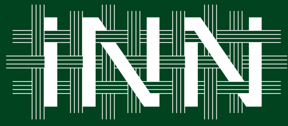

Inland Norway
University of
Applied Sciences

Faculty of Social and Health Sciences

Ragnhild Holmen Bjørnsen

PhD Thesis

A privileged childhood?

Autobiographies of growing up in the Norwegian Foreign Service

PhD in Child and Youth Participation and Competence Development
2021

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Ragnhild Holmen Bjørnsen

A privileged childhood? Autobiographies of growing up in the Norwegian Foreign Service

PhD Thesis

2021

PhD programme

Child and Youth Participation and Competence Development

Faculty of Social and Health Sciences, Inland Norway University of Applied Sciences

Sammendrag

Denne doktoravhandlingen er en fenomenologisk og narrativ undersøkelse om livene til voksne som har vokst opp innenfor de institusjonelle rammene til Norsk utenrikstjeneste (NFS). De har vært barn av profesjonelle som har blitt sendt utenriks flere ganger og er ofte benevnt som "Third Culture Kids" (TCKs). Avhandlingens hovedspørsmål er: *Hva betyr det å ha hatt en barndom i NFS?* Dette spørsmålet vil bli undersøkt ved 1) Hvilken betydning hadde denne barndommen for dem som barn; og 2) Hvilken betydning har denne barndommen hatt for dem som voksne, spesielt for hvordan de ser på seg selv og sine liv i dag. Målsetningen med denne avhandlingen er å bidra med en narrativ om globalisering sett fra deltakernes øyne. Dette gir bidrag til kunnskap om deres erfaringer, samtidig som det gir et innblikk i eksisterende ideologier. Deltakerne var forløpere til en stadig økende global mobilitet. Da de har blitt tillagt betegnelsen "priviligerte", fungerer deres erfaringer også som et forstørrelsesglass inn i pågående stereotypier. Dataene består av 43 skrevne og verbale retrospektive selvbiografier. Jeg henter min faglige innfallsvinkel fra psykologisk antropologi og følelsenes sosiologi, og forstår kulturelle narrativer som bærere av "følelsesregler". Teoretisk sett plasserer jeg deltakerne mellom metanarrativer av tiltreknings- og frastøtingsfaktorer av migrasjon med motsatte grunnfølelser overfor mobilitet (på den ene siden som «privilegium» og på den annen side som «tap»). Artikkel 1 viser at dersom det er kollisjon mellom opplevd barndom og fortellingen om dem som "privilegert", kan dette resultere i et barns emosjonelle distansering både ovenfor seg selv og sine foreldre. Artikkel 2 beskriver hvordan stadige globale flyttinger kan føre til frakobling fra sted, venner og samfunn. De deltakerne som imidlertid deltok i forhandlinger om "hjem" og "reise" sammen med foreldrene, opprettholdte en forbindelse til hjemmet, og reiser ble forutsigbare og meningsfulle. Artikkel 3 viser at diplomatbarnet befinner seg i et ingenmannsland sett fra et barnevernsperspektiv. Generelt kan TCKs' antatte «privilegerte» situasjon føre til at andre ikke involverer seg i deres private og dermed rettslige sfære. Videre synes dimensjoner av frakopling å komme til syne i en tendens for deltakere til å gå fra hyppige flyttinger i tidlig voksenliv, til en søken etter tilkopling til ett sted og nære relasjoner i voksen alder. Ut fra fragmentert fortid skaper de sammenheng i sine fortellinger om seg selv i en følelsesmessig og reflekterende bevegelse mellom tiltreknings- og frastøtingsfaktorer i migrasjonsfortellinger; barn- og voksenperspektiver; og tilskrevne privilegier kontra selv-opplevd takknemlighet. En takknemlighet som er fundert i oppøvd evne til å skifte mellom flere kulturelle perspektiver; bevege seg mellom indre følelsesverdener; og en underliggende

flerkulturell verdiorientering. En spesielt fremtredende verdi de besitter, er empati på tvers av kulturelle forskjeller og fysiske avstander, forankret i barndommens møter. Disse funn setter lys på mulig frakobling, stereotypier og kraften i narrativer som kan få betydning for et stadig større antall barn og voksne i en tid der profesjoner i økende grad blir preget av mobilitet.

Abstract

This PhD thesis is a phenomenological and narrative inquiry into the lives of adults who have grown up within the institutional framework of the Norwegian Foreign Service (NFS). They have been mobile child dependents of employees who are sent on multiple missions overseas, commonly referred to as 'classic' "Third Culture Kids" (TCKs). The thesis asks: *What does it mean to have had a childhood within the NFS?* This is explored both as childhood experiences and circumstances, and in terms of how participants perceive themselves and live their lives as adults. Through narrative analysis of 43 written and oral retrospective autobiographies, the thesis aims to provide a bottom-up narrative of globalisation through participants' eyes. Approaches from psychological anthropology and sociology of emotions are applied, conceiving cultural narratives as carriers of "feeling rules". Article 1 finds a possible disconnection towards the emotional self and towards parents, due to a mismatch between a "privileged" narrative as told versus childhood as experienced. Narratives of ascribed "privilege" tighten the range of socially acceptable emotions. Article 2 finds that multiple relocations can lead to a disconnection towards place, friends and community. However, participants who negotiated "home" and "journeying" with their parents kept a connection to home, and journeys were experienced as predictable and meaningful. Article 3 finds that the diplomat child exists in a legal loophole from a child welfare perspective. Further, TCKs can face barriers to realising their rights because assumptions over "privileged mobility" foster others' non-involvement of the private sphere. Participants seek to resolve these tensions of disconnection. There is a tendency to go from serial mobility in young adult life, towards seeking connection to one location and to locally bound relationships in later adulthood. From fragmented pasts, participants create coherent narrative selves like a melody moving back and forth between perspectives: between opposing tones of push- and pull-migration; between the child and the adult self; between ascribed "privileged" status and self-perceived gratitude. Their gratitude is anchored in abilities to shift mental and emotional perceptions, and towards their accumulated values. A salient underlying value is a wide empathy map, stretching across cultural differences and physical distances, but rooted in local childhood encounters. These findings shed light on dimensions of disconnection, stereotypes and narrative power which will have relevance for a growing number of children and adults as 21st century professions become increasingly mobile.

Preface

I want to thank those who participated in this study by offering their stories of childhood and adult life. Together, we have made this project possible. To study your autobiographies has been both challenging and enriching. To me, it was as though each story was a tree of life. I looked at one up-close. Then I spotted a similar tree. Yet through a microscopic lens, each leaf has its own fine weave, as unique as a fingerprint. Each tree a microcosm all on its own. I turned around and saw a very different tree, which taught me many things about the first one. I zoomed out and found a whole jungle, stories of life from all corners of the globe. Overwhelming in its rich diversity. Norwegian pine hand in hand with mango trees. Palms swaying up above. How to understand and communicate the meanings that linger within this landscape? What is more, I look up to the sky, and know I am part of the same growth. I am a gardener in her own terrain, yet there is no map, no obvious direction to choose. They say the PhD is a solo project, but this is far from the truth. It takes a whole stubborn forest in a snowstorm to complete a PhD thesis. I am grateful to have been part of the Child and Youth Participation and Competence Development PhD-program, which provided funding, the academic infrastructure, and a wonderful group of leaders and PhD colleagues. It is my great fortune that Prof. Dag Leonardsen at the Norway Inland University of Applied Sciences became my main supervisor. You have been the best of guides in a wide academic landscape of interpretive possibilities. Most of all, you believed in the project throughout, and with your enthusiasm, patience and wisdom, you have been a mentor for me on this journey. A big thanks to co-supervisor Prof. Keir J. C. Martin at the University of Oslo for joining the ride with fresh perspectives and a much needed 'cut to the chase' attitude. I am grateful to co-supervisor Ass. Prof. Frank J. Bruun for your input in the early phase of this project. It was a great pleasure to write Article 3 of this thesis together with Prof. Halvor Fauske and Dr. Jan Fadnes, with helpful feedback from Prof. Torunn E. Kvisberg to point us in the right direction. Thank you, Jan, for also seeing to it that I reached the finish line through playing academic hardball and editing the manuscripts. I am sincerely grateful to Eli Rikter Wiborg for your beautiful illustrations which have given this project a visual identity that I hope will live on in a forthcoming book. I want to thank my dear friend and colleague Wenche Thoresen for our conversations into philosophy over the years that have been a major source of inspiration. I am indebted to Hilde Farmen and Kristin Sandvik at the INN library for all

your guidance and assistance. My family and friends have been a major source of cheerleading and support, each in your own way. My father has read all manuscripts and given valuable feedback. My mother and Len always encouraged me in my academic abilities and have provided me with a place to write. My brothers, you guys have always got my back whenever your little sister is in trouble. Most important of all is the support and love I have received from my husband James every day, through what has been an intense chapter in our lives. Luka and Jona, you have gone from young teens to young, critical adults with whom it is a joy to discuss the state of the world. You are all part of this PhD thesis.

There was a boy
A very strange
enchanted boy
They say he wandered
Very far
Very far
Over land and sea
A little shy
and sad of eye
But very wise was he
And then one day
A magic day
he passed my way
And while we spoke of
many things
Fools and kings
This he said to me
"The greatest thing
you'll ever learn
Is just to love
and be loved
in return"

"Nature boy"
Eden Abhez

List of Articles

This thesis is based on the following articles, referred to in the text as Article 1, 2 and 3.

Article 1: Bjørnsen, R. (2020). The assumption of privilege? Expectations on emotions when growing up in the Norwegian Foreign Service. *Childhood (27)*1: 120-133. https://doi.org/10.1177/0907568219885377

Article 2: Ragnhild Bjørnsen: "Place attachment and agency in globally mobile childhoods: Retrospective narratives inside the Norwegian Foreign Service." Under second review in *Journal of Environmental Psychology.*

Article 3: Ragnhild Bjørnsen, Halvor Fauske, Jan Fadnes: "Invisible children, untouchable cases? Diplomat children and Third Culture Kids – A Child Welfare Perspective". Under review in *The International Journal of Children's Rights.*

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Chapter 1. Introduction

Due to my parents' international form of work I lived in many countries and continents during my childhood. I continued to relocate also after I started studying, grabbing all opportunities I came across to explore new places. I was living in Berlin when I in 2005 was introduced to a book by an acquaintance, titled "Third Culture Kids – Growing up among worlds" (Pollock & Van Reken, 2009[2001]). By then the term "Third Culture Kids", or "TCKs", had become a global popularised discourse. I had previously worked at asylum centres and with unaccompanied minor refugees and was writing a masters' thesis in political science about EU asylum policies at the time. The question occurred to me: was I also a migrant? I had not thought this way before because I always had this one thing "the others" never had: a Norwegian passport. It is red, yet it might as well be laced with pure gold, a reminder that in this world, being a Norwegian citizen means you drew the golden lottery ticket.

Reading up on the subject, I found the field on TCKs lacking in research that tied this childhood to wider sociohistorical questions of globalisation. At the same time, life lived across many countries is a highly individual matter. Here was a possibility to connect the personal to the global, psychology to anthropology. As I put out feelers for possibilities of such a study, I was introduced to Iver B. Neumann's (2012) anthropological study of Norwegian diplomats. Children of diplomats represent an empirical void in childhood studies. I decided to inquire about a study into former Norwegian diplomat children. The "missionary kid" discourse had reached Norway in the 1980s and had its own research field, both in Norway and internationally. Yet it is its own field, bounded in its religious context. What would be particular for a diplomat childhood? As I began this investigation, there were no studies explicitly of diplomat children or youth, or adults who had grown up within foreign services. However, during the course of this thesis came Sara A. Hiorns' study of former children of the British Diplomatic Service (2017), which presented a possibility for comparison.

1. 1. Children in the Norwegian Foreign Service and "Third Culture Kids"

Approximately 400 Norwegian children with a parent(s) in the Norwegian Foreign Service (NFS) live overseas at any time. The rotation system applied in diplomacy implies relocation

every two-to-four years, making them what is referred to as "serial migrants". These relocations vary between missions overseas and periods spent at "home" in Norway. Historical documents within the NFS show that children have been part of official institutional practice at least since 1919 (Neumann, 2012:145-146). Historically, sending children to boarding school or to extended family in Norway was a means to ensure (class-appropriate) socialisation and education needs, and was part of institutional practice. This was also common practice in the British Diplomatic Service and numerous other organisations historically rooted in colonial traditions. In more recent decades, children of the NFS generally attend locally based English-speaking schools overseas and live with their parent(s).

In the aftermath of WWII, the term "TCK" came to designate the children of American diplomats, missionaries, military and international companies who lived overseas (Useem & Downie, 1976). However, as the term developed in popular discourse, "TCK" was given wider definitions in order to include a growing diversity and a global reach. The definition which is commonly referred to is the following:

> A Third Culture Kid (TCK) is a person who has spent a significant part of his or her developmental years outside the parents' culture. The TCK frequently builds relationships to all of the cultures, while not having full ownership in any. Although elements from each culture may be assimilated into the TCK's life experience, the sense of belonging is in relationship to others of similar background. (Pollock & Van Reken, 2009:13).

The term is broadly used as an identity marker by many in today's multicultural world. Yet this definition easily becomes a "catch-all concept", which represents analytical challenges to its application for research purposes. In this thesis, a high level of international mobility is a central part of the topic under study. Moreover, children of diplomats represent one of the origins of the term (Useem & Downie, 1976), what is now popularly referred to as "classic TCKs". For the purpose of analysis for this particular study, I apply the following definition:

> *TCKs are child dependents of parents who are sent on multiple missions overseas by their employer. These are typically children of diplomats; missionaries; the armed forces; Governmental International Organisations (IOs); Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs); or corporations with branches overseas. Common to these institutions is a contract specifying international mobility, and a middle- to upper-middle-class level of income.*

An example of a contract with an international rotation system for all employees is the diplomat's specified "duty to move" (in Norwegian "flytteplikt"). In these organisations, employees are typically "posted" every one-to-four years in a country overseas before being "posted" to the next country, and periodically to their "home" country. The degree to which

an employee formally and informally has influence over decisions of where and when they relocate will vary. The nature of the employee's work is characteristically to represent either a nation-state (which is the case for diplomats); a religious or humanitarian orientation (missionaries, IOs and NGOs); or a political regime (such as the armed forces). These are also commonly life-long careers. The children therefore become serial migrants within an institutional framework. The age (and therefore developmental stage) the children are in when they relocate; how many times they relocate; and how much time they spend in their country of citizenship(s), will vary considerably. This is also the case amongst the participants in this study. The cultural contrasts across the countries and continents where the children reside also varies. What is common, however, is the presence of the rotational contract and the impact it has on many sides to their life. It will influence their degree of mobility; the cultural and national contexts they grow up in; their relationships to people and places; and how they see themselves. The historical origins and common dimensions of this "classic TCK" childhood are explained further in Chapter 2.

1.2. Why study former diplomat children?

This study sheds light on global processes through the participants' eyes. The autobiographies provide an entrance into two worlds which they bring together: 1) current trends of the global and the local; and 2) personal experience of being placed in an ascribed "privileged" category. The group under study is early in historically rising patterns of global mobility and globalisation's accelerated change. Mobility is an intrinsic part of an increasing number of professions. Especially for those in rising social mobility, or who are at the upper side of socioeconomic status in society, to relocate for both higher education and work is becoming the norm rather than the exception. The idea of life as a path towards self-realisation has now adopted a neoliberal and mobile character. Life is seen as meaningful through the development of achieved identities, in which one is 'free to choose' amongst a variety of lifestyle options. In this pursuit of profession and opportunity, relationships move away from set communities over time to become "loose networks". Goodhart coined the term "Anywheres" to describe these members of society, as they "see the world from Anywhere" (2019:3). In the present sociohistorical context, most of these "Anywheres" still come from somewhere, which they wished to leave or felt they needed to leave in pursuit of self-realisation. This, however, will not be the case for a rising number of their children, who are likely to grow up in several places within or across nation-states. In this context, the

participants of this study are forerunners, and they document experiences that will be of relevance to an increasing number of children and adults. Their reflections can function as a magnifying glass in this respect. The participants have grown up in various places, yet they share a common set of references of the global and of high mobility. This global orientation is not only transnational across two countries - the multitude of places means it goes beyond concepts of nation-states.

The "global" has entered their way of reflecting about themselves, their identity, their life choices and values. As they are early mirrors of current trends, these values are cultural resources that provide valuable insights. For the diplomat child, on the other hand, the "local" constant is the family on-the-move, with its family narratives and practices. Another form of "local" they have experienced are the expatriate communities, neighbourhoods and schools. A characteristic of expatriate communities is that you or the Other will soon be leaving. To study this group therefore gives insight into tensions which will be relevant for future families, and generally dilemmas of the social temporariness an increasing part of the population will come to know.

The study provides an entrance into questions of ascribed "privilege", which have now taken a global character, referred to as "elite mobility". Yet outer symbols of lifestyle neither tell us about the invisible sides of life, nor do they give us a child perspective. There is now a tendency in migration research to create a dichotomy between "privileged mobility" and "underprivileged migrants". Such a divide does not distinguish how mobility for an adult can be experienced as displacement for a child, regardless of economic circumstances. This study provides personal accounts of what it is like for a child to be ascribed a "privileged" status. It, therefore, gives insight into what it is that we actually do when we categorise children in this way and what effects this act can have, both in childhood and for adult life.

1. 3. Research gaps, research questions and aims of this study

As there is a complete lack of empirical knowledge of diplomat childhoods, I formulated the following explorative research questions. The main research question of this thesis is:

What does it mean to have had a childhood within the NFS?

This is explored through two sub-research questions that cut across the articles and the discussion in this extended abstract:

1) *What has this childhood meant for participants' circumstances and experiences during childhood?*
2) *How does this childhood manifest as tensions and resolutions in adult life?*

The overall aim of this thesis is to provide a bottom-up narrative of globalisation through the experiences and reflections of those who have grown up in the NFS.

- The thesis aims to contribute to further knowledge of the TCK experience, and suggests implications with the goal to assist TCKs, youth, their parents, employer institutions, and adults with a TCK background.
- Furthermore, the study aims to provide a prism into current ideologies from the perspective of adults who, as international child migrants, are forerunners in a new world trend towards increasing global mobility. As they were labelled "privileged", this prism also functions as a mirror into current ideals, assumptions and stereotypes.

The wealth of information that lied in the collected autobiographies of the participants led me towards directions that had not been addressed in the research field on TCKs. Firstly, the way emerging global narratives of "privilege", and their underlying ideologies, affect children's emotions and self-image amongst this group had not been documented and theorised. Moreover, most studies in this field are oriented towards psychological and educational assistance and "repair" when TCKs show signs of psychopathology. Questions regarding how children can experience agency by participating in decision-making over "home" were left unexplored. Further, a few autobiographies led me to discover a lack of research in addressing how this form of high-mobility childhood represents its own barriers for children to realise their legal rights, and in particular in situations of diplomatic immunity. These research gaps are addressed in the research questions of the three articles of this thesis, respectively:

Article 1: *How has a mismatch between expectations on emotions and the emotional state participants experienced affected them, both as children and in their adult lives*?
Article 2: *What are the relationships between place attachment, social attachments, and agency in an NFS childhood, and how are these relationships experienced as lived tensions in participants' adult life*?

Article 3: *In what ways may characteristics of a TCK childhood in general, and a diplomat childhood in particular, cause legal bias from a Child Welfare perspective?*

1.4. Research design, data and analysis

The research design of this thesis is explorative and phenomenological, within an overall narrative framework. This framework is reflected in the choice of method to collect retrospective autobiographies. The data consists of collected (and co-constructed) autobiographies, whereof 31 are written life stories and 12 are narrative interviews. Participants responded to a request to write (or tell) one's autobiography about a childhood in the NFS. Participants cover three generations, from age 19 to 78, and consist of three thirds women. Unless otherwise stated, quotes from the autobiographies are my translations from Norwegian to English. Further, I applied narrative analysis to identify patterns of meaning in the data. Narrative theory on the micro-level of narrative self, the meso-level of institutions, and the macro-level of ideology has assisted in interpreting the data.

1.5. Main findings and contributions to knowledge

Article 1 is entitled: "The assumption of privilege? Expectations on emotions when growing up in the Norwegian Foreign Service". The article was specifically concerned with the *challenges* described in the data. The analysis was, therefore, in large part oriented towards the autobiographies of participants who had experienced a particularly challenging childhood. The article finds that there is a cultural narrative that ascribes a "privileged" status onto the participants, and which assumes emotional expectations. As active agents in their socialisation, the participants who experienced a mismatch between emotions as expected and emotions as experienced interpreted the cultural narrative of "privilege" into "feeling rules" of what was culturally correct and incorrect to feel. Acts of "deep acting" to match these feeling rules created an emotional estrangement towards their caregivers as well as within themselves.

Article 2 is entitled: "Place attachment and agency in globally mobile childhoods: Retrospective narratives inside the Norwegian Foreign Service". This article took as its empirical starting point the autobiographies of participants who recall a particularly *happy* childhood within the NFS. The results pointed to how, in order to manage high mobility,

families in the NFS created different narratives of what “home” is. Participants have evaluated their degree of agency within such family narratives. Findings indicated that when there was a high degree of child agency through negotiating "home" with their parents, it benefited the child's sense of control, predictability and perceived meaning over journeying away from home. Further, participants who experienced a lack of choice over "home" illustrated how intense, frequent and accelerated mobility can be experienced as existential outsideness. This takes the form of tensions into questions of self and belonging, which participants perceive a need to resolve in adult life.

Article 3 is entitled: “Invisible children, untouchable cases? Diplomat children and Third Culture Kids – A Child Welfare perspective”. This article has taken a *specific case* in the dataset to ask questions about legal barriers for TCKs in cases of parental neglect or abuse within the family. For reasons of anonymity, the analysis is based on two publicly known international cases. The analysis finds that characteristics of affluence and high mobility can cause TCKs to be "invisible" to Child Welfare Services. Also, TCKs live overseas, making them "unreachable" for Child Welfare Services in their country of citizenship. Compounded to these challenges is the legal immunity afforded to children of diplomats. This immunity may save the child from an outside threat but leaves child neglect or child abuse cases "untouchable" for local authorities and family courts. Finally, we discuss preventive measures which address these challenges for TCKs in general and diplomat children in particular.

The discussion of this extended abstract brings these findings together in a synthesis. The three areas of tension explored in the articles are conceived as various forms of potential global disconnection. Participants are theorised as existing between metanarratives of pull- and push-migration that have opposite emotional tone towards mobility (one of “privilege”, the other of “loss”). The autobiographies as a whole show a tendency for participants to go from high mobility in young adult life, towards a wish for connection to one location and locally bound relationships in later adulthood, with an emphasis on friendships over time. Moreover, they create coherent narrative selves as an emotional and reflexive movement between pull- and push-migration narratives; between their child and adult perspective; between ascribed "privileged" status and self-perceived gratitude. This gratitude is rooted in abilities to shift cultural perceptions; to move inner emotional horizons; and their acquired value-orientations. A salient underlying value is empathy across differences and distances – a form of global consciousness which has its source in childhood local encounters.

With these empirical findings, the study makes an important contribution to knowledge, both to further understand the diplomat child experience, and to the TCK experience by addressing important gaps in this research field. Moreover, it makes a theoretical contribution to this field by introducing a psycho-anthropological approach which combines Arlie Hochschild's (1983) concepts of "feeling rules" and "deep acting" with a cultural narrative framework. Through this fresh perspective, the study formulates theoretical propositions based on rich contextual information and a plurality of voices. These theoretical propositions aim for analytical generalisability as they can be a starting point for theorising about others who have known similar circumstances.

1.6. Outline of this thesis

This thesis consists of three articles and an extended abstract. The purpose of the extended abstract in an article-based PhD dissertation is to clarify how the articles' themes and findings are interrelated within an overarching context. Moreover, the extended abstract should develop discussion into the complexities of findings further, in light of theoretical and methodological perspectives and limitations. The following chapter provides an overview of the research most relevant to situate and discuss this thesis's research questions, which I appraise and synthesise. In Chapter 3, I introduce a theoretical framework which understands childhood within the NFS as three narrative levels. I further link Hochschild's concepts of cultural "feeling rules" and "deep acting" to the narrative framework. In Chapter 4, I enter into an imagined dialogue with Pierre Bourdieu, where we discuss the strengths and limitations to my methodological choices. These include using the autobiography as data; a researcher's reflexivity; dilemmas during data collection; the steps of narrative analysis; and ethical considerations. Chapter 5 presents a summary of the articles and demographic results. Chapter 6 synthesises these findings and discussions in a higher level of abstraction, connecting them to dialectic relationships between push- and pull-migration narratives of opposite emotional tone; between the child and the adult perspective; and between ascribed "privilege" and self-perceived gratitude. Finally, Chapter 7 summarises the thesis' main contributions and limitations. It also suggests possible implications and paths for future research.

Chapter 2. Background, and how to delimit the state of the art?

2. 1. Introduction

This chapter identifies, appraises and synthesises the research most relevant to situate and discuss the research questions. I show that research on TCKs until 2010 had a western and individualistic orientation dominated by developmental psychology and attachment theory. Later contributions, however, made the research field more interdisciplinary. This has opened the door to diversity and critical thought that allows placing the TCK within local cultural contexts and globalised ideological influences.

Although the research field on TCKs is relatively small, this extended abstract's strict format does not permit an exhaustive summary. Instead, I will provide an in-depth review that sheds light on this thesis's theme from different theoretical and empirical perspectives. This more purposive sampling compensates for brevity by seeking theoretical and contextual saturation (Cochrane Handbook, Chapter 20.3.2.1.) rather than elucidating all avenues of available data. The aim of presenting various perspectives is also to provide the sociohistorical context of such childhoods, an element that has all but disappeared from research on TCKs. My approach is an inductive meta-synthesis, analysing the results of previous studies across categories and findings. Such a meta-synthesis can provide new understandings of existing research based on patterns that emerge across the literature (Malterud, 2017).

Three fields of research literature, which I will call "stories", stand out as particularly relevant to this review: The "Third Culture Kid" (TCK), the Norwegian "missionary kid", and the diplomat child. These are not exclusive categories, as the TCK research field includes missionary kids, diplomat children and other child dependents (see definition proposed in Chapter 1). Yet whereas the TCK ("story 1") has focused on commonalities across such childhoods, studies I refer to of Norwegian missionary kids ("story 2") and diplomat children ("story 3") are orientated towards what is specific to the childhood experiences within these respective organisations. Moreover, the TCK research field has a strong American origin. Like a tripod, this literature review stands with one leg in each of these three research "stories". Three main themes emerge from my reading across this literature. Firstly, I ask: "Privileged childhood?" Here I present the discussion that is taking place within each "story" of whether or not the children are "privileged". The second theme is entitled "Representation,

the hero’s calling and sacrifice". In this section, I shed light on how notions of career and sacrifice (especially family sacrifice) are institutionalised. Third, I explore how each of the three "stories" are communities which censor alternatives, including their knowledge production. Here I have found Fish’s (1976) concept of “interpretive communities" especially useful to highlight processes of communal censorship and change.

In this chapter, I first present the methods I have applied for this research review and methodological limitations. I then proceed to present the three emergent themes above for the three literature "stories": the "Third Culture Kid", the Norwegian "missionary kid", and a diplomat childhood, consecutively. Because the "Third Culture Kid" story is a concept *across* sponsor organisations (military, religious missions, diplomacy, trade), my summary will be more general. In contrast, I go deeper into the phenomena of missionary and diplomat childhoods. Finally, I sum up and present research gaps which this thesis will address.

2. 2. Methods

My initial literature search began in September 2018 in PsycINFO, Academic Search Complete, and Web of Science.[1] The result was 185 relevant hits, comprised of academic peer-reviewed articles, dissertations, and non-scientific articles. The latter were mainly in magazines designed for staff and spouses of employer organisations such as the *Foreign Service Journal* for the American State Department. I proceeded with an examination of abstracts and bibliographies. This examination led me to search in a few key journals that have published research on TCKs. These were notably *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*; *Journal of Research in International Education*; and *Journal of International Education Research*. Moreover, many studies of TCKs are of children of missionaries and published accordingly in journals such as *Journal of Psychology and Theology*; *Journal of Psychology and Christianity; Mental Health, Religion and Culture*; *Torch Trinity Journal;* and (not peer-reviewed) *Evangelic Mission Quarterly*. I did searches for literature reviews, of

[1] Example of search strategy in Academic Search Complete for qualitative studies: 1> “third culture kids” OR “third culture child”. 2> “third culture individual*”. 3> “Global* nomad*”. 4> (“global* mobile) AND (child* OR adolescent OR adult). 5> expatriate* AND (child OR children OR adolescent OR kid). 6> “diplomat kid*” OR “diplomat child”. 7> Missionar* kid OR missionar* child*”. 8> “military brat*”. 9> (narrative OR experience OR autobiograp* OR qualitative OR interview OR reflection). 10> 1 OR 2 OR 3 OR 4 OR 5 OR 6 OR 7 OR 8. 11> 9 AND 10.

which published peer-reviewed reviews are lacking.[2] The "snowball-effect" of going through lists of references led me to discover studies that did not appear on the first keyword searches. My initial search strategy had not picked up initial literature in the field (from the 1960s to 1990s). Therefore, reference and citation tracking were important to acquire an overview. Searches in Google Scholar and a (Norwegian) library search motor, Oria, pointed to key books and book chapter publications. Results were international (with an absolute overweight of American) theoretical and empirical research and substantial non-academic and grey literature such as conference papers, personal autobiographies, fictional stories, journalistic work, and film documentaries. This diversity shows that "Third Culture Kids" is a discourse with a wide variety of contributions.

Gradually, I discovered that childhood in the military is its own research field. A search in PsycINFO alone using the suggested keyword "military families" gave 729 hits. Much of the literature focuses on medical and psychiatric effects of parental deployment, published in medical-oriented journals. Although parental deployment is an aspect of a TCK's childhood, it does not focus on the international migration experience. This literature consequently proved tangential to the research focus. Another limitation to my original searches was that investigation into TCKs' sociohistorical and cultural contexts was largely missing. This lack is a likely result of the TCK research field's focus on individual development at the expense of context. That is why the "expatriate community" is relevant as supplementary research to understand a TCK's social environment. The expatriate community is a vast research field largely focused on adults and "expatriate adjustment", from the perspective of organisational costs and management. Overall, this literature equals "adjustment" with "success". However, this dissertation assumes no such thing. On the contrary, it raises questions about what the individual should adjust *towards*. Therefore, I chose not to engage with this fundamental research premise. Instead, I made selections from the literature that describe a set of institutional premises in the expatriate environment that influence the TCK experience.

I also found a diversity of academic and non-academic sources in the Norwegian searches. I proceeded with searches in the database NORART, with five relevant hits. The Norwegian

[2] There are online (not peer-reviewed) literature reviews and bibliographies. Ruth H. Useem presented a comprehensive revised bibliography in 1999, with resources dating back to 1889: http://tckresearcher.net/RHU%20bib%20v2%20copy

database IDUNN provided one research article. Searches were made in Oria and Bokhylla for books and book chapters, with an almost exclusive majority of hits concerning Norwegian missionary children. Searches in newspaper articles through ATEKST gave an overview of media coverage of children of diplomats, missionaries and the military over the last decades – an indicator of a small yet present discourse on TCKs in Norway – almost exclusively on missionary children. The non-scientific, independent journal for aid and development workers, *Bistandsaktuelt*, has published a few articles regarding "Third Culture Kids" and "missionary kids". The five Norwegian missionary organisations also have their own published stories of missionary children.

Since these first searches in 2018, I have continued to keep up with recent publications, including 2020. In the following review, I have made a selection according to these criteria: 1) overall confidence (research design; bias in primary data set; validity between presented findings and original dataset); 2) how they represent a diversity of research themes and critique; 3) how they represent a diversity of empirical sources; and 4) their impact on the field.

2. 3. American “Third Culture Kids”: Childhood by design nr. 1

2. 3. 1. Privileged childhood?

The first use of the terms “third culture” (Useem et al., 1963) and “Third culture kids” (Useem & Downie, 1976) were introduced by sociologists John and Ruth Useem in the 1960s. The sociologists reported on their ethnographic fieldwork in India and Vietnam. Their work focused on powerful American organisations - the military, the State Department, missions and international trade - increasing their presence after WWII. They used the term "third culture" to describe how Americans and local "nationals" interacted to ensure cooperation. American families were sent overseas in increasing numbers, demonstrated by American presence growing from 118.000 in 1940 to 1.700.000 in 1970 (Cohen, 1977). By the 1980s, adults who had grown up overseas as "child dependents" of these sponsor organisations began to voice a counter-narrative to the dominant story about their "privileged” childhood. These adult TCKs pointed out how, *despite* their material and educational needs having been met, some of their existential needs had not. This alternative narrative is a central theme in Article 1 of this thesis. The 1980s to 2000 see a range of personal stories, novels, films, and

journalistic work published about their painful childhood experiences and how it had affected them in later life. The strongest voices came from former "missionary kids"[3] and "military brats".[4]

2. 3. 2. Representation, the hero's calling, and sacrifice

Within their organisations, and in the public's eye, these American expatriates were national heroes with a greater calling, whether religious, one's country's interests, or establishing a new capitalist world order (Useem et al., 1963). The nature of the work was (and still is) *representation*, which meant that visible sides of these families' lives symbolically represented both their organisation and country. Accordingly, there was an air of "privilege" in terms of material and exclusive lifestyle as symbols towards the outside world of wealth and power. As the super-subordinate relations of colonialism ebbed out, "expatriate communities" took over similar colonial practices yet with other membership criteria (Cohen, 1977). To this day, TCK "dependents" live in expatriate communities that engage in the "continuous drawing, maintaining and negotiating of boundaries, such as those of ethnicity, nationality, or gender" (Fechter, 2007:50). Fechter illustrates practices of exclusiveness by how expatriates refer to their often secluded and esoteric lives with the use of metaphors such as the "bubble", "bunker", "ghetto", "hothouse", and "Disneyland" (ibid:37).

The representational work is organised in postings; for diplomats, this is on average three years, followed by repatriation or another posting. Why this rotation? This is a critical question, as this way of designing temporary assignments in the "third culture" has been copied and is still the norm throughout much of the expatriate work sector. Reasons given are: to avoid deeper involvement to the host community; safeguard undivided allegiance; and reduce host hostility (Cohen, 1977). The temporality can also be for health reasons, such as protecting the diplomat from high-risk posts and provide the possibility to return home. However, the implications of this institutional design of "a psychological sense of

[3] "Letters Never Sent" (R. Van Reken, 2012[1988]); "Paper airplanes in the Himalayas: The Unfinished Path Home" (P. Seaman, 1997). According to a survey by Pollock and Van Reken (2009) (non-peer-reviewed), in 1986, before WWII, American missionary kids were separated from their parents at age six and had on average not seen their parents for 3.6 years. After the war, they reported an average of 11 months (due to both air travel and the establishment of regional boarding schools).

[4] In "Military Brats: Legacies of Childhood inside the Fortress", M. Wertsch described how adult "military brats" often relocated every year and how many had grown up in authoritarian homes of violence and alcoholism. Military families, she argued, wear: "masks of secrecy, stoicism, and denial" (1991:49).

impermanency" (ibid:17) are central to understanding challenges TCKs face, as the research indicates that the children have a sense of being "in limbo" (Bell-Villada et al., 2011).

Such postings had profound implications on how to organise institutions and recruit staff. A premature end of posting was wasted resources, and a failed posting was rather due to "unsatisfactory family adjustments than with unsatisfactory work relationships" (Useem et al., 1963:175), something which continues to be true today (Van der Zee et al., 2007). A compensatory system of "mutual reinforcement" (Useem et al., 1963:174) developed to ensure speedy adjustment. The organisations provided extra "privileges" such as higher salaries, housing, clubs, travel, servants, shops, private schools and health services as a means of *compensation* for personal sacrifices, such as leaving relationships, communities and one's home behind (Useem et al., 1963). Today, this is known as "the expat package". The common practice to send one's children to boarding school from a young age gradually dissipated as American schools (later "international" schools) were established as an alternative, yet boarding schools are still in use. As I demonstrate below, there is still an understanding within these sponsor organisations that this work for a greater cause involves family sacrifice.

2. 3. 4. Interpretive communities, censorship and change

In her analysis of literature production within Norwegian missions, Mikaelsson (2010) refers to Fish's analytical concept "interpretive communities" (Fish, 1976). Such interpretive communities are shared strategies of knowledge production aimed at a particular audience of readers within a community. This knowledge production follows certain norms which guide what is accepted and unaccepted, "providing just enough stability for interpretive battles to go on" (Fish, 1976:484). At the same time, knowledge and belief systems are "hot" (emotional) rather than "cold" (cognitive), the result of which is resistance and censorship towards alternative narratives (Pateman, 2018). These internal mechanisms within communities have consequences for the extent to which we can access information about a particular childhood; what kind of knowledge is generated; and ultimately, for the children themselves and their later life trajectories. One example of an interpretive community and its knowledge production was the research following the "missionary kids" international conference in Nairobi in 1989. The CART/CORE research team was led by Leslie Andrews, the Director of Institutional Research at Asbury Theological Seminary (which prepares students to become missionaries). The team formulated the goals of three quantitative studies. One was to investigate how missionary kids could become "healthy, spiritually integrated, and satisfied

children who become mature Christian adults" (Powell, 1999:99). A second study aimed to identify the best personality characteristics of boarding school staff (Wickstrom & Andrews, 1993). The third study was directed at adult former missionary kids. It aimed "to measure three dimensions of well-being: religious, existential and spiritual well-being" (Andrews, 1995:442). The conclusion drawn from the survey was that "most MKs (missionary kids) can be expected to do very well spiritually as adults" (ibid:446). However, several adult missionary kids raised a concern that, although they may have kept their faith, other elements of their childhood, such as being sent to boarding school at an early age, had nonetheless led to psychopathology in later life (ibid:448). Although the methodology may have been sound, the way research questions and goals were formulated are testimony of what knowledge was desired in the context of religious missions at the time, and where there was resistance.

1970-2010: Third Culture Kids – enter the psychologists

Adult missionary kids and other adult TCKs of various sponsor organisations produced texts within a different interpretive community. These texts were largely influenced by psychologists such as Erikson's (1968) theory of identity development and Bowlby's (1969) attachment theory. TCK research had a clear focus on individual psychology. In light of attachment theory, early separation from parents, such as the use of boarding schools, could not be justified.[5] Relocations away from significant others, such as extended family members and the frequency of ending friendships, were conceptualised as multiple cycles of separations and understood as sources of grief (Schaetti, 2002). However, due to the necessity of "successful adjustment", this grief in childhood was primarily disenfranchised. The grief was consequently not socially recognised and emotionally processed (Gilbert, 2008). Young adult TCKs felt both "rootless" and "restless" (Useem & Cottrell, 1996; Choi & Luke, 2011). Identity development and integration was a concern due to multiple cultural and peer-group transitions (Pearce, 1998). With reference to Helson's (1964) disconfirmed expectancy theory, it was observed already in the 1970s how TCKs experienced "reverse culture shock" upon re-entry (or entry, since many were born overseas) to their passport country (Gaw, 2000). Often, repatriation took place when TCKs were adolescents or at the age of leaving the nest to begin college, at which point they felt like "hidden immigrants". Based on theories dating back to Park's "marginal man" (1928), the debate was whether these TCKs were destined to be

[5] Davis et al. (2013) present a comprehensive overview of research on the subject of emotional challenges which TCKs face upon repatriation and unresolved grief related to separations in childhood (with an overweight of references to missionary kid TCKs).

"isolated marginals" or could make the most out of their acquired skills as "constructive marginals" (Bennett, 1993; Fail. et al., 2004; Kilguss, 2008).

TCKs were found to have their particular toolbox of competencies. They were trained observers who adapted to new contexts and had intrapersonal and intercultural communication skills (Jordan, 2002). TCKs displayed value-orientations towards intercultural sensitivity and empathy (Straffon, 2003; Dewaele & van Oudenhoven, 2009), yet scored low on emotional stability (Dewaele & van Oudenhoven, 2009). Studies found they were well versed in "being a rapid friend maker" (Sears, 2011:78). A study on female college student TCKs (Choi et al., 2013) documented how the participants tended to choose functionally connected (useful) and socially connected (enjoyable) rather than emotionally connected (trust) friendship types. Experiencing intimate friendships and maintaining them over time was found to be challenging for (young) adult TCKs (Lijadi & Schalkwyk, 2014; Mortimer, 2010). However, a survey of older generation adult TCKs (ages 25 to 90, N=604) showed how they with age reported a higher quality of life as they settled into relationships and communities (Useem & Cottrell, 1996).[6] These findings are largely confirmed in a survey (ages 18-80+, N = 782) by Abe (2018).

Overall, the research field on the TCK experience has since the 1960s produced, often with uncritical cross-referencing, a combination of personal stories; "expert" self-help and parental guidebooks; non-peer-reviewed articles from newsletters and magazines internal to sponsor organisations; and scientific research. Research is often unpublished doctoral dissertations based on surveys distributed to overseas schools and to college students in the U.S. Fail. et al. (2004) provide an overview of the early literature.

The TCK "interpretive community" has had two primary audiences who were often also its writers. Firstly, you have the practitioners working with TCKs: teachers and school counsellors (Barringer, 2001; Cockburn, 2002); psychologists receiving TCK college students from overseas (Davis et al.,2015; Melles & Frey, 2014); family counsellors within Human Resources of the sponsor organisations; and parents.[7] Secondly, you find the adult TCKs

[6] This study is frequently referenced but not published peer-reviewed, methods and sampling limitations are not specified (respondents lived in the U.S.). Results of the same study are published by A. Cottrell in Ender (2002).
[7] For example, The Foreign Service Youth Foundation published a handbook in 1994: "Notes of a travelling childhood", a blend of practitioners' experiences and views, and personal stories edited as parental guide.

seeking to understand their childhood experiences. These two audiences are crucial to understanding why the TCK research field became narrowed down to individual developmental psychology. The focus became how to support TCKs, *given that* they do not have influence in their situation of being mobile "dependents" of sponsor organisations.

Parallel to this essentialist development, the definition of TCK that still stands today (Pollock & Van Reken, 2009) expanded to a catch-all concept beyond the “classic TCKs”. A fascinating critique of the TCK discourse is given by Cranston (2017). She uses "the Third Culture Kid (TCK) industry" to illustrate neoliberalism's push of self-help literature, which is overall “an industry that was worth an estimated $11 billion in the U.S. in 2013” (ibid:27). Applying Foucault, she argues that "self-help works by governing subjectivity through managing emotions – a form of bio-power" (ibid:8). Cranston concludes that the "TCK industry" produces grief and insecurity as the normal response to a globally mobile childhood, a liminal condition of ontological insecurity. It then produces a narrative through which people "discover their TCK self, and, in doing so, find a comfort in belonging" (ibid:28). This critique provides important insight into how neoliberal ideology exercises power over the subject through self-management, which I discuss in Chapter 6. Cranston's observations bring new understanding to the consequences of the TCK discourse, which has gained global popularity, perhaps moving towards a "one size fits all" psychology, thereby risking censorship of alternative narratives.

2010 - 2020: Third Culture Kids – enter the anthropologists

From 2010 onwards, the research field on TCKs has been subjected to critique and studies challenging the ‘canonical truths’ of earlier research (Derwin & Benjamin, 2015). Fechter and Korpela argue that “although the term 'TCK' seems to work as a descriptive label and it is popular outside of academia, it runs into trouble when used analytically.” (2016:424). Among important reasons are the "homogenizing, American-centric approach (…) and its essentializing view of cultures” (2016:424). Currently, researchers use other terminology when studying TCKs. This includes "globally mobile children" and children of mobile "highly skilled households" (Hatfield, 2010; Konzett-Smoliner, 2016); "transnational elites" and "privileged migrants" (Fechter & Korpela, 2016; Coles & Fechter, 2008; Dobson, 2009; Dervin & Benjamin, 2015). Fechter and Korpela's (2016) aim is to bring the study of TCKs beyond the psychological and individualistic approach and into the wider fields of transnational migration and child migration within anthropology. To change the gaze towards

the local cultural contexts in which TCKs are embedded seems a much-needed direction. Widening the perspective contributes to highlight diversity in the TCK experience, provide studies from non-western approaches, and point to how the "third culture" is a social space of diversity and change. TCKs represent a diversity from all parts of the globe; they are multi-ethnic; mixed-race; children of binational households; single-parent and same-sex families; with mothers as breadwinners, to name a few (Sterle et al., 2018; Bell-Villada et al., 2011; Dervin & Benjamin, 2015).

Tanu (2017) points to several problematic aspects of the TCK research field based on her ethnographic fieldwork of transnational youth at an “international school” in Jakarta. She finds that the expatriate community is laden with Eurocentric socio-cultural hierarchies, including characteristic neo-colonial traits (supported in Emineke & Plowwright, 2017). A narrow definition of cosmopolitanism, such as speaking English and being “westernised”, was considered "international" and therefore approved by the school, whereas other forms of cosmopolitanism practised by pupils of Asian ethnicity were considered “incorrect”. Her findings reject the idealised description of TCKs as especially tolerant, representing “the United Nations of the future” (Cockburn, 2002:483).

Sears (2011) brings a needed update in the research on TCKs' identities, which has tended to approach this theme as if individuals have one identity. Instead, she refers to Bauman's (1996) theory of the postmodern individual who negotiates multiple, shifting and fragmented identities. Sears suggests that TCKs illustrate postmodern lifestyles, a view also taken to a degree in this thesis. Moreover, she applies Ricoeur's (1984) narrative theory of the self, as I also adopt and develop in Chapter 3. Sears’ results are based on interviews with TCKs (ages 8 to 17), parents and school staff. A number of these young TCKs explained how being a "stranger" encouraged self-reflexive processes, making them more conscious of who they are. This points to how TCKs develop a skill set that can provide resilience. Self-reflexiveness is deep work on self-perception. Therefore, this finding challenges the “chameleon” metaphor sometimes used on TCKs, as a creature who adapts to shifting contexts only on the surface. Sears documents how reflexive narratives give possibilities of self-continuity and coherence despite mobility. However, in Sear's contribution, the TCK's narration of the self is presented as an intellectual exercise, without an explicit notion of an embodied and emotional self.

This is not the case in the framework introduced by Melles and Frey (2014), as they ask: "If TCKs learn not to acknowledge their feelings or needs as young children, what will they know of their identity?" (ibid:353). Frequent relocations can cause inaccessibility to parents, which fosters disconnectedness both towards parents and a TCK's own emotions. The TCK in their case study wished not to escalate and be the cause of relocation stress, and therefore assumed an independent role. The authors identify three ways adult TCKs disconnect. Firstly, emotional disengagement manifested in struggling with relational intimacy, or being ashamed of emotions. Secondly, role-play, often chosen as efforts to please, control, or get others' attention instead of authenticity. Thirdly, replication, the phenomenon of repeating well-known patterns from childhood, can be recognised in the adult TCK who lives as though the option to remain in relationships is absent. Such a perceived absence of choice and lack of agency is the main theme in Article 2 of this thesis.

Change over time?

In sum, whereas research on TCKs until 2010 had a western and individualistic orientation, where developmental psychology and attachment theory were dominant influences, later contributions have made the research field more interdisciplinary, opening up to diversity and critical thought that places the TCK within local cultural contexts and globalised ideological influences. There is also notable progress towards fewer generalisations, more peer-reviewed publications, and describing methods and corresponding limitations of findings. In light of diversity, several recent contributions question whether the term "TCK" has analytical value. However, increased focus on diversity risks losing track of the historical and institutional origins of the "third culture", what I label the "society by design", as described by Useem et al. (1963) and Cohen (1977). This was, and still is, a highly specific social space designed to represent power, rotate its personnel, and ensure families' speedy adjustment. For these reasons, the families' *visible* lifestyle is one of high status and material "privileges". The "classic TCK" experience is a "childhood by design".

In the effort to place TCKs into the anthropological study of transnationals, the tendency is now to label TCKs "privileged migrant children" (Fechter & Korpela, 2016:423). They are now part of global stories of "transnational elites" (Willis et al., 2002) and "privileged mobility" (Croucher, 2012). Unfortunately, this comes at a price. In a plea for researchers to "pay attention to the labels and ideologies that we use to obscure the heterogeneity of the persons we study" (Dervin & Benjamin, 2015:9), the same authors now apply the reductive

categories "privileged" and "underprivileged" (Dervin & Benjamin, 2015:4). These are also stereotypes, and their assumptions obscure the work that was at the essence of understanding these children's worlds. We run the risk of detachment from the historical and institutional background of the “classic TCKs” "childhood by design". It may, ironically, lead to similar mechanisms of censorship the adult TCKs opposed in the 1980s. As I will argue throughout this thesis, this labelling of "privileged" and "underprivileged" is adult-centric and does not necessarily take the child perspective.

Another reason why "TCK" is rejected analytically may be due to contradictory empirical findings. With Abe (2018), I argue that the lack of longitudinal studies and lifespan perspective in this field is one reason why results appear more conflicting than might be the case. Results based on data of children and youth do not encompass voices of adult TCKs. Seemingly opposing findings may also be because *meanings we accord particular experiences change over the life course*. Youth practising discriminatory behaviour at an "international" school (Tanu, 2017) may well become more tolerant later in life, and a global identity does not necessarily have an "empty-shelled nature” (Dervin & Benjamin, 2015:7). Furthermore, an aspect that adds to the confusion is how studies of young college-age TCKs are labelled "adult TCKs" (or “ATCKs”). There are few empirical studies of the *oldest* generations. Results based on a college-age group are not representative of a TCK's entire adult life trajectory. Instead, they tell us something about a specific phase of transitioning from adolescence into early adulthood, an age generally known to be unsettling. Consequently, there may be negative biases within the overall impression of what it is like to be an adult TCK (Abe, 2018). Lastly, a factor that likely contributes to these negative biases is how informants are often recruited from online forums. Here participants are more likely to self-recruit as they often actively seek support. With the need to both return to the 'classic' group of TCKs, and to include older generation participants, I now turn to two specific research "stories": Norwegian adult missionary kids and adult diplomat children.

2. 4. Adult Norwegian missionary kids: Childhood by design nr. 2

Adult missionary kids in the U.S. were at the forefront of the critical reaction towards how missions organised childrearing separated from parents' care. This movement spread around the world, amounting to three international conferences in Milan (1984), Quito (1987), and Nairobi (1989). Amongst the audience were a few Norwegian adult missionary kids. The

following synthesis of their experiences is based on various research contributions provided in the compilation volume *Med hjertet på flere steder: Om barn, misjon og flerkulturell oppvekst* (Drønen & Skjortnes, 2010), as it presents this theme from multiple perspectives.[8]

The main study I refer to is by Skjortnes (2010). Her analysis is based on retrospective narrative interviews of five adult missionary kids, two men and three women, and is the study that best matches my thesis's research design. Participants represent childhood in different decades, from the 1950s to the 1990s. Also, I consider carefully a quantitative survey (ages 18 to 97, N = 60) by the International Research Institute of Stavanger (IRIS), which explores "what it was like to have a childhood as a Norwegian missionary kid, and what it has meant for the individual" (Lie & Abrahamsen, 2010:263). Further, I base my synthesis on Tjelle's (2010b) analysis of the missionary kid debate in Norway, where she summarises its main events from the 1970s to 2010. Finally, Mikaelsson (2010) has studied memoir literature production by missionaries. She sheds light on how the missionary movement is an "interpretive community" (Fish, 1976).

2. 4. 1. Privileged childhood?

According to Tjelle, the adult missionary kids' motivation for confronting the sponsor organisations was "primarily to nuance the exclusive picture of what it meant to have been a child of missionaries; they wanted to convey a different story than the 'sunshine version'" (2010b:106). Two of the missionary kids who confronted their mission sponsor organisation were Kirsti Håtveit and Berit Dahl.[9] As friends, "the conversations went on in secret, and they thought they were alone about their negative experiences – to be a missionary kid was otherwise always referred to as a privilege" (ibid:107-108). Compared to children in Norway, missionary kids did not grow up under particularly materially affluent conditions. Why, then, was there an exclusively "bright-sided" story of "privilege" about this childhood?

By 1987, adult missionary kids had begun to confront the missions, reporting that they over many years had needed to process painful experiences of separation from parents, neglect of

[8] Translated title: "With the heart in several places: On children, mission, and multicultural childhood". This book also serves as a detailed bibliography of all the research conducted on Norwegian missionary kids. All citations from this volume are my translations. Other important Norwegian contributions to knowledge and discourse on TCKs are L. Salole (2013; 2020); Salole & van der Weele (2010); and G. Hoaas (2016).
[9] Berit Dahl (1990) has given a personal autobiographical account of her childhood and later life trajectory in *Bortsendt: Om barn mellom kulturer* (Transl.: Sent away: Of children between cultures).

care at boarding schools, multiple relocations, and the culture shock upon (re)entry to Norway. In 2009, IRIS concluded in a survey of missionary children overseas between 1950 and 2000 that the children were given insufficient care at boarding schools and insufficient parental care and contact (Lie & Abrahamsen, 2010:269-270). "It is beyond doubt that this (the separation from parents) has left deep marks" (Abrahamsen, 2010:342). In all, 7% reported sexual violations, both boys and girls, of which 67% of cases were by school staff, and 35% of other children at the schools. These cases had been unknown, and adult missionary kids were the first to point out how the Norwegian Children's Act and Child Welfare Act did not protect a child overseas (Lidén et al., 2014).

2. 4. 2. Representation, the hero's calling, and sacrifice

Mikaelsson (2010) documents how a mission's effort is primed at sending missionaries to preach the word of God and introduce the gospel to non-Christians. A central element to recruitment and self-recruitment is the notion of having received a personal inner calling from God to be his missionary. The community, the "friends of the mission", have an "outer calling" to assist and provide financial and moral support to those chosen as qualified for the missionary's task. In this way, Mikaelsson shows that there is a *mutual reinforcement of legitimisation*. It provides the whole organisation with a representative identity.

The idea of personal sacrifice was at the centre (Mikaelsson, 2010). A missionary's children became part of such conceptions of true sacrifice. In her analysis of the missionary-run children's home Solbakken (1889-1952), Tjelle explains how Buettner's (2004) "Orphans of Empire" can be transferred to "the Orphans of Mission" (Tjelle, 2010a).[10] The willingness to give up family life to follow God's calling became a sign of morals: the greater the sacrifice, the more credible and authentic the life-long calling (Tjelle, 2010a; Tjelle, 2010b; Mikaelsson, 2010). Reinforcing the rhetoric of sacrifice, the reasons for children to stay in Norway, or constructing isolated 'gated' Norwegian schools overseas, were to avoid health risks and provide a Norwegian education and (Christian) socialisation. With the establishment of children's homes and schools, the missions created an institutionalised "childhood by design".

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[10] The legendary missionary David Livingston introduced the term when he said: "Nothing but the conviction that the step will lead to the glory of Christ would make me orphanise my children" (cited in Buettner, 2004: 112).

Adult missionary kids have stated that they grew up with the discourse of sacrifice, and that it was seen as a "privilege" to have a mother and father who were fulfilling God's will. Consequently, feelings of sadness, anxiety, protest or anger at being sent to boarding school was to go against God's will – a grave source of shame. The adult missionary kids argued that, from a child perspective, one could not talk of children's willingness to sacrifice: "The children have never had the choice of whether or not *to sacrifice*, on the contrary, they have *been sacrificed* for the sake of the mission" (Tjelle, 2010b:107). The sacrificial rhetoric and institutionalisation of childhood at boarding schools had consequences for the children's emotional development. In IRIS's study, 60% of respondents had been to boarding school, 25% were at boarding school throughout their school years, and the average starting age was 7. Between ages 7 to 10, the children saw their parents on average 2-3 times a year, the older children slightly more (Lie & Abrahamsen, 2010).

2. 4. 3. Interpretive communities, censorship and change

Over the years, missionaries published a wealth of literature, especially of heroic memoirs. Mikaelsson (2010) shows how this writing had a very specific audience and function in mind, making missions "interpretive communities" (Fish, 1976). The more heroic the stories, in both bravery and sacrifice, the more supporters in the community would be interested, inspired and eager towards the cause. According to her analysis, two norms determined text production: 1) the missionary calling is a central, unifying reference and duty (e.i. the hero story); and 2) what is published must not harm the mission's cause. These norms meant that there would be: "both censorship and self-censorship" (Mikaelsson, 2010:285). Censorship towards the outside world was tangible when the adult missionary kids who confronted the mission organisations were "accused of causing problems, tearing down the good and bright childhood experiences of others, of destroying the mission's future" (Tjelle, 2010b:106).

Because family sacrifice was seen as inevitable for missionary work, this childhood was designed to encourage children's self-censorship. Some boarding schools practised censorship of letters from children, as they were not to make their parents sad or worried. In the IRIS survey, 77% stated that they did *not* protest to being sent to boarding school. Why not? A participant explains how "being good" (Skjortnes, 2010:254) meant they were not supposed to show feelings, and how they looked down upon the children who wept when parents left. Childhood amnesia means it is typical for participants to remember other children's emotional

feelings rather than their own (Abrahamsen, 2010). The interpretive censorship of the community became *emotional censorship* which children practised on themselves.

Despite challenges typical to the TCK experience, the IRIS survey reports three fourths of participants remain Christian, and 92% felt that: "My childhood overseas has enriched my life" (Lie & Abrahamsen, 2010:274). Participants in the IRIS study further report that their experiences and knowledge of other cultures are highly important to them; how this has enabled them to understand other ways of thinking and behaving; and made them more tolerant of difference (Lie & Abrahamsen, 2010:274). However, there is an ideological shift, as participants report a dislike of the "cultural arrogance" (Skjortnes, 2010:258) they perceive is involved in the missionary movement. "We set ourselves above them." (ibid:252).

In her analysis of the missionary kid debate of the late 1980s, Tjelle (2010b) concludes that it was a discourse that necessarily surfaced under the changing public opinion of children as legal beings.[11] However, Tjelle argues that a "final resolution" has yet to come as new stories and lawsuits continue to reopen the debate. The last boarding school of Norwegian missions closed in 2006. What became a challenge for missionary kids in the aftermath of this debate, however, was how their *positive* experiences became invalidated. It became taboo to tell alternative, happy stories from life at missionary boarding schools. What had previously been understood by the internal missionary community as a "privileged childhood" was now being seen as its polar opposite – they had become the "underprivileged" victims in the eyes of the public. Therefore, "Thorstein", who grew up in the 1990s, says one of the hardest aspects of his childhood has been to be "labelled as a missionary kid" (Skjortnes, 2010:257).

2. 5. Adult diplomat kids: Childhood by design nr. 3

Based on my searches, I have found no historical events among children of diplomats which correspond to the international conferences of missionary kids. However, the TCK discourse made its way into the American State Department's Foreign Service.[12] The Foreign Service Youth Foundation was established in 1989.

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[11] 1976 was the United Nation's "Year of the child", and the United Nation's International Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) came in 1989.
[12] In 1987, Eakin, a diplomat wife and mother, published a handbook specifically on challenges related to "reverse culture-shock" that foreign service youth encountered upon (re)entry into the USA. For the latest /reviewed addition used by the State Department, see: https://www.state.gov/family-liaison-office/education-and-youth/bouncing-back-transition-and-re-entry-planning-for-the-parents-of-foreign-service-youth

There are no studies of Norwegian diplomat children, neither children nor adults. As far as I could find, the only official study of this group is by Hiorns (2017): "Little friends of all the world? The experiences of British Diplomatic Service children 1945 – 1990". The author's research design resembles my own, and it will be the primary study I refer to in the following synthesis. Hiorns' study is a historical reconstruction of British Diplomatic Service children between 1945 and 1990, based on oral history testimonies with 27 former British diplomat children, interviews with parents, and historical archives of reports and newsletters from the British Diplomatic Service. She explores three research questions: 1) How far the complexity of Diplomatic Service children's experiences defied popular stereotypes; 2) Whether the participants' experiences challenged post-war historical narratives of childhood; and 3) Whether experiences differed according to gender.

The second major study I refer to is Neumann's (2012) "At home with the diplomats: Inside a European Foreign Ministry", based on Neumann's ethnographic fieldwork within the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Neumann does not explore childhood within the Norwegian Foreign Service (NFS), but his study serves the purpose of providing a rare insight into the life of diplomats and the NFS as an institution. Foreign Services are protective and private institutions (Hiorns, 2017; Neumann, 2012; Coles, 2008), which is probably the main reason for the lack of research in this area.

Neumann describes diplomacy as a "third culture" (2008:51); its "commonalities in organisation, training and practices make for a certain uniformity throughout the globe" (2012:132). Therefore, when I in this synthesis combine studies of Norwegian, British, American, Australian and German diplomats and their families, I argue that there are enough similarities between them for such a synthesis to be valid across these nationalities. For further insight into the "interpretive community" of diplomats, I include Barbalet's (2019) discussion of writing the diplomatic memoir, based on Australian diplomatic memoirs since WWII. To include the perspective of the spouse, I refer to Hochschild's (2013) study of American diplomatic wives in the 1960s, and Cole's (2008) survey (N>400, 88% female) of British diplomat spouses.

2. 5.1. Privileged childhood?

Functioning diplomats overseas live a lifestyle with the accorded "privileges" that goes with the representational work. However, similar to the IRIS study of missionary kids, Hiorns' historical reconstruction of British Diplomatic Service childhood concludes that they "denied them proper parenting" (2017:229). All but three of the 27 participants had been sent to boarding school. Hiorn's analysis finds that the "transience" of relocations that they experienced (often before boarding school) made friendships a challenge for participants in later life, and they experienced an unclear national identity. Participants' relationships to place and home in adulthood are described either as restlessness or with a strong need to stay in one place. Hiorns argues: "this prevailing view of their lives as elite and privileged was a misleading veneer for a set of experiences which was altogether more thought-provoking and complex" (ibid:8). She makes the distinction that although participants: "experienced privilege through the opportunities afforded to them by boarding school education, they often felt emotionally deprived" (ibid:223).

2. 5. 2. Representation, the hero's calling, and sacrifice

Neumann explains how, in the NFS context, the hero story of 'the deed' is a career story: "serving diplomats are often referred to as "career diplomats" to underline that this is a full-time occupation, but also to underline the importance of this story." (2012:96). Similarly, in Hiorns' study, a participant describes her father's career as "a genuine calling or vocation, not just a profession" (2017:152). Diplomats sign a contract which states that they have a duty to relocate. This international rotational mobility of three years on average is part of the characteristic diplomat story. Career, rank, class, gender and loyalty are all dimensions that play into a diplomat's professional self-image (Neumann, 2012). Where class is concerned, diplomats are distinguished as part of an elite - not for their incomes (which in Norway and Britain represent upper-middle-class), but in Bourdieu's sense of capital as consumption and expression of taste (Bourdieu, 1984; Neumann, 2012). Successfully enacting this class role is critical to representational work, as are the "privileges" part of its signature feature.
As the missionary, the diplomat was a classic 'hero of Empire' role, with the consequent "discourse of family sacrifice" (Buettner, 2004:110). The traditional diplomat was male, and well into the 1970s, he had a wife expected to serve the Foreign Service with as much loyalty as himself (Callan, 1975). The couple also had children, who needed protection from health risks, education, and (class-appropriate) socialisation (Hickman, 1999). The childhood

‘design’ to send diplomat children to boarding school meant that the diplomatic career could go uncompromised. Moreover, among the British, the practice of sending children to prestigious schools was a part of the family’s identity, a ‘deed’ which was part of the service and acted as a sign of loyalty to the noble cause (Buettner, 2004). “These diplomatic fathers express a sense of regretful duty, implying that parents felt powerless to do anything other than send their children away” (Hiorns, 2017:98). This despite remembering how unsettling it was when they themselves were sent to boarding school. Diplomat wives gave similar stories of regretful sacrifice (Hickman 1999).

Even during the periods when children lived with their parents, the Foreign Services defined the relations between work and family time in detail. An official British guidance book of 1965 states: "Except in emergencies and at the beginning of an appointment, your wife will not be able to make the children a reason for not going to parties with you" (Hiorns, 2017:118). This conflict is known as “the clash between ‘cocktail and feeding time’” (ibid) and is widely documented from the perspective of female spouses (Callan, 1975; Hochschild, 2013; Coles, 2008; Hickman, 1999). The amount of time and dedication to the service grows exponentially higher with the rank of the diplomat: “One hundred ambassadors mean one hundred national day days for which each ambassador usually gave an evening reception. And these other ambassadors or their representatives were expected to put in an appearance” (Hochschild, 2013:87). In this way, “official life blurs into social life” (ibid:78). Today there is no formal expectation for spouses to accompany the diplomat to receptions. However, Coles (2008) finds there is still some level of informal expectation to participate. These receptions are a large part of diplomatic work. Anthropologist Constantinou refers to the diplomat Robert Moore, who calculated that he had spent 900 hours "formally at table or at cocktail parties" (1996:138). However, during his fieldwork at the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Neumann never registered a complaint about this aspect. Instead, colleagues commented that “It's all part of the job.” “This is how it is.” “This is what we do.” (Neumann, 2012:18).

Nevertheless, Neumann finds that the Norwegian diplomat’s everyday life is marked by tension of clashing stories: “home” and “work”, and “home” and “abroad” (2012:102, his transl.): “Changing representations of spousal and familial responsibilities now make for an intense cross-pressure on diplomats with a family” (ibid:103). Despite formal rules stating that a diplomat may stay in Norway up to several years, stories from Neumann's ethnography

show how someone can be seen as "unprofessional" if declining a posting or has the career sidelined if choosing family over a post, which is also reported by Hiorns (2017). It seems it is even more challenging for female diplomats to obtain both a career and a family life (Waibel et al., 2017). Moreover, in Neumann's study, some colleagues choose to go overseas without their family: "The message was clear: this was how things were, and it was none of my business to worry about it." (2012:105, his transl.). Although far less extreme and institutionalised than at earlier times when children were sent to boarding school, there is a taint of a "culture of separation" within the NFS. Article 3 raises the issue of parental absence.

2. 5. 3. Interpretive communities, censorship and change

Hiorns asks why British diplomats continued to send their children to the UK when there were "international" schools at hand. Foreign Services are prone to tradition and active resistance to change, what Neuman calls "face-saving" (2012:148). In what ways can the Foreign Services be said to be "interpretive communities"? According to Barbalet (2019), two main norms guide diplomatic memoirs. Firstly, "they are "masculinist narratives", "overwhelmingly triumphalist and mundane" voices, with traditional values such as strength, bravery, and (in the case of diplomats) national ascendancy" (2019:4). Secondly, "memoirs need to be personally discreet due to responsibilities of public office" (ibid), including preserving official secrets, political concerns, and the lives of others. These norms of text production mean that there is communal censorship and self-censorship in what becomes publicly known. Hiorns' study shows the same pattern as for missionary kids (Skjortnes, 2010) of how the "inevitable" separations caused the children to apply *self-censorship* to protect their parent's feelings, "a self-imposed system of emotional restraint" (Hiorns, 2017:82). Participants expressed how emotional resignation could be misinterpreted as ideals of independence.

Hiorns' historical reconstruction of British Diplomatic Service childhood has a negative hum, citing separations, transience, national identity and friendships as problematic. However, she reports that "a small group of the interview sample" have chosen a diplomatic career (Hiorns, 2017:225). However, surely, 7 out of 27 is not a small number. She explains their choice to join the Diplomatic Service as "confused" - a combination of family tradition, the Service feeling like their "natural environment", and their wish for a similar lifestyle, e.g. *not* the nature of the work itself. Hiorns also described how some male participants reported happily that they "quite enjoyed" boarding school, yet she does not give these reports weight. In this

way, her analysis excludes positive narratives, which I find lacking when considering her findings contradict such descriptions. As mentioned in Skjortnes' (2010) study, a young participant found being labelled a missionary kid to be the most challenging aspect of his childhood. It is, therefore, ethically and empirically essential that researchers describe and appreciate nuances present in the data.

However, Hiorns observes important shifts in ideology and value-orientations. One such is the increased refusal towards the role of the "privileged". Participants report the unease, "embarrassment", and "humiliation" (Hiorns, 2017:152) they felt as children living within the visible "privileges" of the representational lifestyle contrasting their social surroundings. These childhood experiences have been formative for how they perceive their quality of life and their political views. Their experiences of childhood have not matched a (British) public assumption of the diplomat childhood as "privileged". While Hiorns does not further explore what it has been like for the participants to grow up in this *mismatch* between their subjective experiences and this public stereotype, this is a general theme throughout my thesis.

2. 6. Summary and research gaps

This literature review gives a meta-synthesis of three childhood experiences: the "Third Culture Kid", the Norwegian adult "missionary kid", and the adult "diplomat kid". I have also shown how these three research "stories" stand on a common "third culture" context that is highly particular in its institutional framework, including visible affluent lifestyle traits due to concerns of representation, mobility and adjustment. I have labelled this institutionalised TCK environment a "society by design". From the overview I provide, which aims for depth rather than an exhaustive summary, it becomes clear that there are research gaps, both empirical and theoretical, some of which I aim to address in this thesis.

Empirically, there is an absence of studies on children of diplomats, both in Norway and internationally, with the sole exception of a recent British study of adult diplomat children. Moreover, my overview of the literature on TCKs demonstrates how the lifespan perspective, including older generations of adulthood, is needed. Though my study did not allow for a longitudinal study, its wide age span (19-74) reflects different life stages. Finally, there is a potential negative bias within TCK research which could be both due to informants' self-

recruitment and that this field has traditionally had the focus of supporting practitioners. These school counsellors' and psychologists' main motivation has been to support TCKs who struggle with their current or past experiences. However, the dataset in this study tends as a whole to be evenly distributed, where exclusively "happy" or "unhappy" recollections of childhood are the exceptions, and most autobiographies represent a larger group of both along this continuum.

Theoretically, due to the classic focus on individual psychology within TCK research, there is a lack of approaches which critically appraise the social environment, value-orientations and ideological beliefs surrounding the TCK experience. I address this gap in Article 1, which presents an alternative theoretical approach that combines psychology and anthropology. One way this lack of cultural critique comes to light in TCK research is an expressed resignation and inevitability in the literature over global trends of mobility – the same tone as the parental stories which told of boarding school being imminent. Therefore, there is a gap in the literature on how TCKs could have a position of agency regarding questions of mobility, home, and belonging. Article 2 takes as a starting point the autobiographies collected in this study where participants have participated in family negotiations, experienced a sense of control and meaning over 'journeying', as well as a sense of Norway being "My place".

Finally, research of the TCK experience lacks a discussion into the children's legal situation overseas. Norwegian adult missionary kids brought up this problematic aspect of their childhood, yet this has not received attention in the research literature. I pick up this thread in Article 3. I argue that there exists a biased belief that children of affluent families do not experience parental neglect or abuse and discuss how diplomatic immunity creates a legal loophole for children's right to care and protection. I will point to further research areas within the TCK field which need exploration in the conclusion chapter of this extended abstract.

Chapter 3. Theoretical Approach

> Who somebody is or was we can know only by knowing the story of which he himself is the hero – his biography, in other words.
>
> Hannah Aarendt,
> The human condition, 1958:186

3. 1. Introduction

In this chapter, I suggest a theoretical framework grown from an explorative, inductive design. I apply an approach to theory inspired by Glaser's (1978) goal of "theoretical sensitivity". Arriving at useful theoretical tools for analysis has been a trial and error process to identify relations between emerging themes in the data. This being said, to collect autobiographies was a choice made at the early stage of designing this inquiry. Within this choice lie both theoretical and methodological directions and assumptions.

Upon reading the autobiographies, it became apparent that participants perceived mobility across countries in childhood as what sets them apart from other Norwegians. Consequently, I came to see the migration aspect as central to the analysis and is, therefore, a major part of this theoretical framework. This framework analyses childhood within the NFS on three narrative levels of inquiry: The microlevel of narrative self; the mesolevel of institutional practice; and the macrolevel of metanarratives, which are the carriers of ideology. To separate narrative perspectives into three analytical parts is ambitious and comes at the expense of a more in-depth investigation into one of them. However, I found it necessary to apply all three perspectives, as they separately and together provided insights into central emerging themes in the autobiographies.

I further link Arlie Hochschild's (1983) concepts of cultural "feeling rules" (norms of what is correct and expected to feel) and "deep acting" (the work of trying to change one's emotions to fit these expectations) to the narrative framework. Across these narrative layers, cultural feeling rules and the deep acting involved in closing the emotional expectation gap are processes that affect the self. Consequently, this study's theoretical approach brings cultural and psychological attributes together, leaning on the fields of the sociology of emotion (Hochschild, 1983) and psychological anthropology (Röttger-Rössler, 2009).

In the following, I first present aspects of the narrative self on the microlevel. Second, I introduce the theoretical divide between push- and pull-migration on the macrolevel of metanarratives, which have opposite emotional tone. Third, I show how an ascribed "privileged" status is part of meso-narratives at the institutional level. Finally, I explain what is meant by an "expectation gap" within this framework.

3.2. The microlevel of narrative self

3. 2. 1. TCK – the profile of a postmodern childhood?

TCKs have been theorised as children living an extreme version of postmodern life, and how TCKs' narration of their life story is a way to preserve a sense of self in high mobility, shifting cultural contexts; and relational ruptures (Sears, 2011). Researchers further assert that postmodern life affects this narration in a particular way. Postmodernism is a concept in social sciences introduced by Lyotard (1984), describing a disbelief in the 'big stories' or metanarratives. According to Lyotard, the days where ideological metanarratives ruled our lives without questioning them were at an end. These metanarratives were stories of religions, of local and class origin, which largely pre-defined an individual's identity and life options. The 'narrative turn' spread across and connected the humanities, psychology and the social sciences, who began to see how experiences of personal meaning were rooted in cultural myths and narratives (Geertz, 1973; Bruner, 1987; Mattingly et al., 2008). Narratives were conceived as carriers of knowledge and scripts for practice that passed through generations. Bruner (1990) held that cultures provide us with narrative structures around which we organise our lives. To participate as a member of a society is to own narrative knowledge of its range of accumulated meanings. The metanarratives (also referred to as myths or grand narratives) provide ideological beliefs upon which all other life narratives lean. An ideology, according to Arendt:

> ...differs from a simple opinion in that it claims to possess either the key to history, or the solution for all the 'riddles of the universe', or the intimate knowledge of the hidden universal laws, which are supposed to rule nature and man (1968:159).

Postmodern or late modernity theorists departed from a deterministic way of seeing identity and socialisation, characteristic of structuralist sociology from Durkheim to Bourdieu. Instead, individuals were perceived to live reflexively, balancing diverse identities in different contexts while making sense of life through reflection: "The self has become a reflexive project, for which the individual is responsible" (Giddens, 1991:75). Sears finds that TCKs,

age 8 to 17, indeed engage in reflexive processes to question and negotiate different identities upon relocations and arriving into different worlds (2011). In this state of what Bauman coined a global "liquid modernity" (2000), there is a growing interest in how the autobiography represents a way to integrate what appear as fragmented, incompatible and inconsistent life particles into a coherent sense of self (Gullestad, 1996).

3. 2. 2. Self as narrative

Phenomenology seeks to understand the conscious experience and how experiences become meaningful *in context*. Narration is a meaning-making activity that provides us with this context. To ask what something means is to ask how it is related to something else, and narrative meaning-making is created by noting that something is a part of some whole. A narrative process can be defined broadly as a process by which a speaker or writer "1) connects events into a sequence; 2) that is consequential for later action and for the meanings that the speaker; 3) wants listeners to take away from the story" (Riessman, 2008:3). The primary audience of the autobiography, or one's life story, is oneself. The autobiography is a special kind of narrative that concerns the question "Who am I?". A narrative sense of self, our living autobiography, provides the author with a meaningful pattern even when there seemingly is none. It has a holistic ambition. However, the narrative has room for paradoxes and ambiguities. Not everything must be resolved. It is spacious and plastic. The autobiography is an integrated and creative part of the life it is narrating - a self in the making. Narration helps reconstruct the past and construct the present and the future through the past (Gullestad, 1996). It provides a set of coherent relationships from life's particles, provides an argument to claim that life has meaning, and that self exists. In health terms, it helps us achieve comprehensibility, manageability, and meaning – a sense of coherence (Antonovsky, 1987).

The autobiography can be a powerful tool to process and create a sense of unity and continuity behind our social roles and identities (Gullestad, 1996). One way to bind the present into a future sense of self is through what Ricoeur refers to as "the promise", or the possibility of "keeping one's word" (1992:140). In this way, we carry values, moral and ethical judgements from the past into the present and future: "I can be anyone, I can be anything, but this is where I stand!" (1992:168). Secondly, Ricoeur sees the narrative self as the "indispensable mediator" we create between "idem" and "ipse" (1992). As a contrast to an identity that is purely socially determined and ascribed (idem), Ricoeur insists that we have

selfhood that is unique to each individual (ipse). This selfhood is our singularity and accounts for the plurality amongst us despite the same social conditions. The narrative work is the oscillator of the strings, played throughout life, between our social identities and selfhood. Through this melody, a sense of continuity and coherence of the self unfolds, despite a gap between what we are socially expected to be (idem), and who we experience ourselves to be (ipse). Narratives provide consistency to our sense of self, not through a perfect fit of social identities, but by preserving our uniqueness. The narrative can always change with new perspectives, but it provides us with a temporary beginning, plot, and conclusion we can live with (Ricoeur, 1984). We can never be in complete control of what happens to us, and yet: "By narrating a life of which I am not the author as to its existence, I make myself its co-author as to its meaning." (Ricoeur, 1992:162).

3. 2. 3. Narrative as emotional self

Since narration often is understood as purely mental reflexive activity, studies into how TCKs construct narrative selves have tended to present narrative identity as such (Sears, 2011; Fail. et al., 2004). These findings disregard how the autobiography is an embodied and highly emotional way of constructing a coherent self and sense of meaning. Phenomenology sees the conscious experience as perception in context of intension, time and space (Husserl, 1960). In everyday life, these perceptions are most often pre-reflexive, experienced by our subjective bodies: "One's own body is in the world just as the heart is in the organism" (Merleau-Ponty, 1962:245). For Merleau-Ponty, our normal state is rather an active "I can" than of an "I am". The autobiography is a narrative of an embodied life in action, always answering "What can I?", and only in reflexive moments "Who am I?". According to this perspective, autobiography does not build on a cause-effect logic as much as a logic of the possibilities and potentials of "I can". This is Schutz' (1967) rational of motivation: narratives provide more of a future "um zu" (in order to), than a causal, past "weil" (because of). Our body carries our history as memories. In its active remembering (Van der Kolk, 2014), the body enables the possibilities of "I can" through our patterned body schemas (Merleau-Ponty, 1962).[13] The body's primary audience is our selves, and its strongest signals of what something means to us are emotions. As we engage towards something, the body normally tends towards a background in our experience, a silent presence (Leder, 1990). However,

[13] This does not mean that the body's memories are fully accurate, as is true for all memories (Laney & Loftus, 2013). Questions concerning the reliability and selectivity of our memories is discussed in Chapter 4.

there are times when the body is not 'silently doing'. A characteristic of emotions is that they "bind together insideness and outsideness" (ibid:55), "…a means by which we know about our relation to the world." (Hochschild, 1983:229). The embodied self that is otherwise part of silent knowledge moves to the foreground in emotional experience, and it fills the experiential space. The actual way we are experiencing grabs our attention. When such reactions from the body's 'deep level' awaken from the depths, especially if we do not understand them, it can seem as though the body is foreign to us (Merleau-Ponty, 1962). The weight within our horizon of experience shifts towards the self's existence. The bond between us and the world is filled with *personal* meaning (Johnsen, 2013).

Here I bring back Ricoeur's narrative "indispensable mediator" between "idem" and "ipse". Now it is as though this "oscillator" creates a melody with emotional tones that need to be brought back to harmony, meaning, and a coherent sense of self. Why can there be an emotional distance between the ascribed social "idem" and the subjectively experiencing "ipse"? As Hochschild (1983) made apparent, we are embedded in cultural contexts which formulate "feeling rules". These cultural rules in society tell us how we are expected to feel in different social contexts. They are "…cultural and social codes (that) specify at which times and in which manner which emotions should be shown, emphasized, or subdued, and in which manner which emotions are to be felt by whom" (Röttger-Rössler, 2009:165). They are parts of the scripts which guide us in everyday life, and it is usually when we feel *differently* than what is expected of us that feeling rules become tangible to our experience. "Ipse" is in conflict with "idem". Here Hochschild points to how we perform "deep acting" (also named "emotion management" and "emotion work") upon ourselves to try to change how we feel to fit emotional expectations. Given how intense emotional perception is for the embodied self, to perform deep acting is not without personal costs: "This is why emotion work is *work*, and why estrangement from emotion is estrangement *from* something of importance and weight." (Hochschild, 1983:229). In Hochschild's terms, we offer "a gift of feeling" to others during deep acting, often to make loved ones feel better. It can also be a source of emotional maturity, as our ways of looking at the emotional experience – our *inner horizon* of perception - can be widened (Merleau-Ponty, 1962; Johnsen, 2013). However, because of the strong signal function emotions have in our process of meaning-making, deep acting can go too far. This "affects the degree to which we listen to feeling and sometimes our very capacity to feel." (Hochschild, 1983:21). It can result in an emotionally detached and estranged self. The difference is a question of context, power relations, and, for children, our developmental

stage. For whom do we do this work? Do we have a choice? How are we to find our way back to a harmonised narrative self between the “ipse” who is experiencing and the “idem” of how we are supposed to be? Moreover, do we have the social option to tell the story of our narrative self publicly?

Postmodernity (or late-modernity) theorists, who depict a self who chooses between a multitude of options, are criticised for ignoring current existing economic and political structures, uneven power relations, the role of religion, class, and ascribed social roles (Bourdieu, 1999). The narratives we create of ourselves are anchored in wider cultural stories on the level of ideologies and institutions. Empirical studies show how, despite social mobility tendencies (in both directions), ‘big stories’ are still highly defining for a large part of the world's population. Moreover, even the young, middle-class, and educated are still socialised within class and tend to reproduce earlier generations' values and practices (Krange & Øya, 2005). Where do the children of diplomats stand in this social landscape?

3. 3. Two metanarratives of migration: the pull- and push-migration narratives

Children of diplomats, and TCKs as defined in this study, find themselves in a situation of serial migration. Traditionally, migration theory has made an analytic divide between pull- and push-factors (Lee, 1966). From an evolutionary perspective, migration has always been part of human existence to survive. People have had to leave a settlement (push-factors) while creating stories of a better place with a brighter future (pull-factors). This binary can therefore be said to represent two timeless narratives that take on specific sociohistorical characteristics within their metanarratives. Moreover, the migration narratives take on opposite emotional tone, i.e. community lost versus freedom gained. The pull-migration narrative serves as a powerful source of emotional motivation. It has helped people to look forward to the unknown with optimism and courage. Religious history has prophecies of "the promised land". Europeans emigrating to America, hunger and poverty pushing them to leave Europe, migrated to "The land of opportunity". On the other hand, the push-migration narrative is one of loss. All one was meaningfully connected to – sacred places, close relationships, community – is left behind. There was no choice but to flee "the holy land". These cultural narratives are both carriers of feeling rules. In the pull-migration narrative, emotions of happiness, joy and excitement over what the future will bring are expected and culturally tolerated. In the push-migration narrative, the expected emotions are sadness, anger and

anxiety of all that is lost and the insecurity of what is to come. However, the push-migration narrative can equally be a source of emotional motivation. Experiences of loss can motivate people to preserve cultural traditions; keep one's deep-rooted values; learn from processing painful emotions; feel gratitude towards one's past; and stay emotionally connected to people and places across distance.

I bring two metanarratives into relief here that currently influence our lives on a global scale. I will draw them with admittedly broad brushstrokes for analytical purposes, and I present their view on individuals rather than political and economic principles and policy. One is based on neoliberalist ideology and is globally expansive. The other is collectivistic and locally anchored. Neoliberalism has its roots in classic liberalist thought, with the ideas, amongst others of John Locke, and free market capitalism (Hayek, 1944; Friedman, 1962). Since the 1970s, it has expanded into its current global form. Neoliberalism has applied utilitarian ethics to justify how economic growth will "trickle down" and benefit the largest number of people on a global scale. Individuals should achieve independence and are seen as atomistic and motivated by self-gain. All dependency is perceived as a downward spiral. This logic's expression has led to life goals being perceived as projects of individual self-realisation (Beck, 1992). Through the market economy, individuals are seen to obtain political freedom, as a growing number of consumer and lifestyle options will be at their disposal – they are "free to choose" (Friedman & Friedman, 1981). What is central to the subject of this thesis is how this ideology is a *pull-migration narrative*. Migration (or more positively loaded "mobility" and "relocation") is seen as another option for the individual. We are "Anywheres", and our social lives are "loose networks" which provide us with more opportunities (Goodhart, 2019). There are feeling rules for the pull-migration neoliberal narrative: one is only permitted to have positive emotions about migration.

Political and technological forces inspired by the neoliberal metanarrative have led to standardisations and flow of goods, services, labour and information across national borders, i.e. globalisation (Eriksen, 2008; 2016). However, this 'big story' has encountered a simultaneous movement towards collectivism, localisation, the particular. These simultaneous processes are known as "glocalisation" (Robertson, 2012). The collectivistic narrative is rooted ideologically in an old tradition, from Aristotle, Edmund Burke and Emile Durkheim. It warns against abrupt changes. Currently, it seems to expand as a counter-narrative to neoliberalism with growing force (Chomsky, 1999), especially since the global financial crash

in 2008. It sees individuals as dependent on each other, in need of long-lasting relationships, community, shared traditions and collective narratives (Vetlesen, 2009). The individual is dependent on recognition from others within bonds of family and friendships; from the solidarity within groups and communities; and being recognised as legal beings (Honneth, 1995b). Freedom is relational and contextual. Ethics of proximity stand strong in this tradition (Buber, 1937; Løgstrup, 1956). One is seen as having roots, and as being immersed in place (Relph, 1976). We are "Somewheres", in need of protecting our community, our traditions and long-lasting relationships (Goodhart, 2019). From this perspective, migration is seen as forced, as 'dislocation', implying the loss of relationships, community and home: a *push-migration narrative*. This metanarrative is also a carrier of feeling rules: the collectivistic narrative centres around the emotional pain related to experiences of loss in the face of change.

Figure 1: *The 'Pull-' and 'push-migration narratives'*

Pull	**Push**
Agent	Victim
Freedom of choice	Force
Future gain	Loss of past
Opportunity	Security
Independence	Dependence
Individual self-realisation	Community
Possibility/Change	Stability
Universality	Proximity
Wings	Roots
Anywheres	Somewheres

The migrant, including the diplomat child and TCKs, will live between these metanarratives of opposite ideologies and emotional tones. Moreover, they are also embedded in meso-narratives at the level of social organisation.

3. 4. Narratives at the mesolevel: ascribed "privileged" status

3. 4. 1. Ascribed versus achieved status

Schütz (1967) developed a social phenomenology emphasising how experiences occur within an intersubjective field, a lifeworld shared with others and taken to be reality. Our knowledge of what is real and unreal is socially constructed (Berger and Luckmann, 1966). In narrative

terms, the ideologies of metanarratives take different forms in meso-narratives as we organise and institutionalise social life, practice and interaction (Bruner, 1987). To know the narratives is to own a part of a society's intersubjective stock of knowledge. Yet we exist within "interpretive communities" (Fish, 1976), and our knowledge of the Other remains limited. We imagine the Other by simplifying, categorising, and ascribing certain qualities, most often based on visual characteristics or symbols, assisting us in our orientation. One such process of categorisation is assigning an *ascribed status* onto another. Linton (1936:115-131) made the distinction between "ascribed status", which we assign to individuals without references to their inner differences or abilities, and "achieved status", which requires the qualities that are open for individuals to develop. Ascribed status is often given at birth, be it gender, age, inherited possessions, social memberships, or other qualities which position someone in a social hierarchy regardless of effort or strain. A "high" ascribed position is interpreted as an advantage often referred to as "privilege". Those perceived at a disadvantage are the "underprivileged". Who is categorised as "privileged" depends on our ideological references to metanarratives. Because our knowledge of the nuances and complexities about the Other is limited, the narratives of ascribed status undergo the same simplifications and generalisations: if in possession of *one* type of advantage, then one is generalised as "privileged". But what of other aspects, invisible to the public? What of differences within groups, and achieved qualities (Linton, 1936)? Where does the TCK stand in these social processes?

3. 4. 2. Feeling rules for the "privileged"

The research literature on TCKs, missionary kids and diplomat children presented in Chapter 2 can also be understood in terms of migration metanarratives. Former Norwegian missionary kids have grown up within a Christian pull-migration narrative, as they were a "privileged" piece in the greater narrative of doing God's work (Tjelle, 2010b). Though not religious, the former British Diplomatic Service children were also surrounded by a pull-migration narrative, seen as "privileged" by the public, who associated them with the British "establishment": an ascribed status of wealth and exclusive options at their disposal (Hiorns, 2017). In both cases, the narratives of "privilege" come with a narrow set of feeling rules. Emotions connected to loss, such as sadness, anger or anxiety, were not to be shared with parents, other adults or other children (Skjortnes, 2010). These emotional reactions went against the narratives of the missionary and diplomatic service institutions. Hochschild (1983) also points to how feeling rules, like other social norms, are closely connected to the powerful social mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion. Their psychological effects can be either social

reward, or shame, blame and negative self-image. In the studies of both former Norwegian missionary kids and British diplomat children, participants recall either self-censoring negative emotions or looking down upon other children who displayed such reactions (Skjortnes, 2010; Hiorns, 2017). Also, in the more general research on TCKs, studies have found how the grief of children was disenfranchised within their social environments (Gilbert, 2008). Others highlight how the children engage in emotional role-play to fit an ideal of independence during relocation (Melles & Fray, 2015).

3. 5. The "expectation gap": in the child and in society

The expectation gap between emotions experienced as selfhood (idem) and emotions which are socially expected (ipse) can be theorised both at the micro-level of everyday childhood experiences and on a macro-level, as consequences for a rising number within a population.

3. 5. 1. Expectation gap at the micro-level: the child perspective

In the studies above of TCKs, there are signs of how the participants as children engaged in deep acting to close a gap between emotions they experienced and expected emotions. Parents are the primary communicators of what reality is for children. Through institutional family narratives (Pratt & Fiese, 2004), children's interpretive worlds of what things mean, including emotions, are pronounced or silently communicated (Fivush, 2010). However, children may still sense a mismatch between how they experience something and what this something is supposed to be. The family's 'story as told' is not always one's 'story as experienced'. Moreover, children are agents in their own socialisation (Corsaro, 2018), and they will *create* feeling rules for themselves based on their interpretations of surrounding narratives. From the perspective of child psychology, when children try to distort emotions and perform self-censorship towards parents, it will affect emotion-regulation development negatively (Siegel, 2012). Moreover, parents' degree of awareness, and ability of awareness, of a child's mental and emotional life varies (Slade, 2005). Emotion regulation is the act of going *through* emotions in ways that will regulate children back to a less emotion-dominated state. They are assisted in their state of being overwhelmed to come back into their "window of tolerance" (Ogden et.al., 2006).

During the early developmental years, children are dependent on caregivers to learn ways of emotion regulation and provide the intrapersonal meaning-making of what emotions mean. Through parents' assistance they also experience that they can lean on parents and others for emotional support, i.e. secure attachment (Siegel, 2012). Children and youth learn critical aspects of their identity from their emotional reactions (Melles & Frey, 2014; Nordanger & Braarud, 2017). The logic is that if we learn healthy emotion regulation in childhood, and importantly also in adolescence (Dahl & Suleiman, 2017), we will have healthy ways of going through emotionally challenging episodes in later life. In one case, an adult missionary kid reported how she "…had to train herself to live in her feelings again, to live them out and show them" (Skjortnes, 2010:256). An adult diplomat child reported how her adulthood had been about "…realness, and trying to respond and be real" (Hiorns, 2017:161). These participants' stories reflect how they have needed to learn emotion regulation during adulthood, as the practices of deep acting during their childhood prohibited this development. These are examples of why children's individual developmental paths must be investigated as situated within sociohistorical contexts (Hedegaard & Jytte, 2008).

3. 5. 2. Expectation gap at the macro-level: social pathologies

The micro-acts of everyday deep acting are embedded in cultural contexts and can therefore be theorised as responses to ideological metanarratives and broader social trends. Hochschild illustrated empirically how, if we find ourselves at the wrong end of power relations, deep acting can cause emotional estrangement (Hochschild, 1983). Her empirical findings indicated that air stewardesses performed deep acting on the self, and lost their right to anger, due to customer service demands. This, she pointed out, was a rising (and worrying) trend on the macro-level of the service sector in a capitalistic society. Similarly, the participants in this study provide empirical insights into social trends on the macro-level of the global through reflections about their childhood and its influence on their later life trajectory.

Durkheim (1897) presented the theory of how an individual's act of suicide could be explained by social factors in a society. He described how a society in "anomie", marked by conflicting norms, moral confusion, lack of social direction and loss of sense of meaning, would lead to rising suicidal tendencies. Merton (1938) further developed the concept of societal anomie when he specified how a growing "expectation gap" in society puts an existential *strain* on the individual. Especially in times of economic growth, individuals are subjected to increasing life expectations based on ideological beliefs. Yet, they suffer

psychologically, as these expectations become increasingly incompatible with the realities of what is possible on the ground. Merton theorised that this expectation gap results in parts of the population "striking out" in the form of criminal behaviour. However, for others, this meant "striking in", in ways of feeling insufficient when faced with society's expressed ideals, values and life goals. The current health challenges on the rise in western societies are psychosocial "co-illnesses" (Espnes & Smedslund, 2009). They manifest themselves in general stress symptoms (psychological and somatic), burnout, chronic fatigue, eating disorders, emotional numbness, anxiety, depression and suicide. From a sociological perspective, these illnesses are s*ocial pathologies.* Individuals themselves do not cause them. Rather, they are socially, historically, culturally, and morally created, and can therefore be avoided (Honneth, 1995a; Bourdieu, 1999; Vetlesen, 2009).

Critics of free market neoliberalism claim it places expectations on individuals to be ever-more mobile, flexible and adaptable (Chomsky, 1999; Vetlesen, 2009; Eriksen, 2016). What is more, there is a feeling rule: It is "…up to the individual to embrace positive thinking and do the hard work of attitude adjustment and maintenance on him- or herself." (Ehrenreich, 2009:204). A link can be drawn between the general movement of "positive thinking" within neoliberalist ideology (Peale, 2003) and the pull-migration narrative depicted above. The participants in this study have needed to be flexible and adaptable in the context of high mobility in childhood. If the globalising trends continue to increase, these participants' experiences and how they create coherent narrative selves may shed new light on rising social pathologies. Moreover, participants act as a social mirror of new expectations and ideals, as they have been ascribed a "privileged" status.

3. 6. Conclusion

In this chapter, I have suggested a theoretical framework that understands childhood within the NFS as narrative levels: on the microlevel of narrative self; on the mesolevel of institutional practice; and the macrolevel of metanarratives, which are the carriers of ideology. Across these narrative layers, cultural "feeling rules", their expectations on emotions, and the "deep acting" involved in closing this expectation gap, are processes that affect the self.

Experiences in childhood have been the main focus in the three Articles of this thesis. Family narratives are particularly significant for children's understanding of reality, and in a “classic TCK” childhood of multiple relocations, the family may well be the only stable unit over time. In Article 1, the autobiographies of participants who recall the *most challenging* childhood within the NFS are the empirical starting point. Metanarratives, meso-narratives and feeling rules in which we are embedded largely go unnoticed in everyday life. It is at the point of mismatch between social expectations and subjective experience that we may grasp these narratives and feeling rules. The challenging childhoods in the study made visible these feeling rules. Article 1 identifies a narrative of a "privileged NFS childhood” and asserts that where this narrative has been strictly adopted within families, there have been consequences for emotion regulation and self-image. Article 2 takes the autobiographies of those describing an especially *happy* childhood in the NFS. Here, family narratives of home are explored, pointing towards either the neoliberal "pull-migration" narrative of "places as privileged options" or "my place" as valued location, friendships and community. Article 3 takes one particular autobiography as starting point and explores the legal bias children can be subjected to as a result of general assumptions over affluence and “privileged mobility”. This legal situation is made all the more complex when a child is included in the "diplomatic privileges and immunities" accorded a functioning diplomat. The discussion in Chapter 6 takes as starting premise that our childhood is a dynamic part of adult life (Orellana & Phoenix, 2016). In this way, results from the three Articles, and other results presented in Chapter 5, are brought together in a discussion of how participants create coherent narrative selves in adulthood. Through “oscillating” the strings between the pull- and push-migration metanarratives in which they are embedded, they accord meaning to their childhood within the Norwegian Foreign Service.

Chapter 4. Data and methodology: a conversation with Bourdieu

4. 1. Introduction

This study is a phenomenological and narrative inquiry into what it means to have had a childhood in the NFS. Its design is explorative (as opposed to hypothesis-driven) and retrospective. My interest has been to understand their childhoods based on the participants' own subjective experiences, and to capture the reality of a phenomenon from multiple perspectives (Husserl, 1960). Autobiographies allow the narrative possibility for participants to express what they perceive as relevant and important. I have aimed to interpret the original autobiographies in a way that both enriches the meanings participants have communicated, and at the same time provide an analytical perspective to understand the stories as a whole (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). Such interpretive qualitative inquiry provides possibilities for developing the body of knowledge on TCKs as defined in this thesis by formulating insightful questions and theoretical propositions, and providing opportunities for comparison to verify or falsify previous assumptions (Flyvbjerg, 2006).

Within social sciences, both positivistic and interpretive traditions reign when it comes to the questions of what reality is (ontology) and how we can know what it is (epistemology) (Benton & Craib, 2011). This study stands firmly in the interpretive phenomenological tradition, seeing social reality as an intersubjective lifeworld which we can access through people's accounts of their experiences (Schütz, 1967; Berger & Luckmann, 1966). Searching for meaning is an ongoing hermeneutic circle as opposed to arriving at a final "fact" (Heidegger, 1962). However, not every perspective is as valid as any other and must be evaluated for its overall trustworthiness (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The choices of methods in this study have their limitations. I have chosen to write this chapter as a dialogue with Pierre Bourdieu because he opposed using autobiographies as data for the social sciences (Saunders & Hemecker, 2017). As the 'narrative turn' saw its culmination in the late 1980s (MacIntyre, 1981; Bruner, 1987; Polkinhorne, 1988), Bourdieu published a stunning critique in "L'Illusion Biographique"[14]:

[14] Translated and published in English in 1987 in (eds) R. J. Parmentier & G. Urban: "Working Papers and Proceedings of the Centre for Psychosocial Studies": 1-7. I reference this text from Saunders & Hemecker (2017): 210-216. In this dialogue, I refer to Bourdieu's opinions from this text and other works (1992; 1999). The rest of his voice is fiction, yet I have tried to remain true to his opinions.

> 'Life history' is one of these common-sense notions that has been smuggled into the learned universe, first with little noise among anthropologists, then, more recently, and with a lot of noise, among sociologists. (Saunders & Hemecker, 2017:210)

He proceeds with a methodological breakdown of using autobiography (life history as self-told) and biography (life history as told by another). Thanks to his arguments, I will have to defend my qualitative study's trustworthiness in a dialogue of "friendly fire". Accordingly, in this dialogue, we touch upon four criteria: 1) internal validity, ensuring that the choice of methods and one's findings actually reflect the phenomenon under study; 2) generalisability (or external validity); 3) reliability, the degree to which other researchers can replicate the research process and results; and 4) representativity, whether the results can be applied to a wider population (Shenton, 2004; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009).

In the following, Bourdieu and I first discuss my choice of using the autobiography. Secondly, we discuss how autobiographies can be used in social sciences, despite their limitations. Thirdly, we address the subject of a researcher's reflexivity. Next, we review the steps of data collection before ending at the steps of narrative analysis. Finally, we discuss the ethical considerations salient to this study.

4. 2. The autobiography: strengths and limitations[15]

Bourdieu: Bonjour. Even post-humous, I am a busy man, why am I here?
Me: I have invited you to join me in a conversation of a methodological nature, because I believe that there will be disagreements between us concerning my choices of methods.
Bourdieu: Try me.
Me: I have collected (co-constructed) autobiographies, both written and interviews. I define the autobiography as primarily an inner dialogue that the author has with herself:[16]

> A retrospective account in prose that a person creates about his own existence, and which underlines his individual life and especially the history of a personality. (Lejeune, 1975:14, my English transl.)

Bourdieu: "To produce a life history or to consider life as history, that is, as a coherent narrative of a significant and directed sequence of events, is perhaps to conform to a rhetorical

[15] I give quotation marks and references when I cite Bourdieu directly. Otherwise, his statements are fictional.
[16] The autobiographical interview takes place more spontaneously in the present and is a dialogue between the narrator and researcher. However, my experience was that the informants had spent time doing 'autobiographical reflecting'. One informant said: "I have been doing a lot of thinking as to why I wanted to do this interview".

illusion, to the common representation of existence that a whole literary tradition has always and still continues to reinforce" (Saunders & Hemecker, 2017:211).

Me: What is it that makes the autobiography an illusion?

Bourdieu: "…the autobiographical narrative is always at least partially motivated by a concern to give meaning, to rationalize, to show the inherent logic, both of the past and for the future, to make consistent and constant, through the creation of intelligible relationships, like that of the cause (immediate or final) and effect between successive states, which are thus turned into *steps* of a necessary development." (ibid:211).

Me: What is wrong with trying to find meaning to one's past and future?

Bourdieu: I can see you are blinded by "what common sense, or everyday language, tells us: life is like a path, a road, a track, with crossroads (…), pitfalls, even ambushes (…) a progression, that is, a way that one is clearing and has yet to clear, a trip, a trajectory, a *cursus*, a passage, a voyage, a direct journey…" (ibid:210). Then, as a researcher, you have fallen into the trap: "This inclination to make oneself the ideologist of one's own life, through the selection of a few significant events, with the purpose of establishing between them connections to give them causal coherence, or, more often, as conclusions, find their complicity with the biographer who, from the very beginning has dispositions of an interpretive professional, is inclined to accept this artificial creation of meaning" (ibid:211).

Me: These are wise words…

Bourdieu: Admittedly, a habitus of mine.

Me: Let us try to break them down. Firstly, the question of whether *our memories can be trusted* is highly debated in research circles (Helstrup & Magnussen, 2007; Berntsen & Rubin, 2012). We know that remembering is in itself a process of reconstruction and selection, and autobiographies of childhood are accounts written from the perspective of an afterthought in adulthood - an interpretive filter through which all accounts of the past are coloured by the present (Gullestad, 1996). We know that the way we remember episodes have a way of serving in the writer's – the hero's – favour (Habermas, 2012). This creates bias, such as holding on to the 'happy' memories (Matlin, 2016), or to feed an ongoing depression.[17] Informants' stage in the life cycle, and their degree of well-being, will affect their evaluations of the past, present and future (Rubenstein & Parmele, 1992). Memories can even be

[17] There is a discussion within trauma research of to what degree we block out episodes that have been too strong for our psyche to cope with (Van der Kolk, 2014). These are forms of trauma that are not the focus of this study.

fabricated (Laney & Loftus, 2013). Research into false memories has played a revolutionary role in legal contexts.

Bourdieu: Precisely.

Me: However, there is the matter of the contract, which I argue raises the level of trustworthiness of the autobiography. Lejeune (1975) insists that the autobiographical genre implies a "pact" of trust between the writer and the reader, stating that the author's story is of real-life experiences. This pact is the underlying premise for a reader to accept that a narrative is an autobiographical account. I also specified in my data collection that the participants' stories must be real. Gullestad (1996) reminds us that autobiographies are stories by real people living real lives. Furthermore, the autobiography is an inner dialogue between the person who is, and the person who was, who is engaging in a truth-seeking process. Moreover, there are "helpers" for autobiographical memory, which can also be an argument for trustworthiness. Berntsen and Rubin (2004) explain how our autobiographical memory is assisted by our cultural "life script", structured by our understanding of how our life should be. These cultural scripts create important chapters in our life, which serve to assist our memory.

Bourdieu: For example?

Me: An expected cultural life script can be going to school, obtaining higher education and career paths, marriage, having children, and being a grandparent in old age. It is primarily the details we "fill in" between the chapters that are improvised. Our emotional, bodily reactions are often the episodes we remember the most vividly and correctly, marking the end of one chapter and the beginning of another in our life (Berntsen & Rubin, 2004; 2012).[18] Such emotional memories are often linked to cultural rituals, such as weddings or funerals. Deviations from these culturally expected life chapters are also strong emotional memories, as these need justification and explanation. They are often experienced as painful because they go against life-script norms (Fivush, 2010). In the written autobiographies of this study, informants created chapters in their childhood and adolescence with the structure of each geographical relocation. This is different from what we usually expect from sedentary life chapters of childhood, which would often be summarised by transitions from pre-school, secondary school, then high school, and, finally, beginning college. As Lucie, age 23, writes:

> Time. I have a very clear concept of the division of my life in terms of time: It is 5+5+3+4+1+5=23. The numbers are years; the years are the places where I have lived.

[18] Like in a theatre play, the props and details of smaller events are not as easily recalled and are easily filled in with incorrect details, but the main scenes, characters, and the strong emotional peeks are remembered (ibid).

Memories before, during and after relocations are both remembered and described most vividly in the autobiographies. Autobiographical remembering encourages emotionally charged, embodied memories of past place and time (Damasio, 1999). The body is a memory map, retaining strong sensory experiences and emotional arousals, moods, pain, tension, relaxation, joy, and comfort. For example, Marcus, age 49, writes:

> I can feel some of the anxiety come back as I'm writing this, and I remember that even though I had a "normal" everyday life with school, friends and playing, there was a lot of fear.

Moreover, repeated childhood experiences are claimed to be more robust, as they indicate the implicit memory of unconscious working models (Morgan, 2010). This is why I assert that we can still arrive at a *child perspective* by using autobiographical data of adults' memories. I argue that these "helpers" increase the validity of the autobiography.

Bourdieu: The body remembers, but even the body does not always remember correctly. And what of my objection to how the autobiography takes "the selection of a few significant events, with the purpose of establishing between them connections to give them causal coherence"? (Saunders & Hemecker, 2017:211)

Me: Polkinghorne makes a distinction between narrative as change and the perception it gives us of causal logic: "Narrative explanation does not focus on how one event is predicted or deduced from another, but on how change from beginning to end takes place. (...) Although the reason why the life-event has occurred does not flow from a deduction of formal logic (Humean causality), the perception of the patterned totality described by narrative brings with it the experience of causal 'power'." (1988:117). You are right; we cannot infer from our autobiography that we have arrived at an exact explanation. The autobiography creates relationships of meaning concerning one's sense of self and one's life. It sets episodes into sequences of past, present and future. Although we do not exactly know how, we know these are elements of a wider picture which is our life (Gullestad, 1996). For example, Miriam, age 34, is careful to draw causal inferences. She states that her episodes of anxiety and depression: "…are probably a combination of a genetic disposition and life circumstances." Moreover, Jonathan, age 43, also questions his causal claims when he writes about his attitude towards friendships: "Is this the result of my childhood experiences, or other factors in my life? Who can say. But it is also not impossible that it has had an influence…". In an autobiography, there can be expressions of awareness of inconsistencies and contradictions. Not everything needs to be resolved, although a narrative can assist us with an end, however temporary (Ricoeur, 1984). We can also be aware that we and our life stories change and tell

different stories depending on our situation, context and audience. Lea, age 26, writes: “If I had written this as a teenager, this text would probably have been different. I would probably have complained a lot more about how my childhood had been, as teenagers do."

Bourdieu: Though the participants may show critical awareness, this does not mean that you, the researcher, have this critical ability. To secure your findings' validity, you cannot base your analysis on these causal relationships, an inescapable element of the autobiography.

Me: What if patterns across many autobiographies emerge? Bertaux's method of saturation could be helpful here: "New life stories only confirmed what we understood, adding slight individual variations. (…) We went through a process of *saturation of knowledge*” (1981:37).

Bourdieu: You would need a large number indeed to claim such a saturation for your claims to be valid, and even then, you could not argue that your results would be *representative*.

Me: I will consider your word of caution over causal inference and treat them as *subjective propositions* within autobiographies. Keeping this in mind, in the end, I had to stick to the "contract", the pact of trust (Lejeune, 1985). I chose a post-critical approach to the autobiographies (Ricoeur, 1992). I also did not want to see the stories from a particular pre-defined theoretically critical perspective, such as a feminist or Marxist starting point. Instead of a “hermeneutics of suspicion” (Ricoeur, 1992), I wanted to first treasure each story at face value before applying analytical distance. I have not aimed to arrive at an objective truth, but what is true for each participant, and then intersubjectivity (Schütz, 1967).

Bourdieu: In my view, this still represents a real threat to the validity of your inquiry. I hope that you at least have cross-triangulated the autobiographies with other sources of data to support the validity of your results (Yin, 1994). Did you do a longitudinal study over some years and compare texts, as your informant Lea (above) suggested? Or interview other members of the same family, such as siblings, to get their version of the story?

Me: No.

Bourdieu: Did you add ethnographic fieldwork, with children and youth perhaps, or within families or schools, to see what they *do*, not just what they *say* they do, or what they say happened in the past?

Me: No.

Bourdieu: Historical documents? Focus groups?

Me: I am afraid not. I have, however, had several meetings with Human Resources personnel at the NFS to inform myself of their routines regarding children, with psychologists who give seminars about TCKs at the NFS, or have worked with NFS teenagers. I have also had email

correspondence with UD-partnerne, a network for NFS spouses. I have also had meetings with the Norwegian Ombudsperson for Children regarding diplomat children's legal situation. All research projects have their limitations. Had I received only a few autobiographies, I would have had the capacity to supplement them with other sources. Nevertheless, "another form of triangulation may involve the use of a wide range of informants." (Shenton, 2004:66), and can, to some degree, compensate for these limitations. A broad spectrum allows individual views to be verified against each other to compare different attitudes and assumptions. They can provide a rich contextual picture, a "thick description" (Geertz, 1973). I received 31 written texts and 12 requests for interviews, 43 autobiographies in total.
Bourdieu: That is a relatively large number, I will give you that. The validity will depend on what you will use them for and how.

4. 3. How can we use autobiographies, despite their limitations?

Me: A strength of the autobiography is *access.* In studies *with* children, or about children, gatekeepers are first and foremost the parents. As I highlight in article 3, families of high status can be more difficult to access, whether for a social worker or a researcher. Besides, children are often mirrors and echoes of their parents' family narratives. On the other hand, the autobiography allows the researcher to access existential and intimate data that for participatory observation would require a long-term commitment (Gullestad, 1996). Our inner, autobiographical dialogue often takes place when we are alone and in moments of silence. This study's autobiographies have descriptions and reflections about close relationships with parents, siblings, friends, and life partners. In this personal information, the storyteller engages in *reflexive* meaning-making processes to create a coherent self despite life's fragmentation.
Bourdieu: "Trying to understand a life as a unique and self-sufficient series of successive events (sufficient unto itself), and without ties other than the association to a 'subject' whose constancy is probably just that of a proper name, is nearly as absurd as trying to make sense of a subway route without taking into account the network structure, that is the matrix of objective relations between the different stations" (Saunders & Hemecker, 2017:215).
Me: I fear we are now venturing into a theoretical discussion of whether the 'subject' is purely socially determined or whether there is also a part of us that is 'selfhood' (Truc, 2011). I have already taken Ricoeur's stance on this matter (1992). I believe there is valuable sociological knowledge in investigating how individuals reflexively create narrative selves. However, I

want to continue your metaphor of the subway. Gullestad (1996) used a handful of selected and contrasting autobiographies to illustrate how values in Norwegian society, and our ways of understanding the self, had changed. Autobiographies are both personal and cultural accounts (Wang & Brockmeier, 2002). Memory itself is profoundly social, created in social contexts (Neumann & Neumann, 2012). Informants' reflections about the past could provide us with further information about their present values. The autobiography's “impurity”, or bias, can also be its strength: the twist of information required for a narrative to be coherent is precisely what reveals the participants' values (Gullestad, 1996). Autobiographies thus provide rich contextual information about the contrasts between ‘how things were done’ in the past, versus what participants believe now. Surely this can provide information about the society, or, as you put it, the "network structure" of the subway route?
Bourdieu: I am less sceptical to this way of using the autobiography, as Bertaux (1981) did. It is more similar to how I used narratives to grasp the informant's perspective in "The Weight of the World" (Boudieu, 1999). The question of reflexivity has preoccupied me differently: It is a method that the researcher must do to ensure she avoids bias of pre-assumptions, a critical part of ensuring the validity of any study (Bourdieu, 1992).

4. 4. A researcher’s reflexivity

Bourdieu: A social scientist must engage in constant self-reflexivity to be objective (Bourdieu, 1992).
Me: In the phenomenological and interpretive tradition, I cannot aim for a researcher's objectivity, but I can make my pre-assumptions clear, follow methods to be aware of bias continually, and aim for intersubjectivity (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). Neumann and Neumann (2012) divide reflexivity into 1) “autobiographical situatedness”; 2) “field situatedness”; and 3) “textual situatedness”. “Autobiographical situatedness” is divided into primary socialisation (childhood) and secondary socialisation (a researcher’s training).
Bourdieu: Are we back to autobiographical “truths” again?
Me: Actually, Grenfell (2014) sees your stance towards the autobiography on the one side, and your goal of self-reflexivity on the other, as an epistemological paradox. How does one make explicit one's knowledge of oneself as a subject without using one's own autobiography? In this case, I believe my primary socialisation is highly relevant for questions of bias, as I have done an "insider job".
Bourdieu: What makes you an “insider” in this study?

Me: I am not an insider in the strictest sense. The study's informants share the criteria of having a parent in the NFS. I have not. I share that I had a childhood with similar mobility patterns, and I had parents who at times had diplomatic status via international organisations. I went to international schools, which most of the informants also have, and was part of the Norwegian and Scandinavian social circle of expatriates at various missions overseas. No doubt, these lifestyle experiences in childhood make me more of an "insider" than someone who has had a childhood in Norway. My pre-understanding, experiences, language and cultural references opened doors, both institutional and individual, to access the data I have.
Bourdieu: I do not recommend a too close match between interviewer and respondent: "…where nothing can be said because, since nothing can be questioned, everything goes without saying; and total divergence (would be impossible because) understanding and trust would become impossible" (Bourdieu, 1999:612).
Me: I must disagree! Lincoln and Guba (1985) argue that familiarity is key to validity in qualitative inquiry. Also, I do not believe that "nothing is questioned" when "insider" researchers study their own social environment. My experience was that a certain predefined social proximity between the informants and me during interviews made contrasts between us come into sharp focus. As other "insider" studies have shown (Ganga & Scott, 2006), one's closeness to the group under study can serve to *falsify* rather than verify one's presuppositions (Flyvbjerg, 2006).
Bourdieu: Which pre-assumptions were these?
Me: At the onset of this study, I had an overview of TCK research and my own autobiographical situatedness. However, only when I had the data did I realise a whole range of pre-assumptions. I recognised the difference between having a cognitive understanding of the TCK literature, and being directly confronted with stories of what it feels like to be that particular individual with his or her specific experiences:
1) I had assumed an accumulative pattern between the number of relocations and experienced NFS childhood: the higher the number and frequency of relocations, the more challenging the overall experience was. There was no such clear pattern.
2) I had not understood how important it could be to grow up in one *stable* family unit throughout a TCK childhood. Because I had grown up with divorced parents and family members dispersed across continents, the meanings that emerged in the data about the family sphere's significance were surprising. This sphere would become a central unit of analysis.
3) The research on TCKs continues to confirm that a large majority report (im)migrating to their "home" country is challenging during childhood - that they feel like "hidden

immigrants". Nevertheless, I had not expected this to be *the* most challenging episode described by a majority in this study. There were dramatic descriptions of bullying, anxiety and social isolation. This did not mirror my own experiences. I was surprised to see how many of the informants struggled to express themselves correctly in Norwegian. This was also connected to identity. After reading some of the autobiographies, I realised that I had never entirely understood what it meant to be insecure about one's identity. When comparing myself to the stories, I understood that I have always been quite self-confident about who I am.
4) I had pre-assumptions about school and social life overseas. I had not realised what it could feel like to have learning disabilities or social anxiety during a TCK childhood, as I always managed well at school, and I quickly made new friends.
5) I had also never given thought to the legal implications of what could happen if a TCK, especially a diplomat child, was subjected to parental neglect or abuse within the family.
6) I had not expected to receive autobiographies that described exclusively happy memories and reflections concerning one's childhood. I would learn at least as much from the "very happy" as the "very unhappy" accounts. During the analysis, I would come to understand the value of receiving empirical data from a wide spectre and diversity.
Bourdieu: As I see it, the danger of being an "insider" is how there can be a: "projection of oneself onto the other" (1999:613).
Me: However, it is a difficult line to draw. Even you speak of: "a spiritual exercise that, through forgetfulness of self, aims at a true conversion of the way we look at other people in the ordinary circumstances of life" (1999:614). You even speak of "intellectual love" (ibid)!
Bourdieu: This is not the same as emotional identification with participants. This especially is a risk when they start self-reflexive processes, as is typical of the autobiographical style, because this: "…may provoke in a researcher who feels a spark of recognition, because they are constructed with the instruments of thought and forms of expression close to their own…" (1999:616). This can only lead to romanticising of a bond that is not and *should not* be there.
Me: I believe that there is an important divide between closeness in data collection and analytical distance. The epistemic value of integrating the ethnographer's emotional reactions into self-reflexive work should be recognised (Neumann and Neumann, 2012; Stodulka, 2014). Upon reading each autobiography, I took notes of my reactions and interpreted these as immediate responses to whether my own autobiographical "truths" were being confirmed or disconfirmed. Academics are not immune to the need for recognition. However, these are momentarily triggered emotions, and one's awareness of them are tools to create analytical distance. Becoming aware of my pre-assumptions, I applied a strategy of both conscious

naiveté (Husserl, 1960) and deliberately challenging my bias. If my presuppositions were challenged, this meant that there was something new to learn.

Bourdieu: What about your secondary socialisation, your scientific background? What I have insisted on is that the sociologist is aware of her *theoretical* presuppositions (1992). We tend to see what we want to see, to confirm our previous theoretical perspectives.

Me: This is admittedly a tough question. As introduced by Glaser and Strauss (1967), "Grounded Theory" has a goal to approach theory only in the later stages of analysis. Through coding, the researcher moves from codes that use the participants' expressions to gradually more abstract codes that match theoretical concepts. Nevertheless, we are never without pre-conceptions. Is Grounded Theory possible? My previous theoretical landscape consisted of theories of institutional culture, globalisation and refugee migration. The large majority of theoretical perspectives I apply was discovered along the way. Debriefings with supervisors and colleagues have assisted me in the process of evaluating which theories could be good analytical tools as I tried to make sense of the data.

Bourdieu: What of "field situatedness" (Neumann & Neumann, 2012) during your interviews?

Me: In retrospect, I believe it was fortunate to have received the written autobiographies before conducting the interviews. The diversity within the texts meant I had become aware of a wider horizon of this childhood's possible experiences, which may have prepared me for the interviewees' diverse opinions. I tried to draw a "parenthesis" around my own bias so that I could keep myself in the background (Husserl, 1960). This is not purely a question of what was said. The researcher's body language is highly expressive (Neumann & Neumann, 2012). The researcher plays a far more influential role in data construction in interviews than when receiving written texts.

Bourdieu: And what about power relations? Scientists have as much "symbolic power" (Bourdieu, 1999:616) over respondents as any other high-status groups in society.

Me: Yes, I think that can become less clear in an "insider" situation. It can obscure an imbalance of power. The interview is "constructed" with specific terms and goals defined by the researcher. Recording the interview also makes it formal and has aspects of power in that your words are "caught" (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). However, the participants knew that they could withdraw and have their data erased. There is also the risk that the interviewee could feel pressured into giving information. However, in studies of "studying up", such as research on high-status elites and experts in society, the researcher can feel she is at the weaker end of power relations, which was also my experience at times. Interviewees would

also interrupt me and correct me if I proposed an interpretation to which they disagreed (Latour, 2000).
Bourdieu: The way we choose to write our research is also a question of self-reflexivity (Neumann & Neumann, 2012).
Me: Yes. I have strived to give their voices centre stage, to 'lift up' informants' ways of expression and bring them to the foreground by extensive use of quotes (Neumann & Neumann, 2012). I have also aimed to make my final text "open" for the reader to make their own interpretations (Gullestad, 1996).

4. 5. Data collection and first results

Me: Data was collected in 2015-2019. I sent out an invitation to write one's autobiography of a "global childhood" within the NFS (Appendix 2), distributed through a website which a friend who is a former diplomat child designed.[19] To motivate potential participants, they could win money prises. The site included a written form of consent to sign through Questback (Appendix 3). It was specified that the data would be presented as anonymous, and they would not be recognised by other factors, such as countries where they had lived and descriptions of other family members.
Bourdieu: What of the interviews?
Me: The information on the website was also the reference for the narrative interviews. I also noticed when reading the written texts that all the informants (except two) had created a chronological structure of their autobiography based on geographical place. I adopted this as a structure for conducting the interviews. Together with the interviewee, we would start by sketching a chronological map of their age and places they had lived. We then pointed to these life chapters as they reflected and made interpretations. This was a strategy I believe strengthened the process of negotiating meanings to reach intersubjectivity (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). I also decided to not transcribe the interviews due to limited capacity.
Bourdieu: Not transcribe? This affects the reliability of your research.
Me: There are several advantages to keeping interviews in their audio file format (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). Transcribing interviews into text is an additional step of interpretation, where the researcher has to choose a style of textual representation (Riessman, 2008). When

[19] www.globalchildhood.com

analysing the interviews as audio files, you keep the interviewee's voice, their respective tone and ways of expression.

Bourdieu: You mentioned you received 43 autobiographies in total? How did you ensure random sampling?

Me: Yes, 31 written texts, between one and twenty-seven pages long, and 12 interviews between one and three and a half hours. The participants represented three generations, ranging from age 19 to 78, of which two-thirds were women. They have lived in various continents during their developmental years, and the number of relocations varied between two and eight times until the age of 18 (Appendix 4: Demographics). Participants had different motivations for taking part in this study. Some wished to tell the world how wonderful this childhood is; others wished to write about their emotionally difficult experiences as a warning to future parents. Therefore, I believe the sampling represented a wide spectre of data, which strengthens the study's validity (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

4. 6. Steps of analysis

Bourdieu: You mentioned “Grounded Theory”, did you do coding in NVivo? Did you use Strauss and Corbin’s “axial coding” (2008) or Glaser’s “core categories” (1978)? You know they went their separate ways.

Me: I had Giorgi & Giorgi (2003)’s phenomenological method in mind. I started making codes of themes in NVivo, first general codes followed by subcategories within each code.

Bourdieu: In this coding process, *reliability* is critical: would another researcher have made the same codes as you?

Me: I tried to stay as close as possible to the informants' themes and how they expressed them. Nevertheless, I had a growing sense of unease: I was erasing the subject behind the "subjective experiences". Their unique narrative, their voice, the tone, it was all fading. I needed to re-orientate my focus to meaning-in-context (Mishler, 1979). I felt I was breaking the "autobiographical pact". I needed to keep each autobiography as a unit and had to concede that NVivo and I were not a happy marriage. I entered the world of hermeneutics.

4. 6. 1. Narrative hermeneutics

Me: Heidegger (1962, §25) pointed to how hermeneutics is an intrinsic part of our way of being in the world, because we need to understand the meanings of our experiences here and now. History and our understanding are not final objects that we can observe – they are

endless processes in which we take part as meaning-making, engaged, and historical beings (Lægreid et al., 2014). The hermeneutic circle transcends the subject-object relationship in a movement of back and forth between a context as a whole (such as a text), and the interpreter's possibility for understanding (Lægreid et al., 2014). To reach an understanding would be to identify the questions I can ask the autobiography and to which the autobiography could have meaningful answers (Gadamer, 1989). The interpreter must not try to take ownership of the narrative as an object but rather enter into a dialogue with it. Through the interpreter's questions, which she can only pose in her horizon of understanding, she must approach the story in a way that lets it open up to its claim to meaning and truth – its own horizon of understanding. The ideal is for the two horizons to melt into each other, yet this cannot ever be a final destination: there are always new meanings to discover. The hermeneutic circle is never truly complete.
Bourdieu: In this study, you are dealing with double hermeneutics (Giddens, 1976). The autobiographies are interpretations that their authors have made; the interviews are interpretations that you have made together with the interviewee; and your analysis is your interpretation of the autobiographies. Your horizon of possible understanding and which questions you ask the narratives brings us back to the subject of the researcher's reflexivity.
Me: Yes. With such a large quantity of detailed data, researchers in various academic fields would choose different perspectives. My autobiographical and theoretical orientation, which I have tried to make transparent, undoubtedly played a role in the following steps of analysis.

4. 6. 2. First step of analysis: structural narrative analysis

My first analytical questions, which I addressed to each informant was descriptive: 1) What are your descriptions of childhood?; 2) What are your reflections about your childhood?; and 3) Who are you today? Labov and Waletzky's (1967) structural coding system helped me identify how the narratives each had different parts which served a specific function. These consist of six elements: 1) an abstract (summary and "point" of the story); 2) an orientation (to time, place, characters, situations); 3) a complication action (the event sequence, or plot, usually with a turning point); 4) an evaluation (the author steps back from the action and reflects, gives meanings and emotions to the story; 5) a resolution (an outcome of the plot); and 6) a coda (ending which brings the writer, and reader, back to the present). It is not so that this particular sequence is always the same, and not every story contains all six elements. However, this gave me some "hooks" to organise thought.

4. 6. 3. Second step: thematic narrative analysis

Me: I understand thematic analysis as: "Theorizing across a number of cases by identifying common thematic elements across research participants." (Riessman, 2008:74). In narrative thematic analysis, you preserve sequences, trying to keep the story intact, "a case-centred *commitment*" (ibid, my ital.). I based my first major analytical step on observing the varying tone of the autobiographies. I created a continuum ranging from "very unhappy childhood" to "very happy childhood" and placed the autobiographies along this continuum. I then zoomed in on themes and made constant comparisons back and forth across the stories, comparing events, experiences, their attributed meanings, and each author's propositions. I looked for patterns, range and variation (Riessman, 2008).

Bourdieu: For reliability's sake, what has been the process so far?

Me: 1) Going through each narrative as an individual unit; 2) marking its parts and their functions; 3) classifying them according to their placement on the "very unhappy/very happy"-continuum; and 4) examining emergent themes respecting narrative context and attributed meanings. Three themes became my main units of analysis at this stage. They would each become an article: emotional self (Article 1); agency in choices of place, friendships and community (Article 2); and a diplomat child's legal situation (Article 3).

Bourdieu: Did you control for alternative explanations, contrasting, or negative cases to enhance internal validity (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009)?

Me: I suppose this is the strength of having a wide range of cases, though I could not control findings with alternative sources for triangulation (Yin, 1994; Shenton, 2004). I identified patterns in how participants described other's assumptions of them. I made the theoretical choice to understand this set of assumptions as a cultural narrative, similar to how Cain (1991) found a common set of assumptions as an overarching master narrative of what it means to be an alcoholic within Alcoholics Anonymous. In article 1, I label this narrative a "privileged childhood within the NFS". What became apparent in the autobiographies of a "very unhappy childhood" was how this cultural narrative of "privilege" was dominant also within the family. Therefore, their local context was a family narrative of "privilege", which set certain expectations for which emotions were allowed to feel and express and which were not. I made a theoretical connection between these expectations on emotions and Hochschild's (1983) theoretical concepts of cultural "feeling rules" and "deep acting".

Bourdieu: And have you now forgotten all the "happy" childhood stories?

Me: In article 2, I began at the other end of the "very unhappy/very happy" continuum and asked whether there were common patterns across "very happy" autobiographies that

contrasted to the rest of the dataset. Here my observation of passive/active voice and degree of sensed agency emerged as an important unit of analysis. The participants described situations of agency as they negotiated choices over home, their friends and their community. I found that their degree of agency varied within different family narratives of "home".

4. 6. 4. Third step: synthesis

Me: To synthesise the patterns I observed in the data, I created a fictional story where I used extracts of the autobiographies that illustrate participants' plurality of voices. The story is supposed to be representative of the dilemmas they have faced in adult life, not representative of a wider population.

Bourdieu: A fictional story? I argue that the autobiography is fiction, now you have also created a fictional story… What about when we discussed how autobiographies can be used despite their limitations? You said they could provide us with information about society, about the subway's "network structure" (Saunders & Hemecker, 2017:15).

Me: May I replace your focus on "structure" with my narrative framework where I identify "metanarratives" as carriers of ideology in society? I proceeded in the discussion in this extended abstract to move towards a higher level of theoretical abstraction to understand the collection of autobiographies. I wanted to draw the threads of the three articles together into one framework. The analytical units presented in the articles represent different areas of childhood. However, the articles also mention how they have influenced threads that continue into participants' adult lives, affecting their sense of self, life choices, and values.

Bourdieu: You are moving into the dangerous territory of the autobiography's claims to causal inference again…

Me: To state there is contextual "influence" is not the same as causality from cause to effect in one direction in the sense of the natural sciences (Neumann, 2008). Rather, I am concerned with "loose relationships that go in many directions" (Gullestad, 1996), where I connect participants' life worlds in autobiographies to larger current sociohistorical trends, following William's (1984) example in his study of personal narratives of illness. In this final analysis stage, I found three dimensions across which participants create narrative selves: 1) push- and pull-migration; 2) child and adult perspectives; and 3) ascribed "privileged" status and self-perceived gratitude.

4. 7. Ethical considerations

Bourdieu: We have saved the most important topic for the end. Which ethical considerations have been central to your study, and which measures have you taken?

Me: The research project was approved by the Norwegian Centre for Research Data (NSD: Appendix 1). Ethical considerations towards the participants were made in several stages and as a constant process of evaluating and re-evaluating my approaches.

Bourdieu: It can help to distinguish research ethics on a micro-and macrolevel.

Me: On the micro-level, firstly, written information was provided in advance about the study on the information website (www.globalchildhood.com; Appendix 2). I informed participants that they at any time, and without explanation, could withdraw from the project. Data was handled confidentially, anonymity was ensured, and participants' name and names of places are changed in publications. In the declaration of consent, participants could specify whether they consented to having parts of their autobiography published, and under what conditions (Appendix 3). As the Norwegian diplomat community is a small population, and due to certain diplomats' high public status, it was important to guarantee that participants and their families were rendered unidentifiable in publications. Some participants expressed particular concern that their other family members could be identified. This meant that I, in some cases, also had to change more than the participants' names and places they had lived.

Bourdieu: What about during the interviews?

Me: I asked for permission before recording in audio, whether these were physical meetings, on Skype, or the phone. Participants decided where to do the interview, most often in their home, but also in their office, or neighbourhood cafés. There were some instances where interviewees began to cry, upon which I asked if they wished to take a break (no one did). I wanted to stay empathetic, but not take on a role as a "friend". Autobiography is a personal narrative, often with information of private sides to life and close relationships. It was important to adhere to the overarching ethical guideline that research should have as little risk as possible of damaging participants (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009).

Bourdieu: On the macro-level, ethics also concern knowledge production. What and how we write about individuals and groups has potential consequences for both themselves, how we influence public debate, institutional practice, as well as official and unofficial policy.

Me: With this in mind, we have to accept that no researcher has a "view from nowhere". We cannot foresee all future consequences of our research's impact on individuals and society (Kaiser, 2014).

4. 8. Conclusion

Me: If we are to summarise our conversation, I would say we have identified certain limitations to internal validity, including how retrospective autobiography has distortions of memory and selectivity, as well as making subjective causal inferences between past, present and future. On the other hand, I have presented arguments for the autobiography's trustworthiness: it is truth-seeking on behalf of the teller; there is a contract of trust between the teller and reader, and there are certain patterns to autobiographical remembering which assists us in organising memories. I have taken a post-critical approach to the autobiographies, taking them at face value.

Bourdieu: Suspicious.

Me: Nevertheless, I have approached causal inferences, which participants make in the autobiographies, as their subjective propositions, and a method of saturation allowed by a large number of autobiographies. Other limitations to internal validity were the lack of triangulation of alternative data sources. Moreover, a limitation to qualitative studies is that findings cannot be representative of a wider population. I argue that the broad sample of voices strengthens internal validity and provides a wide range for comparison and contextual description. We disagree on the sociological value of information about how people create reflexive narrative selves but agree that autobiography, like all narratives, may allow for insights about society from a person's perspective. Another concern to internal validity is reflexivity on behalf of the researcher, upon which I spelled out my potential biases. Steps of data collection, then steps of my narrative and thematic analysis were made explicit to enhance the reliability of this study, although retracing my steps would not necessarily lead others to the exact same results. I aim for analytical generalisability (external validity) by providing ample contextual information and explaining my theoretical abstraction steps, thus providing plausible theoretical propositions. Finally, we discussed the ethical considerations on a micro-and macro-level specific to this study.

Chapter 5: Articles and other results

The extended abstract is meant to clarify how the themes and results of the articles are interrelated within an overarching context. In this chapter, I first summarise the findings in the three Articles. I proceed to present results concerning age; gender; ethnicity; and class, which are not mentioned in the articles. Together, the results will be the point of departure for the discussion in Chapter 6. The overall implications this research has for children, adult life, public debate and further research will be presented in the conclusion in Chapter 7.

5.1. Article 1

Bjørnsen, R. (2020). The assumption of privilege? Expectations on emotions when growing up in the Norwegian Foreign Service. *Childhood.* 27(1):120-133.[20]

Article 1 addresses a theoretical gap in the research literature on TCKs which connect children's inner psychological states, intrapersonal emotion regulation in the family, and current global narratives of the "privileged". To address this gap, I suggest a psycho-anthropological approach based on Hochschild's (1983) concepts of "feeling rules" and "deep acting". My empirical starting point is certain autobiographies within the collective dataset containing descriptions of especially "challenging" childhoods within the NFS. These are life stories from exclusively female contributions, and the findings are not representative of the entire dataset. However, as Chapter 3 explains, where there is a dissonance between emotions as experienced and emotions as expected, feeling rules become visible and demarcated by this contrast. Therefore, the autobiographies who describe such dissonance shed light on wider cultural contexts which otherwise go unnoticed, and therefore can have analytical generalisability beyond particular autobiographies. The article explores how this dissonance affected them, both as children and in their adult lives. The aim of the article was phenomenological and broad, to provide a bottom-up story of this childhood and discuss more general existential questions of what it means to grow up in a high-mobility, global context.

The results of the analysis showed how these participants have experienced relocations as emotionally overwhelming. They describe fear, loss of friendships, and loss of meaning (loss

[20] Article 1 states that the study has 42 autobiographies in total. One last interview was conducted in late 2019 and was therefore not part of the dataset of this article. In total, this study has 43 autobiographies.

of “a world”). A numbness towards people and places is described as a reaction to frequent relocations. At the same time, there is a hyper-attachment towards the nuclear family, which is the only stable “local” in an otherwise “global” childhood. Periods of living in Norway after having been overseas are especially challenging, where they experienced bullying and social isolation over time. These experiences are described as a contrast to what others imagined their childhood to be. Through this contrast, I identified four dimensions of assumptions, theorised as a dominant cultural narrative which I labelled “a privileged NFS childhood”. These components were: 1) being part of an upper socioeconomic class; 2) exotic experiences; 3) unique opportunities at their disposal; and 4) they could always happily return home. What set these autobiographies apart from others was how this general narrative of a “privileged NFS childhood” was dominant (often silently) within the children’s intimate interpretive world of family narratives. This caused the children to create feeling rules where only happy, excited and grateful feelings were “correct”. Through deep acting, they pretended to be the privileged child. This created an emotional distance towards parents and towards the self, inhibiting social emotion-regulation and meaning-making processes. The expectation gap between a “privileged childhood” as imagined and their actual experiences caused them to feel shame, self-blame and gave them a negative self-image.

These results are discussed with reference to how globalisation creates imaginings of a “global privileged elite”. The findings in this article illustrate how such narratives do not match the micro-scale of the human condition as experienced, which is increasingly marked by accelerated change, demand for high mobility and constant readjustment (Eriksen, 2016; Vetlesen, 2009). Can the nuclear family provide all premises for a child’s existential security if external conditions push in the opposite direction? Moreover, the family narrative is influenced by these wider ideologies, which are adult-centric in their values, assumptions and evaluations over who is “privileged” and why. The autobiographies illustrate how children’s encounters with these global narratives of “privilege” influence how they as children felt about themselves and their own lives, which in turn affected their later life trajectories.

5. 2. Article 2

Bjørnsen, R. Place attachment and agency in globally mobile childhoods: Retrospective narratives inside the Norwegian Foreign Service. *Journal of Environmental Psychology*: Under review.

The second article addresses a research gap in the literature on TCKs as to how they experience agency in questions over relocation. Whereas agency in matters of place and home is highly discussed in other forms of child migration, this is assumed unproblematic for globally mobile children of middle- and high-income families. I began my phenomenological investigation into autobiographies who stood out as recalling an especially "happy" childhood within the NFS. These stories described a location in Norway as home, and they experienced a sense of agency related to home and relocations during childhood. The article subsequently explores the relationships and tensions between place attachment, social attachments, and agency in the entire collection of autobiographies.

My analysis finds that to manage high mobility, families create different narratives of what home is. These family narratives are a child's main interpretive world, and they create different repetitive internal working models of place attachment in childhood (Morgan, 2010). I grouped these narratives into four main types: 1) "My place"; 2) "Being placed"; 3) "Home is my family"; and 4) "Places as privileged options". In the stories of "My place", participants describe having an ownership to a place, with friends and community, and how they perceive it as in their best interest to be there. This became the starting point of negotiations between them and their parents, who recognised situations where there can be conflicts of interest between children and parents' needs. By continuously negotiating parameters of relocations, they experienced a sense of agency, control and predictability. The three other story types represent ways in which children do not experience agency. "Being placed" are experiences of disruptive repeated child dislocations. "Home is my family" recognises relocations as both opportunities and losses. However, mobility becomes a predetermined collective fate where a range of emotions are shared, except the fact that there is no choice. Moreover, when transitioning to young adulthood, these participants do not have bonds to a particular place, people and community as they leave the nest. "Places as privileged options" presents place with exclusive emphasis on adventure, fascination, excitement, and prospective pleasure, equating relocation and tourism. However, this story type places children in a double bind. "To stay" is not on the list of options. Secondly, when presenting relocations as "privileged", any feelings of sadness or insecurity do not match the narrative and are therefore not recognised and validated.

The results are discussed while rejecting dogmatic assumptions which claim mobility necessarily means displacement and disruption (Cresswell, 2006). Further, to identify and discuss the ways participants experienced home, I situated the discussion in a theoretical framework that allowed for different possibilities of place attachment, including mobility. Stories of "My place" demonstrate the possibility of place attachment in a degree of mobility, a complementarity between dwelling and journeying. However, the autobiographies as a whole show a limit to how far concepts of place can be abstractly expanded. The majority of participants have experienced an existential outsideness (Relph, 1976) in childhood and adult life - an alienation from place and its social relationships and community. This points to how research which labels children as "privileged" can obscure the child perspective. The gap between "home" as represented in family narratives versus a sense of not feeling at home anywhere has been a strain in life which participants seek to resolve. It shines through in the paradox of why they wish for their own children to be place-bound, despite their feelings of gratitude towards their own mobile childhood. Moreover, I suggest that what is illustrated empirically in the article is part of a broader globalised trend: Is the story of "Places as privileged options" one that we adults tell ourselves as we face increasing structural expectations of high mobility and adaptability? It is a carrier of feeling rules, where the mobile nuclear family becomes its only place of consolation, e.g. "Home is my family". However, when the family becomes a pressure-cooker in idealised mobility, to whom, where or what shall we attach if it comes apart?

5. 3. Article 3

Bjørnsen, R., Fauske, H. & J. Fadnes. Invisible children, untouchable cases? Diplomat children and Third Culture Kids – A Child Welfare perspective. *The international journal of children's rights*: Under review.

The starting point for Article 3 is one autobiography, which would normally call for the intervention and support of Norwegian Child Welfare Services due to parents' emotional neglect and substance abuse. Several other participants also described emotional neglect and general absence of their parents. However, this is a small minority in the dataset. In this article, we explore the potential barriers to how TCKs in general, and diplomat children in particular, can realise their legal rights if subjected to neglect of care or abuse. The article identifies a research gap between: 1) Child Welfare research, where middle-class and affluent

families are an under-researched group; 2) the research on TCKs, which does not address the children's legal situation; and 3) the body of research on diplomatic immunity, where studies of implications for children within diplomat families are scarce.

Our analysis shows that TCKs in general can face barriers to their legal rights for protection and support from Child Welfare Services because material wealth and high mobility of the families make them more "invisible" to these services. Moreover, living outside of their country of citizenship make them less reachable to these national child support institutions. TCKs are dependent on local authorities where they temporarily reside. However, in the case of children of diplomats, local authorities and family courts do not have jurisdiction to intervene, due to diplomatic legal immunity. Based on the analysis of two publicly known cases of parental neglect or abuse, we identified four characteristics which set legal barriers for diplomat children. These were: 1) States need to safeguard their own diplomats, therefore they follow the principle of reciprocal retaliation; 2) The cases concerning children are redefined into cases which concern International Relations; 3) In cases concerning a diplomat child, alternative institutional channels apply than what are standards for children, therefore warped institutional proceedings; and 4) Due to the above, states have a strong incentive to negotiate any situation concerning diplomat children away from public attention. Consequences of such incentive is that a diplomat child's voice and situational circumstances can go undocumented, and deterrence of the child's legal agency.

We discuss the results from the perspective of how the general rise in child migration across national borders is in need of further efforts to guarantee children's rights and legal agency on the ground. Child serial migrants in middle- and high-income families such as TCKs must not be assumed excluded from these challenges. Their potential situations of invisibility and unreachability pose particular risks of legal bias and barriers to realising their rights. The specific legal vacuum for diplomat children is also discussed within this international legal framework. The Vienna Convention of Diplomatic Relations (VCDR) can serve to provide diplomat children with protection from an outer threat. Yet the convention is at odds with the UNCRC if the threat lies within the family of a functioning diplomat overseas. Therefore, there is a gap between an adult-centric perspective which states that diplomats and their families shall "enjoy the privileges and immunities" of diplomatic immunity (VCDR, Art. 37 (1)), whereas from the child perspective, these same "privileges" can mean a barrier to their rights to care and protection. Where TCKs live within expatriate communities, the symbolic

and physical boundaries can signal to local authorities that they are legally “off limits”, whether or not they officially have diplomatic immunity. Lastly, we suggest legal and institutional preventive measures for the Norwegian Foreign Service and generally for employers who send families overseas. These include digital forums and communication, and the regular use of TCK consultants.

5. 4. Demographics: age, gender, ethnicity, class

The three articles have not referred to patterns of age, gender, ethnicity and class because they have discussed patterns which have emerged across these demographics. However, the autobiographies do show that these classic dimensions are influential (see also Appendix 4).

5. 4. 1. Age

As for childhood relocations, there is a large variation across developmental stages and number of relocations (Appendix 4). A majority of participants have experienced mobility in early and later childhood, as well as during adolescence. Relocations in adolescence is generally recalled as more challenging than earlier childhood mobility due to the importance of peer-group connections, and especially younger adult participants advise future NFS parents to not relocate when their children are in their teens.

I have divided the participants into three groups of adults, depending on where they find themselves in the adult life course: young adulthood (age 19-29); middle adulthood (age 30-49); and older adulthood (50+). The younger age group stands out in important ways. Notably, several apply the term “TCK” to describe and discuss their childhood and young adult identity, which the older participants do not. They have a more deterministic way of perceiving how childhood has influenced them than the older participants, e.g. ‘I will forever be this way’. Phases of childhood spent in Norway are portrayed with vivid painful emotions. One participant was supposed to live alone in Norway from age 16. However, her unhappiness there led her to rather choose to go to an international boarding school in Africa, which she describes as an especially positive experience. Amongst the group in middle adulthood, there are many reflections on how having their own children changed how they perceived their own childhood, emphasising children’s need for security, stability and friendships over time. The oldest participants recall a childhood in which children should be

seen but not heard, and that "this was how things were done". They have experienced either being sent to boarding school (the youngest at age 12) in Norway or sent to Norway with younger siblings they became responsible for. The reason for this was for education and to "become Norwegian".

5. 4. 2. Gender

There is a distinct difference in gender among the oldest participants in how they experienced being at boarding school. Whereas men recall this time with fondness, attending alumni meet-ups as adults, the women experienced these years as emotionally very challenging. One woman recalls looking at other families and their homes, wishing she had a home. Another participant ran away from boarding school. This difference in emotional tone is present throughout the autobiographies, across generations. Male participants write with a more humorous tone, often with a self-observing irony. This was also the case in the interviews. However, two themes stand out which are described in a serious tone by male participants: difficulties with friendships and the importance of the cabin for their future bond to Norway. Moreover, several reflect on how they have changed their views about their childhood when they themselves have had children. Being part of sports teams is seen as an important supporting factor during relocation transitions. The female participants describe their childhood experiences with a far more serious emotional tone. Certain episodes of childhood are understood to have debilitating consequences for later life. Several describe many years of psychotherapy in adulthood. Brothers are remembered as becoming angry, whereas they reacted with sadness, anxiety, shame and censoring their emotions in the presence of their parents (see Article 1). Female participants describe taking responsibility for younger siblings. Overall, male participants are more positive towards their childhood than their female counterparts, who are more divided. However, gratitude is expressed across gender.

5. 4. 3. Ethnicity and minority appearances

12 participants have one non-Norwegian parent. For some, this has influenced their relationship to nationality and belonging. The majority of participants have had a strained relationship to Norway regardless of parents' origins. Having one parent from a different nationality becomes an additional factor, as they also have an ambiguous relationship to another country which is felt as both home and not home. They have grown up bilingually, or not spoken Norwegian at home, which has added to the challenge of (re)entry to Norway.

Some indicate needing to nourish the 'other part' of them when in Norway. One participant whose one parent is from a highly collectivistic national culture was told by people there: "What a shame, you are *almost* a…". She describes challenges with identity over many years, starting in pre-adolescence. However, having to "make a choice" to become Norwegian is also expressed amongst those whose parents are both Norwegian.

Five participants are non-white and therefore a visible minority in Norway. One participant describes how being non-white made him feel "even more foreign" when arriving to a small town in Norway after residing overseas. Others seem to bond with other minority children in their class upon (re)entry to a multicultural neighbourhood, which may be an advantage over the participants who report the challenges of having "blond hair and blue eyes" upon (re)entry to Norway. In the latter group, being a "hidden immigrant" made their social surroundings in Norway ascribe them as Norwegian, with the expectations of linguistic, behavioural and cultural references that they could not match. However, 17 out of 43 were born overseas. They may find themselves in Norway for the first time. When a visible minority overseas, several white participants recall uncomfortable situations as children when people wanted to touch their skin and hair or stared at them. Many participants describe how their experiences of being a minority overseas has made them focus on people's individuality rather than their visible traits or nationality.

5. 4. 4. Class

The lifestyle of periods overseas in childhood was different in many ways from when participants lived in Norway. Overseas, they were embedded in symbolism which indicated belonging to an upper-class and high-status group in society. These can be living in large residencies with servants, riding in luxury cars, and for the children, going to expensive private schools. The experiences of belonging to an exclusive class was more intense when participants resided in countries with a large part of the population living in material poverty, without public health services, without women's rights, with high crime rates, and during war or internal unrest. In these countries, the children were more likely to live in "bubbles" with security around their residences and schools. However, during periods in Norway, the family has lived a standard middle-class life. As children, the participants therefore experienced fluctuating class mobility. Moreover, with the exception of three who live similar expatriate lives overseas, all participants live middle-class lives in adulthood, whether in Norway or overseas. Therefore, participants have experienced comparative downward mobility.

Chapter 6 Discussion

Are we restless, or are we free? (Karin, age 55)

6. 1. Introduction

This chapter synthesises the results presented in Chapter 5. It is especially concerned with how participants' childhood experiences and circumstances, as analysed in the three articles, are manifested as tensions and resolutions in adult life. Our childhood is a continuous part of our sense of narrative self throughout life (Orellana & Phoenix, 2016). Mobility and the global are part of the participants' set of references, which distinguishes them from a Norwegian majority. This discussion connects participants' sense of self, life choices, and value-orientations to the wider ideological contexts in which they are embedded. The way someone creatively brings together aspects of social and cultural contexts into autobiography is unique, yet we can learn about general aspects of society from studying such accounts (Olney, 1980; Gullestad, 1996). Sociologists have theorised that, especially in times of economic growth, ideological expectations become increasingly incompatible with the reality of life as lived, and a growing "expectation gap" in society puts an existential *strain* on individuals (Merton, 1938). Such socially created circumstances can cause pathologies in a population (Durkheim, 1897; Honneth, 1995a; Vetlesen, 2009). In Chapter 3, I presented the theoretical proposition that, as migrants, participants exist within "pull-" and "push-migration" metanarratives (Lee, 1966). Today, the pull-migration narrative takes on a neoliberal, globally expansive form, whereas the push-migration narrative is collectivistic and locally anchored. I presented them as metanarratives of opposite emotional tone, one of mobility as "privilege", the other as loss. However, both narratives can be motivational. As the participants in this study are early in rising trends of serial migration on a global scale, their reflections on how they close the "expectation gap" represent valuable insights.

In the following, I first present four separate states of being which represent variation in participants' adult life situations and trajectories: the "Somewheres", the "Searching-for-Somewheres", the "Orbiting Anywheres", and the "Anywhere-but-Heres". Next, I synthesise these findings in a fictional story of a life-trajectory which illustrates findings across the autobiographies. It also serves as an image of how institutions are carriers of ideologies. In the final section, I present an analysis of how the participants create continuous and coherent

narrative selves, discussing this in light of the research presented in Chapter 2. I show how participants "close the expectation gap" between the socially expected self and selfhood by reflexively moving between 1) pull- and push-migration narratives; 2) their child and adult perspectives; and 3) ascribed "privileged" status and self-perceived gratitude.

6. 2. Home and relationships: "Anywheres" or "Somewheres"?

The participants used extensive narrative space in the autobiographies to reflect on how their childhood mobility influenced how they in adult life related to questions of place, relationships, and ambiguous feelings about Norway. These deliberations cut across age, gender, ethnicity or class differences and is a highly distinctive feature of the group. Their reflections can usefully be categorised into four variations, inspired by Goodhart's (2019) categories of "Somewheres" and "Anywheres". These are not static, although they are a stable choice over time for some. Overall, they represent states of being that they have experienced in different phases of a dynamic lifespan, as one person can go through all these states.

6. 2. 1. The "Somewheres"

At the time of writing their autobiography, the "Somewheres" in this study present their life as being settled in a place, and how this is a key element to their well-being. Together, they represent a clear majority. A small minority within this group has a connection to Norway and Norwegian identity that seems unambiguous. They have typically lived one or two times overseas during childhood, and the periods they spent in Norway were less conflictual than for most participants. Generally, they have had long-lasting friendships in Norway in their childhood and later adult life. Reflections about their relationship to Norway are about having an outsider-looking-in-perspective, which they find highly rewarding. I have called them *"Norwegians with a twist"*. Secondly, there are the *"Norwegians by choice"*. They show a sense of determination in needing to choose between identities, and they have chosen to be Norwegian. Thirdly, there are those I term *"Norway as end destination"*. They have typically experienced many challenging childhood periods, and have chosen Norway to provide stability, permanence and support. Some have gone from an "Anywhere-but-Here" or "Searching-for-Somewhere" phase earlier in adulthood (see below), or both, and have 'landed' in Norway at a later stage. They have generally known periods of psychological, psychosocial or psychosomatic illness in childhood and later life. Finally, there are the "Somewheres" who live permanently in one place outside Norway. They have sought

multicultural environments, which they feel reflects their culturally diverse childhood. They have settled in *"Mirroring homes"*. They do not wish to live in Norway, nor do they wish to relocate. The common factor among the "Somewheres" is a resolve to stay where they are, and that this has an essential value in their life. Yet there are times they feel too different from those around them, a feeling that can trigger loneliness. They slip into a sense of…

6. 2. 2. The "Searching-for-Somewheres"

These participants have a sense of life as unresolved at the time of writing (or telling) their autobiography. They express a state of outsideness (see Article 2), and a need to belong somewhere. However, this is perceived to somehow be out of reach, despite great efforts in the place where they have lived over many years. Some are *"Searching outside Norway"*. Several have experienced bullying over time in Norway during childhood, and they express a strained relationship with their passport country. Those who have children express anxiety that they will have similar struggles. This feeling of wanting a place, yet not quite finding it, is shared by several participants who have lived in Norway over time, the *"Searching in Norway"*. Common to both types is how they seek consolation to their longing in multicultural surroundings, often with other immigrants or others with a migration history. They also express difficulties with friendships and social surroundings. At times, the "Searching-for-Somewheres" wish they could be…

6. 2. 3. The "Orbiting Anywheres"

The "Orbiting Anywheres" live an adult life in international serial migration. They find their childhood has made them independent, skilled in adapting to new places, and are generally high achievers in their professions. They describe a strong connection between a mobile childhood and their international adult life, to which they attach their identity. However, they describe an awareness of how their mobile lifestyle has emotional costs. Some describe emotional pain over their losses at each relocation, especially about the breaking of relationships. Others express an awareness of how they dissociate emotionally upon each relocation and how this is a pattern they learnt in childhood. The "Orbiting Anywheres" feel that the joys of living internationally outweigh these emotional costs. They describe a bird's eye perspective of the globe and perceive that their global mobility is a choice. They use the term "restlessness" to describe positive feelings of adventure and journeying. Three in the "young adult" age group, three in the "middle adult" age group, and one amongst the "older

adult" age group (until his retirement) live in this serial migration lifestyle. However, not everyone moving from place to place feel it is a choice. Rather, they are…

6. 2. 4. The "Anywhere-but-Heres"

This is a phase or state of being that mostly young participants find themselves in at the time of writing (or telling). It is also a state which many participants describe as something they "went through" as young adults. This state is described as a negative type of restlessness. They feel able to live anywhere. On the other hand, the choice to settle somewhere seems impossible, especially in Norway. They feel like outsiders wherever they are, which at times feels positive, but then spills over to a negative "rootlessness". They find themselves "Searching for Somewhere" but then experience a need to get away (see Article 2 on implosion and flight from place). Keeping social relationships over time is a challenge. Some express that family is "home" and do not need to belong to a place. However, their parents still live as "Orbiting Anywheres". Although described as something participants have resolved or wish to resolve, it is a state which older participants express as sometimes resurfacing in other phases of adulthood.

6. 3. Henry: a fictional story of an "expectation gap"

There is no absolute pattern between how many times participants have relocated in childhood and variations in the strain involved in resolving questions of home and relationships. However, there is a clear pattern in the dataset as whole of an adult lifespan trajectory. In the following, I synthesise the four states mentioned above into a fictional story. The purpose of the story is to communicate the meanings participants express in their autobiographies with an ambition to represent the dataset as a whole. Moreover, I draw lines back to the characteristics of the "third culture by design" (or expatriate culture) with its neo-colonial traits I presented in Chapter 2. These were: 1) the role, status, and material/lifestyle "privileges" which come with representation (Useem et al., 1963); 2) contract rotation and its social and psychological consequence for a "psychological sense of impermanency" (Cohen, 1977:17); the expatriate "bubble" with its disconnection from the local (Fechter, 2007); 3) the central focus of the career as a "calling" (Michaelsson, 2010; Hiorns, 2017); 4) the notion that this requires relational and family sacrifices (Neumann, 2012; Coles, 2008); and 5) the restraints of an "interpretive community" (Fish, 1976). These are characteristics known to the hero of this story, as he has grown up within the NFS. I also display how the hero encounters

neoliberal values as they manifest through the institutions of higher education and career he encounters along his path. These are: 1) self-realisation, mobility and “loose networks” of the “Anywheres” (Goodhart, 2019); 2) the goal of maximum amount of options from which one is “free to choose” and build one’s achieved identity (Friedman & Friedman, 1981); and 3) how the individual (not societal conditions) is made responsible for his or her successes and failures (Vetlesen, 2009), having to do "the hard work of attitude adjustment and maintenance on him- or herself" (Ehrenreich, 2009:204). Within this expatriate and neoliberalist context, I demonstrate how the hero lives within cultural “feeling rules” with corresponding “deep acting” (Hochschild, 1983). As the expectation gap between ideals and his subjective reality widens, he starts “striking in” (Merton, 1938).

6. 3. 1. Henry is ‘on his way’, he is ‘going places’

Henry is 18 years old and has grown up within the NFS. Born in Norway, his first memories from overseas are from when he lived in Nepal from ages 4 to 7. After Nepal, the family would live in Norway, the Republic of Congo, back to Norway, and finally Washington DC. Henry is embarking on adult life. Where to study? He feels he could go anywhere, his frame of reference is “the world”. However, lately he has reflected on his nationality. He finds it easier to be a Norwegian overseas than to be in Norway. He feels his mother tongue is English. When in Norway, people have asked where he is from: "I detect an accent, but I can't quite *place* it…”. He decides to go to Norway, perhaps to ‘resolve’ these feelings?

Henry’s choice of education will lead to options for possible career choices in future. He experiences these choices as serious. He hears of various exchange semester programs overseas. The pull-migration narrative is at work: “Mobility is an opportunity you cannot miss.” He has a case of “FOMO” (the Fear Of Missing Out). “I *should* apply”, Henry tells himself, “make the most of my options”.

> Who has been able to maximise and multiply the potential and the *gift* one has received as a kid of the Foreign Service the most? (Irene, age 23: Article 1)

He feels restless. At times, Norway feels suffocating. When he mentions his past, some ask him: "Which country did you like the most"? He finds it impossible to answer - as if one could compare pieces of oneself? Happy memories flood in but are difficult to communicate. A class project in Kathmandu, when they learned to make a puppet theatre. Hanging out with a diplomat neighbour kid in Brazzaville who had a pool. Tribes. Colours on fabrics. Red

earth. The steps of the White House, so white they blind your eyes. Being inches (centimetres?) away from the finishing line – score! He applies to the exchange programme and feels a familiar sense of excitement.

> … I dream of moving to Libanon to learn Arabic. Dream of moving to New York to be an apprentice in the UN. Dream of being an apprentice at the embassy in Buenos Aires. Of taking a masters' in the UK or USA… (Jeanette, age 21).

Yet during the exchange semester, he starts to doubt himself and whether he has made the right choices. "What if I did not choose the career path that was right for me?" A world of possibilities is open to Henry, but not the possibility of making the wrong choice or to under-achieve.

> I mean, the truth about the expectations and the pressure that lies there, often unsaid, but that at least I feel all the time. (Irene, age 23: Article 1; Article 3)

He is having trouble sleeping and concentrating. He starts feeling overwhelmed and does not know the people around him that well.

> I didn't manage to start university right after high school, and it is only now that I am approaching the end of my studies. I went into quite a serious depression where a constant repetition of "it will be fine. Everything will be fine in the end"- mantra was the only thing that made me keep on going. (Rebekka, age 25)

He starts getting spells of anxiety: "Have I chosen the right city? The right university? The right subjects? Perhaps I should have put all my cards on the music?" Henry feels he cannot keep up with his new college mates. He starts to isolate himself socially. Inside, he is falling. The thought enters his mind: should he just end it all? But at the end of the semester, Henry meets a crowd at college who do not seem to take things so seriously. He feels relief: "Why did I care that much?"

> During university, I was very self-destructive and spent more hours in the day high than sober. This was not unusual amongst the diplomat children I came into contact with. Thank God I got out of it with my health intact, and I count myself lucky to have avoided problems of addiction. (Jacob, age 49)

Nevertheless, gradually, Henry admits he does care. He tells himself: "I gotta get more self-disciplined. Exercise more, eat healthily, study harder." He follows a feeling rule: "You have only yourself to blame for failing to make it." A voice is ringing in his ear: "You're privileged, man - get it together." His efforts show results, he is getting the grades. He gets an apprenticeship in a place he has always dreamt of seeing: "In three months from now, I will be living in such an amazing city!" The excitement washes over him like a wave (Article 2).

His friends and teachers say Henry is definitely “going places”. The pull-migration narrative dominates within Henry’s friend circles: “We are young and ‘on our way’. And anyway, we will keep in touch online. We should only feel happy and excited about the next step.”

6. 3. 2. Henry is ‘moving up’ in the world

Henry has become an “Anywhere”. He has an achieved identity and has followed his career path wherever work takes him. He keeps in touch online, his “loose networks”. He notices that they start to look up to him; he is ‘moving up’ in the world. The company he works for has an opening for a position overseas. Henry applies, he knows international work experience is considered important on your CV these days. However, at the same time as he gets the job, a friend he has known the last two years calls and has some crazy news: He has gotten a serious diagnosis, it could even be terminal. Nevertheless, both he and his friend take for granted that the pull-migration narrative still stands: Henry has ‘a golden opportunity’, in three months, he will be ‘on his way’. The feeling rule gets priority. He and his friend perform deep acting: “It’s probably not that serious, and anyway, we will stay in touch online.”

> I most likely wouldn’t ever see or speak to them again, and if I did it would only be a superficial “happy birthday” on Facebook if even that. (Tessa, age 25: Article 2)

Henry is now living as a thriving expatriate. This setting feels like home to him, like the settlement mobility he was used to in his childhood with his family. His socioeconomic status is higher in his expatriate role, as he is representing his company overseas. Living in an expatriate “bubble”, he is not really integrated into the local environment. Contact with “locals” is limited, and he is mostly with other expatriates like himself. However, he enjoys being “out of place” (Said, 1999). He is a “constructive marginal”, bringing individual and creative skills to his work community. He feels like his work environment and social circle is a “Mirroring Home” of people like himself.

> New York has become my adopted home and its cultural diversity seems to mirror my childhood experiences. (Elisabeth, age 45, writes in English)

Henry’s first two-year posting has been a success, and in three months, he is moving to his next posting. However, something is bothering Henry. From his balcony door, he has seen a boy meandering around in his garden, often with a grim expression on his face, hitting the ground with a stick. It is a lovely house… the kid even has a pool in the garden. But when the boy's father comes home from his travels, Henry hears shouting. The mother seems to have a wine glass in her hand at all times. Frankly, the boy seems miserable. Suddenly, Henry

realises that the boy's situation reminds him of his childhood neighbour friend in Brazzaville. They were always alone in that big house, a nanny checking on them sometimes. He didn't think that something was wrong back then, but thinking of it now… Paul Simon's song *The boy in the bubble* pops into Henry's mind: "These are the days of miracle and wonders, this is a long distance call… and don't cry baby, don't cry…". Maybe he should ask the boy if he is alright, or talk to the parents, but what would he say? Surely the teachers have an eye on him, although… "It is almost as if the boy is invisible to the outside world", he thinks to himself (Article 3). Does Henry even have the right to meddle in this family's affairs? "I'm not sure what the laws are in this country, and, I mean, they could be diplomats for all I know…". He is reminded of a well-known phrase: "The expatriate has all these rewards together with a distinct knowledge that no one will bother him…He is Tarzan, King of the Jungle" (Theroux, 1967:16). Also, Henry is relocating in three months, it feels wrong to stir up something when he is leaving. The familiar social temporariness kicks in. The state of transience, of being "in limbo" (Bell-Villada et al., 2011) surrounds and engulfs him. In the end, the family even relocates before Henry does.

> There was no one who picked up on it – but it makes sense – it's hard to notice anything when the child is there 2-3 years and then disappears, and in the big international schools with so many kids, 2000 children. (Silje, age 35: Article 3)

The state of 'anomie' within expatriate communities (Nash, 1967) makes Henry confused about what to do. He sticks to the feeling rule of not getting emotionally involved in other people's private business: "He's not my responsibility", he says to himself. Henry performs deep acting: "I'm not *that* worried for the kid…".

In each new posting, Henry adjust quickly to new places. He feels he has acquired a form of independence.

> But I'm pretty sure that because I have had to start again so many times, this has made me unafraid when faced with change and 'the unknown'. I see possibilities where others see problems… I feel that I have become secure about myself and that is a security that I bring with me wherever I choose to live… My identity is something that I carry with me and is not attached to a particular location. (Ingvild, age 36).

Henry has become an "Orbiting Anywhere". He thinks: "I could do this my whole life."

> Although it has its pros and cons, its uncertainties and inconsistencies, growing up as a "UD barn" (NFS child) is something I am blessed with. It has strengthened my independence, confidence and most importantly tolerance towards the world… And those are the learnings I will be sure to pass on to my son, while we continue to globetrot as forever expats without equity, proper pension

> plans or real friends. Apart from Skype and WhatsApp of course. Merry Xmas, Happy Chinese New Year or Eid Mubarak, wherever you are. (Lars, in his 40s, writes in English)

At times, Henry feels as though he is made of flowing currents, free to choose in an ever-changing reality, as if liquid. He feels free even to reinvent himself in each new place if he so wishes:

> To land is to be reborn. Slowly but surely, you build yourself up. A New World. A New You. Reset. Start Over. That is the best part. How lucky one is to regularly be allowed to recreate oneself. I always get a kick out of this feeling of freedom: I can be anything, I can be anyone, no one knows who I was before. (Jennifer, age 26)

6. 3. 3. Henry is sinking from the mother ship

However, in other ways, life surrounding Henry is undergoing standardisation. A new metric system has been introduced at work, allowing his employer to measure productivity in the local branches from the 'mother ship'. He pushes himself a little further than usual.

> I have reflected over this from several perspectives. Sometimes one can become *too* adaptable. (David, age 40)

One night, he has trouble falling asleep. The problem continues - he is not getting his eight hours. He feels tired and has trouble concentrating. He is reminded of his first exchange semester at university, when he started feeling this way: “I was weak back then”. He knows what to do: the value of being self-sufficient is a given for Henry. His cultural weapon is self-discipline. He goes for longer runs, improves his routine, makes the right choices. He lies awake, feeling his heartbeat, and sometimes wakes up in the night in a state of panic. Suddenly he is reminded of having felt like this as a child.

> I remember the (…) war which broke out while we were there. This meant sandbags outside the house, the front lights on the car painted blue, and repeated bombing drills at school. Even in our house a bomb-safe basement was built. I feel the anxiety come back to me as I’m writing this… (Marcus, age 49)

The doctor tells him to take some time off work and prescribes an antidepressant. Days and then weeks pass by: “What if this continues?” The pull-migration narrative says that he is by all measures a success. The feeling rule is buzzing in his ear: “You are privileged, you’re happy, what is wrong with you?” He begins his deep acting, but…

> In reality, shivers where crawling up and down my spine. As the years passed, I learned to put words to my experiences (Martha, age 41: Article 1).

“Keep it together, man”. He gets kind calls from colleagues who show concern, but he avoids telling them about the sleepless nights, the panic attacks. Henry is in an “interpretive community” where certain things are not uttered. It is as though he is wearing a mask. He reflects: "The masks in the White House, the masks of Nepal, the masks of the Congo, you know them all…". When he speaks to colleagues, he is practising narrative censorship on himself.

> When people ask me where I’m from, I hesitate to answer… It has also dawned on me that many quickly experience one as arrogant when you start to tell them something about your background because it perhaps is a bit more exciting than what is average. I therefore keep my background to myself… (Mette, age 31)

Henry’s work gives him a strong feeling of purpose. It feels like a kind of personal calling towards a greater cause. But *who* is Henry, when he cannot function in his achieved identity as an “Anywhere”? His life has all the ingredients of the narrative of a “privileged NFS childhood” (Article 1): high socioeconomic status; exotic experiences; extraordinary opportunities and potential; and freedom to always be able to return home. But why return home? “Anyway, where would this ‘home’ be for me?” In these ponderings, Henry joins the “Searching-for-Somewheres”.

> I don't think that the question of my identity is answered yet… I have tried to create my own type of belonging to a fixed place, and with good friends and a good partner it is happening slowly but surely. But I still don’t think that I will ever really feel I belong neither here nor there… (if I grew up in Norway) I would probably also have had a stronger sense of belonging to a place, such as to a childhood home or to a city and felt that I had a place that I could call home in a deeper way than I do now. (Hilde, age 34)

A thought strikes Henry: “Maybe it is simply time to move on? Maybe this place is simply wrong for me?" He feels a sudden need to get away, to be “Anywhere-but-Here”. Nick Cave is singing to him from his favourite album “Henry’s dream”: “Oh, sweet Jesus, this really is the end, there’s always one more town a little further down the bend…” Is this *our* Henry? He feels restless.

> There was an air of temporariness around them, a longing to go out again as soon as possible. I didn’t feel comfortable – had I become too Norwegian? (Renate, age 21)

Freddy Mercury’s voice “I want to break free” is blasting through Henry’s stereo, but he realises that in his contract, he actually does not have a choice in the matter of relocation. He has felt a sense of agency over his life in mobility, but now this “rotation contract” feels forced and leaves him feeling powerless – he is “Being placed” (Article 2). Henry reflects on how the constant relocations are making him end relationships. He has made new

acquaintances easily in each place, but then put them into his "loose networks" online upon each relocation.

> I'm prepared for the possibility that my friends can vanish from me, that I myself can vanish from them. I have registered that my relationship to friendship is more fleeting than for many… (Jonathan, age 43).

He also starts reflecting on how his romantic relationships have come and gone for years. "But my family were happy while we moved from place to place."

> Mom used to talk about how it was just the four of us, in a boat, out on a wide, open ocean. (Monika, age 21)

For Henry, it has proved difficult to combine a relationship with dual careers and serial mobility. Tom Waits' song "If I have to go" enters Henry's mind: "I don't belong here, and you can't come with me, you'll only slow me down…".

> The moment I made any progress, it was time to move on and start from scratch. Don't get me wrong, I am not blaming anyone. It just became the norm and an easy, emotionless way out. And it still is. (Lars, in his 40s, writes in English)

Henry can't remember a time in his life when he could not manage on his own. "I travel light, no strings attached… But in my privileged situation, how can I be feeling like this?"

6. 3. 4. Henry's friend is not going anywhere

Henry finds himself feeling helpless, confused, without answers. Should he call his parents? What would he say?

> Of course, it was extremely challenging to talk about this at home. I was the successful, tough proud independent daughter. It took me a long time to get over that year in London. I think in a way that it has marked me for life. (Olivia, age 55)

"I'm not their responsibility. Anyway, they are not here, what could they do for me?"

> It has also struck me as a little upside-down that I, a young student, live a standard A4-life in Norway, at the same time as my parents live an exciting, exotic and unconventional life in tropical parts of the globe. (Maren, age 28)

He goes for walks and finds himself thinking of his friend who received the grave diagnosis some years back. He remembers a few things that his friend said and realises that perhaps he had not understood what his friend actually meant. He gets an overwhelming urge to call his old friend. His friend's response is:

> A friend of my brother's, a psychologist, said to me: I think you should try to stop moving all the time, to stay in Norway for a while… (Lisbeth, age 74)

During the plane ride, Henry worries that he once again will feel like an outsider in his passport country – a "hidden immigrant" (Articles 1 and 2). Has Henry become Park's "marginal man" (1928)?

> In my spare time, I lift weights and do martial arts. A conspicuously large number of my training buddies are immigrants, either first or second generation. The academic Norwegian in me apprehends that this extreme quest for classic masculine strength reflects a common vulnerability that springs from a united sense of exclusion – that we bare papers that identify us as citizens of Norway, but that we don't truly belong. (Benjamin, age 43)

Henry closes his eyes, and in his mind's eye, he sees a place by the sea where he used to go every summer as a child. Seashells, the sound of the waves, a cabin where he spent his summers as a boy ("My place", Article 2). But he is agitated: How will he feel about returning to Norway again?

> It is tiring to always be on the move, to feel different, to not feel at ease or attached. But sometimes I feel most estranged at home… 'Oslo as home' is therefore cherished, yet is also complex, contradictive, and conflictual. (Ingvild, age 36)

His friend is at the airport, and he feels a sense of relief. Henry has had many friends, yet he has always seen friendships as something useful, as people he has enjoyed hanging out with…

> Attachment problems and restlessness are maybe the two biggest problems I have had. Concerning the first one, I still find it difficult to have long-lasting friendships because I am used to them having an "expiry date" - when the norm is that friendships last an average of two years before someone moves, it can feel unnatural to think of friendship as something that lasts. As a consequence, it takes me a long time to open up to new friends. (Johanne, age 19)

Henry feels he is lousy company, yet his friend still invites him over - he even challenges Henry's views, because Henry is worth this potential unease. His friend is *involved* rather than the polite 'slipping away' of the pull-migration narrative. Henry starts to feel secure that he can tell his friend how he feels. In this process of rebuilding self as narrative, his friend becomes a guardian of Henry's self-continuity. This is Aristotle's third friendship (philia) type: a unique bond where one holds the other in especially high regard, for the other's sake (Hugues, 2013). What Henry is experiencing now is a new feeling rule: He can trust his friend, he can lean on him, show how he feels. His friend is not going anywhere.

> They (my friends) have become a new constant unit in my life. They are not necessarily many. But they are, in some strange way, home. Security. I know where they are. They are in Norway. They are not going anywhere. I can always come home to them. They love me and I love them (Vivian, age 23).

As for Henry, he sometimes thinks that he might want to live “Somewhere”. Whether or not he becomes a “Norway as end destination” is a different chapter.

6. 4. Closing the expectation gap

6. 4. 1. “Henry” – a case of social pathology?

Though the story of Henry is of someone with a serial and global migratory childhood, it nevertheless illustrates something that is generally ‘in the air’ in present times, and is likely to increase with rising numbers of adults becoming mobile in pursuit of their careers. Yet even without cross-country mobility, others encounter the same institutions of higher education and employment as Henry does on his path - institutions influenced by neoliberal ideals. These ideals (freedom through maximum options, self-realisation, independence) come with outer pressure for mobility, flexibility, adaptability and self-control, and are hypothesised as major factors of the social pathology on the rise in “western societies” today, notably the socio-psycho-somatic illnesses (Vetlesen, 2009). To take the example of Norway, Henry's first illness represents the 1 in 4 students in Norway who report having serious psychological challenges.[21] Suicide is the highest cause of death in Norway amongst the age-group 10 to 24.[22] During Henry’s second phase of illness, he joins the 16 to 22% of Norway's adult population who in 2018 experienced a form of psychological illness in a year - anxiety, depression and substance abuse ranking as the top three.[23] Henry is ascribed an antidepressant, the medical answer which has taken the world by an industrial storm (Hughes et al., 2019). Furthermore, Henry’s continuous deep acting grows in intensity when he insists that he is "privileged". This only serves to aggravate his psychological state and encourages self-blame and a negative self-image. It does not help him find social support or values that can increase a healthy coherence in his situation (Antonovsky, 1987). How do participants in this study, as Henry would say, “keep it together”? How do they close the “expectation gap”?

6. 4. 2. Reflexivity between “pull-” and “push-migration” narratives

The tone of Henry’s fictional story is representative of the collective dataset as a whole. At the time of creating their autobiographies, 37 out of 43 participants find themselves as either

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[21] https://studenthelse.no/tema/psykisk_helse_og_trivsel. The results in SHOT show: 1 of 3 students have symptoms of insomnia-diagnosis, including exhaustion during daytime; 1 of 5 students report having performed self-harm on themselves intentionally.

[22] http://statistikkbank.fhi.no/dar/

[23] https://www.fhi.no/globalassets/dokumenterfiler/rapporter/2018/psykisk_helse_i_norge2018.pdf

“Somewheres” or “Searching-for-Somewheres”. This number cannot be interpreted as being representative of this population, yet it is striking. They express a need to *connect* to their emotional selves, relationships, community and place. They seek greater emotional involvement. Younger participants are more likely to be highly mobile across countries, to either be “Orbiting Anywheres” or in a state of needing to be “Anywhere-but-Here”. Older participants describe how they needed to resolve a strain in their life related to connection and disconnection of place and social relationships. The majority of older participants (except 3) reflect on how they became exhausted from serial mobility in younger adulthood or felt they were trying to solve psychological challenges by flight from one place to the next (Article 2). This overall finding gives support to studies which suggest that TCKs emotionally disconnect through emotional disengagement (Melles & Fray, 2014). Whether inside or outside Norway, this process of increased connection over time is described as a gradual rise in well-being with age, confirming studies of TCKs across several generations (Useem & Cottrell, 1996; Abe, 2018; Article 2).

Figure 1: *The ‘Pull-’ and ‘push-migration narratives’*

Pull	**Push**
Agent	Victim
Freedom of choice	Force
Future gain	Loss of past
Opportunity	Security
Independence	Dependence
Individual self-realisation	Community
Possibility/Change	Stability
Universality	Proximity
Wings	Roots
Anywheres	Somewheres

Both the pull- and push-migration narratives represent important values to the participants in this study. Both narratives are recognised, as participants create their autobiographies by “oscillating” the strings (Ricoeur, 1992) between the two.

The participants combine their childhood experiences - their child perspective - with the reflective distance of adulthood. To varying degrees, participants felt they were a victim and experienced major losses (Figure 1) as children within the NFS. The few who have experienced some form of parental neglect, which Article 3 addresses, have a clear perception of being victims of these circumstances in childhood. More generally, losses were in relation to an emotional self, friends, community, place, and sense of meaning. These findings reflect the literature of TCK research from 1960s to 2010 which emphasises loss and grief (Jordan, 2002, Gilbert, 2008; Pollock & van Reken, 2009). However, this study finds experiences of loss vary with the degree of emotional proximity to parents. Article 1 finds that emotion-

regulation support was related to how strong notions of ascribed “privilege” was adopted into a family’s narrative.

Sense of loss has also depended on sense of agency (Figure 1) in matters concerning relocation. Article 2 finds that participants who had a relationship to Norway as “My place” could negotiated a sense of home with their parents. These participants refer to their relocations as a meaningful complementarity between journeying and coming home. Lived agency was found to be connected to a sense of control and predictability. The more they experienced negotiations with parents over relocation, the more they felt they were “free to choose” and less forced (Figure 1). Those who had a clear relationship to Norway as “My place” in childhood also felt stronger roots (Figure 1) to Norway as adults. These “Norwegians with a twist” experience a “constructive marginality” (Benneth, 1993; Fail et. al., 2004; Kilguss, 2008). This result is a contrast to Hiorns’ (2017) findings of her participants’ ambiguous sense of national identity.

On the other hand, Article 2 also showed participants who experienced “Being placed”, especially as displacement to Norway. Their child perspective knows that Norway as “home” was highly conflictual. The need for security of place, of growing roots, of community and dependence on friends (Figure 1) is expressed most vividly by two groups: The “Somewheres" who described "Norway as end destination", and the "Searching-for-Somewheres". Especially the latter experience an "isolated marginality".

Moreover, patterns across autobiographies show that the less participants feel the need to belong to a place, the more they express an intense attachment to family, expressed through the stories of "Family is my home" in Article 2. This is more common amongst the younger adult participants. This may indicate that connection to place becomes more salient with age (Chawla, 1992). However, it may also indicate a change in sense of belonging across distances as new forms of transnationalism emerge (Coles & Fechter, 2008; Amit, 2007). Yet there are counterindications. The young participants express how digital connectedness is not a substitute for friends in a shared location. Although some findings of young TCKs using digital platforms may indicate otherwise (Hannaford, 2016), such studies do not provide longitudinal results. Dependency on the family as “home” also becomes more complex with age. As parents (who become grandparents) continue to be mobile, questions over

dependencies, responsibilities, involvement and care become more conflictual, as is well documented among British female diplomat spouses (Coles, 2008).

An important counterweight to the emphasis on losses, forced relocations and lack of belonging, are the results that indicate how mobility provided participants with agency in adulthood to master changes (Figure 1). This confidence is seen as a form of independence, of having “wings” (Figure 1), and is most pronounced by the “Orbiting Anywheres”. Moreover, the participants make a clear connection between their multicultural exposure during childhood and their strengths in multicultural communication later in life. Across the autobiographies, everyday life experiences in the multicultural environment at "international" schools are recalled with fond memories. Participants experienced friendships across ethnicity and cultural practices. In light of recent ethnographic studies which find the presence of cultural hierarchies and discrimination at such “international” schools (Tanu, 2017), one explanation for these fond memories of school overseas may be that the participants in this study have had a cultural high status by being “Norwegians” and “western” in these school settings. Their descriptions of schools overseas stand in stark contrast to the social exclusion practices they experienced in school environments upon (re)entry to Norway.

To perceive oneself as capable when facing change is part of the motivational dimension of the pull-migration narrative. These positive attributes of mobility perceived by participants can be obscured in a push-migration narrative. This is a source of criticism towards research that has assumed a sedentary lifestyle as superior, a discussion I enter in Article 2. A dominant focus on people’s need for stability, relationships and recognition within a community (Figure 1) can neglect important findings. Furthermore, as demands for mobility and adaptability rise with global accelerated change, sedentary assumptions pose the risk of disengaging with important research into how people find the ability to face changes, including mobility. Knowing how to "start again" and build up new social networks can assist in reconnecting and reinventing. Freedom of choice does not have to mean that a maximum of options is a goal in itself (e.g. Henry’s story), but that it presents a possibility to choose someone and somewhere *in particular* (Vetlesen, 2009). Although participants generally express a gradual need to stay in one location, they have often *created* this belonging. This is illustrated by the "Somewheres” I have named the “Norwegians by choice”. This group and those who settle in “Mirroring homes” are testimony of more recent TCK research which

finds they negotiate multicultural identities in empowering ways (Moore & Barker, 2012; Sears, 2011).

The young adults discuss their childhood and describe themselves by actively applying the "TCK" terminology in this movement between the pull- and push-migration stories. They refer to their own personality traits, values, and life challenges by comparing themselves to what they know about "TCKs". The term presents a possibility for language and understanding that influences these young participants. However, the way they discuss their identity is reflexive and with a critical distance, the "TCK-profile" (Pollock & Van Reken, 2009) being one identity perspective out of several with which they engage. Therefore, they do not give empirical backing to Cranston's findings of how the discourse of TCKs has become a dominating profile, "…governing subjectivity through managing emotions – a form of bio-power." (2017:8).

6. 4. 3. Postmodern self: taking an alternative course

The way participants' reflections can be analytically understood as "oscillation" between the pull- and push-migration narratives illustrates how postmodern individuals negotiate between identities depending on context (Giddens, 1991). However, this reflexivity occurs within current global metanarratives that limit our interpretive possibilities and how we perceive ourselves. In this study, the two metanarratives, one of global expansionism, the other of local collectivism, frame how participants interpret their migration history.

Characteristic of postmodernism is the breaking away of previous generations' values, cultural practices, traditions and lifestyle (Harvey, 1989; Bauman, 2000). An indication of such a movement illustrated in this dataset is the general pattern of going from a migratory childhood to a gradually sedentary, locally bounded adult life. This movement is pronounced when participants have children themselves. They provide reflections on how their children changed their perception of their own childhood. They want their own children to grow up place-bound, stressing children's need for security, stability and friendships over time. These views represent traditional Norwegian beliefs of what a "good" childhood is supposed to be (Thuen, 2008), but speak against the rising numbers of mobile professionals. Only two

participants in the data are, or have been, serial migrants with children. In this way, most participants have chosen a lifestyle in contrast to their parents.

6. 4. 4. Autobiography as movement in outer and inner perceptual horizons

The way participants move between the pull- and push-migration metanarratives illustrates an emotional gap between the social roles ascribed to them ("idem") and their own experiences of selfhood ("ipse"), as the metanarratives have opposite tone (Figure 1). The gap between "story as told" and "story as experienced" has been greater for some participants than for others, as Article 1 has shown. "Oscillating" over a wide gap means perceptual and emotional processing over time. This movement is sometimes rewarding, at other times emotionally challenging. As for other migrant groups, it is a process of continuously "rebuilding the ship at sea" (Eriksen, 2015). There is a shift in perceptual field.

> But, had I only lived in Norway, then I would have missed an important widening of my mental horizon. My stay in Houston exposed me to ways of thinking (Catholicism, minority perspectives, American approaches), people, and ideas I would not have experienced in Norway. (Isak, age 31)

Moreover, it is a movement in emotional perception, a shift of the *inner* horizon (Merleau-Ponty, 1962; Johnsen, 2013) - at times a highly demanding process.

> …and it is only now that I for the first time have reached a point in my life where I finally feel that temporariness and non-continuity no longer are impossibly heavy to bear, and where I have finally found an inner sense of security which can counteract the feeling of rootlessness. (Åse, age 51)

Yet the autobiography provides us with a strength: a temporary conclusion which we can live with (Ricoeur, 1984).

> When I look back now as an adult, I see that my childhood has given me much – what I like about myself the most, would probably never have been present in my life had it not been for my fragmented life experience. (Martha, 41)

The quotes above show how participants, as they move between "idem" and "ipse", also shift between two separate concepts: one is "privilege" as ascribed by the Other, the second is subjectively perceived "privilege", in better words: *gratitude*. Gratitude binds one's past into the present and future. It is part of the autobiography as an empowered self in action.

6. 4. 5. Empathy maps: the morally engaged narrative self

The push-migration narrative of loss is a source of motivation towards the moral self. In Ricoeur's (1992) terms, this is the expression of "the promise", the moral self of past, present and future, which is a source of continuity and coherence for the narrative self. The

participants express strong moral stances – the driving force of an engaged "I can", or rather "I must". As opposed to the “breaking away” from their parents’ mobile lifestyle choices, most participants perceive their moral values as *highly influenced by their parents*. This finding supports current voices critical of postmodern theory, which show empirically how values still pass from one generation to the next (Krange & Øya, 2005). The work of a diplomat is to be “in service” of the country he or she represents, to be devoted to a greater cause. Overall, descriptions of parents show that outer symbols of representation, perceived as "privileges", are not representative of their values. Norway is a social-democratic welfare state, and the NFS is engaged in areas of peace mediation, promoting human rights, and humanitarian aid. This stands in contrast to the neoliberal ideal of a non-government regulated market economy. There is an expressed conflict between families’ political orientations on the one hand, and the material and lifestyle circumstances of the "third culture by design”.

> It is, for example, not exactly normal to have servants for everything at home: Butler, cleaner, cook, gardener, driver, and security guards. Especially not when you think of yourself as a socialist. (Mathias, 25)

However, an important distinction between parents and themselves is that the participants' views are anchored in intense encounters during their developmental age. They carry their *child perspective* with them.

> Outside of the bubble was reality. In my memory, reality has a clear face. It is a girl. She was exactly the same age as me, sold newspapers through the car windows… But when she would become an adult (read: when she got her period), she would move and live with him. It was strange the day I understood that she was gone. That is how different two lives can be. (Wenche, age 34)

The proximity (Figure 1) of a face to face encounter is a situation of "I and you", rather than "I and it" (Buber, 1937). This strain between inner value orientations and outer symbols is confirmed in reports from former British diplomat children (Hiorns, 2017) and former Norwegian missionary kids (Skjortnes, 2010). Structural inequalities and injustices became tangible to the participants as they compared their representational lifestyle overseas with their immediate surroundings, and in constant comparisons between what they experienced overseas to life in Norway.

> When you have grown up in a country where you daily see children your own age living in the streets and people without legs and arms who are begging, it is disgusting to go from that and be placed in a class where your worth is decided by how much money you use on clothes. Me and my classmates lived in two separate worlds. (Rannveig, age 31, upon arriving to Norway at age 12)

Whereas Norwegian children’s exposure to war is through a TV screen, there are participants who have had embodied experiences of such circumstances.

> People were in a panic, the sound of grenades and shots sounded like a horrible lightning storm, and I remember being frightened. My body felt the war up close then. (Tonje, age 36)

The proximity of close exposure triggers deeper levels of the emotional body, of how something is personally meaningful to the self.

> I remember the picture of people dancing in the street in their pyjamas, it filled the whole page, with big black capital letters: PEACE AT LAST. I cried over the breakfast cereal. (Lucie, age 23)

Whereas the narrative of a "privileged NFS childhood" stressed unique and exotic experiences (Article 1), the participants write about their experiences as "encounters" and "exposure", which have shaped them in ways they are grateful for. There is a gap between an adult-centric perspective (Articles 1, 2 & 3) of a “privileged” childhood, and their own child perspective. In the experienced proximity of encounters, we are called upon to take an active stance. It is as though the ethical, moral engagement *comes to you* (Løgstrup, 1956) and is not a choice that you can easily ignore.

> A moral responsibility that drives me forth, upward, beyond and out towards the world, which I cannot let go of; or rather, a world that does not let go of me. (Lucie, age 23)

Their childhood experiences are described as directly related to their views of others in adulthood. Their own experiences of being an "outsider" affect their views on immigration.

> Some say that ethnic Norwegian children will be a minority when my son starts school. This doesn’t concern me much. I have myself long experiences of being a minority and it provides useful perspectives. (Nathaniel, age 43)

This comparison of migrant experiences is also pronounced amongst Skjortnes’ (2010) participants of former Norwegian missionary kids. One childhood experience reflects another:

> When I look back at that time, everything is dark, cold and lonely. I wrote a diary at that time, and it is sad to read it now. I was not ok, and perhaps I was clinically depressed. I feel tremendous sympathy towards children who live in unstable societies. If a normal and orderly relocation is experienced so dramatically by a 9-year-old, how is it then for a refugee child who must flee her home? (Rannveig, age 31)

These expressions of values support studies which find that TCKs develop intercultural sensitivity and empathy (Straffon, 2003; Dewaele & van Oudenhoven, 2009). However, the

participants in this study are far from cultural relativists, as they have also been exposed to beliefs and practices which they clearly oppose, both in Norway and overseas.

Participants' voices strongly suggest that values of empathy continue to develop in later adulthood, as they are given new meaning throughout the life-course. Contributing to their values is how participants carry with them their childhood experiences of fluctuating class positioning between an affluent lifestyle overseas and middle-class life when in Norway. Moreover, compared to the "representational" circumstances when diplomat children live overseas, participants have undergone a comparative downward mobility in their current adult middle-class lives. This lived class dimension is part of their continuous comparisons across stark contrasts in human circumstances. As a result of these experiences and insights, many participants express a sharp awareness of structural inequalities and injustices, and on a global scale. "Empathy maps are not given to us: we develop the art of making them." (Hochschild, 2013:38). Empathy can be understood as the art of staying tuned into what the other is feeling and imagining ourselves into other people's minds. If empathy maps draw boundaries of who is inside or outside our empathy zones, operating with criteria for entrance and exclusion, then the map expressed in the autobiographies has a wide wingspan. It cuts across differences locally and across distances globally. Several describe themselves as "global citizens". This global consciousness is full of personal meaning and substance. Values have developed in tune with the narrative self and are an empowering force - the autobiography's "I can". When other social categories do not fit, such as the question: "Where are you from?", then selfhood needs the narrative alternative. Each autobiography is its own unique melody, but it is dependent on social permission to be told.

6. 5. Conclusion

In this chapter, I have presented a synthesis of this thesis's findings. The three articles are seen as representing forms of potential emotional disconnections: disconnection to emotional self (Article 1); disconnection to place, relationships and community (Article 2); and a non-involvement in other people's private spheres (illustrated in Article 3 by how assumptions about affluent, mobile children can create barriers to realising their legal rights). The life-trajectory pattern across the autobiographies of this study shows a tendency for participants to seek reconnection. These processes of disconnection and reconnection are the manifestations of tensions and resolutions participants engage in as adults, with their common set of

references into a global and mobile childhood. I have illustrated tensions as an "expectation gap" within a context of expatriate mobility and neoliberal ideals, and proceeded to show how participants engage in resolutions to close this "expectation gap". I have discussed how their self-reflexive processes can be understood as "oscillation" between pull- and push-migration narratives; between their child and adult perspectives; and between ascribed "privileged" status and self-perceived gratitude. Within participants' mastery of changing circumstances, including mobility and multicultural environments, gratitude plays a major part. Compared to the results presented by Hiorns (2017) of former British diplomat children's experiences, I find a far more balanced collective voice from this study's participants. However, this difference in findings can be largely due to the fact that all but three of her 27 participants had been sent to boarding school from an early age. In this study, challenging childhood experiences have for many become cultural resources, manifested in underlying values which are a source to motivation, self-continuity and coherence.

Chapter 7. Conclusion

All actual life is encounter.

Martin Buber
I and Though, 1937.

As I started to present this study to students and at conferences, I found myself using two cartoons that effectively demonstrated my empirical findings: “The Jetsons” from the 1960s, and “Inside Out” from 2015. The Jetsons (A) are a family of the future who live in Orbit City, an undefined place in the sky. The nuclear family swooshes around together in a bubble airplane, all smiles. Futuristic technology allows them to go anywhere in just a few seconds – anything is possible! “Inside Out” (B) is the story of Riley, an 11-year-old girl from Minnesota, who is happy outdoors playing ice-hockey with her friends in a tight-knit community. The viewers see inside her mind, where each emotion is a character. Suddenly, she is in a fully loaded car, moving to San Francisco due to her father’s work. She is upset, but her father is stressed, and her mother says the two of them can help him by being their usual happy selves. With this message from her mother, Joy becomes determined for Riley to be happy at all cost, despite how everything is crumbling for Riley: old friendships go digital and do not last, she makes a fool of herself in her new class, she cannot concentrate at ice-hockey. Riley becomes emotionally numb, runs away, determined to go back “home”. In the end, Sadness saves the day. Riley goes back to her parents, and they start a shared grieving process. Both of these two cartoons represent global migration narratives today. There is the pull-migration narrative (Story A), full of optimism for all future opportunities, global in its dimensions and neoliberal in its ideals. It is the story of the global “Anywheres”. The push-migration narrative (Story B), on the other hand, emphasises sadness, anger and anxiety over loss of connections to place, relationships, and shared community. It represents the feelings of the locally anchored “Somewheres”.

Which of these two global narratives is “correct”? My empirical findings indicate that participants engage in a self-reflexive and emotionally-laden movement between stories (A) and (B). They have grown up in particular circumstances, which later become a unique set of references. Yet, the participants are an early barometer of what we can expect as migration grows into new forms and rising numbers. Society and research often label these children "privileged" migrants. Therefore, their stories also function as a mirror into current

stereotypes. Participants' autobiographies provide a bottom-up story of globalisation that questions several assumptions. This final chapter summarises main empirical, theoretical and methodological contributions. It then suggests possible implications of these findings, reminds the reader of the thesis's limitations, and suggests future research paths.

7. 1. Main contributions

7. 1. 1. Empirical contributions

Through Articles 1-3 and in Chapters 5 and 6, this thesis presents empirical findings of what it means to have grown up as children of diplomats in order to contract the void of knowledge on this particular group. Moreover, a review of the literature found specific research gaps in the knowledge-base of "Third Culture Kids", which are also addressed.

Firstly, Article 1 found a relationship between a cultural narrative of ascribed "privilege" surrounding the diplomat child, which included material wealth; maximum opportunities; exotic experiences; and the freedom to always return "home". Faced with this narrative of "privilege", individual children created feeling rules about what was expected and "correct" for them to feel. These rules led them to try to change and self-censor their emotions, and created an emotional estrangement towards the self and their parents. This presented challenges for parents to support emotion-regulation development. Children’s experiences which did not match the narrative of "privilege" led them to adopt a negative self-image. In contrast to the highly individual-centred psychological research on TCKs, Article 1 links the psychological with the values and ideological beliefs of the cultural narratives in which children grow up.

Secondly, a review of the literature found a lack of knowledge over how TCKs might experience agency in questions over relocation. Previous research takes for granted that TCKs cannot take part in negotiations over place. However, some autobiographies in this study showed how parents included children and adolescents in decision-making over "home". These participants describe a sense of control and predictability, and mobility became a meaningful complementarity between "journeying and home". However, a majority of participants experienced relocations as displacement, with an absence of choice. This took various forms, depending on dominant family narratives. Some described the family as the only form of "home", and relocations as a family's collective fate. This creates a hyper-

attachment towards the nuclear family. The family becomes the only "local" constant and consequently becomes a pressure-cooker for solving all family members' needs. Other family narratives seemingly presented children with several options of exciting locations. Yet the option to stay in one place was not on the list of choices, therefore putting children in a double bind. Behind the list lies "the contract". In order for children to have possibilities of agency in questions of relocation, this assumes that workers' contracts be sufficiently flexible. At least formally, diplomats within the NFS have such flexibility, yet such work conditions cannot be assumed for future mobile professionals.

How legal rights across national borders can protect TCKs in questions of Child Welfare revealed a further gap in research. Article 3 sheds light on how TCKs become both "invisible" and "unreachable" for Child Welfare Services. The article addresses the lack of research on the complex questions regarding a diplomat child's legal status. The legal loophole of diplomatic immunity is a concern from a Child Welfare perspective. Diplomatic immunity effectively implies that children are "untouchable" cases to local authorities and family courts. It will therefore be up to the government of the diplomat to weigh international relations against the interest of the child. With an analysis of two internationally known cases, and with reference to an ongoing case, we find that the concerns over international relations weigh higher than a diplomat child's rights. Results also suggest that common assumptions about children's situation within affluent mobile families foster non-involvement towards these families' private sphere, a form of disconnection towards children.

Overall, the cultural narrative of ascribed “privilege” of children who grew up in the NFS is a variant of a pull-migration narrative. In their *encounter* with this narrative, the socially acceptable emotional range is narrowed. The narrative is ideologically anchored in both institutionalised ways of organising expatriate life, and in neoliberal ideals. Its influence represents a risk of three types of emotional disconnection: towards the emotional self and parents; towards place, friendships and community; and others' non-involvement of the private sphere. These results make a contribution to knowledge and function as an early warning sign in the context of rising numbers of adult "Anywheres" – today's new mobile professionals. At present, these new "Anywheres" have generally had a place-bound childhood. They come from somewhere, which acts as their original point of reference. However, in the context of rising global mobility and accelerated change, their children may

not. Most participants in this study express that their relocations have cost them emotional and existential losses and strain.

The pattern across autobiographies show how participants seek to resolve tensions of disconnection in various forms of emotionally reconnecting to places, relationships and communities. Close and long-lasting friendships are a particular concern to them, which stands in contrast to the "loose networks" of the new "Anywheres". However, participants express gratitude towards how their childhood has strengthened their self-confidence to face change. Moreover, they describe how a plurality of references has enabled them to shift between several mental perceptions, and with age, between emotional horizons. Most of all, their gratitude is deeply rooted in their moral views and accumulated values. Especially salient is their expressed empathy towards other migrants and tolerance towards people of different cultural backgrounds. These underlying values of empathy are influenced by their parents' value-orientations and anchored in their own childhood encounters. They are stretched out across continents – a global empathy map and a form of global consciousness.

The thesis makes a contribution to knowledge of the TCK experience by demonstrating empirically how participants find coherence and continuity while anchored in these tensions and resolutions. Results suggest that narrating the self will be an important way for individuals to communicate their identities and experience healthy coherence in future. Therefore, participants' reflections are testimony of the significance of giving individuals social opportunities to tell their life stories.

7. 1. 2. Theoretical contributions

This thesis makes a theoretical contribution in its innovative way of linking Arlie Hochschild's (1983) concepts of cultural "feeling rules" and "deep acting" to a narrative framework as a perspective through which to understand childhood migration. Cultural narratives are understood as carriers of feeling rules, which formulate emotional expectations and assumptions upon the individual, including children. They begin in childhood through the emotion-regulation and meaning-making support children receive from caregivers.

I place this perspective on emotions into the context of two metanarratives of migration. One is the pull-migration narrative which sees migration as "privileged" choice. The second is the push-migration narrative, which sees relocation as forced and emphasises loss. Both these

narratives formulate feeling rules and expectations on emotions. Therefore, they are relevant both when studying childhood mobility and how migrant children later perceive their adult self. Finally, I make a connection between feeling rules and social pathologies on the macro-level of society: illness caused by avoidable strains in society. It should be a task for researchers to identify cultural resources in the population that can mitigate the risk of social pathologies. This study is a source to such cultural resources that will have relevance for a growing population.

7. 1. 3. Methodological contributions

Research on TCKs began in the 1960s with ethnographic fieldwork of Americans overseas and the “national” counterparts. After this, the field has been mainly interested in individual psychological development, due to its specific audience within education and psychological counselling. Methodologically, studies have mainly consisted of interviews and surveys. However, since 2010, social anthropology has reintroduced ethnography as method. It has reconceptualised the TCK as contextually situated, allowing for cultural critique.

I have applied an alternative methodological approach. Following Hochschild, I have observed how feeling rules come to light, especially where there is a mismatch between experienced emotions and expected emotions. My method takes such mismatch as the point where autobiography meets emotional imperatives within cultural contexts. Narratives of self at the micro-level are relational and can therefore be analysed as embedded and embodied in narratives at the meso- and macro-levels of society. Moreover, I have attempted to avoid the potential analytical bias where some autobiographical voices weigh more than others. As the TCK field has been criticised empirically for giving a too negative impression of the experience, it has been essential to have analytical tools which accord equal validity to variations of experiences.

The thesis also contributes to the discussion over whether "TCK" is a fruitful analytical term. I identified several specific institutional characteristics on how the "third culture" unfolded as a design that largely remains the same today. This historical yet present context is far too often neglected in studies of TCKs. Whether or not researchers apply the term “TCK”, studies on this population should take into account these particular sociohistorical contexts.

7. 2. Possible implications

The goal of this thesis has not been to provide a guide to best-practice and "successful adjustment" of TCKs. Rather, it has aimed to pose explorative questions to a group growing up in unique circumstances. They represent a broad knowledge base that ought to be actively consulted, as their value orientations are a useful cultural resource. The following are suggestions to ways their insight can be practical assets.

7. 2. 1. Implications for childhood: parents, schools, employers, policymakers

The results of this inquiry do not point to mobility being necessarily problematic in itself. Participants' experiences are varied. The autobiographies in this study tell stories of happy periods overseas, and participants feel grateful for several aspects of their childhood. What became challenges for some are a result of several contextual relationships. The results of Article 1 suggest that when a family narrative becomes an echo chamber of "privileged" ideals, it narrows the range of acceptable emotional reactions. Furthermore, as "privilege" is often associated with visible, outer symbols of wealth, status, and lifestyle, children can themselves easily interpret their situation as meaning they have no valid reasons to "complain". Also, many participants in the study describe relocations as a loss of meaning. Overall, results suggest that it is helpful for parents to build a family narrative that allows children to understand the difference between visible (material) and invisible (existential) needs. The family narrative is a source of meaning-making and can recognise that losses related to relocations are valid and need emotional expression.

Moreover, as Article 2 suggests, if parents acknowledge that relocations overseas imply both losses and positive experiences, this can be a fruitful starting point for family members' negotiations. The participants who negotiated "My place" with parents also experienced coherence and easier repatriation if friends from home could visit them overseas and witness their life there. Several young adult participants stressed the importance of being in Norway during high school to have a friendship base. Having an extracurricular activity across relocations, such as a sport or connection with animals, is perceived as an antidote to bullying when arriving in a new place and generally strengthens emotional well-being.

Sponsor organisations and companies have institutional narratives which influence how employees perceive family relocation. Instead of an exclusive focus on "successful adjustment", employers can nuance the "privileged" narrative by providing balanced information. Employer institutions, as well as school and family counsellors, can facilitate family negotiations over "home" and "journey". Institutions and companies that send employees overseas have added responsibility for the well-being of employees and their families. This implies a more involved and active role in employees' personal lives than is usually the case. Several participants in this study stressed the importance of evaluating a family's situation and teaching parents psychology relevant to the TCK experience. It is suggested that a counsellor meets with parents and children directly, both before and during posting, as well as upon repatriation. Furthermore, there is a need for increased awareness of how children are not protected by their national Children's Acts and Child Welfare Acts when overseas. When parents have diplomatic immunity, children are not legally protected in concerns of Child Welfare within the family when overseas. Article 3 suggests several substantial preventive measures to protect the TCK and the diplomat child.

7. 2. 2. Implications for adulthood: “privilege” as a fashionable form of censorship

The last five to ten years have witnessed a rising use of the term “privileged” in political and social debate.[24] It is currently in hyper-use and serves as a broad categorisation of the Other. One is placed into categories of "privilege", primarily based on visible markers such as "white privilege", "socioeconomic privilege", and so forth. Following this logic, a young, slim, middle-class white man is "privileged" in all ways that matter. Opioids may have eroded his friends and ravaged his community, he may be anorexic and living in internal hell, but his "privileges" will be the lens through which his life is evaluated. This thesis has transfer value as a contribution on the micro-level of subjective experience to this broader rhetorical trend. Participants have experienced being categorised as "privileged", regardless of what childhood experiences they actually had, or which adult lives they lead. Some were emotionally neglected children, others have lived with psychological illness for decades in adult life. Some have survived as a single parent on social benefits; others report they have never really known what it is to have a friend.

[24] https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2020/jun/14/white-privilege-is-a-lazy-distraction-leaving-racism-and-power-untouched

The need to place others in a "privileged" category distorts the image of the Other as a complex individual. It is also an attack on this individual for inequalities and injustices on a macro-level of society. This study shows how feeling rules for the "privileged" is a narrow repertoire of what is correct to feel. It is not enough to fight against inequalities and injustices. At the point of encounters with the Other, there is the requirement to point the finger at oneself, to feel shame and practice self-blame. In a debate, you are to "check your privilege", but only if you disagree, a rhetorical method to delegitimise. Our young white male is disqualified, though his insights can be valuable. We become divided into ever-smaller identity-niches of who has the right to enter a discussion.

Similarly, labelling the participants in this study "underprivileged" is also misleading. This thesis has shown how participants' losses have also been sources of future motivation. Labelling the Other "underprivileged" obscures the valuable yet invisible riches that this individual owns and can contribute to society. Abilities and alternative stories are devalued, a challenge Norwegian missionary kids experienced after the public debate in the 1980s. Moreover, to be labelled "underprivileged" can be experienced as though one is personally a societal problem. Testimonies from a recent Norwegian contribution titled “Third Culture Kids” (of a group with a different migratory history) argue how they are tired of being seen as “a problem to be solved" (Naqvi, 2019).

7. 2. 3. Implications for research: “privileged” and “underprivileged” as obscuring categories

The term “privilege” is now applied in academia as frequently as in popular discourse. Through Articles 1-3, I raise the problematic issue of labelling children “privileged”. This challenge has entered TCK research, as authors label them "privileged" to distinguish TCKs from other groups of migrants (Fechter & Korpela, 2016; Dervin & Benjamin, 2015). However, what "privilege" or "underprivilege" is for a child is a question that research should explore empirically from a child perspective. Ethically, our terminology affects popular discourse and the groups we study, including children. In these current academic trends, what exactly is meant by "privileged children" is rarely made explicit. The articles find that this can obscure key power relations in questions of agency, including legal barriers.

7. 3. Limitations and future directions

The scope of this study necessarily set both methodological and theoretical limitations. A future study could explore similar themes with a research design capturing a smaller number of families and receive each family member's perspective. An important avenue to pursue would be to collect oral or written accounts of siblings, as this would provide nuances and additional knowledge of family narratives. Moreover, there is a need to capture stories of the mothers who were frequently mentioned in the autobiographies. The mothers were often juggling the impossible situation of being a diplomat's spouse, parent, and daughter of elderly parents in Norway. These are stories of parenting some decades ago and can be explored comparatively against current spouses, of which a growing number are men. The retrospective autobiographies of adults provide a certain lens into the diplomat childhood experience. A study with children and youth would be an important complementary study. Also, research on NFS's history by reviewing institutional documents would provide additional knowledge that regretfully was not possible to pursue here.

The results of this thesis should be regarded as possibilities for analytical generalisations. Forty-three life stories is a substantial number. Overall, this in-depth qualitative study can serve as a foundation for future surveys, as it points to what themes are relevant to pursue statistically. The findings can have transfer validity to similar cases, with possibilities for comparison. As I have only found one study of former (and none of current) diplomat children which explicitly explores this distinct group (Hiorns, 2017), further empirical contributions would be welcomed. Another possible avenue is a study of former Norwegian military children, of which there are none. This would allow for comparison to both existing research on former Norwegian missionary kids and the results of this thesis. Moreover, a dive into the literature on children of affluent families in Article 3 revealed that research into this topic is scarce. Comparing findings in this thesis with future studies of non-mobile groups of children and adults labelled "privileged" would likely bring interesting results.

Theoretically, a childhood within the NFS can be studied from a wide variety of lenses that were not taken here. Whereas this thesis took a cultural approach to analysing the autobiographies, psychologists would find sources to information on more individual-focused variations, such as resilience theory. It is recommended for linguists to investigate how these patterns of high mobility affect complex relationships to a mother tongue. Finally, participants

across generations reported a high motivation to learn and experienced social inclusiveness in the "international" schools. In contrast, they had the opposite experience in Norwegian schools. Investigating why this may be could give important insights in the field of education.

As the global and mobile dimensions of a diplomat childhood will likely be shared with a rising number of children and adults in the future, studying this group provides valuable knowledge I hope others will continue to explore. As they represent an under-researched group, the possibilities to complement this thesis with other perspectives and methodologies are there for the taking.

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Appendix 1

NSD NORSK SENTER FOR FORSKNINGSDATA

NSD sin vurdering

Prosjekttittel
Experiences of growing up in the Norwegian Foreign Service: an emotion-culture approach Referansenummer
147381
Registrert
06.01.2020 av Ragnhild Holmen Bjørnsen - ragnhild.bjornsen@inn.no
Behandlingsansvarlig institusjon
Høgskolen i Innlandet / Fakultet for helse- og sosialvitenskap / Institutt for sosialfag og veiledning Prosjektansvarlig (vitenskapelig ansatt/veileder eller stipendiat)
Ragnhild Bjørnsen, ragnhild.bjornsen@inn.no, tlf: 93612009
Type prosjekt
Forskerprosjekt
Prosjektperiode
28.08.2012 - 01.03.2021
Status
08.01.2021 - Avsluttet

Vurdering (2)

28.09.2020 - Vurdert

NSD har vurdert endringen registrert 20.09.2020.

Vi har nå registrert 31.12.2020 som ny sluttdato for behandling av personopplysninger.

NSD vil følge opp ved ny planlagt avslutning for å avklare om behandlingen av personopplysningene er avsluttet.

Lykke til videre med prosjektet!

Kontaktperson hos NSD: Kajsa Amundsen Tlf. Personverntjenester: 55 58 21 17 (tast 1)

30.01.2020 - Vurdert

BAKGRUNN
Behandlingen av personopplysninger ble opprinnelig meldt inn til NSD 22.09.2014 (NSD sin ref: 39923) og vurdert under personopplysningsloven som var gjeldende på det tidspunktet.
06.01.2020 meldte prosjektleder inn en endring av prosjektet. Prosjektperioden vil utsettes til 29.08.2020. De registrerte er informert om forlengelsen.

Det er vår vurdering at behandlingen/hele prosjektet vil være i samsvar med den gjeldende personvernlovgivningen, så fremt den gjennomføres i tråd med det som er dokumentert i meldeskjemaet 30.01.2020 med vedlegg, samt i meldingsdialogen mellom innmelder og NSD. Behandlingen kan fortsette.

MELD VESENTLIGE ENDRINGER
Dersom det skjer vesentlige endringer i behandlingen av personopplysninger, kan det være nødvendig å melde dette til NSD ved å oppdatere meldeskjemaet. Før du melder inn en endring, oppfordrer vi deg til å lese om hvilke type endringer det er nødvendig å melde: https://nsd.no/personvernombud/meld_prosjekt/meld_endringer.html

Du må vente på svar fra NSD før endringen gjennomføres.

LOVLIG GRUNNLAG
Prosjektet vil innhente samtykke fra de registrerte til behandlingen av personopplysninger. Vår vurdering er at prosjektet legger opp til et samtykke i samsvar med kravene i art. 4 og 7, ved at det er en frivillig, spesifikk, informert og utvetydig bekreftelse som kan dokumenteres, og som den registrerte kan trekke tilbake. Lovlig grunnlag for behandlingen vil dermed være den registrertes samtykke, jf. personvernforordningen art. 6 nr. 1 bokstav a.

PERSONVERNPRINSIPPER
NSD vurderer at den planlagte behandlingen av personopplysninger vil følge prinsippene i personvernforordningen om:

- lovlighet, rettferdighet og åpenhet (art. 5.1 a), ved at de registrerte får tilfredsstillende informasjon om og samtykker til behandlingen
- formålsbegrensning (art. 5.1 b), ved at personopplysninger samles inn for spesifikke, uttrykkelig angitte og berettigede formål, og ikke viderebehandles til nye uforenlige formål
- dataminimering (art. 5.1 c), ved at det kun behandles opplysninger som er adekvate, relevante og nødvendige for formålet med prosjektet
- lagringsbegrensning (art. 5.1 e), ved at personopplysningene ikke lagres lengre enn nødvendig for å oppfylle formålet

DE REGISTRERTES RETTIGHETER
Så lenge de registrerte kan identifiseres i datamaterialet vil de ha følgende rettigheter: åpenhet (art. 12), informasjon (art. 13), innsyn (art. 15), retting (art. 16), sletting (art. 17), begrensning (art. 18), underretning (art. 19), dataportabilitet (art. 20).

NSD vurderer at informasjonen som de registrerte vil motta oppfyller lovens krav til form og innhold, jf. art. 12.1 og art. 13.

Vi minner om at hvis en registrert tar kontakt om sine rettigheter, har behandlingsansvarlig institusjon plikt til å svare innen en måned.

FØLG DIN INSTITUSJONS RETNINGSLINJER
NSD legger til grunn at behandlingen oppfyller kravene i personvernforordningen om riktighet (art. 5.1 d), integritet og konfidensialitet (art. 5.1. f) og sikkerhet (art. 32).

For å forsikre dere om at kravene oppfylles, må dere følge interne retningslinjer og eventuelt rådføre dere med behandlingsansvarlig institusjon.

OPPFØLGING AV PROSJEKTET
NSD vil følge opp ved planlagt avslutning for å avklare om behandlingen av personopplysningene er avsluttet.

Lykke til med prosjektet!

Kontaktperson hos NSD: Kajsa Amundsen Tlf. Personverntjenester: 55 58 21 17 (tast 1)

Appendix 2 (website)

Appendix 2

Høgskolen i Lillehammer
Lillehammer University College

Home | Prizes | Deadline | Practical | Anonymity | Contact

RESEARCH PROJECT ABOUT GROWING UP

IN THE NORWEGIAN FOREIGN SERVICE

WRITE ABOUT YOUR CHILDHOOD!

- STORIES FROM A CHILDHOOD IN THE NORWEGIAN FOREIGN SERVICE -

INVITATION TO WRITE

*

This is an invitation to participate in the research project "Global Childhood". Your story could give important knowledge for future children who will have a similar childhood, and their numbers are increasing fast.

To write one's own story can be an opportunity to reflect and see how different parts of one's life are interconnected. Your reflections will give important insight into this type of childhood, insight we cannot access if those who have actually experienced it do not tell their stories. We therefore encourage you to write your autobiography, with your own words.

All adults aged 18 and up who have a parent who worked or is working in The Norwegian Foreign Service can participate. You do this by writing your story about how you experienced your own childhood, and what thoughts you have about it now.

This is a PhD research project that is independent of The Norwegian Foreign Service, but they have assisted by sending this request to their employees. This is a project that will be completed at the "Centre for child and youth participation and competence development" at the Inland Norway University of Applied Sciences.

WHAT CAN YOU WRITE ABOUT?

*

The text can for example contain descriptions of what happened in your childhood, how you experienced it, and your reflections about this now. The length of what you write is up to you.

You are basically free to write what you wish, but the text should touch upon the following topics:

Identity
Social relationships
Belonging

Here are some suggestions of what to write about:

Foto: Frederic de Villamil Flickr
Family/home

Foto: Aimee Custis Flickr
Friends, girl/boyfriends, others who were important to you

Foto: Emilien Etienne Flickr
School and free time

Foto: The Muuj Flickr
Moving and resettling

Foto: Serie+Serie Flickr
Culture, language, adaptation

Foto: Flickr
Temporariness and continuity

Contact with others with similar backgrounds, and local population

We encourage you to reflect on how your life has been influenced by the childhood you have had.

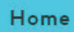
- How has your life become different from those who grew up in the same place in Norway?
- What are the differences between the story you would have told about your childhood as a child or adolescent, as opposed to the one you're writing here, as an adult?

USE OF THE CONTRIBUTIONS

*

The results of the project will be published in the form of scientific articles. A book using extracts from the autobiographies is planned to be published after the PhD, with consent from those who have written the stories. Extracts from the autobiographies will be published in such a way that it will be impossible to recognise the persons behind the life histories.

With new knowledge in this field, authorities, employer institutions and parents can better assess under which circumstances children and adolescents can move abroad with their parents, and facilitate accordingly.



Prizes | Deadline | Practical | Anonymity | Contact

RESEARCH PROJECT

About growing up in The Norwegian Foreign Service

PRIZES

*

This is not a competition, but everyone who sends in his/her story will participate in a lottery for the following prizes:

1st prize: 10.000,- 2.prize: 6.000,- 3rd prize: 4.000,-

We cannot say what your chances are of winning because we cannot at this moment predict how many contributions will be sent in.

Home | Prizes | Deadline | Practical | Anonymity | Contact

RESEARCH PROJECT

About growing up in The Norwegian Foreign Service

DEADLINE

*

You can send in your story until the 1st of April 2019.

Send by e-mail to Ragnhild.bjornsen@inn.no
Or by mail (see contact info below)

RESEARCH PROJECT

About growing up in The Norwegian Foreign Service

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

*

If you do not wish to write, you can send in an audio file, or contact PhD research fellow Ragnhild Bjørnsen for an interview. If you find it hard to get started, or have questions as you go along, get in touch!
(see contact information below)

You can, if you wish, use pseudonyms and change names of the places where you've lived, but your experiences must be real. We would also be very happy to receive poems.

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RESEARCH PROJECT

About growing up in The Norwegian Foreign Service

DECLARATION OF CONSENT

ANONYMITY

*

The project is approved by The Norwegian centre for research data (NSD, case reference: 39923/3/LB)

If you wish to participate in the survey, we kindly ask you to fill in the electronic declaration of consent (see the link below). This will automatically be sent back to the researcher. You must attach your name when you send in your story. This is in order for the researcher to make sure that the one who has written also has signed the declaration of consent. There is only one person, who with confidentiality has access to the list with personal information, and who knows who has written what.

The data will be treated with strict confidentiality and is kept unidentified. All the informants will be anonymous. Names of persons and places will be changed when the research is published. We wish to initially collect written stories. We would also like to have the possibility to interview some of the informants at a later stage. In the declaration of consent, you can specify whether parts of your autobiography can be published, and whether you agree to be contacted for a later interview.

It is completely voluntary to participate in the project, and you can at any time pull out and demand your personal information back, without providing an explanation.

RESEARCH PROJECT

About growing up in The Norwegian Foreign Service

Research centre for child and youth participation and competence development. Inland Norway University of Applied Sciences.
PB 400
2418 Elverum, Norway

PhD research fellow
Ragnhild Holmen Bjørnsen
Mobile: 93612009
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Ragnhild Holmen Bjørnsen
Mobile: 93612009
E-mail: Ragnhild.bjornsen@inn.no

Appendix 3

DECLARATION OF CONSENT (online via Questback)

Name:
Age:

I hereby allow my autobiography to be used as underlying data for research.

Tick the appropriate box:
- I allow my autobiography to be published in its entirety.
- I allow excerpts from my autobiography to be published.
- I do not allow my autobiography to be published in its entirety.
- I do not allow excerpts from my autobiography to be published.

If the autobiography / parts of it are allowed to be published, this can be done by changing the names and places, and with the following restrictions:

………………………………………………………………………………
………………………………………………………………………………
………………………………………………………………………………

Tick the appropriate box:
- I can be contacted afterwards for a possible interview / follow-up question.
- I can be contacted afterwards for a possible book publication where my autobiography / parts of my autobiography are included in the text.
- I do not wish to be contacted after submitting an autobiography.

If you can be contacted, please provide your email address, if possible also your telephone number:

Tick the appropriate box:
- I wish to be sent what is published based on this research project.
- I do not wish to be sent what is published based on this research project.

………………………………..…………………………
(place, date)

Signature: ____________

Appendix 4.

Demographics

Female	Male	Age 19-29	Age 30-49	Age 50+	Relocations* 2-3	Relocations 4-6	Relocations 6+	Boarding School	Childhood in 1 Continent	Childhood in 2 Continents
31	12	18	13	12	4	22	17	6	4	20
Childhood in 3+ Continents	Lives in Norway	Lives 1 place overseas	Is serial migrant as adult	Is serial migrant + children	Born overseas	1 parent was non-Norwegian	Father was diplomat	Mother was diplomat	Mother was single parent	Father was single parent
19	32	5	6	2	17	12	33	10	2	0

*(Re)entry to Norway is considered a relocation.

Article 1

Ragnhild Bjørnsen (2020): The assumption of privilege? Expectations on emotions when growing up in the Norwegian Foreign Service. *Childhood (27)*1: 120-133.
https://doi.org/10.1177/0907568219885377

Check for updates

Article

The assumption of privilege? Expectations on emotions when growing up in the Norwegian Foreign Service

Childhood
1–14
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Abstract

Based on 42 autobiographies of former Norwegian Foreign Service children, this article aims to highlight how cultural narratives of global elite migration can intersect with local family emotion-regulation practices and enter into the body of a Third Culture Kid's experience. It asks how a mismatch between emotions as culturally expected and emotions as experienced affected them. Narrative analysis showed how the children interpreted cultural symbols into feeling-rules that created an emotional estrangement towards their caregivers as well as within themselves.

Keywords

Autobiographical memory, emotion regulation, globalisation, narrative, Third Culture Kid

Introduction

> I noticed how people treated me differently when they heard that my father was an ambassador. I noticed early on that it was something special, and that my parents were something special, and that I was 'lucky'. I wasn't happy, but how could I have any reason not to be?
>
> Kristin (aged 51)

This vignette is taken from one of 42 autobiographical texts and interviews of former Norwegian Foreign Service (NFS) children. It serves as a starting point for this article that aims to provide a bottom-up story of this particular type of childhood and to discuss

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more general existential questions of what it means to grow up within a high-mobility, global context. It does so through an explorative, grounded theory approach. Today, all children's lives are touched by the many aspects of modern globalisation and the various ways in which they interact in children's local lives. Globalisation comes with its ideological myths, and from these, cultural narratives of the 'global other' are derived. This is also true for children. New cultural stories of childhoods as imagined are at odds with childhoods as experienced. Such narratives bring cultural expectations of how children are supposed to feel about their own life, a point where emotional tensions and interpretations of feelings enter into the body and sense of self. As the diversity of new lifestyles increases, this intersection between new cultural narratives and the emotional lives of children merits further attention in childhood studies.

In research, as in general discourse, increased attention is given to the new 'global elite' – expatriates who have the means and choose to work and live around the world. Such terms evoke associations to ideals, assumptions and expectations that create stories of the 'privileged others'. In this study, the family lifestyle involves the children moving several times across countries and cultures during their developmental years. For them, the 'global' is the spinning wheel, institutionalised by their parents' employment, that sets structural premises for their mobile lives. The 'local', however, is condensed down to the one place where continuous practice can take place, within the family that is on-the-move. This article concerns the challenges reflected upon in the data from former NFS children. As they describe a mismatch between expectations on emotions and the emotional states they experienced, the article explores how this affected them, both as children and in their adult lives. Narrative analysis showed how this emotional disaccord caused the children as active agents to interpret the cultural narrative of a 'privileged NFS childhood' into feeling-rules that created an emotional estrangement towards their caregivers as well as within themselves.

Theoretical approach: A psycho-anthropological model of the Third Culture Kid's experience

Many aspects of migration in the context of modern globalisation have undergone extensive and interdisciplinary research, and yet,

> Little is known about children's particular understanding of migrant life [. . .] despite the fact that children make up a large proportion of migrants. (Knörr, 2005a: 14)

Children must be studied within the historical, social and cultural contexts that place them in distinctive situations of both agency and vulnerability (Corsaro, 2018). NFS children can be studied within a broader category of 'Third Culture Kids' (hereafter TCKs), first coined by sociologist Ruth Hill Useem (1976). TCKs, also referred to as children of 'global nomads', expatriates or internationally mobile families, often experience childhood in a specific kind of temporariness. They move every few years across countries and cultures during their developmental years. These families typically enjoy a middle or high socio-economic status as their employers assist them with material and visa requirements. It has been rightly pointed out that the term TCK has become diluted, assuming common traits

among a highly varied group of children (Hatfield, 2010), while at the same time obscuring cultural hierachies that play out among children of different class and ethnicity within international schools (Tanu, 2017). However, the term will be applied here because the informants belong to the type of childhood that 'TCK' was initially meant to describe: children of diplomats, missionaries, military personnel and international companies (Pollock and Van Reken, 2009). Especially the younger informants in this study use the term actively to name their identity and discuss being part of a worldwide TCK community.

A number of studies confirm how TCKs' strengths lie in possessing a global and multicultural perspective, as well as having an intellectual flexibility when adapting their frame of reference to new environments (Pollock and Van Reken, 2009). However, 'TCKs often go through intense emotional experiences, engendered by frequent, often abrupt, relationship transitions; safety and security issues in their environments; and the task of developing an integrated and coherent sense of personal identity amidst so much transition' (Davis et al., 2015: 170). To understand the challenges reflected upon in this study, a cross-disciplinary approach was chosen to bring the concept of a child's *emotion-regulation development* (Siegel, 2012) together with the anthropological understanding of emotions as embedded in different *emotion-cultures* (Hochschild, 1983).

Several conditions have been found essential in order for a child to feel existentially secure. Life and its surroundings need to be perceived as predictable, where children feel some degree of control. For there to be meaning and purpose, there must be a continuity that confirms what is real and not real, including the child's concept of self. Together these premises provide a sense of coherence key to survival (Antonovsky, 1979). However, they cannot develop outside of relationships. Children's identity formation and positive relation to self comes from the recognition of others, to which they form a sense of belonging (Erikson, 1963). All these conditions can potentially be disrupted by migration. Yet, studies on attachment have established that the development of a sense of existential security may be obtained if a child has a caregiver able to provide emotion-regulation support (Siegel, 2012). This would be the case despite situations of overwhelming stress (Siegel, 2012). This echoes the research on TCKs which suggests that the most crucial factor determining how TCKs ultimately fare is the parent–child relationship (Ali, 2003; Van der Zee et al., 2007), or what Warinowski (2011) refers to as emotional bonding within the expatriate 'family bubble'. Thus, the environment *outside* the family changes, but emotion-regulation support within the family creates a state of existential security *inside* the child. This is a state where children are within their 'window of tolerance', where body, emotions and mind can be focused, relaxed, handle challenges and learn (Ogden et al., 2006). However, in situations where children are overwhelmed, they are pushed out of their window of tolerance, by becoming either hyper-aroused (mobilisation: fight, flight, freeze) or hypo-aroused (immobilisation: shutdown, numbness, emptiness, dissociation). In both cases, they are dependent on caregivers for emotion-regulation support to bring them back into their window of tolerance. Recent studies show how this support is crucial not only to infants and young children but also in the age of 9 to 14 years, an age where children and youth are vulnerable to developing either healthy or unhealthy emotion-regulation survival strategies (Dahl and Suleiman, 2017). The emotional plasticity of this age group is highly relevant, as TCKs often experience moving up to several times at this age.

This basic understanding of emotion regulation is seen as universal. Yet, the ways emotional arousal is recognised, validated, named into feelings and interpreted into existential meanings vary within shifting cultural contexts, an aspect of social life Hochschild (1983) named 'emotion-culture'. 'Feeling-rules', as well as appropriate forms of expression of feeling, 'display rules' (Hochschild, 1983), decide when and how 'emotions are to be shown, emphasized, or subdued, and in which contexts which emotions should be felt by whom' (Röttger-Rössler, 2009: 165). Unresolved and disenfrachised grief has been well documented among TCKs (Schaetti, 2002), the result of what Gilbert (2008) refers to as 'grieving rules'. Retrospective studies have shown that it is common for TCKs to experience a lack of permission and time to emotionally react to the many transitions. There was stigma and shame in displaying negative emotions, as this felt like directly going against the ideology, faith or lifestyle choices of their parents. Yet, these emotional reactions often arise after they move away from their families to study. As they start to question their world, it is known that TCKs may experience an existential crisis in early adulthood (Fail et al., 2004).

This article identifies feeling-rules and explores how the informants are embedded and embodied in a cultural narrative. Cultural narratives are stories that set preconditions for and expectations on social practices (Neumann, 2012). They also act as frameworks from which people construct their own personal stories, and how we imagine the lives of others. Such frameworks are moral and evaluative (Fivush, 2010). When people's emotional *experiences* clash with the *expectations* within a dominant narrative, adapting to expected feeling-rules demands 'emotion-work', either in 'surface acting' or in 'deep acting' (Hochschild, 1983). When we perform surface acting, we deceive others while knowing how we really feel. In deep acting, however, we try to change or distance ourselves to our initial feelings in order to fit social contexts. The cost of this social offering, especially if given repeatedly over time, is that lines between surface acting, deep acting and the state of the self become blurred. This is especially true for children and youth, who do not easily distinguish one from the other. Accordingly, it affects the degree to which they listen to their own emotions, of how a given situation is relevant to the self, and whether or not they feel at home in their own bodies.

Based on the data of this study, a cultural narrative emerged that regards growing up within the NFS as 'privileged'. It is argued that this narrative is an adult-centric perspective that expects the children and adolescents to feel happy and grateful. For those informants whose experiences did not match these expectations, the consequence of this cultural narrative was a distancing towards caregivers that inhibited emotion-regulation practices, as well as a distancing towards the emotional self.

Methodology

Data collection and informant participation

This study applies a phenomenological and grounded theory approach in order to explore the subjectivities of the former NFS children's lived lives. The goal is to provide an in-depth description of how such a childhood may be experienced, from the perspective of the embodied, existential lifeworld of each informant (Merleau-Ponty,

1962). A subset of the total data set is presented, and the informants and quotes below have been selected because of their ability to illustrate the complexity of the findings related specifically to the *challenges* the informants expressed. This article is part of a larger study, where findings also point to many benefits of growing up within the NFS, which will not be discussed here.[1] Furthermore, the results presented do not attempt to be representative of all those growing up in the NFS, of which approximately 400 children live abroad each year. Methodological limitations to the study include that findings have not been controlled for individual personality characteristics, nor are they supported by stories of other family members. Moreover, it was specified when requesting informants to write about their childhood that they touch upon aspects of identity, relationships and belonging, which necessarily creates bias. Nevertheless, the autobiographical form leaves room for informants to bring up and use most narrative space on what they themselves feel are the most important aspects of their childhood. The narrative approach opens up for variations, nuances and inner logic in the descriptions and reflections of each informant's lived story and life trajectory. As a pilot study, three of the informants who were previously known to the researcher provided feedback in the process of shaping the invitation to write. The request was distributed with the assistance of the NFS and the NFS Pensioner Association. A total of 31 written autobiographies were received by email, and 11 in-depth interviews, from 1.5 to 3.5 hours long, were conducted in the informants' homes, offices or in their neighbourhood café in the period of 2015–2016. The interview method was open-ended and took the form of a narrative dialogue. The stories and their authors have a great number of variations. The informants represent three generations, ranging from age 21 to 75, whereof one-third male and two-thirds female. They lived in a variety of continents during their developmental years, and number of relocations vary between 2 and 8 times until the age of 18. Informants quoted in this article have participated by reading the draft and agreeing to the way extracts of their autobiography have been used in the context of this analysis.

Autobiographical remembering

To what degree can we 'trust' memories? Memories are not fixed entities. Rather, remembering is a process of reconstruction and selection, and autobiographies of childhood are accounts written from the perspective of afterthought, an interpretive filter through which all accounts of the past are selected and coloured by the present. Autobiographies are a special type of narrative, in which the author has a conversation with his or her inner lifeworld. Due to its intimate relation to its storyteller, the autobiography will have elements of self-serving bias and personality-related motivation (Habermas, 2012). Life stories are subjective in their accounts of the relationship between the author and her social world. Childhood memories that share common conflictual themes may be condensed into nuclear scenes, and privileged space of narrative tension may be given to self-defining memories to form an individualised life story (Habermas, 2012). Added to memory distortion is that of fabrication. The awareness of how it is possible to create false memories has long since spread from psychological experiments to the witness stand (Laney and Loftus, 2013).

Though distortions in the life story occur, Berntsen and Rubin (2004) explain how memory is assisted by 'life scripts'. Such scripts are structured by culturally prescribed

expectations of what typical life *should* be over the life span. Yet, *deviations* to this defined standard trigger emotional arousal and identity confusion. We are dependent on explaining this gap to make a coherent individual narrative (Fivush, 2010). The informants in this study, aware that their childhood deviates from those growing up in Norway, created chapters in their childhood with each new relocation – critical junctures that assisted their memory. A deciding factor of what and how we remember an event is how personally meaningful and how intense the emotional arousal was at the time (Van der Kolk, 2014). The informants write about how such emotions arise in them as they remember different episodes. The body is a memory map, retaining sensory experiences, as well as emotional arousal: 'The body keeps the score' (Van der Kolk, 2014). This is why a *child perspective* is accessible through the use of retrospective, autobiographical data. Furthermore, from a narrative perspective, childhood is not strictly distinct from adulthood. Rather, childhood is a dynamic and continuous part of living (Orellana and Phoenix, 2016). Our child perspective is part of our sense of self and therefore takes part in reflexive work of reconstructing the past, understanding the present and imagining our future (Gullestad, 1996).

Results and discussion

The lifeworld of the NFS child

Despite the diversity of informants participating in this study, a striking common trait is how they accord a large part of their story to describe and reflect around relocation episodes. How then, is a move experienced in the lifeworld of a NFS child? Lisa, aged 31, reflects around her experience of moving at age 9:

> But for me, the whole thing was extremely mysterious and impossible to understand. I perceived it as very dramatic. This 'contract' came and took my life, took all my friends, it took everything. As an adult, it can probably be difficult to understand a child's perspective on things, but for a child your whole life is torn away, they do not have a perspective of time, and cannot take in whether something is permanent or temporary. They are just here and now.

Lisa experiences moving as an abrupt and overwhelming disruption in her life. Control, predictability, meaning, identity and belonging – premises of existential security – are put to the test. The *external* environment changes as a child faces migration, even if, for the adults, everything is understood and planned, as would mostly be the case for the 'global elite'. What of the *internal* lifeworld, of interpreting how these changes are existentially meaningful to the self? Jennifer, aged 26, explains,

> TCKs experience very early being stripped of their identity, to be reduced to a body in a plane. I experience a deep fear of this idea, exactly because all my different lives on the ground are transitory, and I know I'm going up again. The fear is the thought that when I am all these different versions of myself on the ground, then who is left sitting here on this plane?

Jennifer's story illustrates how situations of intense and rapid shift in life context across countries can create hypo- or hyper-aroused embodied experiences of losing a sense of an *existing self* (Merleau-Ponty, 1962). Globalisation comes with positive aspects of

interconnectedness between cultures, people and places. Yet, this interconnectedness comes hand in hand with global myths that provide un-nuanced optimism surrounding political, economic and technological progress on a macro-scale. When zooming in on the micro-scale of the human condition, it is increasingly marked by accelerated change, demand for high mobility and constant readjustment (Eriksen, 2016; Vetlesen, 2009). If an overweight of such preconditions becomes the hand that future children and youth are dealt, it is warranted to ask whether they will be able to develop a sense of existential security in their formative years. Jennifer elaborates,

> I think a life in the air does something with how you experience life on the ground. Your perception becomes a bit crooked. One can imagine the traveller's lens as a camera where everything in the background, the scene and extras, become less and less in focus. Places and people shoot by at great speed, change fast, become settings and extras that colour the picture, but that one hardly really notices. They sink into a lower degree of reality. In contrast, what comes in the foreground is those you travel with, they come in even stronger focus, too strong. TCKs have a tendency to attach themselves violently to the others in the caravan (family, pets, perhaps boy/girlfriends and friends). They become the only constant, the only thing that's steady in a relatively liquid life. The problem with this overly sharp focus on those closest to you is that when the caravan comes apart, or when you for example experience family trouble, then maybe you react even stronger than others. Then suddenly *everything* is out of focus.

Numbing towards the temporary is balanced by a *hyper-fear* of loss towards that which might provide a possibility for security: the family. When family represents all the reference points that hold the child's world together, TCKs are placed in a vulnerable context where emotion-regulation support from caregivers becomes all the more essential. What do the autobiographies tell us about how these everyday micro-practices are influenced by their emotion-culture context?

The cultural narrative of a global childhood

When the autobiographies were placed on a continuum from those who reported having had a 'very happy' childhood to those having had a 'very challenging' one, an essential distinction emerged. The more challenging a childhood was experienced, the more the informant described a discrepancy between expectations on emotions and emotional experiences. The stories show a chasm between what was told or assumed about their childhood, and how they experienced it. Kristin, aged 51, reflects on this discrepancy:

> This is something I felt throughout my childhood: How could I have 'anything at all to complain about'? We always lived in grand and beautiful houses, but without any feeling of home. The ambassador residence in London is ca. 1000 square meters, we had a chef, butler, cleaner and porter. We had visits from fine and exciting personalities. [. . .] Perhaps we looked privileged to people on the outside who saw and heard about our lives as ambassador children. But the privileges that we had are not what children need, for what do children get out of grand residencies, servants and stylish cars? I was lonely and needed my parents, but they were not there in the way that I needed them and when I needed them. But I looked up to them both, thought that they were both beautiful and happy.

The contours of a cultural narrative come to light, a narrative which states that these NFS children are ‘privileged’. One component of this narrative is *socio-economic class*. The cultural symbols of material wealth are equated with a happy childhood. Yet, research on upper- and middle-class families suggest that, though the families are wealthy, the family account for time and emotion-sharing can be empty (Currie, 2005). Such cultural narratives of lives as imagined are powerful in their emotional expectations. What consequences can they have on a life as lived? Martha, aged 41, paints the following picture:

> ‘Oh my god! How incredibly exciting! Think of everything you have been able to experience compared to other, “normal” Norwegian children?! And you even got Italian for free!’ This is the usual reaction I get when I tell strangers or acquaintances about my childhood as a diplomat kid in the Norwegian Foreign Service. 20 years ago, I’d become directly provoked by such feedback. The first years of my 20s, I became silent or smiled a little while I answered something they expected to hear, something that fit into the image they had constructed. In reality, shivers where crawling up and down my spine. As the years passed, I learned to put words to my experiences. But in such a way that didn’t set people completely aback, and that didn’t leave me naked in front of them, with my feelings sizzling on the surface of my skin. To strangers I squeezed out a few sentences about not letting oneself be blended by the façade, that it is a big difference between holidaying in Rome as opposed to living there – that the reality of a life abroad for me as a child, was first and foremost about collecting as many signs as possible that would prove to me that I was secure.

At the meeting point between a cultural narrative of lives imagined and a life as experienced, not only are the bodily reactions, the memory map, retriggered – the sense of not matching up to the emotional expectations can intensify the initial emotionally painful states one was in as a child and become a lifelong burden. The quote above shows how the imagined NFS childhood has another dimension. Alex, aged 25, describes a typical scenario:

> Especially the last place isn’t somewhere many people have even heard of, and then the whole thing gets this ‘exotic’ character that of the spectators pretty much requires a constant flood of ‘exciting’ stories. Even though there are quite a few funny, interesting and exotic stories to tell about the time in Qatar, you also wish to talk about a totally everyday ‘normal’ life.

The *exotic* is a classic way of imagining others’ lives (Said, 1985), creating expectations that may put the child in situations of needing to perform a specific type of role. In the context of this childhood, the exotic is intertwined with the imaginings of *unique opportunities* given to them. However, they come at a price. Alongside the opportunities come expectations of developing special competences, which in turn should result in exceptional performance. In this sense, the narrative has the dimension of children as ‘becomings’, as opposed to ‘beings’. The focus is not on how they feel in their everyday lives at present, but the adult they should become (Uprichard, 2008). Irene, aged 23, illustrates how such expectations are embodied into adulthood:

> Who has been able to maximise and multiply the potential and the *gift* one has received as a kid of the Foreign Service the most? [. . .] Or is this just a failed attempt to generalise an unconscious truth that has only happened to me? I mean, the truth about the expectations and the pressure

> that lies there, often unsaid, but that at least I feel all the time. [. . .] It's a driving force that makes me overachieve compared to others – those with more 'average' childhoods. [. . .] And I know rationally that I am tired, I get tired, probably never will be able to not be tired. And rationally I know that it would be reasonable and true if you said that it doesn't have to be this way, that what I do is enough, more than enough, already.

Vetlesen (2009) explains how, when an individual internalises cultural norms of being solely responsible for realising one's capacities to the fullest, the context of 'anything is possible' becomes an 'internal tribunal' directed at the self, and having to defend any short-comings leads to personal exhaustion. Susanne, aged 34, brings another dimension of the cultural narrative to light, as *coming home* to Norway is supposed to be a happy return:

> As children, I remember that it was often said to me and my sister that we were so lucky to learn so many languages and learn so much about other cultures. I guess this is true in many ways. [. . .] But for me, after a while, it was much, much harder to fit in in Norway than to fit in in diverse countries abroad. [. . .] Because I am blond with blue eyes and speak fluent Norwegian, I feel that there is an expectation that one should 'understand' Norway and Norwegian culture in a different way than when one has not lived there for long. I gave up trying to fit in in Norway a long time ago, and am sure I will never live there.

In the case of forced migration, families have lost their homes to which they cannot return. In contrast, the global elite is 'free' to come and go as they please, making them privileged (Willis et al., 2002). Whereas Hoaas (2006) shows how adult Norwegian TCKs living in Norway eventually came to terms with settling down there, several adults in this study feel that the social pressure of having to be someone they cannot is too strong. Across the large majority of autobiographies, the times they return to their passport country are the most emotionally challenging periods of their childhood – with bullying and identity confusion being the most painful aspects. This is reflected in much of the research on TCKs, described as 'reverse culture-shock' (Fail et al., 2004). Having the same ethnic appearance can emphasise the mismatch of them feeling like a complete stranger, of being a 'hidden immigrant' (Bell, 1997) or treated as a 'homecomer' by peers, family and teachers instead of a (re)migrant (Knörr, 2005b). Frida, now 21 years old, looks back at the year she spent in Norway at age 15:

> The hardest thing about being a diplomat kid was, without comparison, to come home. Or rather – to come 'home'. [. . .] I look at that year as the worst in my life so far. All the gown-ups around me expected me to be happy to come home, to finally be back in Norway. But it was the complete opposite.

The painful experience of being an outsider is not necessarily just a transitional phase. It can lead to many years of 'encapsulated marginality' (Killguss, 2008), as Nina, aged 30, explains,

> From being well liked and quite popular in Dhaka, I was placed in no man's land in Norway. I didn't know anyone. I had trouble making friends [. . .]. I didn't know what I was supposed to talk about, or how I was supposed to act in a Norwegian social context. We had few common

> references. I came from a whole other planet that no one else could imagine what was like. In 6th grade and up to 10th, I gradually pulled myself away from everyone around me.

As a consequence, the informants of this study reflect on what home means to them. As TCKs engage 'in a cloud of uncertainty in the process of homemaking' (Lijadi and van Schalkwyk, 2017: 126), belonging can seem like a notion that is both fleeting and forced, here illustrated by Karen, aged 26:

> I wonder what it has done to me that I don't really know the meaning of a home. I continued the moving circus on my own. Up until the age of 25, I lived in 4 countries before I became curious about what it would be like to live more than a couple of years in one place. Now I have moved back to Norway and decided to settle down, but I have never felt so estranged anywhere.

As a whole, the cultural narrative of 'the privileged NFS childhood' takes the form of an *adult-centric perspective* of the 'global elite', projected onto childhood. Socio-economic status; unique, exotic experiences, opportunities and potential; and that you can always come back home are dimensions of this narrative carrying expectations on emotion that the informants could not match. Whenever challenges are mentioned, these main dimensions are described consistently across the autobiographies, despite the representation of three generations. Together, these dimensions create the specific emotion-culture context wherein the NFS children in this study grew up. Given the dependency on their caregivers, attention now turns to the micro-processes of emotion regulation within the family.

Pretending to feel like the privileged child

> It is difficult to be a child and feel alone even when your parents are there. I have had periods where, emotionally, I felt that I had no parents. [. . .] I know how important it is to give children who move all the help and support they can get. One doesn't always see that a child has problems, and unfortunately, children are often much too good at saying the right things, the things that adults want to hear to make their parents happy. I have done this a lot, and it hasn't served me well. (Kristin, aged 51)

Though 'the privileged NFS childhood' was the dominant narrative in several families, there is only one mention of parents who have pronounced that feeling or showing feelings connected to insecurity was forbidden. Cultural expectations do not always come as uttered rules. In fact, even in their silence, their symbols speak (Fivush, 2010). Children are not actively silenced – the power relation lies in the conformity of being in silence together (Fivush, 2010). Moreover, theorising about children as passively socialised merely through what is said underestimates them (Corsaro, 2018; Crenshaw, 2002). As active agents in their socialisation, the informants interpreted ways to behave emotionally. As children and adolescents, they created *their own* cultural feeling-rules and corresponding display-rules from putting various pieces of symbols of the narrative together. Martha, aged 41, remembers a specific situation:

> I have no clear memories of where we lived and what the days consisted of, but I remember standing in front of the Empire State Building with my head tilted upwards along the facades

> – with tears in my eyes and thinking that: 'Father at all cost must not see'. Everything was enormous, out of control, foreign, scary and . . . impossible to avoid.

Martha's story shows tendency of the Pollyanna syndrome, of playing the 'happy game'. Children start to pretend, to act out a role, as was the case for Nina, aged 30:

> I told the teachers I was sick, and my mother had to leave work to come and get me. On the other hand, I didn't dare tell my mother about the anxiety I actually felt either, and chose to play sick at home as well.

As children and adolescents emotionally withdraw or detach, the distinction between pretending and being in an unclear, yet painful, emotional state over time is blurred. Paula, aged 25, recalls from her teenage years:

> I guess I suffered from light depression when I look back at this time, and I felt constantly stressed and disappointed in myself for not being able to do all the things I felt I should, but I smiled all the time and pretended as if nothing was wrong.

They put their own feelings aside to make others feel well or suffer less. Lisa, aged 31, remembers,

> I saw my mother cry when we were going to move, and I cried too, but always in hiding because I didn't want my parents to become even more sad. It was difficult. They wanted me to be happy, so I didn't want to disappoint them by not being as happy as they wished, so I tried to hide my sadness as much as I could. [. . .] It must have been a difficult period for my parents as well, they too had to move from their friends and their lives, but then they had to constantly pretend as if everything in Norway was fantastic so that it would 'rub off' on us.

Though the data in this study do not include parents' voices directly, parents, especially mothers, are often remembered as struggling to meet the emotional expectations of a successful family narrative that must be kept 'true'. For both adults and children, there can be shame in not matching up to a narrative of privilege. Yet, children are dependent on their caregivers to learn that invisible, *inner* existential needs are as basic to human survival as visible, *outer* circumstances of security. If not, feelings of shame can intensify. Irene, aged 23, reflects back to a time when she was living in a developing country:

> The best teachers. The best schools. The best subjects. The finest quality. The best houses, cooks, housekeepers, drivers. The best opportunities. In the middle of all the poverty. Injustice. Inequality. Is it strange that we are weighed down with guilt? Is it strange that we feel we must pay our dues?

The situations described above portray how children engage in different types of 'emotion work' to adapt to cultural feeling-rules. They offer 'a gift of feeling' to their social environment (Hochschild, 1983). The cost of this gift, repeated over time, becomes a strategy where the lines between 'surface acting', 'deep acting' and the state of the self can dissolve. Emotional arousals in the body when reacting to stressful situations are not

displayed or shared. Rather, they become hidden inner worlds of pressure, shame and illness, isolated inner states that may be difficult for the parents to notice. As a result, the lifeworld of children and adolescents is not recognised and validated. They are left to themselves in meaning-making processes, of making sense of their emotional selves – an inherently social task. The stories show how these ways of relating to one's emotional reactions can become survival strategies that spiral into painful individual pathways, as one loses the sense of feeling at home, and knowing oneself, in one's own body.

Conclusion

The informants who recall having a 'very challenging' childhood within the NFS illustrate how, as children face migration, their lifeworld can be disrupted. Culturally, what is real and unreal is questioned, and relationships outside the family that have been part of shaping their identity and sense of belonging are experienced as abruptly broken. Attachment theory shows how children, despite overwhelming stress, can still have a sense of existential security if they receive the emotion-regulation support they need from caregivers. However, the possibility and degree of such parental support vary depending on the emotional expectations that lie within dominant cultural narratives. A narrative was identified here as the 'privileged NFS childhood', and the dimensions within it that formulated cultural expectations on emotion were as follows: high socio-economic status; exotic, extraordinary opportunities and potential; and freedom to always be able to return home. This cultural narrative is an adult-centric tale, projected onto an imagined childhood. Its implications were that the challenges the informants experienced are described as being in disaccord with cultural expectations on how they were supposed to feel about their own life. As children and adolescents, the informants actively interpreted these expectations as feeling-rules denying them the possibility to have and display any feelings of insecurity. These feeling-rules made them pretend and try to feel differently around their family – a social gift of 'deep acting'. A silent narrative within the family prevented intra-personal emotion regulation and created an emotional estrangement towards their parents as well as within themselves. As a result, coping strategies developed and spiralled into existentially painful trajectories of adulthood. As new narratives rise from ideological myths of globalisation, further research is needed to identify which dimensions lie at the intersection between 'global' cultural expectations on emotion and 'local' emotion-regulation practices and experiences. In this way, we can further our understanding of how they create specific historical, social and cultural contexts in which children and adolescents face new situations of agency and vulnerability.

Declaration of conflicting interests

The author declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship and/or publication of this article.

Funding

The author received no financial support for the research, authorship and/or publication of this article.

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Note

1. *Experiences of growing up in the Norwegian Foreign Service – An emotion-culture approach*. PhD Thesis, Inland Norway University of Applied Sciences, Lillehammer (Forthcoming).

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Article 2

Ragnhild Bjørnsen: "Place attachment and agency in globally mobile childhoods: Retrospective narratives inside the Norwegian Foreign Service."

"Place attachment and agency in globally mobile childhoods: Retrospective narratives inside the Norwegian Foreign Service"

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Abstract

The study analyses critical situations where place attachments, relationship attachments and agency intersect, based on autobiographical accounts from 43 former Norwegian Foreign Service children. Place attachment is understood as an emotional bond which can develop despite mobility, in various configurations of Fixity and Flow (Di Masso et. al., 2019). Results show how diplomat families create distinctive narratives of home. Negotiations between child and parents over "My place" benefited the child, providing a sense of meaning, control and predictability, as well as a sense of belonging in later life trajectory. Social recognition and non-human natural environments strengthened place attachment. Yet this study of former Third Culture Kids illustrates how intense, frequent and accelerated mobility in childhood can lead to existential outsideness, manifested as implosion and flight from place. Family narratives can put children in a double bind, with no real choice concerning migration. Therefore, the results warn against the common assumption of high mobility amongst affluent families as a 'privilege', failing to take the child perspective.

Keywords:
place attachment, child development, agency, child geography, Third Culture Kid, autobiography

1. Introduction

The starting point for this article was an empirical retrospective study of former Norwegian Foreign Service children. Forty-three autobiographies were collected, in which the

informants were asked to write about their childhood. To be a diplomat child means relocating every two-to-three years, often across countries and continents. The informants reflect on how their childhood has given them a global moral orientation for which they feel gratitude. However, only six informants live in mobility at the time of writing their autobiography, and all except two want their children to have a childhood in one location. The majority describe and reflect upon their adult life trajectory as a process of finding one's place in the world, a process that for many has been marked by existential strain. This article presents a phenomenological discussion of these lived tensions of place attachment, based on the analysis of critical situations in the informants' childhood where place attachments, relationship attachments, and agency intersect.

Children of the Foreign Service are part of the wider research field of internationally mobile children, or Third Culture Kids (TCKs). These children spend a significant part of their developmental years outside their passport country due to their parents' employment (Useem & Downie, 1976). Such expatriate employment, referred to by the informants as "the contract" and "the list", is a deciding factor in this migratory rhythm of frequent place transitions. The literature on TCKs finds that they as children and later adults may struggle with identity integration (Fail al., 2004), and disenfranchised grief from ruptures of childhood attachments to people and places (Gilbert, 2008). It is stated that remaining in one location is "… a liberty not afforded to them as children" (Melles & Frey, 2014: 354). The reaction towards such findings is to identify 'best practice' counselling (Davis et. al, 2015; Limberg & Lambie, 2011) and transition programs (Davis et. al., 2010). However, this does not address the identified cause of the struggle and grief: that the children are not part of decision-making over relocation, and therefore have no agency when it comes to questions of 'home'. Anchored in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, the scientific debate on child migration argues that children have a right to be heard and participate in decision-making. However, such concerns are not addressed for mobile children of affluent families. This article addresses this research gap by exploring the relationships and tensions between place attachment, social attachments, and agency among children of expatriate families.

Overall, this study finds that to manage high mobility, families create different narratives of what home is. Informants evaluate their degree of agency within such family narratives. Findings indicate that when there was a high degree of child agency, it benefited the child and the informant's life trajectory. Agency is therefore hypothesised as providing a sense of meaning, control and predictability which are important attributes in coping strategies for children and adolescents. The study finally asserts that TCKs are especially

illustrative of how intense, frequent and accelerated mobility can be experienced as existential outsideness. The results, therefore, warn against the common assumption of describing high mobility of affluent families as a "privilege" for the children, as relocation proves a high-risk exercise.

2. Theoretical framework

The theoretical framework of this article expands on a developmental model of place attachment by Morgan (2010). I define place attachment here as an emotional bond to place (Chawla, 1992). Attachment theory describes the interplay between the attachment and exploration-assertion motivational system (Marvin et. al., 2002). Whereas attachment to a caregiver is seen as interactional, attachment-theory commonly places exploration of the outside world exclusively as a motivation *within* the child. Morgan (2010) instead introduces an alternative developmental model where qualities of the environment invite fascination and interaction. Exposed to the environment, the child's exploration-assertion motivational system is activated, triggering affective states of excitement, mastery, adventure, freedom, and sensory pleasure. Conversely, when the interaction with the environment gives rise to pain or anxiety, the attachment-affiliation motivational system is engaged, and the child seeks proximity to the attachment figure for comfort and emotion regulation.

For this study, place attachment is attributed to the quality of sense of 'home', using Relph's phenomenological notion of depth of place (1979). According to Relph, we experience place along continuums. One is the degree of conceptual versus existential place; another is 'existential insideness' versus 'existential outsideness'. A conceptual place attachment can be our bond to the 'national'. Existential insideness is an immersion of place as a person feels inside, here, safe and enclosed. This bond to a place gives a sense of ease and a possibility of rest. In contrast, existential outsideness is a feeling of being there, alienated, threatened, exposed, and stressed.

In addition, the study includes three dimensions which are particularly significant in analysing the data. First, it includes the possibility of place attachment in mobility by placing this model into a conceptual framework of movement or non-movement, or to use Di Masso et. al., (2019)'s terms, between fixity and flow. These terms allow analysis on various ways of understanding the relationship between the two. For example, *disruption* (from fixity) is the classic way in which sedentary perspectives have seen relocation. Whereas *complementarity* and *compensation* (fixity and flow) are ways in which dwelling and journeying can be

combined. *Contradiction* (fixity or flow) is a state perceived as mutually exclusive choices to either stay or be mobile. *Overarching integration* can be various ways in which mobility feels like continuity, such as attachment to a nomadic *settlement* (fixity from flow). It is possible to feel place attachment to several places, a *multi-centred integration* (flow in fixities). Finally, there is a non-embodied *virtual* or *imaginative* travel (flow).

Secondly, it includes the significance of social recognition in relation to place attachment (Honneth, 1995). Honneth's theory of humans' need for recognition takes three forms: close bonds such as family and friends; solidarity and empathy from a community; and as legal beings. Accordingly, a TCK's attachment to a place will, to a high degree, depend on whether or not the child has friends there and is included into a community.

Finally, Morgan points out that the role of cultural contexts must be integrated into the model of place attachment. In the last decades, we have culturally witnessed a growing understanding of children as legal beings, with the right to be heard. 'The participating child' stands in an uneven power relationship with adults. For children's agency to be real, they need the possibility to participate in decision-making on their terms (Østrem, 2012). The question of an individual's degree of agency takes place within binaries of agent versus structure, of freedom versus determinism, yet agency is also interpretive (Keane, 2003). Zooming in on children's immediate cultural and interpretive world, their life situations will largely depend on the family narratives that surround them (Pratt & Fiese, 2004). Families do not only provide possibilities of emotion regulation, they also carry cultural tools of meaning-making that specify which meanings and feelings are normatively 'correct'. Cultural contexts formulate 'feeling-rules' (Hochschild, 1983). Whether spoken or in silence, family narratives are the holistic interpretive worlds in which the Circle of Security model, of both social and place attachment, takes place. As we grow older, we are exposed to alternative interpretive possibilities, and can therefore evaluate the degree of agency we experienced in our childhood from a perspective outside of family narratives. Retrospective autobiographies are a methodological means to gain knowledge of such evaluative insights.

3. The autobiographies

The study is approved by the Norwegian Centre for Research Data. Autobiographical accounts of former Norwegian Foreign Service children were collected in the timeframe of 2015 to 2019, whereof 12 were interviews, and 31 were written accounts. A website was

designed to give all necessary information about the study.[25] The website was distributed within the Norwegian Foreign Ministry and by the Foreign Ministry's pensioner association. The interviews were conducted in a place each informant chose, their office, in their home, or their neighbourhood café. The informants' age ranged from 19 to 78 years old, whereof two-thirds were women. They have lived in various parts of the world, and have relocated from 2 to 8 times during childhood, at various ages of childhood and adolescence. This qualitative dataset cannot be representative of the whole population of children in the Norwegian Foreign Service, nor of adult TCKs in general. However, it can provide rich contextual information and possibilities for analytic generalisability.

The request to write about one's childhood in the Foreign Service encouraged the informants to elaborate freely, but also specified the themes identity; social relationships; and belonging. This specification implies a degree of bias by setting boundaries to the study's explorative research design. These choices were made to allow narrative analysis and phenomenological analysis of central themes. The study encouraged informants to reflect on subjective relationships to places, yet the *extent* to which informants chose to use narrative space for reflections over the tensions of place was not predicted. This gives support to Chawla's argument that childhood place attachments increase in emotional and identity significance with age (1992). Moreover, all except three participants structured the chapters of their childhood and adult lives chronologically according to places, with relocations as 'critical junctures' between chapters. This supports evidence in neurobiology which suggests how place is an important dimension of organising autobiographical memory (Lengen & Kistemann, 2012).

Each autobiography was first treated as its own contextual unit, respecting the account's tone and causal logic. Patterns emerged across the narratives, one of which was the use of passive or active form when describing relocations, indicating degrees of agency. The second step of analysis was to find a meaningful dialectic that could assist in organising the autobiographies. By comparing the stories, a continuum was made along which they were placed between the extremities of recalling an "exclusively happy" to an "exclusively challenging" childhood. The point of departure of the analysis in this article was stories leaning towards the "exclusively happy" side of the continuum, asking what distinguishes them from the rest of the accounts.

[25] http://www.globalchildhood.com/forsiden-uk.html

Explicit adult memories of childhood are in several respects ‘unreliable’. The quotes from the autobiographies presented in the results below are of how informants have subjectively experienced situations of agency. Other family members will have experienced this differently, and it is considered a limitation to the study that its scope could not include accounts from siblings and parents. The possibility of false memories must also be acknowledged (Laney & Lofthus, 2013). Explicit memories of childhood are selective, reconstructed and biased with the distance of afterthought. Informants’ life cycle, and their degree of well-being, will affect their evaluations of the past, present and future (Rubenstein & Parmele, 1992). However, autobiographical remembering encourages emotionally charged, embodied memories of past place and time (Damasio, 1999). Moreover, repeated childhood experiences are argued to be more robust, as they indicate the implicit memory of unconscious working models (Morgan, 2010).

Autobiographical remembering is a *truth-seeking* story of real people and real-life events. Therefore, the question we must ask is to what degree it is trustworthy (Riessman, 2008). In this study, the autobiographies represent a wide range of motivations for participation. Authors of “happy” childhoods have wished to tell the world of the positive experiences of a globally mobile childhood. Those whose stories point towards the “unhappy” end of the continuum have been driven by a wish to challenge and nuance assumptions of how ‘wonderful’ this childhood is. Overall the tendency is a balanced group of accounts with an overall discussion that mentions both positive and negative aspects of childhood and adult life. Research of adult TCKs is critiqued for its potential bias because studies recruit informants through websites where informants are actively seeking psychological support (Dervin & Benjamin, 2015). The balance of motivations for participating in this study, and its large age-span, are therefore seen as an empirical strength.

4. Results

The informants perceive their childhood and their mobile lifestyle as highly formative for adult identity and relations to place. Four analytical units of variations in family narratives of ‘home’ emerged as central to understanding the diversity and complexity of tensions in place attachment.

4.1. “My place”

The accounts of “My place” describe situations of negotiations between adolescent and parents:

> I remember my dad and I talked about moving to London, and I said: “Ok, as long as I get to go back for the last year, to be ‘russ’ with the guys”[26]. In the end, I didn’t go home for the last year, but it was my choice. (Morten, age 37)

Morten’s father recognises how there exists separate, at times conflicting, interests within the family (Honneth, 1995). Morten takes active part in planning for the future, as is the case with Hanne:

> I was part of making the decision that my father should apply for the position of ambassador. And when they asked, I really wanted to go. Vietnam had been fantastic, I missed Asia, and was happy to take another trip overseas. When the move became reality one and a half years later, I had a boyfriend and was part of a wonderful and tight group of friends. I remember it as waking up with tears in my throat every morning. (…) In the end, mom and dad took action. If I could last the rest of that year, I would be allowed to move home and live alone the last year of high school. This is one of the wisest things they ever did. I started to relax, enjoy myself, and made friends, and at the same time I felt secure because I knew I wouldn’t lose the people who were so important to me in Norway. (Hanne, age 34)

Life does not always go as planned, and Hanne’s story describes a family in continuous processes of renegotiations, where the parents engage in recognition of her changing inner lifeworld (Slade, 2005). In addition, we see that Morten and Hanne have an ownership of place and perceive it as in their best interest to be there. This is their starting position for negotiations. Both informants show how children may want to go on journeys, but that this journey is experienced as more meaningful if they are part of defining its parameters, providing them with a sense of control and predictability. Furthermore, Morten and Hanne’s place attachment is highly related to close and long-lasting friendships outside of their family. Hanne also adds how important it was for her closest friends in Norway to visit her overseas: “…so they could understand”. Mari (age 34) describes another form of social recognition, empathy from her community:

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[26] An important cultural ritual in Norway, marking the transition from high school into adulthood.

> Many of my memories of Bali are linked to the baby monkey. It was “me and the monkey” (…) No one wanted to take over “Ronja”, by then she had become an adult (…) She was my only and best playmate (…) I remember feeling that it was so sad coming back (to Norway) to third grade without my monkey (...) And everyone in my class cared so much about that monkey, we had written letters, sent pictures… everyone were so sad.

What characterises these family narratives of ‘home’ as a fixed location, is how negotiations are manifested in action. This action is part of long-term planning, as Mari explains:

> Home is (a Norwegian island) for me. (…) Mom grew up with a father in the military, so she moved a lot when she was young, and has no childhood friends (…) She lived two years in each place (…) so she has never been attached to anywhere, and therefore she was always so intent on us always having a base, and that I should have the (island) dialect, roots. I was in all the class photos. (…) My father was a big part of creating that strategy and holding it all together.

The “strategy” of the parents is a repetitive pattern of ‘home’ and ‘journey’. A similar pattern of predictable return to place is provided by a striking majority as they describe their relationship to a cabin in natural surroundings:

> We have been lucky to have a cabin by the sea in Norway that has been a “base” for our family all these years. I’ve reflected on this as being an important point of reference, something to hold on to. Maybe the cabin has even contributed to me living in Norway today. (Tom, age 46)

The cabin is a familiar place, with freedom to explore, and vivid sensory experiences of play and nature. With time, this place also becomes an anchor of adult place identity (Chawla, 1992). Hanne’s description of her adult identity is illustrative of those who have grown up with “My place”:

> But most of all, I feel at home with my Norwegian friends who are happy travellers. I am Norwegian, with added spice.

The stories of “My place” represent repetitive internal working models of place attachment (Morgan, 2010) in *fixity and flow* (Di Masso et. al., 2019), of home and journey, with consequences for their identity and sense of home in adult life.

4.2. “Being placed”

As contrast, stories of “Being placed” are marked by use of passive tense, denoting a thing rather than a subject:

> I was sent to boarding school in Norway to “become Norwegian” when I was 12. I would get Foreign Service mail, telling me where I would be placed next. I remember dreading holidays, as I didn’t know what to do, where would I be for Christmas, Easter..? I was like a postal package (…) Once, when I was 17, I told them how I felt, how the last years had been for me, everything. (…) The next morning, my father said: “Your mother has cried all night, you must never speak of this again.” (Victoria, age 74)

Children are excluded from decision-making:

> I remember especially one day when my brother, in a fit of rage, screamed that he longed to go “home” to Sri Lanka. My mother grabbed his shoulders and screamed back: “You are Norwegian, you are Norwegian, this is your home! This is our home!” This triggered a rage within me as well: I hated Norway, to be Norwegian was the last thing on earth that I wanted to be. (Lisa, age 31)

In both Victoria’s and Lisa’s family, the family narrative is of a location that is *supposed* to be ‘home’, but which *feels* forced. “Being placed” are largely descriptions of emotionally painful repatriations to Norway. To travel and reside overseas is mainly referred to as ‘happy’ experiences, whereas the large majority evaluate repatriation as the most challenging periods. This is strongly related to lack of social recognition. They arrive to a place where they have no friends, and to an actively excluding community:

> I didn’t know what bullying was until then. (…) Self-confidence, confidence in life, that there is some point to it… just hide away, keep your eyes fixed to the ground, not take up space. That’s what’s so horrible, that you amplify the job the bullies do. (…) From the 6th grade, all of junior high, I kept my eyes fixed to the ground. From high school until I was 35, I had intense social anxiety. (…) 10 years I was in therapy, depressions, hospital admissions, and… it was really bad. (Kristin, age 45).

Kristin describes a situation of wanting to socially and physically disappear. Norway as place becomes a non-identity. As human social surroundings were destructive, she reflects on how “the stables”, and her connection to horses, saved her life. Others make attempts at ‘fitting in’,

or socially isolate themselves until the next relocation overseas. Importantly, the parents are largely absent from these situational descriptions, as though the child or adolescent is alone. Their later life trajectories are marked by either *implosion* or *flight* from place, or a combination of the two. "Being placed" shows a repetitive internal working model of place attachment of *fixity or flow*, but where both feel forced. Therefore, neither are a real choice. The pattern represents an absence of both place attachment and agency.

4.3. "Home is my family"

The dataset also includes accounts of families which describe high parental reflective functioning (Slade, 2005), and parental attachment figures that provide emotion regulation support (Siegel, 2012):

> We are a really tight family, we have always enjoyed being together. And I think that much of that is because we have moved around together. When we have moved to a new place, none of us have known anyone else, and so it has only been the four of us. We have had each other. (Stine, age 21)

These informants describe family as their sense of security and sense of 'home'. They see place as transient, whereas family lasts. Relocations are described as painful goodbyes from significant others, especially to friends. In expatriate communities, it is not only one's own family, but the others, who live in mobility. There is therefore a particular social temporality in the expatriate landscape:

> A characteristic of the international school was that friends came and left. (…) But a heavy cloud of measured time hung over them, when the holiday arrived, the friendship was over. (Ingrid, age 51)

Though younger informants have grown up digitally, their joint opinion is that the possibilities of virtual connectedness is no replacement for the physical proximity of friendships. Rather, these are referred to as loose networks:

> I most likely wouldn't ever see or speak to them again, and if I did it would only be a superficial "happy birthday" on Facebook if even that. (Tessa, age 25)

In this social landscape, the expatriate family is potentially the only stable entity over time. It is referred to in mobile metaphors as "the boat" and "the caravan". Yet there is a vulnerability to such a home:

> The family, this little family of four, has been the constant unit in my life. Everything else has changed. But the family has prevailed. Until now. For the first time, the family that came to be 30 years ago is living apart, sliced at the middle: two "home", two "out". (…) And just like that, the constant disappeared. The one sense of security, knowing that no matter what, we had each other, as a unit, something tangible and unmalleable, something that just *is* when everything else is liquid. (Berit, age 23)

The stories of "Home is my family" show a model of attachment where family takes over the role of other possible attachments, social and geographical. It is a form of *settlement* attachment, of *fixity in flow*. Further, this family narrative is intensely concentrated on the few members of an insular family. As Berit shows, if it comes apart, children are faced with conflicting interpretive 'truths', without attachments outside the family sphere. Moreover, the informants do not describe agency in decision-making over relocation. Rather, mobility is narrated as a collectivistic fate.

4.4. "Place as privileged options"

Lastly, there are family narratives which relate to places as future commodities to be experienced, and where the children and adolescents are presented with various options from which they can choose:

> "I just want you to decide here, because I don't know, and it's good to involve children in decisions, isn't it?"
> "Yes", I said.
> Yeah so now I have a new offer here. To go to Lebanon. Beirut, right? Do you want to? Could be good? The Mediterranean Sea, and…?" (…)
> In my mind, thoughts of dinosaurs collided with vague memories of the middle east. Skin, wrinkly from swimming, a little dog. Mango. We had lived there from I was three to six years old, one remembers a bit differently then.
> "Just say something, so she stops bothering me", I thought.
> "Yeah, alright, okay. Then we do that." I said, and hung up.
> We moved six months later and lived in Lebanon for five years. (Sara, age 26)

What characterises these accounts is a presentation of place with exclusive emphasis on adventure, as if relocation is the same as tourism. In this way, affective states of fascination, excitement, and prospective pleasure are activated. The repeated internal working model triggers the exploration-assertiveness motivational system. This is *imagined* place attachment in *flow.* However, it places the children in a double bind in several ways. Firstly, they are presented with several options, yet the option to 'stay' is absent. Place attachment, friends and community are not on "the list". In this family narrative, the message to the children is how they are privileged to relocate, thereby formulating spoken or unspoken "feeling rules" (Hochschild, 1983). When ascribed a privileged status, the cultural feeling rules imply that feelings of happiness and excitement are 'correct', but any feelings of sadness, anger or insecurity do not match the narrative. These are therefore not recognised and validated. Parents have activated the exploration-assertiveness motivational system, yet the attachment-affiliation motivational system is cut off from the Circle of Security (Marvin et al., 2002). By holding the children or adolescents accountable for outcomes, parents reinforce feelings of shame if one's feelings do not match the feeling rules. The child is then less likely to seek proximity to the attachment figure for comfort and emotion regulation.

In later trajectories, the informants of "Places as privileged options" find themselves in an idea of *flow*, but where places as imagined do not match the emotional experiences of being somewhere. The pattern becomes one of *detachment* from places, social relationships and the emotional self. What characterises these autobiographies is how the informants feel a need to rewrite the family narrative into one in which a wider range of feelings are valid:

> I am half Norwegian, half The World. (…) I did not feel at home anywhere, not in Norway either. (…) I didn't understand that there was anything wrong with moving to all these 'fantastic' places as a child. (…) I want the parents in the Foreign Service to be more honest with their children about feelings, about friendships... (Lillian, age 35).

5. Discussion

This study confirms the need for an ontic 'mobility turn' in the study of globally mobile childhoods. Lillian reports being "half Norwegian, half The World". The half that is her global identity has been the source to positive self-esteem and distinctiveness (Twigger-Ross & Uzzell, 1996). The informants' mobile childhood is manifested in a blurring together of multiple places into one global orientation. This world-orientation is confirmed in the general

literature of TCKs and adult TCKs (Bell-Villada et. al. 2011). In light of the exploration-assertion motivational system (Morgan, 2010), this study confirms how such a world-orientation is embodied as a sense of mastery and familiarity of global travel. In the fixity-flow framework, to be half "the World" is an *ideological place attachment* (Di Masso et. al., 2019), and is Relph's *conceptual insideness* (1976).

Contrary to mere movement, mobility can be understood as "both meaningful and laden with power" (Cresswell, 2006:9). This is exactly what makes relocations a question of agency. Collectively, the autobiographies show a tendency to continue living in high mobility as young adults. This mobility is described as a state of restlessness, with potentially both positive and negative connotations. The informants who report feeling that "Family is home" are mostly in their 20s. However, older informants report how high mobility in young adulthood became too intense. There is a lingering sense of being separated and alienated from place which accompanies them. There are descriptions of fatigue, confusion, anxiety and depression. What is more, they feel they are supposed to manage on their own. Eventually, belonging outside of family becomes something they feel a need to 'resolve'. With the age-span of informants ranging from 19-78, there is a noticeable pattern within and across the stories. The struggle of 'home' becomes more resolved over time, though not for all. In 37 out of 43 cases, a 'resolved' state is a fixed location, whether in Norway or overseas. Whether sedentary or mobile, there is an increase in reported quality of life in line with the process of 'resolving', which may take several years, even decades. A similar pattern is observed in a quantitative study of adult TCKs (Abe, 2018). Similar to Abe (2018), this study finds that quality of life increases with time. 'Resolving' is a process of developing a sense of agency, a purposive process of 'creating' and 'making' a home, rather than 'having' one. Due to the limitations of this study, these tendencies cannot claim to be representative of the adult TCK population, though they might be. What can be postulated however, is the need for further investigations into processes of increasing agency in longitudinal studies.

It is at the point where 'global orientation' and existential insideness intersect that we see the tensions which were the starting observations of this article: The informants want their children to have the same world-orientation and values, yet want to spare them from the experiences of alienation and outsideness. This tension is replicated in contemporary theorising over place in the context of globally mobile childhoods. On the one hand, place attachment is conceptually stretched to emphasize "…the fluidity, openness, multiplicity, hybridity, and changeability of place." (Picton and Urquhart, 2020: 1590). On the other hand, studies of adult TCKs, this study included, illustrate how they grasp for anchors to avoid

complete disintegration (Bell-Villada et. al., 2011). If we take Cresswell's point of power relations seriously (2006), then we must ask what is actually meant by "negotiation" in conceptualisations of place attachment: "…relocation requires an adjustment period in which negotiation processes incorporate current environments into previous contexts." (Picton and Urquhart, 2020: 1591). Here it is up to the self, the TCK, to existentially do the work of negotiating *within*, in order to *adjust* to an outside world. For the child and adolescent, this is a deterministic framework in which parents and employers are the undisputed power figures. For most informants in this study, the negotiating work toward these power figures accentuates a need to define and experience 'home' as a tangible entity. In the report of being "half Norwegian, half The World", it is the "half Norwegian" which represents the inevitability of always having to be somewhere, and the need for this somewhere to be a social and physical environment of belonging.

Despite this study stressing the salience of 'somewhere', the stories of "My place", of *fixity-and-flow*, illustrate how the sedentary perspective limits our understanding of what forms place attachment can take in childhood. The accounts show that a child does not have to reside in only one location to have place attachment. Moreover, relocations can be a wished-for plan for children, and some degree of mobility does not necessarily imply an "unrooted" childhood. Autobiographies of "My place" illustrate how relocations overseas can be experienced as highly meaningful journeys if children can participate in negotiations, decision-making, and know when they will return 'home'. They show how negotiations give children a sense of agency, control, and predictability. Such degree of agency means taking part in defining the premises under which all other processes of maturity will occur. Yet parents have not completely set aside their own interests (Foros & Vetlesen, 2015). Rather, the parents' wishes for opportunities overseas have been negotiated as a process of mutual recognition, a 'give-and-take' of conflicting interests. What this suggests in practice is how counsellors and transition programs for TCKs would benefit from acquiring expertise on family negotiation processes, rather than a sole focus on TCKs' emotions and identity struggles within a preconditioned framework of their parents' mobility. Counsellors can teach parents techniques of negotiation and be facilitators for collective family decision-making.

The stories of "My place" show how *conceptual insideness* of "half The World" can exist in parallel with an embodied sense of home in a location - an *existential insideness*. However, in the autobiographies of "Being placed", there is complete alienation, especially in situations of repatriation. As Relph argued, the most painful sense of existential outsideness is felt in the place where you are supposed to feel existential insideness, yet which turns out to

be the loneliest, socially most destructive place of one's childhood (1976). Such accounts of "Being placed" support studies of TCKs which find that they experience themselves as "hidden immigrants" upon repatriation, and can experience encapsulated marginality in childhood and in later adult life (Fail et. al., 2004). These experiences of existential outsideness are manifested in this study as *implosion* and *flight* from place. Instead of an engaged child reaching outwards towards the environment in which he or she is intertwined (Merleau-Ponty, 1962), the TCK (and adult TCK) tries to disappear. There is a general state of needing to be "anywhere but here". Simultaneously, participants provide insights into how the non-human world can step in as a lifeline. The cabin, the stables, and animals become anchors in a childhood of constant transitions, where the child enters into a relationship of "I-you" rather than "I-it" (Buber, 1937). Non-human nature can be a child's source to emotion regulation (Kirkby, 1989), solidified by a repetitive pattern of predictable return to a restorative place (Korpela & Hartig, 1996).

It is in the field between fixity and flow that the informants' tension towards place attachment is experienced. However, close relationships are a strong force in this field. The fixity-flow framework opens for a *settlement* place attachment, which is expressed in the stories of "Family is my home". Studies of TCKs in international schools find they often report family as home. It is when asked *where* is home that they enter into internal conflicts (Nette & Hayden, 2007). In relation to the global, the local becomes the family, the 'bubble' where all of life's ups and downs are validated and resolved as a mutual, collective destiny. Yet this family narrative acts as validation of the child's emotions without giving the child agency, thereby creating a repressive tolerance (Marcuse, 1965). It also places the child in a vulnerable position of not having other anchors if the family comes apart, and without footing when leaving the nest. However, the informants of these stories form new close relationships with ease, which later supports them in establishing a sense of belonging and home outside their family.

These relational advantages are not present in the accounts of "Places as privileged options". This interpretation of place triggers children's exploration-assertion motivational system. As well as being made responsible for their 'free' choice, the double-bind they are placed in does not include 'staying' as part of the presented options. The message of privilege is a carrier of narrow normative feeling-rules (Hochschild, 1983). Having other feelings than those which are 'correct' act as interpretive signs to point the finger at themselves as the one who is at fault: they need to negotiate within, as their embodied emotions do not match the privileged narrative (blinded for peer-review). The autobiographies illustrate how existential

conflicts between place as imagined (flow), place as experienced, and a sense of self, can continue into TCKs' adult trajectories.

Similarly, migration research continues to reinforce a duality between "privileged" and "underprivileged" migrants (Croucher, 2012). In doing so, it promotes an adult-centric narrative which fails to take the child's perspective. Affluence alone is no guarantee for a child's emotional well-being (Bernard, 2018). Having lived in grand residencies overseas, these informants know well the distinction between a house and a home. As this phenomenological analysis suggests, to describe certain migratory children as privileged is to obscure uneven power relations and challenges involved in developing a child's agency towards place attachment. In doing so, the scientific community ascribes restricting feeling-rules and stigma onto these groups, affecting the larger discourse of how TCKs and adult TCKs are supposed to feel about their globally mobile experiences.

However, it can be argued that the process of gaining agency in questions of place attachment described here is illustrative of wider-reaching social phenomena in the context of globalisation's push for increased mobility. Family narratives do not emerge in isolation, but are part of larger ideological myths in our societies (MacIntyre, 1981). Perhaps the narrative of "Places of privileged options" is a story which we start to tell ourselves, as workers' rights diminish faced with a globalised work market. As companies send their employees wherever the market needs us, we do not want to know of the breaking of our attachments (Vetlesen, 2009). Accordingly, we only allow ourselves the emotions of the explorative-assertive motivational system: We are excited and happy; we are on an adventure; we have been given an opportunity. Adaptability, flexibility, and adjustment are the skills we carry with us, yet we leave the other components of agency behind. Unable to live up to the feeling rules, we turn to our insular family for emotion regulation. Accordingly, the mobile nuclear family has only itself for consolation. The home becomes a pressure-cooker in ideologized mobility. As the 'family bubble' comes apart, to where, to what, and to whom, is the contemporary (wo)man attached?

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Article 3

Ragnhild Bjørnsen, Halvor Fauske, Jan Fadnes: “Invisible children, untouchable cases? Diplomat children and Third Culture Kids – A Child Welfare Perspective”.

“Invisible children, untouchable cases? Diplomat children and Third Culture Kids – A Child Welfare perspective”

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Abstract:

“Third Culture Kids”, children of affluent families living overseas due to their parents’ globally mobile careers, have received little attention from a Child Welfare perspective. The article addresses this research gap by exploring the barriers to how TCKs can realise their legal rights if subjected to neglect of care or abuse within their own family. The analysis is based on 43 autobiographies of former Norwegian Foreign Service children and two internationally known diplomat family child abuse cases. Results show how affluence and high mobility can cause TCKs to be “invisible” to Child Welfare Services. Moreover, as TCKs reside overseas, they are “unreachable” to the Child Welfare Services in their country of citizenship. Children whose parents have diplomatic status exist in a paradox: legal immunity may save the child from outside threat yet leaves cases of child neglect or abuse within diplomat families “untouchable” for local authorities and family courts.

Keywords

Third Culture Kids, Diplomatic Immunity, Child Welfare, Children’s Rights, Child Abuse (Neglect), International

1. Introduction

The starting point of this article was an empirical study which collected forty-three written and oral autobiographies from adults who have grown up within the Norwegian Foreign Service. Approximately 400 Norwegian children with a parent in the Foreign Service live

overseas at any time. Child Welfare is concerned with ensuring that children receive adequate care and are protected from physical and psychological harm within the family. In a few autobiographies, informants describe a childhood which would suggest intervention or support from Norwegian Child Welfare agencies. These include descriptions of substance misuse and emotional neglect, with pursuing psychological pathology later in life. However, neither were reports of concern registered, nor was any legal action taken to support the children. Though these accounts date back several decades, an ongoing trial of children abused by their diplomat parents in the English High Court shows how the vulnerability of diplomat children remains a pressing matter (*A Local Authority v AG* [2020] EWFC 18; *A Local Authority v AG nr. 2* [2020] EWHC 1346).

Diplomat children is a sub-category in the research field on "Third Culture Kids", or "TCKs". "TCK" is a term applied to children who spend parts of their developmental years outside their country of citizenship due to their parents' international employment (Useem, 1976). The term was introduced in the 1950s when there were a limited number of children whose parents worked as missionaries, diplomats, the armed forces, and corporations. These children were often highly mobile due to their parent(s)' numerous "postings". Researchers observed how children developed an identity and sense of belonging to a "third culture" within their sponsoring organisations' compounds and schools, as opposed to their parents' national cultural heritage, and the various cultural contexts of 'host' countries they resided in. Later, the transition to what was supposed to be their 'home' country proved to be a "reverse culture shock" – a state of alienation (Bell-Villada et. al., 2011). Today, with technological advancement, the globalisation of the market, as well as an expansion of international organisations at the supra-national level, it is hard to grasp the increasing numbers of expatriate children.[27] These children are a diverse group, following parents who represent an expanding multitude of professions, such as academics, businessmen, aid workers, diplomats, missionaries, soldiers, seasonal sojourners and location-independent families. However, this category of children represents a gap in the literature of international Child Welfare (Bernard & Grenwood, 2019b).

One reason for this may be that TCKs belong to the socioeconomic middle-class or affluent families. This is a category of children that generally receives little attention compared to children of poor and working-class backgrounds (blinded for peer review; Bernard & Grenwood, 2019b). On the other hand, research on TCKs is concerned with their

[27] One statistical indication may be the 11,946 registered international schools world-wide, catering for 5.9 million pupils: https://www.ibo.org/

educational needs and the psychological challenges (and benefits) of growing up in cross-cultural high mobility (Fail et al., 2004; Gilbert, 2008). What is lacking in the TCK literature is research that raises the questions of how TCKs can realise their legal rights outside of their passport country. Children's rights are defined as universal in the United Nation's Convention on the Rights of the Child of 1989 (CRC). However, in practice their rights and "best interests" are defined and implemented locally through a range of cultural interpretations, national Children's Acts, and Child Welfare Services on the ground. Accordingly, the laws and institutions meant to protect and support children in their country of citizenship do not directly apply when they live overseas.

This legal situation becomes additionally complicated for children of diplomats. Due to legal immunity, local family courts do not have jurisdiction to intervene when there is a concern for a child's wellbeing. We observe a similar lack of research on diplomat children's access to rights in the literature which discusses diplomatic immunity as spelt out in the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations (VCDR) of 1961. International organisations and councils were accorded diplomatic immunity in 1967, whereupon the world has witnessed a continuing rise of actors protected under this legal privilege. The Diplomatic Relations and Immunities Act of 1967 included the specialised agencies of the United Nations, international councils, and the OECD. In the aftermath of this Act, the number of similar entities has increased dramatically. In this article, we limit the scope of our analysis to the VCDR and diplomats of the Foreign Services. Here critics are concerned with how functioning diplomats may abuse their legal status. Where children are mentioned, they describe them as adolescents or students who also abuse this legal loophole (Ross, 1989).

This article aims to address these research gaps by exploring characteristics of a TCK childhood which may cause legal bias from a Child Welfare perspective. Despite TCKs being a diverse group of children, the results of our analysis show how typical characteristics of affluence and high mobility can cause TCKs to be "invisible" to Child Welfare Services. Also, TCKs live overseas, making them “unreachable” for Child Welfare Services in their country of citizenship. Compounded to these challenges is the legal immunity afforded to children of diplomats. This immunity may save the child from an outside threat but leaves child neglect or child abuse cases “untouchable” for local authorities and family courts. Finally, we discuss preventive measures which address these challenges for TCKs in general, and diplomat children in particular.

2. Empirical background

The aspects of a TCK and diplomat childhood explored in this article have emerged from an empirical study which collected forty-three written and oral autobiographies of former Norwegian Foreign Service children (NFS) in the period 2015 to 2019. (reference blinded for peer review) provides an overview of methods applied and methodological limitations of the empirical study. Questions regarding access to children's rights arose as stories of child care and child-parent relationships pointed to areas of concern, especially in questions of emotional neglect or alcohol misuse. The stories of such problems are a minority in the dataset. They are neither representative of the population of diplomat children as a whole, nor can they give any information on the frequency of such occurrences. However, the quotes and themes raised have analytic generalisability because they illustrate specific challenges that TCKs in general, and diplomat children in particular, may face in their specific circumstances. While compiling this data, we also conducted conversations and email correspondence between 2017-2020 with relevant stakeholders. These include the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affair's HR department; psychologists who have had seminars at the ministry; UD-partnerne (a network for the accompanying spouses of the functioning diplomat); and a representative at the Norwegian Ombudsperson for Children.

3. Affluent, highly mobile, and overseas families: what do we know?

Families with high socioeconomic status are rarely investigated by Child Welfare Services for suspected neglect or abuse. In the research literature, these families are described as affluent, defined by wealth and income, and by the interplay between economic, social and cultural capital (Bernard & Grenwood, 2019b). Based on the characteristics of these families, there is little to indicate that children are exposed to neglect or parental practice that creates challenges for the children. The typical indicators of neglect and abuse are poverty and material deprivation (Bernard & Greenwood, (2019a), absent in affluent families. From the outside, therefore, it seems that affluent families are a good environment for children to grow up in. It turns out, however, that also in these families, there will be various problems that affect children.

In many cases, their challenges relate to achievement pressures and isolation from parents (Luthar & Becker, 2002; Luthar & Latendresse, 2005). Parental neglect and emotional neglect are a common cause of many of the problems these children and adolescents face (Luthar & Latendresse, 2005). The pressure to (over)achieve is familiar to children of the NFS:

> Or is this just a failed attempt to generalise an unconscious truth that has only happened to me? I mean, the truth about the expectations and the pressure that lies there, often unsaid, but that at least I feel all the time. (Irene, age 23)

The parents might be absent, physically or emotionally. The most common reasons for this are parental psychopathology or substance(alcohol) disorders, both of which recent studies suggest are more common amongst expatriates than in the general population (Truman et.al., 2018). Moreover, existing conditions are known to worsen due to unfamiliarity, emotional, professional, and relational demands overseas (Barnes, 1980). A study of the US State Department's initiatives to assist its families shows how relocation-related stress is related to general uncertainty, reduced control, and increased ambiguity (Wilkinson & Singh, 2010). Parental absence is described in the empirical study, though this aspect varies significantly across the autobiographies:

> Diplomats have a kind of job where they have to attend representations also during evenings. In reality, this means that diplomat kids only see their parents on the weekends. It becomes natural that the nanny reads fairy tales by the bedside, or that older children look after the younger. When we moved to (…), I babysat for some diplomat children. The parents were away a lot, so I spent a lot of time with the children. It was especially tough to try to comfort the little boy in the house who missed his parents: 'But Daddy, I haven't seen you all day'. (Laura, age 23)

The challenges these children are exposed to often "go under the radar". This is due to several factors. The problems themselves are more invisible than those among families living in relative poverty and poor material conditions. Affluent parents are often concerned with keeping issues concealed and are therefore reluctant to seek help. Laura (above) points to another significant factor in how challenges at home are more difficult to detect within affluent families: they hire private care to replace the functions that parents would otherwise fill themselves (Bernard & Grenwood, 2019b). Moreover, Child Welfare workers can have a high threshold to intervene in these families, and the families are given the benefit of the doubt when allegations of abuse and neglect arise (Kojan, 2010; Bernard & Grenwood, 2019b). Child Welfare workers face these parents' capacity to question the worker's professional abilities, often reinforced by parents' lawyers. This leads Child Welfare workers to take the positions of "underdogs" (Kojan, 2010). As a result, documenting as well as

defining a child's situation becomes exceedingly challenging. In addition, children are often themselves "professional" guardians of the challenges at home, as parents are their main security:

> Interviewer: … this kind of problem can be difficult for others to discover…
> Interviewee: Yes, because we lie! – 'No, (the parent) is sleeping…', you know? The children don't want it to be discovered either – it's crazy how children are so incredibly loyal… (Silje, age 35)

The difficulties at home are manifested in the children when they reach adolescence, by various forms of relational difficulties, as well as mental challenges such as anxiety, depression, eating disorders and substance misuse. Accordingly, former children of dysfunctional affluent families have publicly posed the question to Child Welfare Services: 'Where were you?', or 'Why did you not interfere sooner?' (Bitsch, 2018).

The invisibility of children can also be the result of high mobility, whether inside or across countries (CFAB, 2018; Lidén et. al., 2014). This is a significant factor in a TCK childhood:

> There was no one who picked up on it – but it makes sense – it's hard to notice anything when the child is there 2-3 years and then disappears, and in the big international schools with so many kids, 2000 children. (Silje, age 35)

As Child Welfare Services are confined to their national jurisdiction, when families live overseas and are highly mobile, the problems of these families become not only invisible; they also become unreachable. Admittedly, such families will be subject to the jurisdiction of the country in which they reside, yet their social status will represent a high threshold for intervention. If the family also has diplomatic immunity, it will be nearly impossible for Child Welfare Services to intervene. The family has become "an untouchable case".

4. Children and diplomatic immunity: untouchable cases

4.1. The Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations

Children have been accorded increased attention in recent decades as legal beings in their own right. According the UNCRC of 1989, all children are entitled to the rights of the Convention,

which support their “best interest”. Children should therefore be protected both by international conventions and their national Children’s Acts. Over the last decades, legislation has increasingly taken a child perspective in legal matters, emphasising their legal agency. What makes the legal context of the diplomat child an exception, is how they and their parents are accorded diplomatic immunity overseas. The Vienna Convention of Diplomatic Relations (VCDR) of 1961, Article 31 (1) states that:

> A diplomatic agent shall enjoy immunity from the criminal jurisdiction of the receiving State. He shall also enjoy immunity from its civil, criminal and administrative jurisdiction.

A functional and today most common reason for according diplomatic immunity is the necessity to ensure the security of the diplomat when performing his or her duties (O’Keefe, 1976: 333). A state who fails to respect a diplomat’s legal immunity is considered to have committed a grave breach of international law (Brownlie, 1973). Those who argue for extending these privileges and immunities to family members base their arguments on the same functional necessity of the diplomat: ‘Pressure on his family would undermine that objective as much as direct pressure on his person.’ (O’Keefe, 1976: 333). The VCDR states clearly how the status of legal immunity also includes the functioning diplomat’s family:

> The members of the family of a diplomatic agent forming part of his household shall, if they are not nationals of the receiving State, enjoy the privileges and immunities specified in articles 29 to 36. Art. 37 (1).

History has shown many times over how diplomats and their families can face physical harm while on missions, becoming targets of rising international or transnational political tensions (Rigamer, 1989). Moreover, a diplomat’s functions may be compromised if the country of residence decides to fabricate evidence against his or her family for political motives. If a diplomat could not remove his or her children from a receiving state, the ability for states to interfere with diplomatic functions could be dangerously increased (Barker, 1998). It is with this reciprocity of security of their respective diplomats in mind that states, through the VCDR, will usually respect the principle of diplomatic immunity and inviolability:

> Inviolability of the person under Article 29 (of the VCDR) means that the receiving State is under a special duty to protect the entitled person and keep him free from harm and insult… Arrest and detention are specifically mentioned as two forms of interference from which the entitled person is protected (O'Keefe, 1976: 343).

In practice, if war breaks out in a receiving state, diplomats and their families will be the first to be safely assisted out of the country. In light of a child's general right to protection, the inviolability of diplomats certainly acts in the child's favour. Another practical implication, however, is that diplomats and their family members are "off limits" to the receiving state's authorities, including their family courts.

Those taking a critical stance towards diplomatic immunity, including a diplomat's family members, highlight how this legal privilege has been abused also by adolescent and student children of the functioning diplomat, of which some cases that are provided by Ross (1989). This reflects the general tendency for children of affluent families to be presented and discussed as "the problem" in the family, rather than being possible victims of parental neglect or abuse (Bernard & Greenwood, 2019). However, in 1987, a case of child abuse in a diplomat family referred to as *Re Terrence K.* sparked a heated debate in the media as well as amongst researchers within international and family law about diplomatic immunity versus children's rights (Ross, 1989; Castro, 2014).

In cases concerning child abduction by a diplomat parent, it has been argued that the UNCRC of 1989 and the Hague Convention of 1996 have amended the VCDR in matters concerning children's rights.[28] Recent developments point in the direction of countering the VCDR with the European Convention on Human Rights of 1955, seeking a balance between preserving the functional necessity of the diplomat, while minimising abuse of diplomatic immunity (*A Local Authority v AG* [2020] EWFC 18; *A Local Authority v AG nr. 2* [2020] EWHC 1346).

However, the present court case in the UK is testimony that diplomatic immunity remains a legal vacuum that can undermine the rights of the child. In the following, we present two known and contrasting cases of diplomat children facing alleged harm within their own family.

Case 1: Re Terrence K., 1987 (Re Terrence K., 522 N.Y.S.2d 949 [1987] N. Y. App. Div.)

The case commenced when a Commissioner of Social Services in the USA filed a petition to the family court to remove the child *Terrence K.* and his two younger siblings from his

[28] It is beyond the scope of this paper to include a discussion of these cases which concern private law. However, we encourage others to pick up this thread. See (Barker (1998) *"Child Abduction and international immunities – balancing competing policies"* for a discussion of the case *Re P (Minors)*, which reached the Court of Appeal and the High Court of England. We also note that the state of "the child's habitual residence" in the Hague Convention can be a particularly complex matter where diplomat children (and other TCKs) are concerned (*Re: A (Children), Re (Rev 1)* [2013] UKSC 60).

parents due to child abuse. The two oldest children were removed and placed into foster care, yet the original court order was ceased, as the parents claimed diplomatic immunity. The father was an attaché of the Republic of Zimbabwe's permanent mission to the United States, and therefore both him and his family members were entitled to diplomatic immunity. The youngest child was temporarily staying with another member of the mission. The US government asked the father to leave the country, which he did the same evening. Negotiations pursued between the US State Department and the government of the Republic of Zimbabwe. The US State Department concluded to place the children in the hands of the United States United Nation's mission, and that the children be returned to Zimbabwe with assurance that the father would face child protection proceedings under the Zimbabwean Children's Act, and that the children would be kept away from the custody of their father.

Case 2: Russian minister-councillor Dmitry Borodin, 2013[29]

In October 2013, a Russian diplomat was arrested in The Hague on grounds of the safety of his children. We will refer to the case as *Dmitry Borodin* because there never was a court case. Police entered the residence of Dmitry Borodin after having followed his car that had allegedly been involved in a car accident. Upon arrival at the residence, the neighbours reported to the police officers that they were concerned for the safety of the diplomat's children. The police entered the residence and brought both father and children to the police station, despite Borodin not allowing them to enter his residence, and stating that he had diplomatic immunity. A few hours later, Dmitry Borodin and his children were released, whereupon the family left the country. Vladimir Putin demanded an official apology from the Netherlands from what he called a "rude violation of treaties on diplomatic relations".[30] The Russian Foreign Ministry claimed the allegations were "absolutely contrived" and done under "false pretext". The arrest happened in a time of other tension between the two States. A few days later, a Dutch diplomat in Moscow was beaten in his residence.[31]

4.2. Observations from the two case studies

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[29] https://apnews.com/a2d0e702c9084306a23ce71f147b9096
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2013/12/02/russian-diplomat-who-was-arrested-in-the-hague-leaves-the-netherlands-a30097

[30] The Dutch Foreign Ministry responded with a reserved statement: 'If it emerges from the investigation that actions were taken in conflict with the Vienna Treaty on Diplomatic Relations, the Netherlands will apologize to Russia'. https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2013/12/02/russian-diplomat-who-was-arrested-in-the-hague-leaves-the-netherlands-a30097

[31] https://jblackwritings.wordpress.com/2013/10/18/russians-beat-up-dutch-diplomat-write-lgbt-on-mirror-in-russian-apartment/

Firstly, we note the principle of *reciprocal retaliation*, primarily motivated by the need to protect a sending state's own diplomats and their families. In the case of *Terrence K.*, the US State Department sent the boy "home", not because it was necessarily in the child's "best interest", as the UNCRC states, but to make sure that American diplomat families are safe when on mission in the Republic of Zimbabwe: '… U.S. diplomatic and consular personnel serving at posts abroad would be exposed unnecessarily to the reciprocal risks of retaliatory measures taken by foreign states' (Hickey & Fisch, 1990: 355). The *Dmitry Borodin* case is an example of how international relations operate with acts of retaliation, and how diplomats, including their families, can become targets of such retaliation. If a receiving state sends the sender state's diplomats out of the country, the sending state will respond with a gesture similar in levels of symbolic significance.

Our second observation is related to the first, namely that a diplomat child's potentially harmful situation is *redefined*, from a Child Welfare concern to questions of International Relations. This is especially clear in the case of *Dmitry Borodin*. In a climate of pre-existing diplomatic tension between two countries, an act of not respecting the "inviolability principle" is interpreted as an immediate breach to the VCDR. However, the case of *Terrence K.* shows that there are alternatives. In this case, the two states concerned, the USA and the Republic of Zimbabwe, agree that the situation was primarily a question of the children's need for protection. In this case, the strong evidence of physical and psychological abuse would have assisted the agreement of defining the situation as a child abuse case, not a "false pretext". The case shows how two Ministries of Foreign Affairs can cooperate to find solutions, despite reciprocal retaliation being the most significant motive. However, although the two countries agreed on a solution, the receiving state (the USA) has no means to follow up on the case, let alone guarantee that the sending state (Zimbabwe) has kept their side of such an agreement.

This leads us to the third characteristic of such cases, which are *particular institutional proceedings*. As the American Child Welfare Services physically remove Terrence from the parents, and the Dutch police enter the residence of a diplomat and make an arrest, both cases are examples of local authorities breaching the "inviolability principle". Such a breach can even become institutionalised, as when the UK Child Protection Services advise to consider removing the diplomat child from school, rather than from the diplomat's residence.[32] However, the two cases also illustrate how standard execution of authority and legal

[32] https://www.londoncp.co.uk/chapters/diplomats_fam.html

proceedings concerning children in a receiving state are replaced with a different set of state proceedings within hours of an arrest or petition. Instead, a diplomat parent's immunity is communicated to the receiving state's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which notifies executive government. Negotiations between the receiving and sending state follow. Broadly speaking, the receiving state has two options. Firstly, it can ask the sending state to waiver immunity of the diplomat. If granted, the receiving state has jurisdiction to commence family court proceedings. Secondly, it can ask the sending state to call back its diplomat, and in severe cases, declare the diplomat persona non grata. In both cases discussed here, the diplomat parent is called home by his respective state at the first opportunity. This is the case for the present court case in the UK (*A Local Authority v AG* [2020] EWFC 18; *A Local Authority v AG nr. 2* [2020] EWHC 1346). This appears to be a standard response, although there is one known example where the French mission to India decided to suspend their functioning diplomat of his duties, effectively to waiver his diplomatic privileges and immunities.[33]

The institutionally warped proceedings, the redefinition of a Child Welfare case into International Relations, and the principle of retaliation, together means that states have a strong incentive to negotiate any situation concerning diplomat children away from public attention. A grave consequence of these negotiations is that a diplomat child's *legal agency, voice, and situational circumstances go undocumented*. Notes from the court proceedings state that Terrence K. was terrified of his father, and he feared being sent back to the Republic of Zimbabwe where his father then resided. However, he is not accorded the legal agency to take part in these decisions. The case is rare in that a court case commenced in the first place, and that the voice of Terrence K. exists in official and publicly available registrations of court proceedings. In the case of *Dmitry Borodin*, a trial was not initiated. The consequence is not only that there was no court case and that the children had no influence in the situation. The result is also that the children's voices, and potential circumstantial evidence, cannot be registered and documented for further investigations.

[33] https://www.thenewsminute.com/article/bengaluru-court-acquits-ex-french-diplomat-pascal-mazurier-charges-raping-minor-daughter
https://www.huffingtonpost.in/2017/05/02/the-misogyny-in-the-pascal-mazurier-judgment-is-whats-wrong-wit_a_22064579/

5. Discussion

5.1. TCKs and diplomat children on the ground

Today, TCKs are a highly diverse group around the world. TCKs and their families live their lives in local contexts that will influence their situation in various ways. Despite these variations, our analysis has shown the importance of typical characteristics that many TCKs share, and which directly or indirectly relate to their access to Child Welfare Services. We have shown how problems of neglect or abuse within the families of TCKs can be invisible to their surroundings, due to both their relative affluence and their high mobility. As they reside outside of their country of citizenship, they are also largely unreachable to the Child Welfare Services of their country of citizenship, from which they would otherwise have had the right to receive support and protective interventions. Their access to these rights will therefore vary depending on the country in which they currently reside.

In the case of diplomat children, however, their legal immunity overseas means that their cases become untouchable for the local authorities and family courts. In our analysis, it becomes clear that diplomatic immunity must continue to include family members. As pointed out, this immunity can certainly act in a child's favour in the context of an outward threat. However, the very same legal immunity means the children do not have access to the Child Welfare Services as other children when residing overseas. Through an analysis of previous cases, an ongoing case in the UK (*A Local Authority v AG* [2020] EWFC 18; *A Local Authority v AG nr. 2* [2020] EWHC 1346), as well as our own empirical research on former Norwegian Foreign Service children, it is apparent that this side to immunity presents a real vulnerability. The few cases known to the public illustrate how such a legal vacuum fails to provide children protection from their own family members; they are not granted legal agency on their own terms; and their voices remain undocumented. In the case of diplomat children, we have yet to witness a trial addressing their particular barriers to rights in the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR). Were it to do so, the fact remains that the large majority of the 191 countries who have ratified the VCDR are not signatory of the ECHR.

Today, we see a growing tendency in court to argue the incompatibility between the VCDR and a country's obligations towards other international conventions, such as the UNCRC and the ECHR. When the UNCRC came into force in 1990, children were recognized as rights holders for the first time in international human rights law. Since then the

rights are ratified and implemented in national constitutions, they are taken into account by courts at international, regional and domestic levels, and they are a central tenet of the policy framework of governments (Tobin, 2013). However, as globalisation gives rise to new lifestyles across national borders, the channels through which children are supposed to realise their rights become less clear. There is a need for nation-states to address the particular legal vulnerabilities of global high-mobility children.

Such vulnerabilities are not only hard to identify, they are difficult to engage. In practice, local authorities do not know whether or not a child has diplomatic immunity until an intervention has taken place. As we have seen, in some situations, this could mean that local authorities interfere where they do not have jurisdiction. However, the result can also be the opposite – that local authorities stay away from a whole expatriate community, as they do not know if a TCK is a diplomat child. Everyday life on the ground as it unfolds in practice does not distinguish clearly between TCKs who have immunity and those who do not. As noted, diplomatic legal immunity is not limited to Foreign Service personnel alone, it is afforded a wide spectre of international actors. In many situations, expatriates still live amongst themselves, engaging in the 'continuous drawing, maintaining and negotiating of boundaries' (Fechter, 2007: 50), hence the metaphors they use to describe their social spheres as a "bubble", "bunker", "ghetto", "hothouse", and "Disneyland" (ibid). Especially in countries of large class differences, these are "gated communities" (Picton & Urquhart, 2020), where housing, workplace, clubs and schools are equipped with heavy security. Together with economic status, Anglo-linguistic and cultural capital, and, in some contexts, ethnicity and "race" (Tanu, 2015), these communal boundaries all play a part in conveying messages to local authorities that these children are "off-limits". Regardless of whether or not they are formally diplomats, in practice this can mean an additional barrier to TCKs who do not have legal immunity. From an adult-centric perspective, we ascribe a status of "privilege" to this group of serial migrants based on material and security benefits. However, if we take a child perspective, the same "privileges and immunities" as is stated in the VCDR may well cause a situation of being stuck inside a dysfunctional family fortress.

5.2. Ways forward?

In what follows, we suggest some preventive measures that could assist TCKs in realising their legal rights. These will not be applicable to all TCKs in all situations. Rather, they represent various possibilities where some might be more relevant than others to match a particular context.

First, we recognise the inviolability principle to be paramount, and that any other bilateral agreement must follow successively. Countries have, however, the ability to make bilateral agreements regarding their missions to protect children and other family members of the diplomat. Take the example of Terrence K. If Zimbabwe and the US had bilateral agreements to ensure a transparent judicial investigation of an alleged crime by a diplomat, the following could be a realistic scenario: Immediately upon the US Commissioner filing the petition the relevant counterparts in Zimbabwe would receive the same documents with an invitation to partake as observers on US soil. The relevant counterparts should have access to all evidence to make the process transparent. The children would be placed in foster care and again the relevant counterparts in Zimbabwe would be invited to observe. Zimbabwe's representatives would also be empowered to care for them or bring the children back to child protecting services or any other suitable arrangements in Zimbabwe. If Zimbabwe did not waiver the diplomat's immunity, the diplomat is returned home and they would be required to investigate the claim and invite US relevant counterparts to observe during investigation and adjudication of the claim. Such a scenario is one of many that would be realistic and would protect both missions and their children while upholding the diplomatic status of the states' representatives. Diplomatic relations are meant to be both rigid and flexible to accommodate crises. It is not hard to see the potential benefits of countries planning for these eventualities while establishing or ratifying an already existing mission. We suspect that both the Dimitry Borodin and Terrence K cases would have benefited from predetermined procedures to protect both the inviolability principle and the rights of the child. We urge the international legal community to draft a standard agreement which signatory countries of the VCDR could enter bilaterally.

Further, possibilities for children to easily communicate with the authorities and Child Welfare Services of their country of citizenship must improve. We suggest websites and online forums similar to the Norwegian Red Cross's "Korspaahalsen.no" for children living overseas. State information websites directed towards children and youth, such as "ung.no" and "barneombudet.no" in Norway, must include information and facilitate interactive discussions for children overseas. Studies of online helplines find that children and youth communicate emotional issues such as mental health and close relationships in conversations online rather than in telephone conversations or with physical others. Online, children feel a higher degree of anonymity and reduced impressions of power imbalance (Callahan & Inckle, 2011). Platforms must offer the possibility for children and youth to ask questions directly to an online counsellor, who is under obligation to contact the police in matters of acute concern.

Here cooperation with international organisations such as the Red Cross and local Child Welfare Services needs to be improved (CFAB, 2018). This cooperation is a well-known challenge for the Norwegian Ombudsperson for Children, as they experience children calling them from overseas, only to "lose them".

Thirdly, employers should be made aware of the possible serious implications for a child when posting an employee overseas. They can engage external TCK counsellors to meet with the family and introduce the websites directly to the children and youth. In the case of employers who send families overseas on a large scale, there is a need to invest in their own TCK counsellor who follows the families regularly, facilitates a website and networking for the children and youth. Such sponsor organisations play a considerable role in shaping a mobile child's life, as "the contract" is always a present factor. Many TCKs form parts of their developing identity around the parent's long-term employer, and take on the role as "little heroes/soldiers" of the armed forces, "little missionaries" of God's calling, or "little country representatives" (Ender, 2002). It is therefore key that such TCK interactive websites not become closed-off "interpretive communities" (Fish, 2008) that worship a certain employer profile and stresses a 'uniqueness' of the children.

There is no doubt that some of the former Norwegian Foreign Service (NFS) children of the study upon which this article is based would have benefited greatly from such services. A TCK counsellor, website and network will also serve the children and youth upon re-entry to Norway. Repatriation has been the most challenging time for the majority of the informants, as they can experience social isolation and bullying that for some has marked them long into adulthood. It is indeed discouraging that meet-ups in the presence of a TCK counsellor existed briefly as a service in the NFS, only to have been discarded. It is advised to look to existing solutions, such as the American Foreign Service Youth Foundation, for inspiration. However, for over two decades the NFS has had a presentation about 'Psychological challenges of overseas postings', including the TCK experience. In doing so, the NFS is nuancing a cultural narrative that might otherwise present an understanding of this childhood as exclusively privileged, seen from a perspective of material standards and special opportunities (blinded for peer-review). Moreover, in 2017 the NFS introduced a seminar on the risks of alcohol and substance misuse as part of pre-posting briefing, and couple counselling workshops. These are both issues which directly affect the children's wellbeing and sense of a stable and secure home environment. Other organisations would do well to implement similar HR routines.

It is not satisfactory for any organisation or business who sends their employees overseas to argue that it is solely up to the parents to guarantee for the children's wellbeing. As several informants in the NFS study pointed out, a good employee is not necessarily a good parent, and relocations and repatriations place added strain on families (Wilkinson & Singh, 2010). Where employees are granted diplomatic immunity, the organisations' responsibility exceeds that of other employers due to the "untouchable" legal vacuum in which the child is placed. Embassies overseas need to increase awareness and competency among their "integration consultants" and "family liaisons" (Lidén et. al., 2014) about the specific risks involved in being a child of an affluent high-mobility family overseas, as well as the particular legal vulnerability of the diplomat child.

Finally, online interaction and follow-up with a TCK counsellor presents a possibility for children's voices to be heard and documented, a barrier when they are overseas. This is of particular concern for diplomat children. As governments have a high motivation to keep any potentially dramatic situations concerning diplomats away from the public eye, diplomat children's legal agency can be compromised, and their voices go unregistered. Were the children's voices and circumstances to be documented, this could be a step in the right direction for sending and receiving states to cooperate in defining a situation as one concerning a child's right to care and protection, rather than becoming a piece in the retaliation game of International Relations. Together with a preventive bilateral agreement in place, the situation we now see in the UK should be possible to avoid in future.

6. Conclusion

The last decades have seen the ratification of international conventions promoting the child as a legal being. However, these conventions are interpreted and implemented within nation-state boarders. UNICEF estimates that 50 million children are "on the move", a number that continues to expand (UNICEF, 2018). Migration creates an additional vulnerability for children. However, the scientific community tends to create a dichotomy between "privileged" and "underprivileged" migrants, obscuring the child perspective. This article shines the spotlight on how children from middle-class and affluent families living in global mobility face their own set of circumstances that can act as barriers to their rights for care and protection. With a particular emphasis on the case of the diplomat child, we have shown that they may become invisible, unreachable and untouchable from a Child Welfare perspective. Further research is needed in this area which remains largely unexplored.

Acknowledgements

We want to thank Prof. Torunn E. Kvisberg for her contributions to this paper.

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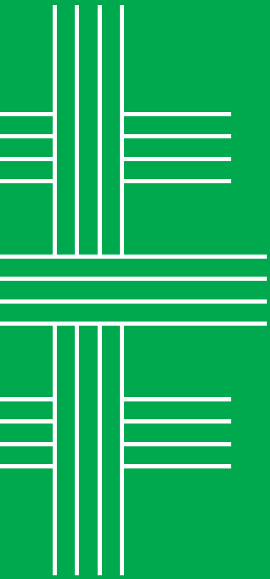

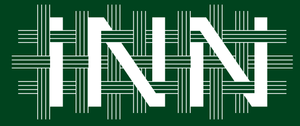

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21st century childhoods are increasingly exposed to mobilities and new forms of global (dis)connections. This is a study into the childhood experiences and adult reflections of those who have grown up within the Norwegian Foreign Service (NFS). They have been mobile child dependents of employees who are sent on multiple missions overseas, commonly referred to as 'classic' "Third Culture Kids" (TCKs). What does it mean to have had a childhood within the NFS? As an early barometer of rising global trends, their voices provide new insight that will be valuable for a growing number of children and adults as professions become increasingly mobile. Having been labelled "a privileged child", their stories also counter public and historicized stereotypes of 'privilege' and 'global elitism'.

Based on 43 written and oral autobiographies, the study finds that narratives of ascribed 'privilege' tighten the range of what is socially acceptable to feel. Children can take these "feeling rules" and perform "deep acting", creating a disconnection towards the emotional self and towards parents. Multiple relocations can lead to disconnection towards place, friends and community. Yet where there was a high degree of child agency in negotiating "home" with their parents, it benefited the child's sense of control, predictability and perceived meaning over journeying away from Norway. Finally, the diplomat child exists in a legal loophole from a Child Welfare perspective. Generally, TCKs can face barriers to realising their rights because assumptions over affluence and privileged mobility nourishes others' non-involvement.

There is a tendency to go from serial mobility in young adult life, towards seeking connection to one location and to locally bound relationships in later adulthood. Yet their childhood encounters give rise to global identities and wide empathy maps which stretch across cultural differences and physical distances, qualities for which they express deep gratitude.