills, and see which ones were paid and which ones where not paid, economy and everything was my responsibility (Rasmussen, 2004, p. 73).

It is evident from the interviews that parents' problems bring along extra responsibilities for their adolescent children, eventually keeping them away from their own school tasks. Rasmussen (2004) also describes how many youngsters had to exchange school every time their family moved, making them having to start over again in a new school. Many youngsters reflect on how their school performance improved after their stay in CWS institution as can be seen from this example of a young girl:

[At CWS institution] I got a lot of help with homework. Things take time and when they don't nag, it doesn't get done. I got help with homework and school and I received pocket money every week (Rasmussen, 2004, p. 74).

### **Two Particular Situations Explored**

In order to gain a better understanding of the reasons behind the overrepresentation of immigrant adolescents in CWS, two specific situations will be explored. A first situation is the one of immigrant adolescent girls. Researchers (e.g., Bø, 2004) and experienced welfare workers (e.g., Aannestad, 2004) state how in Norway particularly immigrant adolescent girls seek help from CWS. Comparing the situation of both sexes can yield insight in why girls are more likely to see CWS support. A second situation that will be explored is the one of Pakistanis in Norway, an immigrant group that is underrepresented in Norwegian CWS. The situation of Pakistanis is compared to the one of Iranian immigrants in Norway, a group that is overrepresented in CWS. Both comparisons shine a light on possible reasons behind overrepresentation of immigrant populations in CWS.

### **Immigrant Adolescent Girls Seek More Help**

Adolescent immigrant girls have been reported to seek more contact with CWS than immigrant boys (Bø, 2004; Aannestad, 2004). In the study of Aannestad for instance, four of the seven girls interviewed sought CWS contact themselves. Several reasons can underlie the fact that girls seek more help than boys.

A first possible reason for the observed gender difference is the frequently documented extra responsibility for household and siblings for immigrant girls (e.g., Suárez-Orozco & Qin, 2006; Valenzuela, 1999). In the interviews presented in this paper, some girls state they played an adult role in their family. Making young girls feel like a mother to their mother and to their siblings (Rasmussen, 2004). As one of the girls in the study of Rasmussen says ‘and then it is always the oldest daughter in the family who takes up the responsibility’ (Rasmussen, 2004, p 63).

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A second possible reason for the gender difference is the broadly accepted assumption that immigrant girls are often treated more strictly than immigrant boys (e.g., Sung, 1987; Olsen, 1997). However, in the study of Rasmussen (2004) the stories of immigrant boys do not seem to be that different than those of immigrant girls. Yang for example tells how his dad did not allow him to see his friends after school time. He did it anyway what led to conflict with his dad. Said on his turn, narrates how he was afraid to go home after school because his dad beat him. He explains how it was best to do what he wanted otherwise conflicts became even bigger.

A third possible factor behind the gender difference is that cultural conflicts seem to hit women harder than men. Researchers report more integration profiles and a better sociocultural (Berry et al., 2006; Sam et al., 2008) and school adaptation (Sam, 1998) for immigrant girls. A study in Norway found less ethnic competence and less collectivist values for immigrant girls than for boys (Oppedal, Røysamb, & Heyerdahl, 2004). Third World immigrant women are often reported to more readily embrace the egalitarian gender roles of Western host societies (Hojat et al., 2000; Phinney & Flores, 2002; Stiles, Gibbons, Lie, Sand, & Krull, 1998; Gabaccia, 1994; Dasgupta, 1998). Immigrant girls clearly see the advantages of living in Norway. In a study by Stiles and colleagues (1998) girls report to prefer living in Norway naming reasons such as “In Norway I don’t have to wear a veil”, “I would have been married already in Pakistan”, “In Norway you can say anything you want about the system”, and “There are more educational possibilities in Norway” (p. 293). However, plenty international research shows how immigrant parents often exert strict control upon their daughters’ outside activities (e.g., Sung, 1987; Olsen, 1997). Girls are assigned the role as “designated keeper of culture” (Billson, 1995) and parents have higher

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expectations for them to embody traditional values than for boys (Haddad & Smith, 1996). Consequently, immigrant girls' inclination towards the Norwegian society can conflict with their role as gate-keeper of culture and can also evoke negative reactions from the men in their own ethnic group (Dalgard & Thapa, 2007). For immigrant boys, the cultural conflict is likely to be smaller as their lower sociocultural adaptation is more in accordance with their smaller task in preserving culture. The observation that women feel more strongly the differences between the collectivistic and individualistic cultures is also seen in other studies documenting the different effect social integration has in men and in women from non-western countries. In their study in Norway, Dalgard, and Thapa (2007) demonstrate how for men the effect of social integration was reduced when adjusting for paid work and household income. According to the authors, social integration increases the probability of being in a paid job what on its turn has a positive effect on mental health. In women, the results are more complex. Social integration seems to increase psychological distress when adjusted for work-related variables.

A fourth possible explanation for the fact that girls seek more CWS contact than boys, could be caused by differences in reactions to difficult life situations. Adolescent immigrant girls have a lower psychological adaptation than boys (Sam & Virta, 2003; Berry et al., 2006; Sam et al., 2008; Ababe et al., 2012). They seem more vulnerable to family-related stress (e.g., Aronowitz, 1984; Zambrana & Silva-Palacios, 1989), internalize their problems more (Birmaher et al., 1996; Loeber, Burke, Lahey, Winters, & Zera, 2000) and are more likely to react with anxiety, depression or other subjective manners (Portes & Rumbaut, 1996; Aannestad, 2004). A Norwegian study by Sagatun et al. (2007) depicts how immigrant adolescent girls are also more affected by their family economy than immigrant boys. In this study,

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both sexes report a lower perceived family economy than Norwegian adolescents. Yet only for immigrant adolescent girls who perceived their family economy to be bad or very bad this was linked to more mental health problems and distress. This link was not found for immigrant boys.

A fifth possible explanation for the gender difference is the often documented gender difference in help seeking. Girls are reported to talk more about their problems and look more for help than boys (Dyregrov, 2000; Rickwood & Braithwaite, 1994; Mackenzie, Gekoski, & Knox, 2006).

### **The Case of Pakistanis in Norway**

A special case of immigrants in CWS in Norway, seems to be the one of Pakistanis. In the 1960's, Pakistanis arrived in Norway as labour migrants. Today, they are the largest non-western immigrant group in Norway. Even though coming from a culture significantly different from Norway's, Pakistanis are underrepresented in Norwegian CWS (Kalve & Dyrhaug, 2011; Bø, 2004). With 43 per 1000 first generation Pakistanis and 39 per 1000 second generation Pakistanis getting in contact with CWS, Pakistanis score lower than the average numbers of 67 per 1000 for first generation immigrants and 51 per 1000 for second generation immigrants (Kalve & Dyrhaug, 2011). Gaining insight into the underrepresentation of Pakistanis can help in understanding the overrepresentation of other groups in Norwegian CWS. For this, the situation of Pakistani immigrants in Norway is compared to the situation of immigrants from Iran. Both countries are large immigrant populations in Norway and come from a similar mainly Muslim, collectivistic, masculine society with large power distances between member of the societies (Hofstede, 1991). Yet contrary to Pakistan, Iran has one of the highest overrepresentation numbers in Norwegian CWS,

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for their first (83 per 1000) as well as for their second generation immigrants (77 per 1000; Kalve & Dyrhaug, 2011).

A first plausible reason behind the underrepresentation of Pakistanis in CWS is the reason for their migration and their pre-migration experiences. Pakistani's mainly came to Norway as labour migrants and in case of family reunification. Only four percent of Pakistanis came to Norway as refugees, asylum seekers or on other humanitarian grounds. Whereas 80 percent of Iranian immigrants migrated to Norway for these reasons (Lien, Thapa, Rove, Kumar, & Hauff, 2010). It was already described before that migration history is a significant risk factor to get into contact with CWS (Kalve & Dyrhaug, 2011; Euser, van IJzendoorn, Prinzie, & Bakermans-Kranenburg, 2011). A recent study by Lien et al. (2010) documents the link between pre-migration experiences and psychological distress for Iranian and Pakistani immigrants in Norway. The researchers found a higher prevalence of psychological distress in immigrants from Iran than in those from Pakistan. For both immigrant groups, psychological distress was significantly related to war experience. Yet far more Iranian immigrants in the study (three out of four) had experienced war than Pakistanis (less than 15%). Additionally, half of Iranian men had experienced imprisonment due to political reasons and torture.

A second possible reason for the underrepresentation of Pakistani immigrants in Norwegian CWS can be found in the size of their population and length of stay in Norway. Pakistanis started coming to Norway in the 1960's hence now make up for the largest non-western immigrant group in Norway with a large group of second generation immigrants. According to Sam, the size of their compatriot social network can provide them support in handling child rearing difficulties (D. Sam, personal communication, April 16, 2013). Even though Iranians are a large group of

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immigrants in Norway, their population is newer and smaller. Possibly this leaves Iranian immigrants with less opportunities to solve their child rearing difficulties within their own Iranian social network.

A third possible reason for the underrepresentation of Pakistanis in Norwegian CWS is closely linked to the just mentioned second reason. Sam (1998) described in one of his studies how Pakistanis in Norway have more often separation as an acculturation style, for them positively related to life satisfaction (Sam, 1998). This can be a result of the size of their immigrant group in Norway. As the network of compatriots of Pakistanis is likely to be large, it is less necessary for their well being to get into contact with Norwegians. A Norwegian study by Iversen, Ma, and Meyer (2013) report a stronger direction towards Norwegian society for Iranian immigrants than for Pakistanis. The researchers found how 55% of Iranian women reported good or very good Norwegian speaking skills whereas this was only the case for 31 percent of Pakistani women. Less variations in language skills were found for men in both groups. According to the authors, Norwegian language skills of immigrants can be seen as an indication of acculturation. Yet the study by Valenta (2009) described before, shows how immigrants find it frustrating having to engage in conversations with Norwegians. Possibly the smaller compatriot network of Iranian causes an extra stress factor as they have to communicate more in a language that is not their mother tongue. For Pakistanis in Norway who can fall back on a large compatriot network, this is possibly less the case.

A fourth possible reason for the underrepresentation of Pakistani immigrants in CWS can be found in their conflict handling style. Conflict handling has been said to be culturally sensitive (Avruch, 1998). Sam (D. Sam, personal Communication, April 16, 2013) agrees Pakistanis tend not to 'wash their dirty linen in public', and

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will try to solve problems within the family. Yet another approach is reported to take place in immigrant Pakistani families, namely sending children back to Pakistan. In the interviews of Rasmussen (2004) and Aannestad some youngsters talk about their fear and not seldom threats to be killed or to be sent out to their country of origin. Results from a Norwegian study shows that quite some youngsters from Pakistani origin spent a significant time period in Pakistan. The study with 870 youngsters (16-25 years) with immigrant background shows that 27% of Pakistani's had stayed in Pakistan for at least one period of one year or more (Løwe, 2008). With this, they score significantly higher than the Vietnamese (2%) and Turkish youth (6%) in the study (Løwe, 2008). It is possible that this is an action from Pakistani parents aimed at preventing or handling possible conflicts with their up growing children. An action that in its turn can lead to the underrepresentation of Pakistanis in Norwegian CWS.



### **The Specificity of Adolescence**

In discussing the situation of immigrant adolescents and deciding the best fitted approach for those in difficult home situations, the specific time-period adolescence is, is not to be forgotten. Not only is adolescence a transient period, it is also a time characterized by norm compliance and peer pressure. In addition, there can be a possible influence of the stress on equality in the Norwegian society.

### **A Transient Period in Life**

As described before, intergenerational value discrepancies between adolescents and their parents are common during adolescents, independent of cultural background (Sam & Virta, 2003; Laursen, Coy, & Collins, 1998). Adolescence is a time when the emotional bond becomes less cordial (Laursen & Collins, 1994) as the search for the adolescents' identity and autonomy takes place. Yet it is important not to forget that this is a temporary phase. When stepping into adulthood many things change in a young life. Identity development, for example is more settled in young adulthood (van Oort et al., 2007). Another important change is the expansion of the social network outside the family. As the social network grows and the place of the family in one's life takes a different place, family relations get easier. In the data from Rasmussen (2004), seven out of 11 youngsters say the contact with their parents improved after they moved on their own after their stay in the CWS institution. Although some still report not to want any contact with their parents. This improvement of parent-adolescent relations after out-of-home care is important to reflect on. Maybe the out-of-home care helped in improving the parent-adolescent relation. Or perhaps their relationship would have improved with the passing of time anyway? If the latter is the case, alternative solutions should be considered that can be

can be helpful for immigrant adolescents in difficult family situations. Possible prevention measures will be discussed further in the next part.

### **Norm Compliance**

Without playing down the toughness of the lives of the immigrant adolescents who contact CWS, it is interesting to reflect on the role of norm compliance in their decision (or acceptance) of the out-of-home placement. International researchers who interviewed immigrant adolescents (e.g., Hyman, Vu, & Beiser, 2000) demonstrate how some compare their parents' attitude to the one of their peers' parents. As described before, child rearing values in Norway can be quite different to the ones in non-western cultures. These differences become clear for immigrant youth who realize their Norwegian peers are raised with other values (Thomson & Rød Larsen, 1994). Some young girls in the study of Rasmussen (2004) write upon a feeling of injustice when realizing how their home situation is different than the one of their (Norwegian) peers. An example in the situation for this girl:

I actually had many problems with my family. I was always arguing with my mother and she did not want to understand that youth in Norway don't do the same as they do in Iraq. She grow up in a totally different way and she cannot expect that we will do the same as she did 40 years ago as things change (Rasmussen, 2004, p. 70).

I wanted to have it different. I didn't want to go out with a shawl, I wanted to go to school, I wanted to have free time, I wanted to go out with friends, I just wanted to do something, but I was not allowed to. I was not allowed to be outside (Aannestad, 2004, p. 105).

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This negative experience even leads some girls in the study of Aannestad (2004) to partially reject their ethnic culture. As can be read in the words of this immigrant girl:

I simply don't mind my home country. Because I don't like Iraqis. They talk so much, they give you a bad reputation and Iraqi boys are so nasty, when they come here to Norway. They think that Norwegian girls and the Iraqi girls who are here, how can I say: .. are whores. I experienced it so many times, that they whispered to me 'you have to speak your own language'. I just show them the finger, because I get so tired of it. They push women down all the time. It shouldn't be like this (Aannestad, 2004, p. 105).

It is possible that some immigrant adolescents feel deprived when comparing their situation to the one of their peers and hope that a placement in out-of-home care will make them be more like their peers. That this claim is not unlikely appears from a Swedish report. In this report, the authors describe how some immigrant adolescent girls even prefer to be placed in a Swedish foster family (Socialstyrelsen, 1995). This claim inclines that aspiring 'being normal' should be visible in other parts of their lives as well, for example in their alcohol and drug abuse. Even though findings in the general population (Amundsen, Rossow, & Skurtveit, 2005), CWS data (Kalve & Dyrhaug, 2011) and the study from Bø (2004) report less substance abuse for immigrant adolescents than for Norwegians, the stories of the immigrant youngsters in the interviews of Rasmussen (2004) and Aannestad (2004) give a different image. Many of the youngsters describe having experimented with alcohol and drugs before they stayed in out-of-home care. Besides the presence of several risk factors of adolescent substance abuse in their lives as listed before, it is possible that some youngsters feel more the need to join Norwegians and their behaviour.

### **The Influence of Equality**

Like in other Scandinavian countries, equality is a cherished ideal in Norway. There is equality in terms of gender and children participation but equality can also be seen in the attitude towards immigrants, as a vast majority of the Norwegian population (86%) wants the same work opportunities for immigrants (Blom, 2012). Yet their expectations towards immigrants seem to hold some of that 'equality' as well, as immigrants are expected to behave similar as Norwegians, hence assimilate to Norwegian culture. Some authors (e.g., Towns, 2002) warn that besides the mainstream praises for gender equality in societies, it can also create divisions between the host national and immigrant population. In her discussion on gender equality in Sweden, Towns (2002) states that it was only as Sweden became a gender-equal state in the 1990's, that gender inequality was presented as a characteristic of the 'culture of immigrants'. According to prominent thinkers such as Alexis de Tocqueville (in Gullestad, 2002), the idea of equality in a society can lead to an identity search. For members of the society who are visibly different from the majority such as immigrants, this identity search can be more pronounced. It is likely that in societies characterized by equality, this search for identity in immigrants will be stronger than in less equal societies.

### **Out-Of-Home Care As Preferred Solution?**

Despite the public cost of organizing out-of-home care, research points to poor long term outcomes on several dimensions such as education, income, social assistance, employment (Clausen & Kristofersen, 2008), mental illness, substance abuse and criminality (Clausen, 2004). An image that is similar to international research (for USA: Courtney & Dworsky, 2006; for Sweden: Vinnerljung & Sallnäs, 2008; for Denmark: Egelund & Lausten, 2009). Yet studies carried out mainly focus on host society children and little- if any- good studies have been carried out on how placement in out-of-home care affects the development of children and adolescents with immigrant background (Holm-Hansen, Haaland, & Myrvold, 2007). The studies of Rasmussen (2004) and Aannestad (2004) give a first view on the experiences of immigrants who were placed in out-of-home care as an adolescent. Next, the experiences of the immigrant youngsters in these studies will be used to discuss the choice of out-of-home care for their situation.

### **Positive CWS Experience**

The immigrant youngsters who were interviewed in the studies of Rasmussen (2004) and Aannestad (2004) describe an overall positive out-of-home care experience. As can be understood from these citations:

I felt like they were a family to me. All the grownups, I can trust on all of them. I can talk to all of them. I off course had my favorites there who I talked most to, but they stood up for me. It was really painful to leave them. But they stood up for me more than my parents did. I got a very good contact with them in a short time, we were together and had a great time... They showed that they loved me, they showed that they cared all along, and that was good to know.

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Everything is positive when you move in here, people are kind to you. For them who need love, they get love. It is good for those who need to be followed up in daily life, and for those who have problems (Rasmussen, 2004, p. 77).

The youngsters talk about their positive school experiences and how it felt to be surrounded by CWS personnel who cared for them and took time to listen to them. Especially the contact with their personal counselor at CWS is seen as a very important part of their stay at the institution. Many youngsters in the study of Rasmussen (2004) refer to their personal counselor with the terms 'father' or 'mother'. As this boy in the study of Rasmussen (2004) explains:

Yes, he (personal counselor) is like my father. When I talk to my grandfather then I say that even though my grandfather and my father live in Morocco, I also have a father in Norway... (Rasmussen, 2004, p. 78).

It is however necessary to mention a possible selection bias in both studies. Contact with the youngsters was made through the personnel of the CWS institutions what might have resulted in a selection of interviewees who had a close and positive contact with their personal counselor during their stay.

The citations of the youngsters also point to one of the shortcomings of out-of-home care as a solution. Even though the immigrant youngsters describe a closeness with the CWS personnel, in their citations can be read it 'It was really painful to leave them'. Their statements emphasize the short term nature of out-of-home care. Once the adolescents get to know their 'new CWS family', it is almost time to leave them again.

**Try all Other Options First**

Even if their out-of-home care was a positive experience, the step towards it is a drastic decision. When reflecting on their situation before contacting CWS, the girls in the study of Aannestad (2004) talk about their fear, sometimes even of being killed. As this girl who was sexually abused by her father tells:

I don't have... thus I thought about all the possibilities, but I thought so to say it, that I won't do it. I was threatened, if I say something then I am done anyway. He will kill me (Aannestad, 2004, p. 118).

The decision to contact CWS is even more drastic when considering the shame these youngsters bring over their family for their situation and contacting CWS. As one girl describes in the study of Aannestad (2004):

So I had problems. I didn't have it good at home, for a long time and mom knew this herself. But she was so busy that it would come out and that other Kurdish families would find out. That was what she was thinking about the most. But in the end I didn't have a choice, so that was it. But it has been a long way this way (Aannestad, 2004, p. 117).

The decision of the adolescents to contact CWS has serious consequences on the relationship with their parents. Many youngsters in the study of Rasmussen (2004) tell their parents did not want to have any more contact after they moved into the CWS institution. For example the story of this young girl:

I lived with my family for such a long time so it was a little strange that they suddenly did not want to have contact with me anymore. So I thought ok, insensitive people, what is the matter? They are supposed to be my parents, and the ones in the institution showed more concern for me than my parents did. ... So I did not want to have that much contact with them. They even

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didn't bother to contact me, they didn't wonder how I was doing. That is a little strange. If I would be my mom I would have been curious how my own daughter is doing. Anyone would be, but my parents were not interested (Rasmussen, 2004, p. 86).

Contrary to their overall positive out-of-home care experience, many of the young immigrants are hesitant to recommend others to contact CWS. They talk about how it influenced their relationship with their parents and see it as an option to be considered only after all other things have failed (Aannestad, 2004).



### **Prevention Strategies**

Some of the immigrant youngsters who experienced out-of-home care describe out-of-home care should be only considered when all other options have been tried. This is an interesting observation. What are these other options for immigrant adolescents? And based on their experiences, which other prevention measures ought to be installed? Sufficient national and international research material points to refugee history as a significant risk factor for out-of-home care. In the interviews described before can be read how this can affect the lives of the refugee children in Norway such as divorce of the parents and growing up with a single mother who not seldom suffers from a mental or physical illness. It should be investigated where factors known to contribute to successful refugee migration can be accounted for such as family migrating as a unit, short time of being apart, young children, (Suárez-Orozco et al., 2002; Elliston, 1985; Baptiste et al., 1997), and positive and frequent parent–child contact prior to reunion (Douglin, 1995).

Reflecting on the experiences of immigrant youngsters who were once in out-of-home care, several prevention strategies are proposed aimed at reducing out-of-home care numbers of first generation immigrant adolescents. The first two strategies that will be presented are related to the specific situation of immigrant adolescents in out-of-home care namely to build a social network for single immigrant mothers and to provide school support for immigrant adolescents. A third prevention strategy is more general. Here acculturation theories are used to discuss how integration policies can positively affect the lives of first generation immigrant adolescents.

#### **Building a Social Network for Single Immigrant Mothers**

Researchers who focus on immigrant mental health in Norway state that a strong family structure conscious of a tradition and value system, and the influence of

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the parents in the socialization and externalizing behaviour, are protective in developing mental health problems for immigrant adolescents (Vaage, et al., 2009). Yet quite some of the immigrant youngsters who experienced out-of-home care in the studies of Rasmussen (2004) and Aannestad (2004) depict mothers who suffer from a psychological or physical illness. Possibly, these mothers were confronted with one or more risk factors associated with mental health problems in immigrant women such as economic deprivation, multiple negative life events and post-traumatic experiences (Ababe et al., 2012). However, an important mediator has been found to reduce a negative effect of these risk factors on mental health, namely social support (Syed, et al., 2006; Ababe et al., 2012).

In order to reduce out-of-home care numbers in first generation immigrant adolescents, sufficient attention should be paid to their mothers. A major part of the prevention policy should therefore consist of programs helping single immigrant mothers build a social network. They should be provided with sufficient social ties to help them cope with their daily difficulties and help them in finding ways to handle their adolescents. Where possible, immigration and social policy workers should be aware of the beneficial effects that contact with compatriots provides immigrants. As described before, many (first generation) immigrants have their closest contacts with compatriots with whom their not only share language but also plenty of cultural experiences (Valenta, 2009).

### **Organizing School Support for Immigrant Adolescents**

Social support from parents (Sam & Berry, 2008) and close others (Syed et al., 2006) is important for immigrant adolescents, as it buffers the negative impact of stressors on the well-being (Cohen & Wills, 1985). Yet several studies show how immigrant adolescents experience less social support than host country adolescents

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(e.g., Syed et al., 2006). Something that is also found in the interviews with immigrant youngsters who stayed in out-of-home care. One of the biggest advantages they report of staying in the CWS institution is to finally have someone to talk to. Someone who listens to them. To have time to focus on themselves and think about their future. To have a person who is there to help them with their school work. The home situation of the adolescents is often too distracting for them to focus on their school work (Rasmussen, 2004; Aannestad, 2004) and immigrant parents sometimes have too low education and bad Norwegian skills to support their children in their homework (Loona, 2002).

School and social care organisations should be aware of this special need and provide a framework where special support can be provided for immigrant adolescents. As the social life of immigrant adolescents can be limited to the school environment, this is a good place to provide them with this extra care. A school teacher or social worker can be the confidence person for the immigrant adolescent and a sounding board for their plans about the future. Special attention and a pro-active approach should be given to refugees, first generation adolescents girls, and adolescents with a single parent.

### **Integration Policies**

For a successful adaptation, it is crucial for immigrant adolescents to find a balance between the two cultures they are involved in (Sam, 2000), a balance that requires them to maintain their cultural heritage and participate in Norwegian society. Even though no specific data is available on the acculturation profiles and adaptation of immigrant adolescents in out-of-home care in Norway, the findings from the interviews of Rasmussen (2004) and Aannestad (2004) show that adolescents find it a struggle to belong to two cultures. Belonging to two cultures can cause conflicts in

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attitudes, values and behaviour and form a problematic identity formation (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Governments are advised to support the findings of acculturation studies (Berry et al., 2006) and use these in shaping their immigration policies.

Extensive international research points to integration as the most beneficial form of acculturation with the best psychological and sociocultural adaptation (Berry et al., 2006). More integration profiles are found for second than for first generation immigrants and more for those with a longer stay in the host country (Berry et al., 2006). Several studies demonstrate the effect of immigration policies and attitudes towards immigrants on the acculturation and mental health of immigrants. For example the study by Virta and colleagues (2004) discussed before, shows a poorer psychological adaptation for Turkish adolescents in Norway than for those in Sweden (Virta, Sam, & Westin, 2004). According to the authors, this difference can be accounted for by differences in integration policy between both countries. Having the opportunity to have compatriot friends is important for the well-being of immigrants. In the interviews of Valenta (2009) mentioned before can be read how first generation immigrants in Norway find it hard and stressful to maintain contacts with their Norwegian friends. An integration policy that promotes integration of her immigrant inhabitants should focus on one or ideally on both integration dimensions: help immigrants maintain their cultural heritage and stimulate interaction between different cultures.

**Encourage maintaining cultural heritage.** A first part of the integration policy should be to encourage immigrants to maintain their cultural heritage. Allowing immigrant groups to live according to their traditions will help immigrant adolescents to develop a positive ethnic identity. This will on its turn have a positive effect on the life satisfaction and mental health of immigrant adolescents.

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However real life citations from the studies of Rasmussen (2004) and Aannestad (2004) mentioned before, hamper the interpretation of this theoretical finding. Some of the girls seem to find it hard to juggle with their ethnic and Norwegian values. Similar to results from other studies, the girls seem likely to endorse Norwegian values. Yet they report how some boys from their own ethnic group seem more likely to follow the ethnic cultural values of their parents. As could be read in the story of the Iraqi girl (p. 59). This causes tensions for the immigrant girls as they find themselves controlled and judged by the members of their ethnic society. What on its turn can cause these immigrant girls to develop a negative ethnic identity and even turn themselves against their own ethnic group.

**Get cultural groups into contact.** The second part of the integration policy should be to encourage immigrant groups and host society members to get into contact. The citations from immigrants in the study of Valenta (2009) described before, show how even though most first generation immigrants prefer close friendships with their compatriots, many find it necessary to keep a contact with Norwegian society as well. One of the greatest difficulties in interaction with Norwegians seems to be the language. One arena ideal for cultural groups to get into contact is through sports (Lidén, 2006). As sports generally follow simple rules, do not require a high linguistic competence (Strandbu, 2004) and can serve as 'building blocks' in a local community (Vestel, 2004). Research results show that in Norway, immigrant youth are less represented in sport movements than Norwegian youth. Especially immigrant girls take to a lesser degree part in sport activities (Strandbu & Bjerkeset, 1998). Since 1990 projects have been put up in Norway to increase the sport participation of the immigrant population (Strandbu, 2004). In this, the role of parents has to be kept in mind as in Norway they play an important part in the sports

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activities of their children by assisting to organize activities such as driving children to matches, be a coach or team leader (Lidén, 2006). Being involved in sports is still more often a challenge for immigrant girls than for boys, hence some sport outfits such as bathing suits. A Norwegian study shows that for immigrant girls, sports are still a challenge to the boundaries of their ethnic identity (Walseth, 2006). Immigrant girls in the study with a strong ethnic identity are less likely to participate in sports and immigrant girls who do participate in sports report having been harassed or sanctioned because of that.

### **Organizing CWS Care for Immigrant Families**

In the next part of this paper, the results from the quantitative and qualitative studies described before are used to discuss the organization and approach of Norwegian CWS for immigrant families. First, a closer look is taken at the tenability of a child-centric approach and the interpretation of the Child Welfare Act when working with immigrant families. Second, possibilities for kinship foster care and voluntary placement are discussed. Third, suggestions are made on how CWS can reduce cultural misunderstandings and the threshold towards CWS in their work with immigrant families.

### **Approaching Immigrant Families**

For Norwegian as well as for immigrant families, CWS has been reported to use a child-centric approach, hereby focusing on the rights of the child and their viewpoints and opinions. However, is it possible to pursue a child-centric approach when working with immigrant families? Is it possible to focus on the individual immigrant child hereby disregarding their family who makes up for their cultural context? A context that will be put aside even more when the child is placed into care. Do possible advantages of out-of-home care for immigrant children on short term (such as performing better at school, giving them more time to focus on themselves) outweigh possible consequences on the longer term (such as a bad contact with their parents, a negative ethnic identity, distancing from their ethnic culture)? Little is known on the effect out-of-home care has on the lives of the rest of the family, particularly the parents. Yet it is important, not only for CWS workers but also for policy makers, to question and discuss whether potential positive outcomes for an immigrant child outweigh potential negative consequences the decision of out-of-home care has on the rest of their family.

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Norwegian CWS workers perceive quite some problems related to the minority background of immigrant children (Križ and Skivenes (2010; 2011). Yet in handling their cases, mainly Norwegian child rearing views are pursued and the cultural background of immigrant families is often disregarded, particularly in cases of refugee families (Hofman, 2010). Hofman (2010), states it is not a question of ‘if’ but rather of ‘how’ CWS should take the cultural background of immigrants into account in their actions and decisions. According to Hofman, the cultural background of the families should be considered in at least two decisions: (1) in deciding whether the terms and conditions of the Child Welfare Act § 4-12 (see p. 9) are met and (2) in judging what is in the ‘best interest’ of the child as mentioned in the Child Welfare Act § 4-1 (see p. 8). Making use of paragraph 4-12 of the Child Welfare Act to guide actions towards immigrant families is ambiguous. Part (c) for example mentions ‘mistreatment’ of the child. For some forms of mistreatment, Norwegian legislation is clear. Physical abuse for example is punishable by law, regardless of culture. Yet for other forms of mistreatment, for example psychological mistreatment, culturally different practices are more subjective to interpretation. Can some parental practices such as not allowing an adolescent to meet up with peers or giving an adolescent responsibilities for household and siblings be seen as insufficient or bad care?

In deciding the ‘best interest’ of the child, the cultural perspective should also be taken into account. What should be done if the opinion of the majority culture (hence the CWS workers) in this manner does not correspond to the opinion of the ethnic minority (hence the immigrant families)? There also ought to be a time perspective of this ‘best interest’ approach. Is what seems best for the child on short term also the best option on longer term? In assessing this, Hofman (2010) notes that even though some of the CWS cases she analyzed mention the importance of the



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biological bound to the culture and family, CWS cases seldom mention the meaning cultural background has for the child. The only opinion of the children that is visible in the CWS cases, is their opinion on being placed in out-of-home care and an eventual moving back to their parents.

It should also be studied what cultural background means when applying the UNCRC guidelines (see p. 8). One of the directives is that there should be continuity in the child's upbringing. Continuity is twofold. One on side, as discussed before, is the continuity in care and the potential consequences of a short term solution such as out-of-home care. On the other side is the continuity related to the cultural background of the immigrant child. When living in a CWS institution or with foster parents, a large part of immigrants lives become filled with contacts with members of other cultural backgrounds. Contact with the own culture is made difficult. Many youngsters in the studies of Rasmussen (2004) and Aannestad (2004) describe how their families refused contact with them while they lived in the CWS institution. Considering the shame they brought over their family for their problems and contacting CWS, it is probable that contact with other members of their culture was further complicated as well. It is also necessary to ask if CWS workers pay sufficient attention so that immigrant adolescents in CWS care can enjoy and practice parts of their own culture? According to Rasmussen (2004) and Aannestad (2004), little effort was made by the CWS workers to maintain a good contact with the parents.

### **Possibilities for Kinship Foster Care**

One possible solution for providing care to immigrant children is placement in kinship foster care, a solution that is often assigned better outcomes for the child than non kinship foster care or care in an institution (Sallnäs, Vinnerljung, & Khyle Westermark, 2004). According to the Guidelines for Foster Homes (Ministry of

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Children, Equality and Social Inclusion, 2008), the organization tries to take into account a child's religious, ethnic, cultural and language background when picking a foster family. Yet this is not always possible. A first problem is that Norwegian foster families not always want an immigrant child. In 2010, one out of three foster families said 'no' to an immigrant foster child (By Rise & Ellingsen, 2011). A second problem is the shortage of immigrant foster families. Only 5% of the foster families in Norway have an immigrant background. Recently, campaigns have been start up to recruit more immigrant foster families, even starring Norwegian Crown Prince Håkon. As a result of the lack of immigrant foster families, taking into account the child's background in placement can bring along long waiting times for immigrant children. As can be read in this citation from one of the Norwegian CWS workers in the study of Križ and Skivenes (2012):

I know children who [...] should have been either adopted or had long-term foster-carers. And could have had them, these black children, if we'd been willing to place [them] with white [foster carers], because that was where the stable people were. They [the children] waited and waited and became less and less able to live in a family. Because people got stuck on an ideology (Križ & Skivenes, 2012, p. 452).

The placement of an immigrant child in a Norwegian foster family also causes debate, for example the placement of a Muslim child in not-Muslim family or with a lesbian couple (for an example see Rabås, 2008).

### **Voluntary and Involuntary Placement**

First generation immigrant adolescents receive more involuntary care than for second generation immigrant and Norwegians. A difference that is not found in the younger age groups (Kalve & Dyrhaug, 2011). This finding gives rise to few

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questions. First, do these results mean that first generation immigrant adolescents are more than Norwegians and second generation immigrants in situations where CWS workers fear for their health or development? The citation from the studies of Rasmussen (2004) and Aannestad (2004) and the Norwegian statistics presented above, not necessarily point in that direction. First generation immigrant adolescents are less than second generation immigrants and Norwegians in contact with CWS because of substance abuse of themselves and their parents. They do get more than Norwegians into contact with CWS because of violence in their homes. But here, first generation immigrants score lower than their second generation counterparts. What makes violence in the homes a less likely explanation for the high amount of involuntary placements of first generation immigrant adolescents.

Second, are there more first generation immigrant parents who refuse a voluntary placement? From the studies of Rasmussen (2004) and Aannestad (2004) appears that this is a credible claim. Some youngsters report how they were afraid even of being killed when they contacted CWS and how their parents did not want any more contact when they were placed in the CWS institution. For some immigrant families it is a shame to get in contact with CWS (Moen, 1996) and parents find it unfit and shameful to bring outsiders into family conflicts.

Third, how important is the child-centric approach of the CWS workers in the negotiation with immigrant parents? The citations from CWS workers in the study of Križ and Skivenes (2012) presented above, show how quite some of them perceive problems related to the minority background of immigrant children. They report to be worried that immigrant parents can provide insufficient support to their children and that their knowledge of Norwegian language is insufficient to support their children in their school work. It is plausible that the child-centric and the more

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assimilationistic opinion of the CWS workers makes them find the situation first generation immigrant adolescents alarming and hence a reason for out-of-home care.

### **Reducing Cultural Misunderstandings**

Only few researchers focus on the experiences of immigrant parents in their contact with CWS. In the United States, Earner (2007) presented three main problems identified by immigrant parents who were in contact with CWS: (1) lack of understanding of immigration status by CWS; (2) mutual cultural misunderstanding between immigrant families and CWS workers and (3) lack of language access. In addition to that, the nature of the contact with a bureaucratic social institution like CWS is often new for immigrants (Fadiman, 1997). It is a different practice than most of the immigrants are used to and can leave immigrant parents with feelings of fear, sense of powerlessness, feeling silenced, vulnerability and loss (Earner, 2007) and quite often the feeling of cultural collision (Fadiman, 1997).

During the past years, researchers have shed a light on the perceptions of Norwegian CWS workers. They report how CWS workers experience communication challenges due to language and cultural differences not uncommonly resulting in misunderstandings (Rasmussen, 2004; Križ & Skivenes, 2010; Skivenes, 2011). The problems immigrant families face, are often new and unfamiliar for social workers (Rasmussen, 2004) and cause uncertainty and insecurity in them (Križ & Skivenes, 2010). The social workers report not only implicit differences but also explicit cultural clashes about child rearing methods and the children's needs (Križ & Skivenes, 2011).

More studies should be carried out to explore the cultural misunderstandings between non-western immigrant parents and CWS. Although the misunderstandings are often mentioned in research and in the media, little is known about the actual areas of misunderstanding. The cultural competences of CWS personnel should be

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increased and they should be given insight in cultural differences in child rearing such as described before. Having an idea on the important values in some cultures (such as respect and obedience) and the importance of a family's reputation will be helpful in understanding some actions and reactions of immigrant parents. It will also raise the awareness of the own Norwegian value system and how this system is not universal. This approach is in line with Norway's CWS that stresses prevention, early intervention and support (Kojan & Lonne, 2011). CWS employees already have the possibility to take part in a training program *Barnevern i et minoritetsperspektiv* [CWS in a minority perspective]. This program was launched in 2008 at the University Colleges of Oslo (HiO), Telemark (HiT), Lillehammer (HiL) and Finnmark (HiFm) and forms part of a continuing education and training program (Thorshaug, Svendsen, & Berg, 2010).

In the same trend, immigrant parents should be informed about child rearing in Norway. They should know what parental practices are certainly not accepted in Norwegian society (for example corporal punishment). They should also be informed on what 'good parenting' is for Norwegians such as helping children with their school work and play a part in their leisure activities. They are to know what care CWS can provide them to help them raise their children.

### **Reducing Threshold Towards CWS**

CWS provides a broad spectrum of support that can help immigrant families in their daily lives such as advice and guidance, economical help, leisure activities, and kindergarten. From the interviews is clear quite some of the problems of immigrant youngsters are a result of their parents difficulties such as problems in handling money and paying bills. Not only can CWS provide them with economical help, they can also give support on other domains. Yet for many immigrant families it is a shame

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to come in contact with CWS (Moen, 1996) and parents find it unfit and shameful to bring outsiders into family conflicts. In the studies of Rasmussen (2004) and Aannestad the young immigrants describe the difficult period they were in before contacting CWS. They talk about their fear and not seldom threats to be killed or to be sent out of the country. In the study of Aannestad (2004), many of the girls tell how parents attach a lot of value to how they are perceived in their ethnical group. Some girls think it is difficult for their parents to put the interest of their child above their reputation in their community.

More studies should be done on how CWS can lower the threshold to working with immigrant families. For example, it can be helpful for CWS to employ immigrants or work with immigrant volunteers who can help to make contact with immigrant families. In order to reduce cultural differences that might cause misunderstanding, immigrant parents should be better informed about child rearing in Norway. They should be told about practices that are not accepted in the society in general and CWS in specific.

### **Conclusion**

In Norway, first generation immigrant adolescents are overrepresented in out-of-home care. More than Norwegians, immigrant adolescents themselves take the initiative to contact CWS. In this, immigrant girls seek more CWS help than boys. In order to understand this drastic decision, a light was shone upon the lives of immigrant youngsters who were once in out-of-home care. The studies presented point to the migration experience to have a large impact on the lives of immigrant adolescents. Not only was their migration often characterized by family breakdown and reunification, but in many cases a difficult migration was followed by a divorce of the parents. As a consequence, many immigrant adolescents who were once in out-of-home care grew up in a family with a single mother. The adolescents depict chaotic households with economic difficulties, generational conflicts and, not seldom, violence. Quite some describe how their mother suffered from a physical or psychological illness. As a result, immigrant adolescents took charge in the household and cared for their siblings as well as for their mother.

The immigrant youngsters describe the out-of-home care by CWS as a positive experience. They describe positive relationships with the CWS personnel and appreciate they finally had some time for themselves and to focus on their school work. Yet they see it as a last option to be considered and are hesitant to recommend other immigrant adolescents to take the same step. They talk about how their stay at the CWS institution influenced their relation with their parents negatively. But many also say that the relation with their parents improved when they moved on their own after their stay at CWS.

Recent studies report how in Norway, many CWS workers hold a child-centric view. The professionals perceive problems in the language barrier and the way some

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immigrant parents support their children. Possibly this child-centric approach of CWS workers, has an effect on the out-of-home care numbers of immigrant adolescents in Norwegian CWS. As the care workers share the view that all children should have the chance to grow up in Norwegian society, it is possible that they find that an out-of-home care placement will provide immigrant adolescent with a better future. Yet it is not known how a placement in out-of-home care affects the development of immigrant adolescents. More studies should be carried out to evaluate the possible consequences of an out-of-home placement on the ethnic identity, mental health well-being of immigrant adolescents. Researchers and policy makers should reflect upon prevention measures in order to reduce out-of-home care numbers such as building a support network for immigrant mothers and providing school support for immigrant adolescents.

This paper is a collection of Norwegian studies that document the lives of immigrant adolescents who were once in Norwegian out-of-home care. However, it should be clear that the above text is not an exhaustive work. The studies by Bø (2004), Rasmussen (2004) and Aannestad (2004) described in this paper all took place in Oslo and focussed on immigrant adolescents in CWS institutions. Even though Oslo is the largest Norwegian city and houses the largest part of the Norwegian immigrant population, possibly immigrant adolescents in other parts of the country have different out-of-home care experiences. The studies used also focus on the lives of adolescents who were once lived in a CWS institution. No studies were found describing the experiences of immigrant adolescents who lived in a foster home. It is possible that the type of CWS care has an influence on the out-of-home care experience of the immigrant adolescents. For the studies of Rasmussen (2004) and



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Aannestad (2004) there was also a selection bias as the researchers interviewed girls referred to by CWS workers.

Notwithstanding these limitations, the studies presented give an interesting first glimpse on the lives of immigrant adolescents in out-of-home care in Norway. Their experiences show that there is a need to put the overrepresentation of first generation immigrant adolescents on the policy agenda. More studies are to be carried out to test the above assumptions. A first step should be to construct a quantitative study to get a clear view on the characteristics of immigrants in out-of-home care. Statistics Norway holds data on personal level of the individuals in out-of-home care in CWS such as SES background, country of origin and reason for migration. However, for this, they have to combine two databases what makes it a time consuming and thus expensive work (J. Å. Haugen, personal communication, April 25, 2012). A second step should be to start up some qualitative studies. These studies should be carried out to provide an answer to the questions named before: What are the experiences of immigrant adolescents in foster care? How does the out-of-home placement of immigrant adolescents effect the lives of their parents? How do immigrant parents in Norway perceive the contact with CWS?

Furthermore, possible prevention approaches should be considered to reduce the overrepresentation of first generation immigrants in CWS. The tenability of a child-centric approach with immigrant families deserves sufficient attention so that all immigrant families in Norway find the most appropriate and least harmful care.

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