29 February – 1 March 2012

PhD/Young Researchers Workshop Oslo
Ethical and methodological challenges in research with unaccompanied refugee minors

Wednesday 29th February

12.00 – 13.00  Welcome Lunch at “Galeien” *

Opening words
13.00 – 14.00  Presentation Paper 1: Ulrika Wernesjö
14.00 – 15.00  Presentation Paper 2: Sofie Haug Changezi
15.00 – 15.30  Coffee Break
15.30 – 16.30  Presentation Paper 3: Live Stretmo
16.30 – 17.30  Presentation Paper 4: Marianne Vervliet

18.00 - 20.00  Workshop Dinner at Sagene Lunsjbar

Thursday 1st March

09.15 – 10.15  Presentation Paper 5: Marianne Jakobsen
10.15 – 10.30  Coffee Break
10.30 – 11.30  Presentation Paper 6: Charlotte Melander and Ingrid Lindman
12.00 – 13.00  Lunch at NKVTS (building 48, Ullevål)

* The seminar room “Galeien” is situated on the 3rd floor of SERAF (Norwegian Centre for Addiction Research) at Ullevål – Oslo University Hospital, Kirkeveien 166 (Building 45), Oslo.

Overview of Paper Presentations and Discussants

The young researchers present a paper based on their ongoing research (ca. 20-30 minutes). Then, two of the participating senior researchers will be discussants (see overview below) and come with their comments. Subsequently, the other senior and junior researchers will participate in the ensuing discussions.

To facilitate all participants’ preparation in advance and attentiveness during the paper sessions the submitted abstracts are included. However, do not quote or cite from the abstracts without the authors’ permission.

TALKING ABOUT EXCLUSION AND RACISM - CHALLENGES IN THE INTERVIEW SITUATION AND ANALYSIS

Ulrika Wernesjö, PhD Candidate
Department of Sociology
Uppsala University

My doctoral thesis project concerns experiences of everyday life in Swedish society among unaccompanied young persons who have arrived in Sweden as asylum-seekers and who are now residing in Sweden. The focus of concern for this research project is on their perspectives on their own life and position in Swedish society. In order to explore this emphasis is put on belonging – and particularly on demarcations of belonging in relation to notions of ‘Swedishness’ and social divisions such as ‘race’/ethnicity, gender, age, nationality and age. By investigating belonging, my ambition is to also explore processes of inclusion and exclusion that shape and restrict this group of children and young people in their everyday lives. In my research I am also interested in the interaction between the participants and myself and what happens in the interview situation. The empirical material consists of 19 interviews with 13 young people, five of them where interviewed on more than one occasion.

In recent years attention has been brought on unaccompanied asylum seeking children and the organization of housing and care during the asylum seeking process. In this debate, there is a propensity to construct asylum seeking and refugee children, and particularly unaccompanied children, on the hand, as victims in need of care, or, on the other hand, as a ‘bogus’ and a threat to the nation-state (see also Stretmo 2010, Ní Laoire et al 2011). Moreover, since 2010 there is an extreme right party, Sverigedemokraterna, represented in the Swedish parliament and there is an ongoing heated public debate concerning immigration and integration. With this context in mind, it is of relevance to explore the research participants own perspectives on these matters and whether they themselves, or people they know, have experienced racism or discrimination in their everyday lives. However, it has been a challenge to raise these topics in the interview situation. Nevertheless, I argue that the difficulties of talking about experiences of exclusion, discrimination and racism are – in themselves – of interest and that they could be understood in a number of ways.

Even though some of the participants express that ”Swedish” peers are reluctant to interact with them and connects that with racism, most of the participants hold that they have not encountered racism or discrimination in Sweden. Rather, Sweden and ("Swedes") is described in positive terms and an overarching theme in the interviews is the young people's expressions of gratitude. This opens up questions regarding the ways in which this gratitude could be understood and how this is linked to the difficulties to (also) talk about negative experience in the same nation-state that you are grateful towards. According to British sociologist Les Back (2007) the ‘grid of immigration’ sets up (unequal) relationships of debt and gratitude between the refugee and the host country, where the former is forced to express gratitude towards the latter. With Back's words “the script is already written” (p.42), which makes it difficult to not express gratitude.

Back makes an illuminating point, however, these expressions could also be understood in relation to past and present experiences and to how these experiences are understood by the young people themselves. For example, when one of the research participants describes it
difficult to get to know, and talk to, “Swedish” peers, I ask why that is. He says that “they might be afraid, I don't know”. This interpretation could be understood as favourable – that young “Swedes” are “just shy”. It may be that he does not interpret this as an expression of racism, or it may not fit the script of gratitude and of a Sweden that guarantees human rights.

Moreover, what the young people do – or do not say – and how they say it, has to be contextualized and related to the (power) relation between the researcher and participant. My position as an adult, white Swedish-born researcher differs, particularly in terms of age, “race”, education, life situations, from the position the young people in focus for this project occupy in Swedish society. Hence, it could be argued that my position is more privileged due to processes of racialization (see Frankenberg 1993, Lundström 2007) and age (Christensen and James, editors, 2000). This may have impact on the interaction with the participants in that they see me as someone who is not able to understand their experiences. In my encounters with the research participants I have tried to reduce the unequal power relations in various ways, for instance I have tried to present myself (i.e. in how I dress, talk and interact) in a way that decreases power differences due to age and educational level. However, as Les Back (1996) puts it in his sociological study on young people in London, it is “foolish to think that our relationships were completely free from the effects of racism” (p.24). I have often reflected upon my relation – and 'outsider' position – to the participants during the research process, and it has at times made me uneasy, particularly in the interview situations. For example, in some of the interviews it has been difficult for me to raise questions regarding experiences of exclusion, discrimination and racism.

In my doctoral thesis my ambition is to interrogate questions of belonging and non-belonging among young unaccompanied men and women in Sweden from their own perspective. I suggest that the questions that I have raised in this abstract are relevant for understanding processes of (non-) belonging, and need to be elaborated and discussed further. However, this has to be done in a way that is sensitive to the complexities of these issues.

REFERENCES


Challenges with applying ethical absolutes –
Discussing the issues of free/informed consent, and guarantees of anonymity and confidentiality related to my own PhD study.

In the paper I will present, I would like to discuss the issues of free and informed consent, as well as the guarantee of anonymity and confidentiality in research with unaccompanied refugee minors (URM). Even though these research principles are considered to be ethical absolutes according to NSD and NESH (the rules-based approach), it does not necessarily mean that it is not challenging to ensure that these principles are fully maintained in practice.

The principal objective of my Ph.D. study is to explore how unaccompanied refugee youth resettling in Norway master the challenges they meet on entering Norwegian secondary school. My Ph.D. study is part of the research project “Unaccompanied refugee minors in the phase of resettlement and integration: Focusing on education, accommodation and care provisions (FUS)”.

The project aims to learn more about (1) how young refugees experience and master their meeting with Norwegian secondary school, and (2) the provisions and initiatives - in and out of school - that can promote or inhibit unaccompanied minor refugees opportunities to complete secondary school” (NKVTS, 2011). The FUS-study looks into the various educational and care services that the unaccompanied refugee youth involved make use of. Three municipalities resettling unaccompanied minors are included in the research project. In the selected municipalities, case studies are carried out in the URM’s housing arrangements and schools. In addition to observation and qualitative, semi-structured interviews with refugee youth, other relevant employees in the municipality are interviewed (teachers, child care workers, etc) (Pastoor, L. de Wal, 2009).

According to NESH (2006), the researcher has an obligation to obtain free and informed consent. Free consent means that “the consent has been obtained without outside pressure or constraints on individual freedom of action” (NESH, 2006:13). Gaining informed consent means that “the informant is given information about his or her participation in the research project. The information must be given in a form that can be understood by the informant” (NESH, 2006:13). The issue of consent is further discussed when it comes to research involving children, and there are mainly two consent problems that are often brought up for discussion. The first consent problem is that “it is not the child itself but the parents who (often) give consent on behalf of the children” (NESH, 1999:13). The second consent problem is related to the informed consent, as this means that “... the object of research or the one who is to participate as an active informant is provided with sufficient information to assess what his/her participation entails “(NESH, 1999:13). The first consent problem which I would like to discuss deals with adults giving consent on behalf of the child. Sometimes it might be that it is not the child’s best interest that is in mind, but rather that their participation may be important to certain organizations or institutions, for example.

1 Norwegian Social Science Data Services (NSD).
2 The National Committee for Research Ethics in the Social Sciences and the Humanities (NESH).
3 The project leader of the FUS-project is Lutine de Wal Pastoor.
4 To this point, the housing arrangements in the PhD project have been “bofellesskap” (i.e., shared housing communities).
I would claim that participation of URMs in my research is based on a free consent. However, this does not mean that I have not been questioning some of the procedures regarding how consent is acquired.

The second consent problem I would like to discuss is related to the issue of informed consent. Giving an exact explanation about ones research, the process and its likely outcomes, to any informant regardless of age, is always difficult – even for an experienced researcher. As a Ph.D. student it will still be important to strive to make sure that the participants do know what is worth knowing about the study, and that all their questions are responded to. Many of the URMs have very short residence in Norway, and neither master Norwegian nor English entirely. URMs’ language skills vary widely, both due to their length of residence in Norway, the received language training in Norway, and whether they attended school in their home country. There are also challenges related to some of the concepts used when gaining consent, such as research, for instance.

Further, I would like to discuss the challenges with the principle of anonymity. I have conducted research in a settlement municipality that would be considered to be somewhat small concerning both the size and the number of residents, and with a small number of URMs resettling. The challenge is then how to be able to keep the informants anonymous. The challenge increases additionally as I spent a great deal of time with the informants in their housing arrangements, in their schools and during other activities outside the house. The informants themselves, or others informed about the research project, usually inform their surroundings about my role. The number of people working with housing arrangements for URMs in the settlement municipalities in Norway is quite limited and transparent. It might be difficult to keep the municipalities in which the fieldwork is conducted anonymous to those working in the same profession. Additionally the head of the housing arrangement and the staff know who I have interviewed, observed, talked to and so forth. There are several ways to secure that an informant’s identity becomes anonymous; change of names, locations and other details. However, this is an issue I still find challenging and would like to discuss. How does one provide the participants with full anonymity?

In addition to anonymity, the participants will be informed that the data that they provide will be treated with the outmost confidentiality. The research material must be handled in a certain way if one is to obtain this. Information that could reveal or identify participants must be stored responsibly. These data will also at some time be destroyed. The informants have a right to know for how long the information that they have provided will be available, and in what form. One of the challenges is regarding where, and for how long, the data material has to be stored. There are strict rules in Norway concerning the storage and treatment of empirical data material. Norwegian Social Science Data Services (NSD) assists researchers with regard to data gathering, data analysis, and issues of methodology, privacy and research ethics, and my working place NKVTS is anxious to comply with NSD’s rules. Still, I would like to discuss how other PhD students deal with these challenges.

Reference list
Abstract Paper 3: Live Stretmo

Live Stretmo

Postgraduate Student at the Department of Sociology, University of Gothenburg and Project Leader at FoU i Väst GR – Ensamkommande barn i Göteborgsregionen stödinsatser och vardagsliv.

Strategic migrants, calculating youths or victimized children?

Depicting the unaccompanied child in speech and practice in Swedish and Norwegian media debate and in national policy during 2000 until 2010

In this paper my aim is to present a short introduction to my PhD project in Sociology and some ethical and methodological issues that I have come to struggle with during the gathering of my empirical material as well as during the process of analysis.

During the ten years between 2000 and 2010 the Swedish board of migration and the Norwegian board of immigration have come to receive (at least according to the two boards) a seemingly increasing number of unaccompanied and asylum-seeking children. Specific steps have been made in order to ensure a decrease in the number of such applications, such as for instance the implementation of an age testing system in the Norwegian context. Parallel steps and policy development have also been made in order to safeguard the asylum-seeking children that do arrive, as well as separating the different rationalities underlying the control and regulative functions versus the care functions from the Swedish (Migrationsverket) and Norwegian (UDI) boards of Migration to the national and local social service. The singling out of specific tasks and functions and also their underlying rationalities, along with the other important policy changes regarding unaccompanied asylum-seeking children, makes Norway and Sweden an interesting case in order to study how unaccompanied minors becomes separated out as a particular subject with specific needs and claims. This course of action highlights how a given system (i.e. the Norwegian and Swedish reception system) become evaluated, improved and reformed but also how it in a parallel process also come to enhance more regulation and organization of its subject (the unaccompanied minor).

As two countries that have internationally been appraised for their rather family and child friendly policies, the balancing between restrictive asylum (or migration) schemes one the one hand and safe guarding the child’s best interest on the other can be a rather tricky act for Norway and Sweden respectively.

During the years between 2000 until 2010 stories featuring unaccompanied asylum seeking minors have concurrently been highlighted in Norwegian and Swedish media. Though the storyline and focus has shifted during this ten years period, the narrations have worked to raise public awareness on what is considered as the specific vulnerability of child migrants that are seeking asylum on their own in Norway and Sweden. Claims have been made, in the news narratives as well as by claims makers such as the ombudsman for children in Norway and Sweden, and by the Save the Children’s alliance and Ecpat, in order to ensure that the states take care of unaccompanied minors according to their specific needs as children separated from their next of kin and legal guardians.
During the early years of 2000 until 2008 news narratives on unaccompanied minors came to focus on instances of unaccompanied minors who vent missing without a trace from refugee centres; such vanishings were sometimes made intelligible in relation to the classical theme of “missing-children” (see for instance Best 1990), at other times such narratives was linked to a fear of “migrant children being in risk of sexual exploitation” (see also Meyer 2007) yet after 2005 this narrative became more clearly connected to an idea of how international cartels and networks were “smuggling/trafficking” unaccompanied minors to and through Norway and Sweden.

Apart from the focus on the vulnerability of asylum-seeking children migrating on their own another common denominator in these newspaper stories have been to make the authorities in charge (i.e. the Swedish board of Migration and the Norwegian board of Immigration) stand allegations of child neglect.

In my PhD project my aim is to analyse how unaccompanied minors become constructed as a specific group of refugees in Norwegian and Swedish media and policy during 2000 until 2010. Part of this comparison is also to deconstruct specific themes in regards to official (policy) and public (medial) conceptualization of unaccompanied minors and the actions and practice (responsibilization strategies and changes in mode of conduct) that become legitimized through these conceptions.

Overall Questions:

◊ How is unaccompanied minors constructed and brought forward in regards to policy and media discourse
◊ What are considered as (social) problems in relation to unaccompanied asylum seeking minors?
◊ What actions are deemed as necessary?

Ethics and Methodology

According to my aims one of the central features of interest in this PhD project is to analyse and deconstruct how a certain view of reality or comprehension become imbedded in national policy and how such images come to colour of on the same policies in a specific way. National policies can be understood as guidelines for action, that reflects values and very often policies express (explicit or implicitly) a specific aim or target. As national instruments for action such policies are quite influential and have real consequences for the groups or subjects they are aimed at. For instance when Norway decides to age-test unaccompanied minors by using biometrical-measures this implies that unaccompanied minors are screened and x-rayed accordingly. When as a consequence of the resulting age-determination the minor at hand is judged as above 21 years, he/she becomes expelled from the group of under-age asylum, looses the benefits that are targeted unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (such as for instance guardian, child friendly reception system, extended social support etc.) and becomes treated as an adult asylum-seekers instead. This example highlights how a specific idea –the fear of adults trying to pass as underage asylum-seekers- give actual consequences for the subject expelled from the category of the unaccompanied minor. But this very idea also has consequences for every unaccompanied minor who, just because of their belongingness to this category, risks being comprehended as a possible strategic adult and because of this a climate of mistrust are hence built into the reception system of unaccompanied minors.
My focus is hence not to understand how many of the unaccompanied minors who claim asylum in Norway and Sweden at any given time might be strategic adults or to find out the exact number of asylum-seeking children who goes missing traceless from reception centres, but to see what kinds of action such problem constructions legitimizes but also to highlight some of their practical consequences. In order to do this I have come to gather a variety of different “policies” (i.e. such as official reports, guidelines, action plans, official government reports from the period of 2000 until 2010). The central task of my discourse analysis is to see what kinds of social problems that are articulated and what kinds of action that hence are deemed as necessary.

As one of my central points of reference is that policy rarely are formulated in a social vacuum and that media plays an important role when it comes to the formulation of important social problems (see also Gamson and Modigliani 1989, Best 1990, Lindgren 1990, Thörn 2005, Meyer 2007, Uhnoo 2011 and Holgersson 2011) it hence also become of interest to see how national media has come to understand issues constructed as related to unaccompanied minors. Amongst the empirical material that I have analysed is hence also a extensive selection of newspaper articles depicted from Norwegian daily newspapers (Aftenposten Morgen and Aften, VG and Dagbladet) and from Swedish (Expressen, Aftonbladet, Dagens Nyheter and GP) during the time frame of 2000 until the midst of 2008 (a total of 300 articles).

Ethical issues that my study might induce often come to central on whether or not it is ethical to analyse how issues of “missing children” or the fear of “strategic adults” come to be narrated by the media or colour of on policy, rather than to establish the “hard facts” such as the exact number of missing asylum-seeking children or strategic adults (or the accuracy of biometrical age tests).

I often see such objections as evidence of different focus or theoretical points of departure: Rather than to test whether common understandings of an specific social issues are “true” or “false”, for me and in my PhD project, it is primarily of interest to understand and highlight what implications –or actual consequences- such common understanding of social issues give when formulated as strategies for action.

NB: Work in progress, do not quote without the author’s permission!
Abstract Paper 4: Marianne Vervliet

**Being a researcher in following the trajectories of unaccompanied refugee minors**

Marianne Vervliet, Ilse Derluyn & Eric Broekaert, Ghent University

**ABSTRACT**

This abstract addresses some reflections on my role as a researcher in my PhD study. In my presentation at the NordURM Workshop I will elaborate on different cases illustrating these reflections.

The central purpose of my research project is to gain more insight in the lived experiences of unaccompanied refugee minors on their trajectories in Belgium. This implies having regularly contacts with the youngsters during their stay in the country, which are taking place since their arrival and over a 1.5-year period. This follow-up spontaneously creates a certain bond between the participants and myself, with a connected meaning to this bond that I perceive as being different from participant to participant. Coming back to them again and again, regardless from where they live, what their legal status is and what else might be happening in their lives, seems to be sometimes rather ‘remarkable’ for all of them, for several even highly important, and it also seems to function as a motivator to further participation. But at the same time, I feel I also become affected when the participants open up about their – often highly difficult– experiences back home or on the road to Belgium, or when they find themselves in harrowing situations now, in the host country. These feelings can be seen as very normal, human, and – may be it tricky – also as “useful” to our research as they may advance the follow-up, but at the same time, they create enormous and numerous ethical challenges.

The first major challenge is not to be carried away by these emotions, which can lead to taking (ethically) ‘wrong’ actions, such as taking the role of a therapist or a friend, hereby also possibly creating expectations that you cannot fulfil and that even can harm the participants. Through reflection and supervision (case-discussions with my supervisor) on my way of acting as a researcher, I learned that, to prevent such ‘wrong’ actions, canalizing emotions is pivotal in the research process. But it became also clear how only a canalization of own emotions, was ethically seen often not satisfactory and that it was necessary to take action.
Numerous times, the participants talked about the different challenges and constraints they were facing in their daily lives, such as: having to live on the streets, worrying about and not understanding their legal situation, the feeling of receiving no appropriate support from social workers or guardians, extreme feelings of depression or loneliness,....From participants in this kind of situations, I received several times an explicit appeal to help them or ‘to show them the way’. In other cases it was rather me who was feeling an appeal to take action, instead of ‘sitting and watching’. But since these appeals often came sudden and unpredicted – during an interview, in a telephone call - it was not possible to ‘prepare’ or reflect on my (re)action on beforehand, and it was not always immediately clear what was – ethically seen and may be also for the participant himself – the best (re)action, and whether the (re)action I did (not) took could – ethically seen – be considered as ‘good’.

Another important issue was that these valuable actions I wanted to look for needed to fit within a complex context, with different actors who surround each particular minor, all with their different roles (legal guardian, social workers, family (back home or in the host country), friends, housemates,...) – and me, who steps in this context with my particular, different role as researcher. As a researcher, I try to connect to and work with the minors in the first place, aiming to understand their perspectives. But to this end, I need to try to create partnerships with the other actors, certainly with legal guardians, whose informed consent is - ethically seen - needed to continue the research, and with social workers, who need to be informed about the research in order to give their practical support. And especially when feeling urged to take “extra actions”, I felt how I was moving in an area of tension, wherein I could not neglect the other actors and their roles. One the one hand, I experienced how giving information to the participants (for example about procedures, rules,...), asking (to guardians or assistants) for extra information and passing this information back to the participants, and referring the participants to other people (such as psychologists, assistants, guardians, lawyers,...) could all be extremely valuable actions. On the other hand, I also felt how taking such actions is continuously like walking a tight rope, with the danger to poach too much on the territory of social workers and guardians, or to ‘take it over’ from the youngster himself, the latter possibly creating too much expectations that cannot be fulfilled and/or a certain dependency from the youngster towards me.

Following unaccompanied refugee minors on their trajectories thus implies creating and maintaining a connection with the minor and at the same time continuously trying to create and maintain (new) connections with different other actors in the minors’ surroundings. It means becoming inevitably and – at least – temporarily a part of their lives - whether a big or an almost invisible one. And being part, means being an actor, with an influence and a responsibility.
Various dimensions of testing. How to make sense of some results from the EXIT project.

Our population was 192 Unaccompanied Minors (UM), from the following countries: They claimed to be between 15 to 18 years old, and were included in the study during their first three weeks in Norway.

- Afghanistan = 73,7 %
- Iran = 2,0 %
- Somalia = 22,2 %
- Palestine = 0,5 %
- West-Sahara = 1,0 %
- Algeria = 0,5 %

All possible subjects were asked to participate, so arrivals into Norway was the determining factor for the selection of boys. Illiteracy for this population was 64%, with an average length of education : 4 years. They were all tested with the MultiCASI.

Self report data.

To our knowledge this is the first time there has been a comprehensive testing of UM without either excluding the illiterates, or testing them differently(having interpreters read and write the answers for them). Our first questions in this workshop is related to this.

1) How much impact does the different testing strategies have on the knowledge, and on the awareness of the limitations of our knowledge, in the field?

2) Can we compare our results with earlier studies?

3) Can we combine our MultiCASI data with data that are collected using other approaches, e.g.the results from the Belgian study?

Diagnostic interviews.

At the three month testing, the EXIT study has included the possibility of diagnostic interviews, with trained clinicians and interpreters. At this point some subjects were lost or excluded, some declined
to participate; 150 have been diagnosed according to the Composite International Diagnostic Interview (CIDI). The preliminary results are:

Posttraumatic stress disorder: 38%
Depression: 20%
Anxiety: 13%

1) How valid is this as a prevalence study?

2) Are there any other studies with structured interviews or other reliable diagnostic methods on this (or a similar) population?

3) Can we generalize the results to other populations? other countries, other situations?

Follow up.

This study is longitudinal, with testing points at start, after 3-4 months, after 1 year, and after 2 years:

The numbers are declining, due to a host of different factors.

1) How does the different reasons for attrition impact our possibility to make sense of our results?

2) What is the best and most honest way to report the numbers?

3) Is there a limit, and how is it calculated?
Credibility, complexity and anonymity in a study on the situation of unaccompanied minors in the Gothenburg region in Sweden

In this abstract we will discuss issues of credibility, complexity and anonymity of our two studies in an ongoing research project on the reception of unaccompanied children and young people in the Gothenburg region's 13 municipalities. Our study consists of two parts. One part consists of a study of files, where we have followed and collected data on children receiving community placement in the Gothenburg Region in 2008 through the Immigration Service’s and social services' personal files. The collected data include information as age of the children, decisions in the asylum process, family background, country of birth, educational background, flight reasons, health, the efforts of the Swedish society, types of accommodation, school situation, work, etc.

The second part of the study consists of approximately 40 interviews with professional groups and support people who work with the reception of the children and the young people as well as interviews with about 10 young people aged 15 and above and who have received a placement in any of the 13 municipalities.

We have at this date gathered all file material and we have started a quantitative analysis of the data collected. We have also completed nine youth interviews and thirty interviews with professional groups and support people. The analysis of interview material is an ongoing
process, but we will carry out a more systematically analysis when all interviews are collected. We will then start a qualitative coding process where we will work in an abductive way, where we both will be guided by previous theory and research as well as looking for and be open to new themes in the empirical material.

Regarding the file study we would like to discuss the reliability of data based on descriptions of the Migration Board’s administrators and on descriptions of the social workers. According to our observations and collection of data from the Social Service personal files, we see that the children's situation are described with different types of terms in different municipalities. Based on this observation, we ask ourselves how we can compare the different types of data and if it is possible to describe for example health from descriptions of an administrator. The descriptions in the files are often ambiguous, but it is only possible to report one answer to the registry in order to be used quantitatively. It therefore becomes extremely important to describe the translation from the descriptive language in the files into ones and zeros in the registry. Is it enough to discuss the credibility or is it difficult to use a file material consisting of someone's subjective descriptions in a quantitative way? What information can be viewed as more or less credible in this context? What can we for example say about the health situation of a child without having received a physical examination?

In the second part of the study, we would particularly like to discuss the balance between giving a credible and complex description of the children’s and young people’s situation and to ensure their anonymity. This ethical and methodological issue is also discussed in detail in Ketil Eide’s (2005) dissertation study "Tværydige Barn – Om barnemigranter i et historisk komparativt perspektiv." Eide has solved this dilemma in every single case and has no general solution on how the issue should be handled. In our case, this issue is particularly important to consider as the study is limited to a specific geographical area and to a time period related to ongoing or recently completed asylum processes. Within the geographical area of Gothenburg region the professional groups who work with unaccompanied children and young people know about each other's work by a network that meets a couple times a year. The network discuss issues that the various professional groups face and each person gets the possibility to presents their ongoing work. Everybody in the network knows for example that only one resident is only addressed to girls. If we would describe the situation of a youth who lives in a home for girls, it's not so difficult for the staff at the accommodation to identify the person, especially when the residence has only been running for a limited period of time.

Another example is that there are relatively few of the youngsters who have become parents. One of our interviewees describes in a very interesting way how she got support as a parent. She describes a support from both her own private networks and from the authorities. The wholeness and this combination of support is exciting and the important part in her story would be lost if one type of support was described separately. The dilemma is that her unique story of how she acted and created a support network is difficult to retell without taking a risk of that various professional groups involved in her life can identify her. This we find as a big dilemma. If we would have conducted the study in a larger geographical area it might have been easier to secure anonymity. One question is how much information
that researchers can change in a personal story without taking the risk of not giving a reliable picture. How reliable are the results of our research if we add and subtract data? If we change the gender and date and place of birth we might lose important dimensions. Maybe it means a lot for the reception of the civil society if a child comes from Somalia or from Iraq, for example.

These questions are particularly important since many of the kids actually asked for anonymity. Some of them have raised serious criticism for the agencies and homes where they are staying and if their stories will be reprinted in its entirety, they could be recognized. As we see it, it commands us that we either rewrite the story or only take fragments from a complex history. One child gave us for example details from a conversation between him and the foster parents, which would be very interesting to quote. Perhaps, however, such a quotation might cause that the boy can be identified, particularly when this conversation took place very close in time.

Welcome to our first Workshop for PhD students and young researchers!

Lutine de Wal Pastoor

List of Participants (in alphabetical order)

"Henry Ascher" <henry.ascher@nhv.se>,
"Maria Brendler-Lindqvist" <mariab79@hotmail.com>,
"Hanneke Ørne Bruce" <hanneke@live.no>,
"Sofie Haug Changezi" <sofie.changezi@nkvts.unirand.no>,
"Ilse Derluyn" <ilse.derluyn@ugent.be>,
"Ketil Eide" <ketil.eide@r-bup.no>,
"Mona Iren Hauge" <m.i.hauge@nkvts.unirand.no>,
"Anders Hjern" <anders.hjern@chess.su.se>,
"Charles Watters" <c.watters@rutgers.edu>,
"Emad Al-Rozzi" <Emad.Al-Rozzi@sam.hio.no>,
"Guro Brokke Omland" <guro.omland@gmail.com>,
"Hanneke Ørne Bruce" <hanneke@live.no>,
"Ilse Derluyn" <ilse.derluyn@ugent.be>,
"Ketil Eide" <ketil.eide@r-bup.no>,
"Mona Iren Hauge" <m.i.hauge@nkvts.unirand.no>,
"Anders Hjern" <anders.hjern@chess.su.se>,
"Anne Mikkonen" <anna.mikkonen@vaestoliitto.fi>,
"Eva Nyberg" <eva.nyberg@fou-sodertorn.se>,
"Lutine de Wal Pastoor" <lutine.pastoor@nkvts.unirand.no>,
"Marianne Jakobsen" <marianne.jakobsen@nkvts.unirand.no>,
"Ingrid Lindman" <ingrid.lindman@grkom.se>,
"Jenny Malmsten" <jenny.malmsten@malmo.se>,
"Melinda Meyer" <melinda.meyer@nkvts.unirand.no>,
"Charlotte Melander" <Charlotte.Melander@grkom.se>,
"Marianne Jakobsen" <Marianne.Vervliet@UGent.be>,
"Ulrika Wernesjö" <ulrika.wernesjo@soc.uu.se>,
"Margrete Aadnanes" <margrete.aadnanes@nkvts.unirand.no>
Above a map of the Ullevål Hospital grounds. **Hovedinngang** = Main entrance and **Inngang** = Entrance, which is the entrance nearest to our meeting locations: SERAF (building 46) and NKVTS (building 48).

... and here you can find a larger map of the area: [http://kart.gulesider.no/m/982PA](http://kart.gulesider.no/m/982PA)
Click at the blue spot in this map, and you see where NKVTS is situated.