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# THE REJECTED CHILDREN

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A POLICY ANALYSIS OF REJECTED ASYLUM-SEEKING  
CHILDREN'S WELL-BEING IN DANISH DEPARTURE  
CENTERS

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## Abstract

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**Title:** The rejected children – a policy analysis of rejected asylum-seeking children's well-being in Danish departure centers

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This thesis explores the interplay between government policy and rejected asylum-seeking children's well-being in deportation processes in Denmark. Central is how political discourses shape specific ways of governing rejected asylum-seeking children, opening and closing specific ways of enhancing their well-being. The conditions and well-being of rejected asylum-seeking children have received much public and political attention in the recent past in Denmark. Framed by a tension between immigration policy and political frameworks on child rights, rejected asylum-seeking children have stipulated public and political concerns over their welfare and conditions and the maintenance of incentive measures to encourage the voluntary return of the families. The political memoranda 'Fair direction for Denmark' and 'The children must move out of Sjølsmark and have better living conditions' from 2019 led to changes for the children and their living conditions at departure centers. The objective is to examine how modes of governance, discourses, and rationales shape state interventions aimed at rejected asylum-seeking children. The memoranda supported by related documentary sources to the policy process and interviews with practitioners who negotiate government policies through their everyday interactions with the children form the basis of the analysis. Building on Carol Bacchi's WPR approach, the thesis shows that rejected asylum-seeking children are trapped between two political discourses; that of childhood and that of migration management. The latter seems to become the established way of governing rejected asylum-seekers, creating a perception of the children as first and foremost 'illegal residents' and secondary 'children'.

**Keywords:** Rejected asylum-seeking children, departure centers, migration, childhood, policy, well-being

## Popular science summary

In 2015, a large influx of asylum-seekers, including children, entered Denmark to seek security and protection. It led to a demand for urgent response and policies to ensure the safety of the Danish borders. As a result, a number of restrictions were made to the Aliens Act to control the influx and encourage unwanted asylum-seekers to leave the country. Among other things, it became mandatory for rejected asylum-seeking children and their families to reside at a departure center until their approaching departure. Since then, the well-being of rejected asylum-seeking children has been under national and international scrutiny.

Dominant arguments in the debate claim that it is the parents who take their children hostage in an attempt to be granted asylum, while alternative arguments claim that it is the politicians who take the children hostage for an unworthy and inhumane symbolic policy. In 2019, the Social Democrats, the Danish Social Liberal Party, the Socialist People's Party, and the Red-Green Alliance agreed to relocate the children and alter their material living conditions. This agreement was formulated in the two memoranda of understandings 'Fair direction for Denmark' and 'The children must move out of Sjælsmark and have better living conditions'.

Together with documents related to the policy process and interviews with practitioners, the memoranda shed light on how different political agendas and government perceptions intervene and influence the conditions of rejected asylum-seeking children. It can be argued that the recently implemented initiatives stated in the memoranda reflect a doubled-sided agenda. On the one hand, the government seeks to enhance better conditions for children to safeguard an image of Denmark as a promoter of a safe and developing childhood. On the other hand, the government entered reservations to the extent to which the conditions can be improved. The improvements must not compromise the government's work with encouraging the voluntary return of rejected asylum-seekers. The integrity of the asylum system takes precedence over the children's well-being, effectively creating a distinction between the government's responsibility to rejected asylum-seeking children and other children in Denmark.

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# 1. Introduction

## 1.1. Background: The rejected children at Sjælsmark

Asylum-seeking children are increasingly visible around the world. 2015 marks the year of the recent largest influx of refugees and migrants to Europe. The Syrian civil war forced children and adults on the run seeking security and protection from human rights violations, violence, persecution, or conflict. Since 2015, approximately 1 million children have arrived in Europe. They come from different backgrounds and conditions. Some are granted residence while others are rejected (Amnesty, 2015; Byrne & Hansen, 2018:4).

In recent years, the public and political debate in Denmark has been mainly concerned with the group of asylum-seeking children who do not receive protection. This group is legally categorized as children of rejected asylum-seekers and do not have legal residence in Denmark. Consequently, rejected asylum-seeking children live in a double situation. At once, they are children residing in Denmark and children who do not have legal residence in Denmark (Christensen & Andersen, 2006:9; DRC, 2018:3).

Humanitarian organizations, professionals, and politicians have criticized the conditions for children, especially at departure center Sjælsmark. Sjælsmark was established in 2012 where the old military barrack was transformed into a departure center. At that time, rejected asylum-seeking families with children only had to be transferred to the center just before their approaching departure. However, as a response to the 2015 refugee crisis, it became mandatory for rejected asylum-seeking families to accommodate at a departure center to motivate the families to leave. From 2015 until the summer of 2020, Sjælsmark housed rejected families who did not voluntarily cooperate in their return. Whereas rejected asylum-seekers, including children, who voluntarily cooperated in their return were accommodated at departure center Avnstrup. As distinct from Avnstrup, Sjælsmark is surrounded by a fence, supervised by uniformed staff, and the families were to eat their meals in a cafeteria to signal that it has consequences if a rejected asylum-seeker refused to leave (Gunnarsdóttir & Bornfeld, 2019:8; Paulsen, 2018).

In December 2018, the Parliamentary Ombudsman was on an unannounced visit to Sjælsmark. The Ombudsman concluded that although the conditions are generally not in conflict with international conventions such as the Convention on the Rights of the Child (abbreviated UNCRC) and the European Convention on Human Rights, the conditions at the center limit the children's opportunities for natural development and self-expression

(Ombudsmandens Børnekontor, 2018:3). In 2019, a report from the Red Cross concluded that 80 percent of the children at departure center Sjælsmark are at risk of developing a mental illness, and 61 percent meet the criteria for a psychiatric diagnosis (Gunnarsdóttir & Bornfeld, 2019:20-22).

In many ways, departure center Sjælsmark became the face of the polarized debate about rejected asylum children's living conditions and well-being. There is a broad agreement that rejected asylum-seeking families must leave but disagreement about to what extent a restrictive immigration policy should outweigh considerations to the children's well-being. The criticism of Sjælsmark has been dismissed with arguments such as it is the parents who take their children hostage in an attempt to be granted asylum. Alternative arguments claim that politicians take the children hostage for an unworthy and inhumane symbolic policy (Redder, 2019; Ritzau, 2019). The debate about Sjælsmark resulted in a political memorandum between the Social Democrats (Socialdemokratiet), the Socialist People's Party (Socialistisk Folkeparti, abbreviated SF), the Danish Social Liberal Party (Radikale Venstre, abbreviated RV), and the Red-Green Alliance (Enhedslisten) stating that conditions for the children at Sjælsmark must be improved. Subsequently, several initiatives were implemented in 2020, including relocating the children and their families from Sjælsmark to departure center Avnstrup. Besides, a daycare, leisure time activities, and facilities for families to cook in their rooms have been established. However, critics argue that the conditions have not changed significantly because uncertainty about the future remains a fundamental condition for the children (Holst, 2020; Redder, 2019).

Rejected asylum-seeking children thus seem to be caught between their parents' decisions not to leave and a political decision ordering them to live at a departure center not suitable for long-term stays. In July 2020, 70 percent of all rejected asylum-seekers were in a deadlock position, indicating that they either oppose the Danish authorities' decision, or for other reasons, are unable to return (Bendixen, 2011:5; Holst, 2020; Nationalt Udlændingecenter, 2020:1). This indicates the complexity of the situation of rejected asylum children and how different political agendas and practices intervene and impact the conditions of rejected asylum-seeking children.

## 1.2. The Danish asylum system

The Danish asylum system is designed so that there is no upper limit for how long a person or child can be in a position of dispatch. Studies show that children's well-being deteriorates with the length of stay (Hallas et al., 2007; IMR, 2009:13; Nielsen et al., 2007). Although stays at a departure center are only meant to be short-lived, many children end up spending years in the centers. An estimate of 160 children currently lives with their families at departure center Avnstrup. Figures from 2017 show that 46 out of the 64 children at Sjølsmark had lived in asylum centers for more than two years and some up to more than seven years<sup>1</sup> (DCR, 2018:30; Svendsen et al., 2018:63; Vistar, 2019). For various reasons, the children get caught in limbo between being unable to stay and unable to leave. This phenomenon is not unique to Denmark. In recent years, European countries have been confronted with the difficulty of deporting rejected asylum-seekers. Either due to continued insecurity and conflict in the home country or lack of paperwork and cooperation with local authorities (Bendixen, 2011:5; Suárez-Krabbe et al., 2018:12).

The current accommodation structure is divided into three phases. This means that the conditions at the centers depend on whether the residents are new arrivals (phase 1), have a pending case for a residence permit (phase 2), or are in a position of deportation (phase 3). All types of centers must ensure the residents' basic needs and the individual's need for security and safety (Nyidanmark.dk, 2019; UIM, 2020b). Conditions specifically applied to rejected asylum-seekers include measures to encourage and ensure the voluntary return of rejected asylum-seekers. These incentive measures are termed motivational advancement measures. They comprise inter alia compulsory attendance at the Police, removal of monetary allowances, residence at a departure center, and the possibility of imprisonment. Such provisions are regulated in the Danish Aliens Act (Bendixen, 2011:21; UIM, 2019a). In addition, Denmark is not covered by the EU standards on asylum but is only bound by international conventions on refugee and child rights. Due to this 'opt-out', Denmark possesses significant autonomy to pursue an independent asylum policy (EU information center, 2019; Gammeltoft-Hansen & Whyte, 2011:153).

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<sup>1</sup> Data in the field of children in the asylum system is very scanty. No data showing the development in the number of children at departure centers, lengths of stay for children at departure centers or the number of various asylum centers that children on average live in while they are in the asylum system (Svendsen et al., 2018:63-65)

### 1.3. The political landscape of asylum policy in Denmark

Along with the other Nordic countries, Denmark has a long history of acceptance of refugees and asylum-seekers and protecting human rights (Byrne & Hansen, 2018:21). The cornerstones of Denmark's current immigration policy are founded in the Aliens Act of 1983. At that time Denmark did not experience a particularly large influx of asylum seekers and had a liberal attitude towards immigration. The public debate was centered on improving the legal position of foreigners and especially asylum-seekers. The legal basis of asylum-seekers was criticized as being too vague and not sufficiently securing the legal claims when proceeding an asylum case or deportation. The development from 1983 until today is a slow turnaround from a liberal and legal-oriented foreign policy to, at least on paper, one of the strictest immigration laws in Europe (Gammeltoft-Hansen & Whyte, 2011:152-155; Spang & Larsen, 2021:684; Vitus & Lidén, 2010:66).

In the early 1990s, the main focus was on immigration to Denmark and the resulting challenges for successful integration. From the end of the 1990s and post 9/11, a greater focus was placed on the economical expenses of asylum-seekers, how to make the asylum process more efficient and how to encourage rejected asylum-seekers to leave the country (Gammeltoft-Hansen & Whyte, 2011:159; Spang & Larsen, 2021:684). From 2002-2011, the VK-government<sup>2</sup> implemented 57 amendments to the Aliens Act, corresponding to 5-6 amendments a year. Among other things, the changes involved intensification of the motivational advancement measures. From 2012-2013, the S-R-SF-government<sup>3</sup> made 15 amendments. Some of these involved withdrawing the previous VK-government's austerity measures. In addition, rejected asylum-seeking families could accommodate in independent housing units outside asylum centers a year after being rejected asylum. This right was deprived shortly after the V-government/V-LA-K-government<sup>4</sup> came to power in 2015. From 2015-2019, government introduced 114 tightenings of the Aliens Act. Once again, the motivational advancement measures were intensified (Bendixen, 2011:21; Gammeltoft-Hansen & Jørgensen, 2014; UIM, 2019a). Since the current S-government<sup>5</sup> came to power in 2019, a new office, the Danish Return Agency, has been established to work more

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<sup>2</sup> The Danish Liberal Party and the Conservative People's Party, governed by prime minister Anders Fogh Rasmussen.

<sup>3</sup> The Social Democrats, the Danish Social Liberal Party and the Socialist People's party, governed by prime minister Helle Thorning Smith.

<sup>4</sup> The Danish Liberal Party formed government from 2015-2016. From 2016-2019 the parties the Danish Liberal Party, the Conservative People's Party and Liberal Alliance formed the government. The hole period was governed by prime minister Lars Løkke Rasmussen.

<sup>5</sup> The Social Democrats, governed by Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen.

purposefully with effectuating deportation of rejected asylum-seekers. Additionally, at this moment the S-government is about reforming the entire asylum system. This involves sending asylum seekers to a third country that will handle the asylum processing and possibly subsequently provide protection to those who are granted asylum. In short, preventing any asylum-seeker to enter Denmark (Wang, 2021).

#### 1.4. Aim and research question

The various amendments to the Aliens Act and public and political debate about the children at Sjælsmark show that the framework of the children's lives is politically determined. Their conditions can in principle be negotiated and changed. The perception of children and asylum-seekers in general influences the design and conditions of departure centers. Conversely, the design of the departure center has consequences for the children and their well-being. It means that the perception of the two phenomena: rejected asylum children and deportation processes, are mutually dependent and constantly evolving (Vitus, 2011a:12; Kohl, 2015:7). The objective of the present thesis is to examine how modes of governance, discourses, and rationales shape state interventions aimed at rejected asylum-seeking children. In other words, the thesis departs from the following research question:

*How does politicians and practitioners' perception of rejected asylum-seeking children shape the initiatives expressed in the memoranda "Fair direction for Denmark" and "The children must move out of Sjælsmark and have better living conditions"?*

To explore the background and consequences of the implemented initiatives based in the memoranda 'Fair direction for Denmark' (Retfærdig retning for Danmark) and 'The children must move out of Sjælsmark and have better living conditions' (Børnene skal ud af Sjælsmark og have bedre vilkår), the thesis uses data including 1) documents related to the policy process such as, resolutions, political debates and statements, citizen proposals, and 2) interviews with practitioners who work with the children. A precondition for my understanding is that policies include but also extend beyond state governing. The policy process is thus understood as the way a political agreement or policy proposal is designed, passed, and implemented. Herein lies a recognition of that conflicting perceptions of how rejected asylum children should be treated can be at stake (Bacchi, 2009:26). Although asylum policy and deportation processes are transnational and for that matter also embedded in geopolitics, the thesis solely focuses on deportation processes in Denmark and how these

affect children (Lemberg-Pedersen, 2011:216). In doing so, I draw on Carol Bacchi's WPR approach to policy analysis to analyze the different rationales behind the political agendas and practices in the memoranda.

### 1.5. Outline

The study is divided into six chapters, including the introduction. *Chapter two* provides an insight into previous literature on children at asylum centers in the Nordic countries and how the present thesis relates hereto. *Chapter three* presents the conceptual framework anchored in Bacchi's WPR approach to policy analysis. *Chapter four* contains the thesis's method and methodological considerations, including the reasons for choosing documents and interviews as data sources. An outline of the data collection, processing, and analysis is also presented. *Chapter five* analyzes the policy process related to memoranda. The theoretical and methodological framework of the WPR approach informs the analysis to examine the discursive understanding that affects the perception of the asylum-seeker and their living conditions. I show that the ambivalent position of rejected asylum-seeking children in deportation processes is rooted in the political identity categories; child and rejected asylum-seeking child. *Chapter six* summarize and discuss the finding of the thesis.

### 1.6. Definition of central laws, asylum terms and core concepts

Before diving into the central elements of the thesis, it is essential to briefly introduce and define some of the laws and terms related to the asylum process and core concepts used throughout the thesis. The aim is to create a shared understanding when used in the thesis.

#### *The Danish Aliens Act (Udlændingeloven):*

The Act includes rules on aliens' entry and residence in Denmark, visas, asylum, family reunification, temporary and permanent residence permits, revocation of residence permits, deportation of aliens, and accommodation of asylum-seekers (Spang & Larsen, 2021).

#### *The Danish Service Act (Serviceloven):*

The Act includes guidelines for advice and support to prevent social problems (Schultz, 2015).

*United Nations Convention of the Right of the Child (UNCRC):*

The UNCRC is an international set of rules to ensure children's rights throughout the world. The convention is not a law by itself. Instead, it is a set of guidelines that the UN member states must adhere to. The principle of 'the best interest of the child' is the building block of the convention to ensure children's provision, protection, and participation (Baraldi & Cockburn, 2018:6).

*Rejected asylum-seeker:*

A rejected asylum-seeker is an alien who has received a final rejection of an application for asylum by the Danish Immigration Service. According to the Aliens Act, an alien who does not have the right to reside in Denmark is obliged to leave the country on one's own accord. When rejected for asylum, the alien has seven days to leave the country. The alien can forcibly be deported if the alien does not leave voluntarily. In such cases the Police will take care of the departure. Children are usually treated as a part of the parent's asylum case. In other words, if the parents have been rejected asylum, this also applies to the child (Spang & Larsen, 2021:686, 703-704; Vedsted-Hansen, 2011:270).

*Motivational advancement measure:*

Rejected asylum seekers are divided into aliens who cooperate in their deportation and aliens who do not cooperate in their deportation. If the alien cooperates, the Danish Return Agency takes care of the departure, such as providing necessary travel documents and planning the logistics of the deportation. Additionally, aliens who voluntarily leave Denmark receive financial support for re-establishment in the home country. If an alien does not cooperate, the Police initiate motivational advancement measures to speed up the deportation process. The motivational advancement measures entail a duty to report to the Police, reside at a departure center, risk of imprisonment, and deprivation of financial benefits (Spang & Larsen, 2021:703-704).

*Departure center:*

There are currently 12 asylum centers in Denmark, including three departure centers (see appendix 1 for an overview of the centers). An alien who does not have legal residence in Denmark and does not cooperate in deportation is obliged to reside at a departure center. An injunction to reside at a departure center means that the alien must spend every night at the center. Families with children are currently accommodated at departure center Avnstrup,

while other groups of rejected asylum seekers are accommodated at departure center Sjælsmark and Kærshovedgård. The departure centers are staffed 24 hours a day. Sjælsmark and Kærshovedgård are operated by the Prison and Probation Service, whereas the Red Cross operates Avnstrup. At Sjælsmark and Kærshovedgård, there is a cafeteria arrangement, where the residents get three meals a day in the center's canteen. At Avnstrup, a flexible food scheme has been implemented, whereby the residents themselves can order and cook food (Nyidanmark.dk, 2021).

#### *Welfare state:*

The concept of welfare state follows Esping-Andersen's trefold division between the social democratic, the conservative, and liberal welfare state. The Danish welfare state is characterized by a high degree of de-commodification, meaning that public services is supported by the state and universal. An overall objective is to ensure financial security by providing free access to a range of public services, e.g., health care and education which is financed through high taxes (Esping-Andersen, 1991:43; Plovsig, 2008:9-10).

#### *Governance:*

The concept of governance is used in a Foucauldian sense. This implies an understanding of governance that includes both the state and a wide range of institutions, agencies, groups of professionals, and the like (Bacchi, 2009:275; Foucault, 1978/2015:140).

#### *Policy/politics:*

Politics is understood as an institutional and discursive process of distributing material (e.g., economic, natural resources) and non-material resources (e.g., norms and values). The distribution process can be seen as a negotiation between power and meaning (Lövheim et al., 2018:138-139).

#### *Well-being/distress:*

The thesis does not directly examine the well-being of rejected asylum-seeking children and the thesis does not work with a specific definition of well-being. Rather well-being is understood as an abstract, relatively open-ended concept which meaning is contested in the policy process. The same applies to the concept of distress (Bacchi, 2009:8).

## 2. Previous literature

The purpose of the literature review is to provide insight into the range of interests and perceptions shaping the children's lives and their well-being while living at asylum centers. The chapter focuses on literature from the Nordic countries as they operate with a somewhat similar idea of safeguarding children's well-being, embedded in the Nordic welfare state (Brembeck et al., 2004:7-8; Plovsig, 2008:10).

The selected literature includes studies of accompanied and unaccompanied children and children at the reception centers, accommodation centers, and departure centers as the literature often includes children from different types of centers. However, it is important to stress that the Nordic countries operate with different asylum systems. Different regulations might apply to asylum-seeking children pending their case and rejected asylum-seeking children. Additionally, due to constant amendments in asylum policy, some of the included studies take a point of departure in legislation no longer in force. Therefore, the results of the studies should be read in the light of the context and period in which they are written (Furseth et al., 2017:38-39, Vitus, 2011a:21).

### 2.1. Trapped between child rights and migration management policies

Throughout the last decades, the Nordic region has been recognized as a promoter and protector of children's human rights. A report published by UNICEF about the Nordic countries' responses to asylum-seeking children concludes that although child rights are widely accepted, the Nordic countries fail to protect the rights of asylum-seeking children. The report argues that due to the large influx of asylum-seekers in 2015, the care and protection of children have been assigned to asylum authorities (Byrne & Hansen, 2018:7, 16). It has made way for a tendency to "give migration law precedence over the Convention on the Rights of the Child" (Byrne & Hansen, 2018:12). Adolphsen (2016) also identifies a political shift in Denmark towards treating asylum-seeking children as a matter of immigration law rather than a matter of social rights. Adolphsen establishes that since no specific regulations exist regarding asylum-seeking children in Denmark, it must be assumed that this group of children is provided the same rights as other Danish children (Adolphsen, 2016:182). According to Adolphsen, however, the Danish authorities seem to be exempting children seeking asylum from the Social Act, using the Aliens Act as argumentation. It is problematic as the Aliens Act does not provide the same protection level for children in need of social support as the Service Act. In line with the UNICEF report, Adolphsen questions

whether the interpretation of the legislation on asylum-seeking children follows the UNCRC and, thus, safeguarding the best interests of the child (Adolphsen, 2016:188).

A similar picture has emerged in Sweden. The principle of *'the best interests of the child'* has gained increasing importance in the Swedish Aliens Act. However, the children's voices and individual rights are still not given corresponding weight because they are subordinated to the interests of the state and the need to control its borders (Eastmond & Ascher, 2011:1193, 1195-1196). Similarly, Vitus and Lidén (2009) and Vitus (2011c) argues that this discrepancy emerges from discursive struggles for hegemony. Asylum-seeking children are embedded in two political identity categories: children and asylum-seeking children. Seeberg et al. (2009) Vitus and Lidén's argument in the phrase:

The major political concerns relating to children in reception centres involve keeping a careful balance between Norway as a country that puts children's rights into practice, and as a country that does not provide its asylum-seekers with higher living standards than other European countries. (Seeberg et al., 2009:409)

In Norway, the two political identity categories compete equally, whereas the discourse on children as asylum-seekers has gained hegemony in Denmark. In Denmark, claims of childhood have been overruled by the 'threat' asylum-seekers pose to the welfare system (Vitus & Lidén, 2009:62-66, 76-78).

The ambivalent political position on asylum-seeking children influences the interplay between government policy and practice. Practitioners, such as center staff, must negotiate government policies through their everyday interactions with the children (Karlsson, 2019:64; Vitus & Lidén, 2010:68). Practitioners often find themselves to be in a quandary. Studies show that professionals often feel trapped between asylum legislation that focuses on migration control and management and legislation on child welfare that focuses on the child's best interests. (Adolphsen, 2016; DRC, 2018; Engebrigtsen, 2003; Ottosen et al., 2012). A Danish Refugee Council (2018) report emphasizes the dilemma of working at a crossroads between the Service Act and the Aliens Act. The report concludes that the Danish authorities rarely intervene in matters concerning asylum-seeking children compared with other Danish children (DRC, 2018:7, 48-49). The social workers experience that distress is typically due to matters that fall under the Aliens Act. These conditions include extended stays in the asylum system and politically determined conditions. Thus, the supportive measurements embedded in the Service Act often become ineffective and in vain (DRC, 2018:30-33). Experiences from

Swedish Children's Case Workers at reception centers show similar findings. Their role positions them as both interpreters and implementers of policies. For this reason, they have the power to adjust regulations and directives to the specific local context of the reception center. However, the Children's Case Workers' position is ambiguous as several conflicting objectives between the individual child's needs and the organization influence their practice. As a result, the children's best interests are not always prioritized due to organizational demands for efficiency (Ottosen et al., 2012:249-250, 260-262).

Ultimately, the Nordic countries create another category of children, which challenges the general assumption that Nordic countries are child-centered societies. The central point is that rejected asylum-seeking children are trapped in a limbo between inclusion and exclusion from the nation-state. On the one hand, they must be included due to their status as children. On the other hand, they must be excluded due to their status as rejected asylum-seeker. Within the field of child welfare, the situation is constructed as unacceptable, whereas in the field of migration management, the situation is constructed as unavoidable (Seeberg et al., 2009:398, 409; Vitus & Lidén, 2009:65, 76-78). This is key to understanding how discursive struggles and opposing political positions categorize the children and shape what is considered normal and desirable regarding rejected asylum-seeking children compared to 'other' children in Danish society.

## 2.2. Children's experiences of being institutionalized

In the literature, the children are positioned as both vulnerable, passive recipients of societal structures but also as active agents with a voice (Josefsson, 2017; Karlsson, 2018, 2019). Previous studies indicate that children's lives at the asylum centers are characterized by uncertainty, boredom, transient relationships, and distress (Bendixen, 2011; Christensen & Andersen, 2006; Gunnarsdóttir & Bornfeld, 2019; Hallas et al., 2007; Nielsen et al., 2007). Bendixen (2011) stresses that extended stays at asylum centers degrade the children's physical and mental health. Gunnarsdóttir and Bornfeld (2019) connect mental health problems to waiting time, uncertainty about the future, unprocessed trauma from being on the run, and an institutionalized everyday life with no or little control over one's life. Vitus (2010, 2011b) observes that temporal structures and open-ended waiting created by asylum policies disrupt the relationship between time and subjectification. In asylum centers, social time, existential time, biological time, and biographical time are transformed into one kind of time - waiting time. The children are waiting to get the asylum case to proceed or return to their country of

origin (Vitus, 2011b:100). As a result, asylum-seeking children live neither in the present nor the future. This situates the children as living in '*no place*' but also as '*no one*' because the present has no existential value (Vitus, 2010:39-41).

Similarly, Karlsson (2019a) and Seeberg, Bagge, and Enger (2009) also emphasize asylum-seeking children's experiences of living in 'no place'. Karlsson (2019) demonstrates how living in 'no place' is connected to the children's experiences of lacking both the spatial dimensions of a house and the social dimensions of a home at the asylum center. The children's articulated experiences illuminate the denial of basic rights regarding conditions for their well-being, including the right to adequate housing with space and privacy, family life, and to live in a safe environment. Thus, the children understand the notions of home, house, and well-being as interlinked (Karlsson, 2019:72-73). In contrast, Seeberg, Bagge, and Enger associate the children's experience of living in 'no place' with being excluded from both the asylum center and society. Asylum-seeking children are exposed to a double exclusion as they are "'*out of place*' in Norwegian society, and '*with no place*' in the reception centres" (Seeberg et al., 2009:407, my emphasis). The children are 'out of place' because of their status as asylum-seekers and 'with no place' at the center as they lack spaces to transform into 'children's places' (Seeberg et al., 2009:395-405). Karlsson (2018) emphasizes that the children's struggle and negotiations of access to play can be seen as political acts. To localize spaces to play, the children use tactical awareness to identify the asylum centers' monitoring and disciplining practices, such as control of space and surveillance cameras. These tactical acts can be understood as political acts of resistance to institutional regulation at the asylum center. However, Karlsson argues that their resistance is hidden to the center and thus remains implicit. Nonetheless, the study shows that the children struggle to become individuals with rights and not only objects of control (Karlsson, 2018:317-322).

An institutionalized life in an asylum center has different individual consequences for the children, both mentally, physically, socially, and in terms of identity. The children experience different ways of living in 'no place' due to the power technologies that the state uses to handle asylum seekers. However, it suggests that children are not just passive recipients who are subject to politically determined structures. Although a macro perspective influences the thesis, it is relevant to understand how political decisions affect children. It shows a necessity to discuss the governance of children in deportation processes.

### 2.3. Summary

Asylum-seeking children pose an ambivalent political position due to tensions between asylum policies and child rights policies. It creates a complex relationship between the child's best interest and the state's interest in protecting its borders. The rights of asylum-seeking children often become subordinated to asylum policies and migration management discourses. Thus, the implementation of child rights is often blurry and conditional due to the children's status as non-citizens. Open-ended waiting and categorization emphasize the children's exclusion and their experience of well-being (Adolphsen, 2016; Eastmond & Ascher, 2011; Karlsson, 2019; Seeberg et al., 2009; Vitus, 2011c, 2011d; Vitus & Lidén, 2009).

The present thesis does not focus on whether children's rights are safeguarded in deportation processes or the children's lived experiences of being institutionalized. Rather, it builds on the assumption that contesting discourses on child rights and migration management create specific understandings of the children, which is fundamental to understand the children's position in society and how these helps shaping certain understandings of the children.

### 3. Theory

Previous literature indicates that rejected asylum-seeking children's well-being is negotiated through different technologies of power, political agendas, categorization mechanisms, and discursive practices. The memoranda operate as starting the point for analyzing how different perceptions shape the conditions of rejected asylum children. Thus, it is relevant to include theoretical concepts that provide knowledge about how the children are governed and a methodology to analyze the political process itself. The thesis is anchored in Carol Bacchi's 'what's the problem represented to be' approach (abbreviated the WPR approach) to policy analysis. Inspired by Foucauldian thinking, the WPR approach offers both a conceptual framework and methodology to examine and question taken-for-granted assumptions embedded in government policy. The concepts of *problematization*, *governmentality*, and *discourse* underpin the WPR approach and constitutes the theoretical point of departure. The methodology of the WPR approach and how I use it to analyze the empirical data are described in the methods chapter. First, the chapter provides a brief overview of different ways of conceptualizing the asylum center and then introduce the WPR approach's conceptual framework.

#### 3.1. Conceptualizing the asylum center

The phenomenon of the asylum-seeker and the asylum center is relatively new. According to Malkki (2002), the rise of the refugee and the asylum-seeker was accompanied by a number of practices, institutions, and disciplines for its management. In this perspective, the refugee camp is described as "a generalizable technology of power, as standard equipment for dealing with mass displacement " (Malkki 2002:352). Malkki refers to Foucault when describing the refugee camp as a *technology of power*. This implies understanding the refugee camp as a tool for determining individuals' behavior and subjecting them to specific goals and forms of discipline and control (Kohl, 2015:13-14). Another way of conceptualizing the asylum centers has been by comparing it with Goffman's *total institution*. According to Goffman, a total institution is an isolated, enclosed social system whose primary purpose is to control most aspects of the participants' lives. This entails a split between a large managed group and a small supervisory staff, which main task is not "guidance or periodic inspection [...] but rather surveillance – a seeing to it that everyone does what he has been clearly told is required of him" (Goffman, 1961:18).

Following this definition, the asylum center provides a 'total life', from which it is impossible to escape. This definition somewhat resembles Malkki's understanding of the asylum center (Kohl, 2015:15). By contrast, Whyte (2011) described today's asylum centers as far less monitored and zealously regulated than the Foucauldian panopticon. Whyte uses the concept of *myoptiocon*, which "models a near-sighted and partial system of surveillance practices, knowledges, and sanctions, deployed as though it were panoptic" (Whyte, 2011:18) to describe the power that permeates the asylum system. In a study of the Danish asylum system, Whyte suggests that the asylum system is permeated by uncertainty which led to frustration and debilitation rather than disciplining the asylum-seekers into good citizens (Whyte, 2011:18-21).

Common to these conceptualizations are that the asylum center is seen as a generalized technology for dealing with asylum-seekers (Kohl, 2015:207). A great emphasis is placed on the relationship between the watched, the asylum-seekers, and the watcher, the center staff. This uneven relationship puts the staff in a more powerful position. However, as Whyte points out, the uncertainty and randomness generated in the asylum system blur the disciplinary character of the asylum center (Whyte, 2011:21). In the present study, I understand the departure center as a total institution that applies different technologies of power to control and shape the behavior of rejected asylum-seekers. The Foucauldian-inspired understandings of the asylum center are vital to understanding the power mechanism within departure centers, both regarding the aim of technologies deployed to effectuate the voluntary return of rejected asylum seekers and understanding the effect of these.

### 3.2. Problems, problematization and problem representation

It is necessary to define the thesis' understanding of policy and how this is related to the concepts of 'problem', 'problematization', and 'problem representation', as this forms the basis for the theoretical and methodological starting point in the WPR approach. The WPR approach aims to uncover problem representations that lie within policies and relate policy analysis to a broader political context. Bacchi regards policies as shaped by specific historical, national, and international contexts, and problems refer to proposed changes in policy proposals (Bacchi, 2009:x, xi).

A basic premise for the thesis' understanding of policy is that our lives are affected by public policies, and "the ways in which problems are constituted or shaped carry all sorts of implications for how we live our lives in a day-to-day basis" (Bacchi, 2009:xviii).

Commonplace view regards policy as 'problem-solving', that it fixed things up, and that within policies, there is an existing problem that needs to be solved. Bacchi challenges the 'problem-solving paradigm' by perceiving problems as something that are produced in the policy process rather than something that fixes problems: "Policies give shape to 'problems'; they do not address them" (Bacchi, 2009:x). Following this understanding, governing processes take place through problematizations rather than through policies. The way issues are thought about and posed as 'problems' constitutes the foundation of governing processes. Central to this is the role of government as the government is an active producer of policy problems (Bacchi, 2009:xi-xii, 1).

Bacchi uses the term *problematization* in two ways. The way in which an issue is conceived as a 'problem'. This involves identifying the thinking behind the particular mode of governance. The second way means to interrogate the problematizations on offer. It is necessary to understand how issues are thought about or, in Bacchi's understanding, problematized to understand the rationales behind different modes of governance (Bacchi, 2009:30-31). This means that the way in which something is problematized is central to understanding the conduct of rejected asylum-seeking children, the rationales behind this perception, and the effects. In other words, the point is to draw attention to the ways problems are represented and the assumptions that develop and shape 'a solution' within a policy (Bacchi, 2009:xix).

### 3.3. Modes of governance

To capture the ways in which individuals are governed through problematization, Bacchi draws on governmentality studies, particularly associated with Foucault. *Governmentality* simplified refers to different '*forms of rule*' or '*modes of governance*', meaning the different kinds of thinking associated with particular approaches to government.

In a Foucauldian sense, *governmentality* refers to a technology of power that emerged in the eighteenth century. The goal of this mode of governance is the welfare of the population, improvement of conditions, the increase of prosperity, and health. In relation to the population, states come to act, either directly or indirectly, which enables, without the clear awareness of the people, the control of the population. Thus, the population constitutes both the means and target. It presupposes the capacity of the governed as free individuals and included the control of the population through self-regulation. Thus, the concept of

governmentality implies an understanding of power as exercised, productive, and relational (Bacchi, 2009:38; Foucault, 1978/2015:135-136, 139).

Importantly, Foucault emphasizes that *governmentality* is one among other forms of rule. He points at a triangle of rule, including sovereignty, discipline, and government (governmentality), which has the population as the main goal and security instruments as the main mechanism. In this sense, governance of the population does not solely mean to control the population as an overall phenomenon or the overall effects of the population. Rather, it is related to the conduct of the population both in detail and depth through a hybrid form of governance (Bacchi, 2009:28; Foucault 1978/2015:138).

Following this perspective, the thesis deploys an understanding of population as divided into two: those who are included in Danish society (Danish citizens) and those who are excluded from Danish society (migrants, asylum-seekers). It is assumed that some modes of governance specifically targeting asylum-seekers are used as a means to 'protect' the welfare of the population the Danish state includes in society. Returning to Bacchi, the concept of *governmentality* is recognized through identifying and analyzing problematizations. Thus, the aim is to point at hybrid 'modes of governance' and the rationality behind specific modes of governance used to regulate rejected asylum-seekers through analyzing problematization.

### 3.4. Discourse

The concept of discourse is multifarious and disputed. It stems from different analytical traditions, such as language theory, poststructuralism, Marxism, and critical theory. In line with the Foucauldian-inspired framework of the WPR approach, a poststructuralist perspective is adopted. As with discourse, the poststructuralist approaches are diverse. Following Dumont (1998), I understand poststructuralism as a way to "strive to affect the functioning "effects of truth" in a given context by rearticulating them through sociological discourses" (Dumont, 1998:224). Thus, the ongoing debate about rejected asylum-seeking children must be understood as shaped by strategical representations of the 'truth' manifested in existing and powerful discourses (Dumont, 1998:224-225).

According to Foucault, discourse should not solely be perceived as the things that are said nor the way they are said. Discourse is as much about what is not said, patterns of behavior, and spatial dispositions (Foucault, 1976/2015:144-145). Similarly, Bacchi describes discourse as "socially produced forms of knowledge that set limits upon what is possible to

think, write or speak about a 'given social object or practice' " (McHoul & Grace, 1993:31 in Bacchi, 2009:35). Following this definition, some discourses gain truth status to regulate and influence society and individuals (Bacchi, 2009:35).

Bacchi draws inspiration from Foucault's work on knowledge archeology and genealogy to identify problematizations. In short, knowledge archeology is occupied with uncovering the rules for how statements become accepted as meaningful and true, whereas genealogy is concerned with the relationship between power and knowledge (Jørgensen & Phillips, 1999:21-22). Hence, the genealogical perspective is used to highlight the contingency of specific ways of governing or problematizing, while knowledge archeology identifies how meaning is created within certain ways of problematization by recognizing binaries, key concepts, and categories (Bacchi, 2009:266).

Binaries rest on antagonisms that exclude one from the other, which involves a hierarchical understanding, where one side is more privileged than the other depending on context and application. Binary also serves to simplify complex relationships. In addition to binaries, concepts reveal meanings assigned to specific problematization and shape policies. Bacchi defines concepts as "abstract labels" which are "relatively open-ended" (Bacchi, 2009:8). Concepts such as 'childhood' or 'well-being' are used and understood differently depending on the area and context. Hence, concepts are constantly contested within policy processes. Just as binaries and concepts, categories play a vital role in governing and meaning-creation of problem representations. Bacchi primarily focuses on categories dealing with people due to humans' central role in policy processes. Categories follow the assumption that people are made up, and the category reflects ways of organizing behavior and "how people come to think about themselves and others" (Bacchi, 2009:9).

According to Bacchi, the genealogical exercise involves two interrelated objectives. First, a reflection of non-discursive practices, such as specific developments and decisions. Second, a recognition of things could have developed differently as competing problematizations exist over time and space. It means that the genealogical analysis engages in how domains of institutions, political events, networks of statements, and modes of rule legitimate certain problem representations. Power and knowledge are joined together in discourses, meaning that discourses produce 'truths regimes' that accompany different consequences (Bacchi, 2009:10, 37; Dumont, 1998:222). Following Bacchi's understanding of discourse, the task becomes to study and analyze underlying assumptions and origin of the problem representations and interrogate the effects of the problem representations on offer. In

this regard, Bacchi emphasizes the need to examine the effects of a given discourse, including the discursive effects, subjectification effects, and lived effects (Bacchi, 2009:xxi, 30-35).

Discursive effects derive from the assumptions and presumptions of a problem representation, limiting individuals' opportunity to think and express themselves differently (Bacchi, 2009:16, 40, 92). By extension, discourses provide different subject positions from which a person can recognize and make sense of the social world. In other words, our social relationships and the way we position ourselves and others are embedded in policies. With reference to Foucault's concept of *dividing practices*, Bacchi explains how the government, through policy processes, often sets people in opposition to one another to target the behavior of minority groups. Hence, the way groups of people are constituted as a 'problem' and made targets of a policy impacts the way they understand themselves and their surroundings. The way a given 'problem' is represented directly affects people's opportunities in life, and with the concept, lived effects, Bacchi refers to the material consequences of problem representations (Bacchi, 2009:15-17).

The knowledge archeological-inspired approach identifies the underlying assumption behind the 'problem' representation of rejected asylum-seeking children in the memoranda by asking why it is shaped the way it is. Combined with the genealogical perspective, it enables studying regimes of 'truth' or 'discursive strategies' by untangling their historical, cultural, and social development and transformation (Bacchi, 2009:14; Dumont, 1998:222).

### 3.5. Summary

With the objective of understanding how different perceptions shape social interventions at the center of analysis, the conceptual combination of *problematizations*, *modes of governance*, and *discourse* allows for both examine current positionings of rejected asylum-seeking children, the underlying assumptions behind the perceptions, how these have come about, and the implications thereof. Importantly, rather than just evaluating the memoranda for their ability to 'solve' problems, the conceptual framework enables a study of how policy constructs problems. This matters as the interplay between rejected asylum-seeking children and the policy process is a product of particular ways of both thinking about rejected asylum-seeking and thinking the practice of governing.

The concepts of problematization, governmentality, and discourse must be understood as interlinked. Within these concepts lies an understanding of power as both productive, relational, and discursive. The purpose of discursive knowledge production in the Foucauldian sense is not to produce objective true knowledge but rather to problematize

knowledge that claims to be or appears to be true and objective. It means that the theoretical foundation complies with the poststructuralist paradigm, which implies specific methodological considerations. This will be further addressed in the following chapter, along with the WPR approach methodological components.

## 4. Methods

This chapter outlines the methodological approach of the study. With an interest in understanding the consequences certain problem representations of rejected asylum children have on their well-being, the study departs from a poststructuralist stance. This must be seen in the context of the study's methodological and theoretical anchorages in the WPR approach. Bacchi draws inspiration from the poststructuralist paradigm that perceives knowledge as discursively mediated. Emphasis is put on how social thought and relations are assigned meaning and change over time and place (Bacchi, 2009:277). The first section deals with the methodological choice of qualitative method and the data collection of documentary sources and semi-structured interviews. The following section presents the data processing performed in NVivo and data analysis anchored in the WPR approach. Finally, my role as a researcher is discussed. The poststructuralist stance is continuously related to the study's methodological choices.

### 4.1. Choice of method and data collection

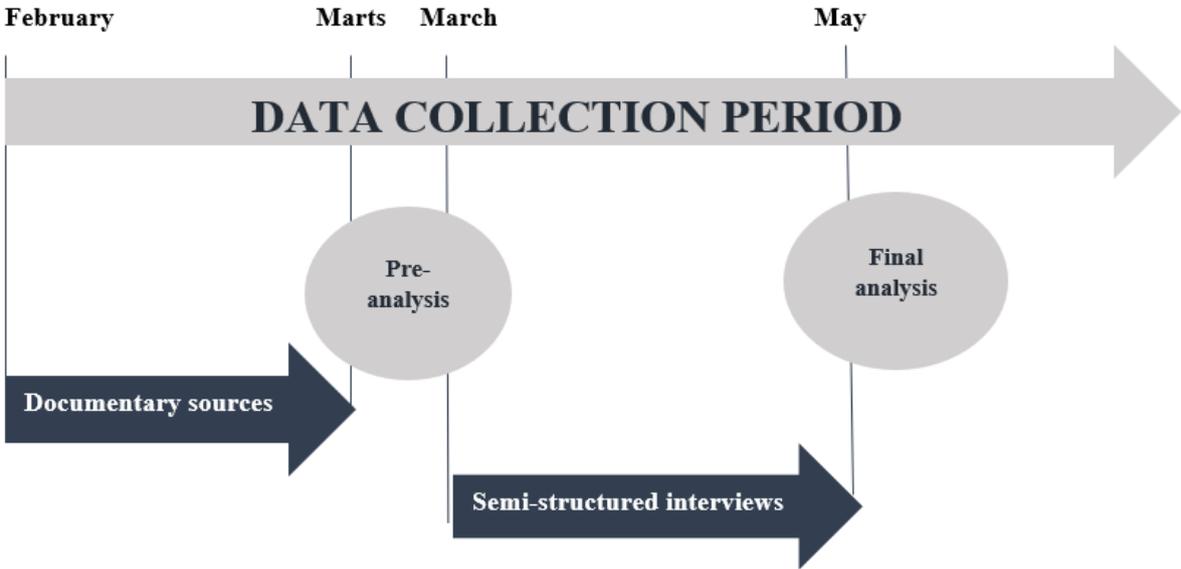
As mentioned elsewhere, the children's life at departure centers is permeated by political decisions (cf. chapter 1). Thus, the Danish state constitutes an important actor in creating and negotiating the conditions of the children's well-being. Bacchi argues that the state is just one among other actors who influence the shape of governing (Bacchi 2009:26). To gain a comprehensive understanding of the complexity of the policy process in which the children's well-being is embedded, I direct attention to state-level interventions as well as practical work for and with the children. The empirical data is based on a combination of qualitative methods. The primary data source consists of documentary sources such as political agreements, resolutions, citizen proposals, and governmental statements (cf. table 1). To extend the government positions and gain an understanding of implementation and resistance to such positions, interview with practitioners who negotiate government policies through their everyday interactions with the children act as supporting empirical data (cf. table 2). According to Tanggard and Brinkmann (2015a), qualitative methods involves

an interest in *how* something is done, said, experienced, appears or develops. One is preoccupied with describing, understanding, interpreting, or deconstructing the qualities of human experience. (Tanggard & Brinkmann, 2015a:13, own translation)

The use of documentary sources allows for an examination of the development of discursive regularities that shape the problem representative of rejected asylum-seeking children’s well-being. The ambition is to show plurality in the political process by identifying changes in the formation of meaning over time and the manifestation of particular utterances. In accordance with the poststructuralist endeavor, the task is also to find alternative discursive constructions. Identification of alternative discourses occurs partly by examining rejected resolutions and partly through interviews with practitioners who partake in producing governing knowledges (Bacchi, 2009:39; Dumont, 1998; Hansen, 2012:238-241). Hence, the combination of qualitative methods produces different knowledge and interpretations of the problem representation of the children’s well-being.

The data collection was divided into two (overlapping) phases, where the second phase, to some extent, depended on and built on knowledge generated from the first phase. Below is an overview of the data collection phases, followed by a more detailed description of each method.

Figure 1. Timeline of the data collection phases.



4.1.1. *Documentary sources*

The documentary sources consist of official government documents, such as resolutions, political debates and statements, and citizen proposals. Different types of documents aim to contribute to a more in-depth and nuanced analysis (Lynggaard, 2015:156). The document selection was based on the time of publication and centrality to the policy process. Media sources are only included to the extent that they contain political or ministerial statements

related to the policy process. The period 2015-2020 constitutes the timeframe for the collected documents due to the record number of refugees arriving in Denmark as well as a shift in government and direction to immigration policy (Amnesty, 2015; UIM, 2019a).

The documents were selected based on a combination of systematic search in databases and snowballing. The Danish words for “asylum”, “children”, “well-being”, and the filter “2015-2020” constituted the search strategy in the systematic search. The keywords were used separately and combined to identify central documents through the databases *retsinformation.dk* and *kranov.dk*. The databases were valuable regarding extracting official governmental documents, which allowed for searching for legislation, resolutions, parliamentary reports, and other documents related to the policy process of approving or rejecting resolutions. However, the databases were delimited to contain documents related to the legislative process solely. Snowballing was used to identify documents that were not related to a given legislative process yet of particular importance to the policy process. For instance, the government report “Report on the proposal for a parliamentary resolution on accommodation of families with children who are rejected asylum<sup>6</sup>” refers to the Red Cross report “Well-being among children at departure center Sjælsmark - a psychosocial study<sup>7</sup>”. The Red Cross report proved to be fundamental for understanding the recently implemented initiatives at departure center Avnstrup for which reason it was included in the dataset (Lynggardd, 2015:156-160). Table 1 provides an overview of collected documents. For a comprehensive overview of each document, see appendix 3.

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<sup>6</sup> Original title: Betænkning over Forslag til folketingsbeslutning om indkvartering af børnefamilier, der har fået afslag på asyl

<sup>7</sup> Original title: Trivsel hos børn på udrejsecenter Sjælsmark - en psykologisk undersøgelse

Table 1. Overview of documentary sources.

<b>Sender</b>	<b>Number of documents per sender</b>	<b>Number of documents per type of document</b>
The Government, Ministries and Committees	N = 24	Memorandum of understanding n = 2 Government platform n = 1 Laws n = 2 Letters n = 2 Resolutions (approved) n = 1 Resolutions (rejected) n = 4 Resolutions (annulled) n = 2 Parliamentary reports n = 6 Parliamentary debates n = 4
Civil society organizations	N = 3	Report n = 1 Citizen proposal n = 1 Speeches n = 1
The Parliaments' ombudsman	N = 1	Report n = 1
The Immigration Office	N = 2	Contracts n = 2
Media	N = 5	Ministerial statements n = 5
<i>Total number of documents</i>	N = 35	
<i>Total number of pages</i>	N = 363	

Source: Own work.

The two memoranda of understanding ‘Fair direction for Denmark’ and ‘The children must move out of Sjølsmark and have better living conditions’ operates as the central documents of analysis as they represent the current government position of the problem. The remaining documents listed above are considered related documents. These are included to provide insight into patterns of thought that shape problem representations over time and across spaces. Mainly, rejected resolutions are of importance as they provide insight into the dominant discourse. In this way, it is possible to identify stability and change in the problematization of child welfare at Danish departure centers (Bacchi, 2009:11, 15; Lynggaard, 2015:153).

It is essential to keep in mind that the information provided by these documents has been initially produced for another purpose with a different target audience. As Clark and Dawson argue “texts must be studied as socially situated products” (Clark and Dawson, 1999:20). Thus, it is key to recognize that documents consist of a variety of different perspectives, values, and positions that affect the study. By virtue, the documents do not constitute independent, objective records of circumstances for which reason I have tried to develop an understanding of both the process by which a document was produced and the social and political context in which it was embedded (Clark and Dawson, 1999:20). At the

same time, the collecting process served as a part of my interim interpretation of the data. In this way, I have already been involved in a pre-analysis at this point in the process (Bacchi, 2009:20).

#### *4.1.2. Semi-structured interviews*

Building on the insights from the documents, three interviews with respectively a leisure time teacher at Center Avnstrup, a volunteer in a child rights organization, and the co-founder of a community center for refugees and asylum-seekers was conducted. Common for the interviewees is that they can be perceived as an extension of the state. Their work has emerged as a result of political decision-making. In this way, it can be argued that they take part in producing governing knowledges and governable subjects (Bacchi, 2009:39). Another common feature between the interviewees is that they have direct experience with rejected asylum-seeking children and have insight into their lives at departure center Avnstrup. These perspectives represent, to some extent, second-hand experiences. The interviews thus serve a dual purpose: to gain insight into interviewees' role in the governing process and the effects of the problem representation in the memoranda.

The interviewees were selected through snowballing. Initially, I only contacted the management at departure center Avnstrup to ask for interviews with staff at the center who somehow work with the children (e.g., teachers, educators). I quickly learned that there was not much willingness to participate in the study. I had to extend my selection criteria to include organizations and institutions working with or for rejected asylum-seeking children. In total, I contacted five organizations, respectively departure center Sjølsmark and Avnstrup, and human/child rights organizations who organize activities at or outside the centers. The organizations and interviewees were informed about the overarching aim of the study. Some organizations asked to see the interview questions before agreeing to participate to ensure the study was not a platform for criticism of their work. I sent the interview questions to a key contact in the organization and not directly to the interviewees. However, it was necessary to stress that the interview guide was not definitive, and new questions could arise during the interview.

The interviews were conducted as semi-structured interviews. The semi-structured interview is characterized by having a clear direction during the interview and at the same time allowing the interviewee to make free associations (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015:185). An interview guide with different themes and questions constitutes the foundation for the interviews (cf. appendix 4-6). Informed consent was an integrated part of the briefing of the

interviews. The interviewees were informed that participation is voluntary, that they had the right to withdraw from the study at any time and promised anonymity. As mentioned above, the questions were only preliminary suggestions which allowed me to change the order and form of the questions while interviewing to pursue and remain open to the interviewee's interpretations (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015:116-117, 185).

Ideally, Tanggaard and Brinkmann recommend interviewing until a saturation point is reached and further interviews do not provide more relevant information (Tanggaard & Brinkmann, 2015b:32-33). Unfortunately, this was possible in this study. Therefore, the interviews will be used in the analysis as supplementary and to fill in gaps in the documents. A presentation of the interviewees is shown in the table below.

Table 2. Presentation of interviewees

<b>Interviewee</b>	<b>Relation to rejected asylum-seeking children</b>	<b>Relation to the policy process</b>	<b>Duration</b>
Alice	Leisure time teacher at Center Avnstrup. At Avnstrup, there is a tripartite club offer; a mini-club for children aged 6-9 years, a junior-club for children aged 10-12 years, and a maxi-club for children aged 13-17 years. The clubs run every weekday after school. The activities follow a fixed procedure where the activities are scheduled and adult-led.	The operator contract between the Immigration Service and the Red Cross states that the operator (Red Cross, ed.) must ensure "sufficient professional-pedagogical staff for the educational and leisure time offers" (UIM, 2020b:85). The 2019 memoranda granted leisure time activities more staffing to ensure adequate leisure time activities with educational quality for children in all relevant age groups.	60 minutes
Tone	Organizational member of a community center that provides activities for the children outside the center and functions as a critical platform for refugees and asylum-seekers. Additionally, a participant in a social movement that arranges demonstrations in association with, e.g., Black Lives Matter, Close the Camps, and residents from departure center Sjølsmark and Avnstrup.	The operator contract between the Immigration Service and Red Cross states that the operator (Red Cross, ed.) must "motivate relevant and interested persons and associations, etc. in the local community to provide a voluntary effort for the benefit of the residents of the individual accommodation" (UIM, 2020b:20).	65 minutes
Sara	Volunteer at children's club at Center Avnstrup. The club is activity-based and runs every Saturday. The aim is to provide a safe place for the children to play and simply be children. The project has been paused for the last year due to COVID-19.	The operator contract between the Immigration Service and Red Cross states that the operator (Red Cross, ed.) must "motivate relevant and interested persons and associations, etc. in the local community to provide a voluntary effort for the benefit of the residents of the individual accommodation" (UIM, 2020b:20).	35 minutes

Source: Interviews with practitioners and UIM, 2020b.

The interviews were conducted by telephone as geographical distance and COVID-19 restrictions did not allow for conducting physical face-to-face interviews. Methodologically, phone interviews can be equated with face-to-face interviews, as an interview mainly consists of verbal communication. However, Andersen (2013) emphasizes that embodied communication also affects the interview context. The interviews were partly affected by the lack of non-verbal communication as it was not possible to read the non-verbal signals indicating whether they took a pause for thought or were done answering a question. However, due to the study's poststructuralist stance, I have mainly been concerned with how the interviewees express themselves and draw on available discursive resource and interpretive perspectives throughout the interview (Andersen, 2013:172-173; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015: 140-142).

Each interview was recorded and transcribed with consent from the interviewees. The transcription served as a process of interpretation, allowing for initial perspectives on the problem statement to emerge (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015:59, 235-236). Transcription from audio recording to text is associated with a number of interpretive challenges. When transcribing, the lived oral conversation gets fixed in writing which involves a translation from one form, an oral discourse, to another form, a written discourse. In addition, translating the data from Danish to English also constitutes an interpretative process. Kvale (1997) emphasizes that any translation from one language to another contains a degree of interpretation as it does not make sense to translate everything literally. Any rendering is a highlight of some features over others. This implies that some meaning might be lost in translation. In the analysis, an English translation of the quote is provided in the main text, whereas the original quote is provided in a footnote (Kvale, 1997; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015:235-236).

#### 4.2. Data processing in NVivo

The documents and transcribed interviews were coded in the software program NVivo. NVivo assisted in ensuring transparency of the study as the program recorded all operations. The coding process was data-driven and consisted primarily of descriptive and in-vivo codes. The latter refers to "words or short phrases from the participant's own language in the data record as codes" (Saldaña, 2016:294). An example of an in-vivo code is 'they must leave' as this short phrase appears several times in the data. Opposite to in-vivo codes, descriptive codes "assign labels to data to summarize in a word or phrase (...) the basic topic of a passage of qualitative data" (Saldaña, 2016:292). An example is the codes' uncertainty' or

'motivational advancement measures'. I had a total of 36 open codes, which highlighted various perspectives, a plurality of discursive formations, and changes in the meaning formation. Subsequently, the codes were reviewed, merged, recoded, and categorized to compile a coding hierarchy. The coding hierarchy emphasized the reciprocal relationship between the different themes, categories, and codes (see appendix 7). It is important to keep in mind that the codes not only represent text sequences on a given subject but also my analytical constructions. It has necessitated a continuous reflection upon the way I attributed meaning to the codes based on my pre-understanding and presumptions (Atherton & Elsmore, 2007; Kristiansen, 2010: 450-451, 460; Saldaña, 2016:4, 9-15). By facilitating an initial analysis process in NVivo, I was able to form a general overview of the key elements of my data.

#### 4.3. Data analysis through the WPR methodology

As illustrated in figure 1, data collection, processing, and analysis constituted an iterative process, meaning data processing and analysis took place simultaneously with the data collection. A final, aggregated analysis took place after all the data was collected. The data analysis builds on Bacchi's WPR methodology. Bacchi introduces six interrelated questions to understand problem representations. Questions 1-3 focus on identifying the problem definition, while questions 4-6 focus on a critical and reflexive stance regarding the problem representation. The WPR approach takes its point of departure in the analysis of policy documents. However, I include interviews to broaden the perspective, especially in terms of analyzing the implications that accompany the initiatives stated in the memoranda.

Table 3. The six guiding questions of the WPR approach.

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1. What is the problem represented to be in a specific policy?
  2. What presuppositions or assumptions underlie this representation of the problem?
  3. How has this representation of the problem come about?
  4. What is left unproblematic in this problem representation? Where are the silences? Can the problem be thought about differently?
  5. What effects are produced by this representation of the problem?
  6. How/where has this representation of the problem been produced, disseminated, and defended? How could it be questioned, disrupted, and replaced?
- 

Source: Bacchi, 2009:2

The six guiding questions can be used in their entirety or by applying a couple of them. Questions 1-3 are at the center of the analysis, whereas questions 4-6 are addressed less extensively. This is partly due to the number of interviews. More interviews could have shed light on the discursive and non-discursive effects of the memoranda or contesting problem representations. In the following, I introduce each of the six guiding questions and account for my use of the WPR approach to analyze the data.

### *Question 1: Problem representation*

The underlying assumption of the WPR approach is that all policies are problematizing activities and thus contain implicit problem representations. Hence, the first question aims to identify problem representation within policy. Problem representation relates to alleged causes, proposed changes, and to which extent the government is responsible and should address the 'problem' (Bacchi, 2009:3). An essential activity is identifying how problem representations are *nested* within each other as policies are complex and often combine a range of proposals. Several problem representations may lie within a policy, and the different representations may as well conflict or contradict each other. On that account, it has been necessary to work backward from the memoranda and examine related documents, including parliamentary debates, ministerial statements, and reports, to obtain a more in-depth picture of the problem representation (Bacchi, 2009:2-4, 20).

### *Question 2: Presuppositions and assumptions*

Having identified the problem representations have, the aim is to investigate assumed and taken-for-granted knowledge of the problem representation. The second question opens for discourse analysis of the problem representation. This has been achieved by identifying binaries, key concepts, and categories working within the policy (Bacchi, 2009: 5-7). The coding process served as a useful tool to identify binaries, categories, and key concepts. To illustrate, the codes '*failure of authority*' and '*failure of parenthood*' contained information about the binary of responsibility/irresponsibility.

### *Question 3: Origin and development*

Question three examines the broader perspective from which different problem representations arise and assume dominance. Bacchi emphasizes that a genealogical analysis “require long detailed records of decision-making, together with the identification of specific

institutional developments that support particular ways of seeing (problematizations)” (Bacchi, 2009:44). In terms of methodology, this raises questions about the timeframe for the analysis and extensiveness of the archive of documents. As to the first questions, the timeframe has been delimited to 2015-2020 (cf. section 4.1.1.). Additionally, building on insights from previous literature, the genealogical analysis is directed towards the origin and development of the perception of children and asylum-seekers (Bacchi, 2009:43). For example, the meaning of the concept ‘children’ or ‘childhood’ is not universal. Rather the understanding is discursively constructed through the social, cultural, and historical context of which it is a part (Bacchi, 2009:20-21, 58).

#### *Question 4: Excluded and alternative perceptions*

Drawing on insights from the discourse analysis introduced in questions two and three, question four deals with perspectives that are silenced in the problem representation. By focusing on simplification of certain issues and competing problem representations, it is possible to identify silences in the problem representations that reflect specific institutional and cultural contexts in ways of thinking ‘problems’ (Bacchi, 2009:12-14). I have sought to draw attention to different tensions and contradictions in the way the ‘problem’ of rejected asylum-seeking children is represented but also what fails to be problematized. For example, when rejected asylum-seeking children are categorized as both ‘illegal residents’ and ‘vulnerable children’, it shows the tensions and acknowledges contesting positions within the policies (Bacchi, 2009:20).

#### *Question 5: Produced effects*

Question five directs attention to the effects or implications that accompany particular problem representations. Problem representations produce intended and unintended effects and by asking who might benefit from the current problem representation it is possible to identify the produced effects. To achieve this, I have drawn on the three overlapping types of effects that may arise from problem representations; discursive effects, subjectification, and lived effects and included binaries, categories, and key concept identified in question two to examine the effects of the problem representations in the memoranda (Bacchi, 2009:15, 38, 44).

### *Question 6: Dissemination and disruption*

The sixth question draws attention to how particular problem representations achieve legitimacy and become dominant and to the question of resistance and the possibility of challenging problem representations if deemed harmful. In this question, it is important to acknowledge that discourses are “plural, complex and, at times, inconsistent. In a sense, therefore, discourses can be seen as 'assets' or resources for re-problematization” (Bacchi, 2009:19). In a concluding remark, it must be emphasized that it has been necessary not only to apply but also to re-apply the questions to identify the complexity and context of which the problem representations are embedded. According to Bacchi

The questions in the WPR approach are not intended as a one-off exercise. Rather, they require repeated application due to the ways in which problem representations 'nest' or are embedded one within the other. (Bacchi, 2009:21)

For example, competing government positions on rejected asylum-seeking children are grounded in different views; the 'problem' of the children's well-being and the 'problem' of migration in general. Due to the interconnectedness of the policies, it is important to stress that other perspectives are possible (Bacchi, 2009).

#### 4.4. Reflections on the researcher role

Throughout all phases of the research process, I have reflected on my role as a researcher by virtue of my engagement in voluntary work with children in both Danish and Swedish asylum centers. Through my voluntary engagement at asylum centers, I have met many children. In particular, one child who frustratedly asked: ”do you think you can save me?” made a big impression. It made me reflect upon what happens when we (the volunteers) leave the centers, and the children return to their lives at the center; what politically determined frameworks govern their everyday lives, and how these shapes their lives and well-being. The experience above has, among others, shaped my understanding of the field. Bacchi emphasizes the necessity of this kind of self-analysis

(..) because we are immersed in the conceptual logics of our era and because who we are, (...) is at least in part shaped through the very problem representations we are trying to analyse. (Bacchi, 2009:19)

Additionally, Flyvbjerg (2009:136) points out that you become part of the discursive formations by producing knowledge as a researcher. Due to my dual role as both involved in and partly produced by discursive practices of my study, it has not been possible to place myself outside the research. On this basis, it has been necessary to identify the assumptions that influenced my understanding of the field and how my study creates specific understandings of the field. The interpretations, representations, and descriptions my study brings into the world have potential effects on the studied subjects (Brinkmann, 2015:473-479; Flyvbjerg, 2009:136).

With that said, having the experience of volunteering at an asylum center was instrumental in relating to the social context of the interviewees. I used my experiences in the interviews to strengthen my relation to the interviewees and understand their perspectives, otherwise being difficult without having a pre-understanding (Brinkmann, 2015:477-479). This is illustrated in the following interview section with Tone:

T: Everyone has a responsibility to the children. We have chosen the politicians as legislators. (...). We can do activities in Avnstrup, but it does not fundamentally change their living conditions. Only a legislative change can do that if you understand.

I: Yes, I actually think that is something I have felt in my voluntary work. We came to the center to provide activities for the children. We were often met by expectant children who had been looking forward to our activities. But I also noticed that they were frustrated when the activities ended. Several times, the children surrounded the car to prevent us from going home.

T: Yes, exactly. That is why we started the Trampoline House. I was because we did not actually believe in doing volunteer work at the center. We did not think that it was possible to organize oneself out of that state of emergency in which people lived<sup>8</sup>. (Interview w/Tone)

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<sup>8</sup> Original quote: Alle har et ansvar for børnene. Det er os, der har valgt politikerne, som lovgivere. (...) Vi kan godt rende rundt og laver aktiviteterne i Avnstrup sammen med børnene, men der ændres grundlæggende ikke deres livsvilkår. Det er kun en lovgivningsændring, der kan det. Hvis du forstår? I: Ja, det tror jeg faktisk lige præcis er noget jeg også har kunne mærke i mit frivillige arbejde. Vi kom jo også og lavede aktiviteter og kreative ting med børnene. Ofte er vi blevet mødt af forventningsfulde børn, som havde set frem til vores aktiviteter. Men jeg har også mærket, at de har været frustreret, når aktiviteterne sluttede. Flere gange omringede børnene bilen, som vi var kørt i, i et forsøg på at forhindre, at vi tog hjem. T: Ja, det er et. Det var derfor vi lavede Trampolinhuset. Det var jo fordi, vi faktisk ikke troede på det her med at gå ud i centret og lave frivilligt arbejde. Vi troede ikke, at man kunne organisere sig ud af den der undtagelsestilstand, som folk levede i.

The above section shows how I was able to relate to Tone's feeling of inadequateness. At the same time, sharing my experience opened for Tone, questioning the effect of the type of volunteer work I have been involved in. In this way, my closeness to the field helped me understand and contextualize the interviewees.

#### 4.4. Summary

The memoranda 'Fair direction for Denmark' and 'The children must move out of Sjølsmark and have better living conditions' constitute the central documents of analysis. The introduction of both related documents to the policy process and interviews with practitioners enables a look at the specific context associated with the implementation of the memoranda and an insight to the broader political and historical context in which the memoranda are embedded. This is supported by the theoretical and methodological departure in Bacchi's WPR approach which focus on the processes of meaning making in the policy process. It directs attention to how knowledge is produced and shape the content of policies but also change meaning over time and place (Bacchi, 2009:265). In this way, the combination of qualitative methods allows for obtaining different perspectives of how rejected asylum-seeking children are governed.

## 5. Analysis

It is well established that children at departure centers are not thriving (Bendixen, 2011; Christensen & Andersen, 2006; Gunnarsdóttir & Bornfeld, 2019; Hallas et al., 2007; Nielsen et al., 2007). The policy process around the children is not concerned with whether they are in distress or not. Rather, the process contains conflicting perceptions of the cause of distress, who is responsible, and what measures are needed in relation to support the children's well-being. The archive of documents and interviews with practitioners provide a broader picture of the policy process related to the memoranda 'Fair direction for Denmark' and 'The children must move out of Sjælsmark and have better living conditions', including how the initiatives have come about, the contestation and effects of the initiatives. This is vital as different responses lead to different social interventions.

The analysis is divided into eight sections. Section one through six focuses on the problematization of the rejected asylum-seeking children to identify patterns of thought, or as Foucault puts it, govern-mentalities, which are used to govern rejected asylum-seeking children. Section seven and eight focus on how the 'patterns' of thought within the memoranda opens and closes certain ways of intervening in the children's life (Bacchi, 2009:17-19, 265). The theoretical framework of the WPR approach and the six guiding questions inform the analysis. The six questions will not be applied step-by-step but where the analysis occasions their use. This is to avoid repetitive sections and develop a more integrated form of analysis (Bacchi, 2009:233).

### 5.1. The art of enhancing the children's well-being without encouraging the parents to stay

The children at departure center Sjælsmark have been the subject of much political and public debate in recent years. The center has been criticized due to the lack of self-catering, welfare benefits, leisure time activities, proper education, and a fence surrounding the center guarded by uniformed staff (cf. section 1.1.; Nielsen & Mark, 2018). The parliamentary election in June 2019 led to a change of government and introduction of several initiatives for the children at Sjælsmark. Mette Frederiksen was appointed Prime Minister of a pure Social Democratic government, whose central election pledge was a continued restrictive foreign policy. An actual Government platform was not established between the government and the supporting parties (RV, SF, and Red-Green Alliance). However, a memorandum of understanding was negotiated between the parties called 'Fair direction for Denmark', focusing on climate policy, welfare, inequality, education, integration, and international

engagement. In addition, a memorandum of understanding named ‘The children must move out of Sjølsmark and have better living conditions’ was negotiated in November 2019. This was specifically aimed at the children at departure center Sjølsmark (Sørensen, 2019). The stated purpose formulated in the two memoranda is 1) relocate the families from Sjølsmark to a more suitable location for a departure center, which must 2) be arranged according to the recommendations from the Red Cross and the Ombudsman's report on conditions at Sjølsmark, which still 3) respect the basic principles of the asylum system, and maintain that asylum-seekers who have received a final rejection of their application must leave (Socialdemokratiet et al., 2019a:1; Socialdemokratiet et al., 2019b:16). On August 25th, 2020, the last families were relocated from departure center Sjølsmark to the departure center Avnstrup. In total, 48 families with 89 children were relocated (Møller & Barfoed, 2020). The relocation was accompanied by a number of improvements to the conditions at the center. The specific efforts and changes include:

- A more flexible food arrangement, including the possibility of families, cooking and eating their meals in their rooms.
- Strengthen care, leisure, and educational facilities, including the establishment of daycare, expand after-school activities, and ensure quality in the different school offers.
- Secure a safe environment by ensuring the new location for the departure center is not surrounded by a fence.
- Transfer the operator assignment from the Danish Prison and Probation Service to a new operator (Socialdemokratiet et al., 2019a:1-2).

The memoranda seek to enhance the children’s well-being through altering the material living conditions at departure centers. The ‘problem’ is thus constituted to be concerned with unacceptable living conditions, and the ‘solution’ is to improve the current conditions to “support that the children have as normal an everyday life as possible<sup>9</sup>” (Socialdemokratiet et al., 2019b:16). Notably, the changes “only apply to families with children” (Ibid.), implying a division of rejected asylum-seekers into two groups: families with children and singles or families without children. The rationale for improving the conditions for rejected families

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<sup>9</sup> Original quote: understøtter, at børnene får så normalt et hverdagsliv som muligt.

with children is that the children are "not to blame for the situation they are in" (Socialdemokratiet et al., 2019b:16).

At first glance, the initiatives for rejected families with children follows a perception that children need protection and caring and that the state must intervene when parent's neglect their responsibility to do so. However, in a casual remark, the memorandum 'Fair direction for Denmark' briefly mention that the changes must reflect the Danish asylum legislation stipulating that the children and their families must ultimately leave Denmark. Recall that problem representation often is located within a web of related policies and statements. By including ministerial media statements and parliamentary debates, it is possible to delve more deeply into the broader problem representation produced in the two memoranda (Bacchi, 2009:56-57). When launching the changes for the children at Sjølsmark, the Minister of Immigration and Integration, Mathias Tesfaye, declared:

It is not good for a child to grow up in a country where you have no future. Nevertheless, they are in that situation because their parents do not cooperate with the Danish authorities and return to their home country<sup>10</sup>. (Mattias Tesfaye quoted in Holst, 2020)

Here the 'problem' is explicitly expressed as a family choice. Such argument follows that the parents can bring the children out of their distress if they leave Denmark. Thus, it is possible to retrieve a more implicit understanding of the 'problem' as lodged in the desire to pursue a strict immigration policy where one cannot "expect asylum<sup>11</sup>". Consequently, the proposed changes must not conflict with the Danish government's attempts to encourage rejected asylum-seekers to leave the country. This becomes distinct when the current government states that they prompt not to implement "improvements that encourage parents to stay in Denmark<sup>12</sup>" (UIM, 2020c:1). This reflects a limitation to the extent to which the government feels responsible to protect the children.

In this broader political context, the memoranda are constructed in two ways: as a part of the 'solution' to distress among rejected asylum-seeking children at Sjølsmark with emphasis on childhood protection and with reservations to the possible 'solutions' as the children and their families must ultimately leave Denmark. Regarding the first construction, the problem representation reflects an understanding that society cannot ignore distress

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<sup>10</sup> Original quote: Det er ikke godt for et barn at vokse op i et land, hvor man ikke har nogen fremtid. Men de er i den situation, fordi deres forældre ikke samarbejder med de danske myndigheder og rejser hjem.

<sup>11</sup> Original quote: vente sig til asyl.

<sup>12</sup> Original quote: forbedringer, som tilskynder forældrene til at blive i Danmark.

among rejected asylum-seeking children. In contrast, the second construction reflects an understanding that society cannot not undermine the principles on which the asylum system is based. The government solely feels responsible to the children and by no means their parents. Hence, contesting government positions within the memoranda is apparent, which pose a potential conflict of interest between "support that the children have as normal an everyday life as possible<sup>13</sup>" and "maintain that asylum-seekers who have received a final rejection of their application must return home<sup>14</sup>" (Socialdemokratiet et al.,2019b:16). These ambiguous and conflicting perceptions positions rejected asylum-seeking children as both children in need of protection and asylum-seekers with limited possibilities. Nested within the memoranda are two patterns of thought, or govern-mentalities, which shape the perception of rejected asylum-seeking children. The emergence and development of childhood protection and migration management as established ways to govern children and rejected asylum-seekers are addressed in the following.

## 5.2. Childhood and the best interest of the child

Childhood protection constitutes one of the key concepts lodged within the problem representation. It is relevant to trace the emergence of different childhood discourses to link it to the current government position on rejected asylum-seeking children. In a Danish context, the welfare state is primarily responsible for safeguarding children's rights and welfare. However, children and childhood are considered socially constructed categories. The meaning of 'child' or 'childhood' is not universal. Rather, the content of the category, Bacchi argues, is determined by the social, cultural and historical context (Bacchi, 2009:58).

Historically, childhood has not always existed. In the past, children were considered as small and unfinished adults (Vitus, 2011a:15). In the late 1800s and early 1900s, childhood emerged as a category. Children were seen as innocent and vulnerable, who needed to be separated from the 'world of adults'. The family was perceived as the guardian of such separation and protection. This perspective changed due to a gradual politicization of childhood and growing concern about parental irresponsibility, abuse, and neglect. In the latter half of the 1900s, these concerns led to the treatment of children as individual rights holders (Vitus, 2011c:142-144; Vitus & Lidén, 2009:67-69). The politicization of childhood was, among other things, reinforced in the 1970s Denmark because of increasing demand for

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<sup>13</sup> Original quote: understøtte at børnene får så normalt et hverdagsliv som muligt.

<sup>14</sup> Original quote: fastholde, at asylansøgere, der har fået et endeligt afslag på deres ansøgning, skal rejse hjem.

gender equality policy, e.g., in the labor market. Family policy was divided into a gender equality policy which mainly concerned women's conditions in the labor market, and a children's policy, where measures were directly aimed at children. Broadly speaking, there was a movement from a family perspective towards a child perspective (Bundesén, 2011:168-170). The further politicization of childhood expressed by the ratification to the UNCRC in 1991 and the introduction of the Danish Service Act in 1998 placed children's provision, protection, and participation on the political agenda (Vitus, 2011c:142-144; Vitus & Lidén, 2009:63). There is thus a collective consensus of what a 'good childhood' entails and that the Danish state is the promotor and protector of such a childhood. It is also expressed across changing governments. For instance, the V-government platform from 2015 states:

Denmark is a great country. Not a perfect country, but one of the best in the world. Through generations, we have created a free society where we share values such as democracy, equality, and opportunities for the individual. Through generations, we have developed a safe society where we take care of our children<sup>15</sup>. (Venstre, 2015:6)

Furthermore, the current Social Democratic Prime Minister, Mette Frederiksen, appointed herself the unofficial title as Prime Minister of Children (børnenes statsminister), and in that connection, she stated that "Denmark must be the best place in the world to be a child"<sup>16</sup> (Socialdemokratiet et al., 2009a:6). This brief examination highlights contingency in the way of understanding children and childhood. Arguably, the perception of children as subjects with individual rights is widely accepted and has become a meaningful and 'true' way of governing children (Bacchi, 2009:266-267). However, it is rarely discussed whether there are limits to whom this idea of a good childhood applies to and whether different 'childhoods' apply to different groups of children (Vitus, 2011a:16-17). An examination of resolutions proposed in the period 2015-2020 questions this otherwise 'true' definition of children and childhood and uses it as an argument for enhancing their well-being.

During the previous liberal government (the V-LAK-government) several resolutions to the Aliens Act was proposed, including 'proposal for a parliamentary resolution on accommodation for families with children who have been refused asylum'<sup>17</sup> with RV, SF, the

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<sup>15</sup> Original quote: Danmark er et dejligt land. Ikke et perfekt land, men et af de bedste i verden. Gennem generationer har vi skabt et frit samfund, hvor vi deler værdier som demokrati, ligeværd og muligheder for den enkelte. Gennem generationer har vi udviklet et trygt samfund, hvor vi passer på vores børn (...).

<sup>16</sup> Original quote: Danmark skal være verdens bedste sted at være barn i.

<sup>17</sup> Original title: forslag til folketingsbeslutning om indkvartering af børnefamilier, der har fået afslag på asyl'

Red-Green Alliance, and the Alternative as proposer, ‘proposal for a parliamentary resolution on greater consideration for children's well-being in asylum centers<sup>18</sup>’ with SF as the proposer, and finally ‘proposal for a parliamentary resolution that rejected asylum-children should be granted better living conditions at departure centers and a temporary residence permit no later than 18 months after a final refusal of asylum<sup>19</sup>’ proposed by the Danish citizens<sup>20</sup>. These resolutions are filled with concepts such as ‘*the best interest of the child*’ (*barnets tarv*), ‘*child life*’ (*børneliv*), and ‘*child rights*’:

Avnstrup and Sjølsmark have been founded by a political majority in view of enforcing Denmark's right to deport rejected asylum seekers. However, several professionals and organizations agree that the enforcement of this right violates the best interests of the child, which contradicts the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child<sup>21</sup>". (Nielsen et al., 2019:2)

Such terms support an understanding of children as bearers of individual rights and represent the 'problem' as a lack of childhood protection. Thus, the proposers challenge the collective consensus about Denmark as promoters of 'the good childhood', at least regarding rejected asylum-seeking children.

As a response to these proposals, the then Minister of Integration and Immigration, Inger Støjberg, stated:

It is, of course, important for the government that all aliens in the asylum system are treated respectfully and secured the rights to which they are entitled, but it is at the same time, the government's position that our asylum system must reflect the situation in which asylum-seekers find themselves<sup>22</sup>. (UIM, 2019c:1)

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<sup>18</sup> Original title: forslag til folketingsbeslutning om større hensyntagen til børns trivsel på asylcentre

<sup>19</sup> Original title: forslag til folketingsbeslutning om, at afviste asylbørn skal tildeles bedre levevilkår i hjem- og udrejsecentre og midlertidig opholdstilladelse senest 18 måneder efter endeligt afslag på asyl'

<sup>20</sup> In Denmark, all citizens with the right to vote can collect support for a political initiative and have the resolution tabled in Folketinget. At least three people must co-found the proposal, and the proposal needs to be supported by 50,000 citizens (Folketinget, u.d.)

<sup>21</sup> Original quote: Avnstrup og Sjølsmark er blevet oprettet af et politisk flertal med henblik på at effektuere Danmarks ret til at udsende afviste asylansøgere. Flere fagfolk og organisationer er dog enige om, at der i håndhævelsen af denne ret sker en tilsidesættelse af børnenes tarv, der strider imod FN's børnekonvention.

<sup>22</sup> Original quote: Det er naturligvis vigtigt for regeringen, at alle udlændinge i indkvarteringssystemet behandles ordentligt og sikres de rettigheder, som de har krav på, men det er samtidigt også regeringens holdning, at vores indkvarteringssystem skal afspejle den situation, som asylansøgerne befinder sig i.

The rejection of these proposals is based on the premise that rejected asylum-seeking children and their families must be subordinated to other modes of governance, namely migration management. By unfolding the concept of motivational advancement measures and tracing its emergence it is possible to show how these measures have become an established way of governing rejected asylum-seekers and how it contests the collective understanding of children as bearers of individual rights.

### 5.3. Migration management: motivational advancement measures

The concept of motivational advancement measure underpins the understanding that the memoranda's 'solutions' to the 'problem' must not compromise with the integrity of the Danish asylum system. The main argument is that because migration is portrayed as an impending threat to Danish society, it has served as a base for expanding measures to control migration. Today, motivational advancement measures have become a legitimate mode of governance (Bacchi, 2009:7, 157).

Migrants have not always been perceived as 'unwanted' or a 'threat' to Danish society. In the 1960s and 1970s, Denmark received several thousand guest workers, mainly from Turkey, Pakistan, and Yugoslavia, without attracting much attention from the population. They were welcomed with open arms because they could be absorbed by a labor market with high employment. Gradually, more refugees came to Denmark, among others, as a result of a mass influx from Vietnam in 1979. During the 1980s, immigration and asylum issues become a debated topic, especially due to the oil crisis. Aliens and asylum-seekers were made a scapegoat for the crisis and unemployment and have since been almost identical in the public debate. In the same period, Denmark got its first xenophobic party - Fremskridtspartiet (today DF). It was the start of the last 40 years of tightening the Aliens Act and the construction of asylum-seekers as a 'threat' (Scocozza & Jensen, 199:385; cf. section 1.3.).

The attempt to minimize the threat and not the least the expenses of rejected asylum-seekers in Denmark can be linked to motivational advancement measures. Motivational advancement measures were introduced in 1997 to the Danish Aliens Act (Suárez-Krabbe, 2018.:8). In 2003, an amendment to the Aliens Act was passed, which stated that motivational advancement measures must increase in intensity the longer the rejected asylum-seeker has been in a position of dispatch. This is illustrated as follows. If the police found that a rejected asylum-seeker did not voluntarily cooperate in deportation, the person was deprived of his or

her monetary allowances. A month later, if the rejected asylum-seeker still not voluntarily cooperate in deportation, the person was moved to a departure center. After that, a duty to report to the police was imposed twice a week. Finally, it was possible to detain rejected asylum-seekers if the other measures were found insufficient (Spang & Larsen, 2021:706). In 2015, the year of the so-called refugee crisis, the Parliament passed another amendment to the Aliens Act, which stated that motivational advancement measures were to be used more consistently. This entailed intensified reporting at the police (twice a week), increased access to imprisonment, and duty to reside at a departure center if a rejected asylum-seeker does not cooperate in departure. The amendment is filled with phrases such as "it is therefore proposed that the police in the future, as far as possible, detain rejected asylum seekers<sup>23</sup>" and that "detention must be exercised unless the detention will conflict with Denmark's international obligations<sup>24</sup>" (Støjberg, 2015:23).

These changes meant that motivational advancement measures no longer increased in intensity according to the length the asylum-seeker had been in a position of dispatch. Rather, they were deployed as soon as an asylum-seekers asylum case was rejected (Folketinget, 2015; Spang & Larsen, 2021:706). The line of argumentation for intensifying the use of motivational advancement measure follows an idea that extraordinary times need extraordinary measures:

There is a need for the government and the Folketing to take responsibility for bringing the migrant crisis under control. (...) Our economy is under pressure. Danish culture and cohesion are under pressure. The intense influx that we have seen and are seeing from especially Muslim countries shakes the foundation of Danish society and increasingly questions some of the most basic values and principles in Denmark<sup>25</sup>. (Udlændinge-, Integrations- og Boligudvalget, 2015:2)

The argument follows an understanding of what Bundesen (2011) terms 'the multiculturalism challenge'. It means that increased migration changes previously culturally homogeneous nations, such as Denmark. It is argued that the welfare state's legitimacy is conditioned by the

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<sup>23</sup> Original quote: Der foreslås derfor, at politiet fremover så vidt muligt skal frihedsberøve afviste asylansøgere.

<sup>24</sup> Original quote: der normalt skal ske frihedsberøvelse, medmindre frihedsberøvelsen vil være i strid med Danmarks internationale forpligtelser.

<sup>25</sup> Original quote: Der er brug for, at regeringen og Folketinget tager ansvar for at bringe migrantkrisen under kontrol. (...) Vores økonomi er presset. Dansk kultur og sammenhængskraft er presset. Den voldsomme tilstrømning, som vi har set og ser fra især muslimske lande, ryster fundamentet i det danske samfund og sætter i stigende grad spørgsmålstegn ved nogle af de mest grundlæggende værdier og principper i Danmark.

presence of a homogeneous population with common nationality and culture. With increased migration, Denmark becomes more culturally heterogeneous. The refugee crisis in 2015 reinforced the perception of migrations as a ‘threat’ to state sovereignty, national identity, social cohesion, and the welfare state by emphasizing the necessity to control the large influx of asylum-seekers to secure Danish values and culture (Boel, 2016:130-131; Bundesen, 2011:198-200). 1.2 million people crossed the Mediterranean in an attempt to reach Europe. The media was filled with pictures of asylum-seekers walking in large groups on highways through Europe. It created a sense of panic in the EU, which resulted in a strong focus on controlling both the EU's external border but also the national borders of member-states, including Denmark (Chege, 2020).

As previously explained, population is a central term in Foucault's work on *governmentality*. According to Foucault, population growth poses challenges for modern governments. By this, Foucault directs attention to how modern governments use different modes of rule to deal with the population. In this case, the population is divided in two: Danish citizens who are included in society and migrants who are excluded from society. It is the growth of the latter that are perceived as a challenge. The Danish state applies hybrid forms of rule to govern these two populations. The overarching objective of migration management is to ensure the security of the Danish population (Foucault, 1978/2015:136-138). Bacchi identifies security as an important govern-mentality used in modern governance (Bacchi, 2009:157). Securitization as a govern-mentality becomes evident in the continuous tightening of the Aliens Act to minimize the ‘threat’ from the outside population. On the contrary, the migrants are governed through motivational advancement measures which have been introduced and deployed to control and discipline rejected asylum-seekers. Ensuring rejected asylum-seekers are accommodated at a departure center, and weekly registration at the police enables the government (and the Immigration Service) to surveil their movement and ensure desirable behavior. This is illustrated by the 2015 Ministry of Immigration, Integration and Housing's perception:

In general, the possibility of detention will encourage aliens to cooperate in departure, just as the individual will discover that it has apparent consequences if they do not cooperate in their deportation process<sup>26</sup>. (Støjberg, 2015:25)

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<sup>26</sup> Original quote: muligheden for frihedsberøvelse generelt vil tilskynde udlændinge til at medvirke til udrejse, ligesom den enkelte vil opleve, at det har meget klare konsekvenser, hvis der ikke samarbejdes om udsendelse.

In that way, rejected asylum-seekers become political subjects involved in the power exercise of self-regulation (Bacchi, 2009:27-28; Bundesen, 2011:30). As Foucault writes “discipline produces subjected and practiced bodies, ‘docile bodies’ ” (Foucault, 1995:138). It is assumed that motivational advancement measures impose a behavior-changing mechanism.

The fact that motivational advancement measures have been reproduced and intensified since they were first introduced in 1997 shows how the migration management discourse has gained truth status to regulate where these measure are used as means to govern rejected asylum-seekers (Bacchi, 2009:11, 35). Although the measures are aimed at rejected asylum-seeking adults, it has intended or unintended consequences on the children as their conditions are shaped by the ‘threat to society’ and therefore ‘they must leave’ way of thinking.

#### 5.4. They must leave but they can or will not leave

The memoranda at core of this study seek to enhance and normalize the children’s life. However, the overarching aim is to ensure that the changes do not conflict with the Danish Government’s attempts to encourage rejected asylum-seekers to leave the country. It becomes distinct in several political media statements by the current Minister of Immigration and Integration, Mattias Tesfaye:

It is crucial that the parents get no idea that you can have a life in Denmark, that they have no future here, and that next stop is Copenhagen Airport<sup>27</sup>. (Mattias Tesfaye quoted in Nielsen & Bremer, 2019)

The Minister repeatedly emphasizes that even though conditions for the children have improved, this is not an indication that they have a future in Denmark. On the contrary. The use of the phrase ‘it is crucial’ suggests that the Government is trying to defend the implementation of the changes in the first place because it may look like they are compromising with the restrictive immigration policy. When the memoranda emphasize that rejected asylum-seeking families must leave, a binary understanding between ‘they must leave’ and ‘they can or will not leave’ is created. This notion of ‘they must leave’ is anchored in the migration management discourse. In contrast, the antagonism ‘they can or will not

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<sup>27</sup> Original quote: Det afgørende her er, at forældrene ikke får nogen ide om, at man kan få en tilværelse i Danmark, at der ikke er nogen fremtid her, og at næste skridt er Kastrup Lufthavn.

leave' attempts to point towards cases of rejected asylum-seekers who are prevented from deportation motives for contradicting departure.

As Foucault notes, discourses are as much about what is not said (Foucault, 1976/2015:144-145). The migration management discourse retains a conception that rejected asylum-seekers 'must leave' but fails to mention the number of cases where this is not possible. In July 2020, 1072 rejected asylum-seekers were in a position of dispatch. Of those, 754 were categorized as either 'deadlocked' or 'limited possibility of dispatch' (Nationalt Udlændingecenter, 2020:1). The former refers to situations where it is impossible to forcibly deport an alien to the country in question because the home country does not want to cooperate in this regard. While the latter refers to irregular deportation, usually requiring more significant effort from the authorities. There may also be countries to which only certain groups of rejected asylum seekers can be deported (Politi, u.d.). These figures indicate that a majority of rejected asylum seekers cannot actually leave. What is not indicated is for how long they have been in this 'deadlock' and whether it is due to the rejected asylum-seeker opposing cooperating with the Danish authorities or due to circumstances in the home country.

Government's motivational advancement measures serve as a part of the effort to encourage voluntary return. However, several reports (Andersen, 2011; Bendixen, 2011; Suárez-Krabbe et al., 2018) indicate that the measures have little or no documented effect. The motivational measures do not meet their stated intention to increase the number of 'voluntary' returns. Nor do they address the problem of rejected asylum-seekers being legally stranded with minimal rights for extended periods (Suárez-Krabbe et al., 2018:6). On the contrary, although many feels pressured by the measures, it is suggested that in a number of cases, the motivational measures encourage rejected asylum-seekers to find other ways to improve their quality of life. For instance, by trying to secure additional income, which might lead to violations of the law (Andersen, 2011:71). This suggests that the motivational measures as a mode of governance have unintended consequences impacting the lived effects. As mentioned, the motivational measures are aimed at rejected asylum-seeking adults and not the children (cf. section 5.2). An unintended consequence is that the children may stay indefinitely at a departure center because the parents cannot or will not leave. The notion 'they can or will not leave' points to some structural problems in the asylum system that the motivational measures do not solve. Some parents can or will not leave because the alternative is worse. It is exemplified in the interview with Tone:

I have met a mother from the Congo who has finally been granted residence after ten years. (...) She came with a two-year-old son who was never born in the Congo but born in a refugee camp in Uganda. Going back to the Congo with a boy who only speaks Danish and risks being recruited as a child soldier, and she risks being raped by the paramilitary forces. It is just not a choice. At the same time, she can well see that her son is feeling absolutely awful. He is getting poorer and poorer<sup>28</sup>. (Interview w/Tone)

From 2015-2019, three resolutions were proposed as a response to the unintended consequences caused by the motivational advancement measures and the dominant understanding of 'they must leave'. However, these resolutions were rejected by the liberal parties and the Social Democrats as they were considered to counteract the Danish state's desire to effectuate the return of rejected asylum-seekers. Bacchi emphasizes that binaries rely on a hierarchical understanding that favors one side over the other (Bacchi, 2009:7). From the above, it can be argued that privileging the binary 'they must leave' over 'they can or will not leave' distorts the situation of rejected asylum-seekers. By reducing the situation to whether the children's parents want to cooperate with the Danish authorities or not, the government does not account for why some rejected asylum-seeking families do not leave. It undermines and silences parts of the asylum system, which attribute some rejected asylum-seekers and their children to accommodate indefinitely at a departure center. Additionally, the dichotomous split between being unable to stay and unable to leave. impacts the idea of who is responsible for the children's well-being.

### 5.5. Placing responsibility: The hostage-taken children

As Bacchi emphasizes, problem representations usually entail built-in assumptions about who is responsible for the 'problem'. Dividing practices often position the targeted group as responsible for the 'problem' (Bacchi, 2009:17). Despite contradicting and competing problem representations, there seems to be an agreement about not attributing the children responsibility for their well-being. What does not seem to be agreed upon is who is then responsible for the children's well-being. Since 2015, both the children's parents and the politicians' have been held accountable.

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<sup>28</sup> Original quote: Jeg har mødt en mor fra Congo, som endeligt har fået ophold efter 10 år. (...) Hun kom med en søn på to år, som aldrig er født i Congo, men som var født i en flygtningelejr i Uganda. At tage tilbage til Congo med ham, som kun taler dansk og som risikerer at blive rekrutteret som børnesoldat og hun blive voldtaget af de paramilitære styrker osv. Det er bare ikke noget valg. Samtidig kan hun godt se, at hendes søn det helt forfærdeligt. Han får det dårligere og dårligere.

On the one hand, it is argued that the parents fail to safeguard their children because they refuse to accept the Danish authority's decision. On the other hand, it is argued that the politicians fail as protectors of child rights. Hence, the children's well-being is governed through the binary responsibility versus irresponsibility that places the children between '*parental responsibility/irresponsibility*' and '*political responsibility/irresponsibility*'. The former is linked to childhood discourses, whereas the latter is concerned with a migration management and neoliberal discourse.

In modern liberal and neoliberal modes of governance, the term 'responsible' has become a keyword. In the 1980s, neoliberalism emerged in Denmark along with the notion of individual responsibility, which made individuals or groups of individuals increasingly responsible for several aspects of their lives. With this, it became trendy to state that the individual in question had "chosen" his or her situation (Bacchi, 2009:83; Bundesen, 2011:36). The discourse on the individual's responsibility is captured by then Minister of Immigration and Integration, Inger Støjberg (V). She consistently held the parent accountable for the children's distress when asked about whether resolutions to improve the conditions should be passed or not.

Sofie Carsten Nielsen (RV): Does it not make an impression on the Minister that there are 103 reports on children from Sjælsmark? What will the Minister do for those children?

Inger Støjberg (V): Sadly, parents take their children hostage when they refuse to accept the authorities' decision to leave the country - especially if this reluctance ends up being at the expense of the child's well-being. The children mentioned in the motion for the resolution (...) come to a large extent from countries that will not receive their nationals when they are forcibly deported, i.e., because of the parents do not cooperate in the departure (...). If the parents cooperated in their departure, the countries would receive them, and accommodation in special housing after extended stays in asylum centers would thus not be considered at all<sup>29</sup>. (UIM, 2019d:1)

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<sup>29</sup> Original quote: Sofie Carsten Nielsen (RV): Gør det ikke indtryk på ministeren, at der er 103 indberetninger om børn fra Sjælsmark? Hvad ønsker ministeren at gøre for de børn? Inger Støjberg (V): Det er trist, at forældre tager deres børn som gidsler, når de nægter at acceptere myndighedernes afgørelse om at skulle udrejse af landet – særligt hvis denne modvillighed ender med at være på bekostning af barnets trivsel. De børn, der omtales i beslutningsforslaget (...) kommer i høj grad fra lande, som ikke vil modtage egne statsborgere, når de tvangsudsendes, dvs. som følge af at forældrene ikke vil medvirke til udrejsen (...). Såfremt forældrene

Distress among rejected asylum children is acknowledged, but at the same time, it is not considered to require political action due to the parents' unwillingness to respect the Danish asylum system. A theoretical explanation for this way of problematizing the 'problem' can be found in a notion of '*homo oeconomicus*', where humans are considered rational individuals. The idea of the 'parents as hostage-takers' follows a mindset that the rational decision would be to leave Denmark because their children obviously are not thriving. There is clear accountability of the parents where a distinction is made between the responsible, rational parents who take on their family responsibility to leave Denmark and those who are not cooperative and neglect their responsibility for the family (Bundesen, 2011:31, 172). Placing responsibility on the parents is reinforced by a migration management discourse which emphasizes that it is politically responsible not to interfere in the children's lives as 'they must leave'.

In the political process, opposing political and public voices use arguments such as "failure of authority" and "it is from a political point of view that the children are taken hostage"<sup>30</sup> (Nielsen et al., 2019:4) to call attention to the responsibility of the politicians. The framing of the 'politicians as hostage-takers' reflects the idea of the Danish welfare state as promoters and protectors of 'the good childhood'. In a governmental report from 2019, Red-Green Alliance, the Alternative, RV, and the SF argued:

The minority finds that the framework for the families living with children in departure centers, where the families e.g., are prevented from cooking their own food and gathering around the meal, and where everyday life is characterized by great restlessness, is a hindrance to live a child life, which the Danish state can be worthy of - notwithstanding that the children and their parents are rejected asylum seekers, and notwithstanding that the parents refuse to leave Denmark<sup>31</sup>. (Udlændinge- og Integrationsudvalget, 2019a:1)

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medvirkede til udrejsen, ville landene tage imod dem, og indkvartering i særlig bolig efter længere tids ophold i asylcenterregi ville dermed slet ikke komme på tale.

<sup>30</sup> Original quote: det er fra politisk hold, man tager børnene som gidsler.

<sup>31</sup> Original quote: Mindretallet finder, at rammerne om børnefamiliers liv på et udrejsecenter, hvor familierne f.eks. er afskåret fra at lave deres egen mad og samles om familiens eget måltid, og hvor hverdagen er præget af stor uro, stiller sig hindrende i vejen for mulighederne for at leve et børneliv, som den danske stat kan være bekendt at byde børn, der bor her – uagtet at børnene og deres forældre er afviste asylansøgere, og uagtet at forældrene nægter at forlade Danmark.

Such a line of arguments exemplifies how opposing parties uses childhood protection as a ‘discursive strategy’ to emphasize the politicians’ responsibility to children. The dichotomous split between political and parental responsibility shows that competing problematizations exist over time and space (Bacchi, 2009:10). However, the actual success in making childhood protection a dominant discourse in framing the politicians as ‘hostage-takers’ is questionable. Although, the ‘problem’ in the memoranda adhere to a structural explanation of the physical conditions at departure centers as unacceptable, it also maintains that is it not society’s fault that the parents contradict political provisions (Bundesen, 2011:35; Socialdemokratiet et al., 2019a:16).

### 5.6. Creating an us/them relationship: Rejected asylum-seeking children as ‘illegal residents’ and ‘vulnerable children’

The memoranda operate with different categorization technologies due to the different ways of problematizing rejected asylum-seeking children’s well-being. While the memorandum ‘The children must move out of Sjølsmark and have better living conditions’ categorize the children as ‘vulnerable’, the memorandum ‘Fair direction for Denmark’ categorize the children as ‘illegal residents’. The different ways of categorizing the children reflect the double bind of the children. On the one hand, they are children residing in Denmark. On the other hand, they are children who do not have legal residence in Denmark (Christensen & Andersen, 2006:9; DRC, 2018:3). An underlying premise in these constructions of the children is that they differ from other children in Danish society. They are either ‘particularly vulnerable’ or ‘illegal residents’ because of their status as rejected. Regardless of whether the children are categorized as ‘vulnerable’ or ‘illegal residents’, an antagonism is created between them and us, which can be seen as ‘dividing practices’ according to Bacchi. Remembering that constructing particular people categories serves an essential role in the governing process and gives particular meanings to problem representation. Thus, these different ways of categorizing the children mutually influence each other (Bacchi, 2009:9, 16-17).

In the memorandum ‘Fair direction for Denmark’ the children are indirectly referred to as ‘illegal residents’ due to their status as children of rejected asylum-seekers. Although it is mentioned that the children are “not to blame for the situation they are in”, the government wants to maintain an understanding that they are and remain illegal citizens in Denmark. On the contrary, the memorandum ‘The children must move out of Sjølsmark and have better

living conditions' is filled with phrases such as: "The children are often in a difficult and vulnerable situation<sup>32</sup>", "Children need a safe environment<sup>33</sup>", "In the selection of a new operator, emphasis will be placed on (...) experience of working with children in vulnerable situations<sup>34</sup>" and that the children must be "protected from the difficult circumstances in which they are brought<sup>35</sup>" (Socialdemokratiet et al., 2019b:1-2). The memorandum aims to 'solve problems' related to their vulnerability. However, the reasons and circumstances causing this 'vulnerability' and from what or whom they need protection is not mentioned.

On the surface, the parties behind the memoranda attribute to a childhood discourse that follows rights and protection. However, framing the parents as hostage-takers and the 'problem' as a family choice supports the late 1800s and early 1900s discourse on childhood where children were seen as part of a family unit rather than individual rights holders (Vitus, 2011c:142-144). Historically, vulnerability has generally alternated between, on the one hand, an explanation of social disadvantage as a self-inflicted condition and, on the other hand, an explanation of social disadvantage as primarily the society's fault (Larsen, 2009:18). Holding the parents accountable for the children's distress and further categorizing the children as 'illegal' promotes an understanding of the situation as self-inflicted by the parents. Furthermore, representing the parents as primarily responsible for their children's vulnerability allows government responses to be seen as generous and benevolent and at the same time reinforce existing power relations (Bacchi, 2009:17). It also becomes vocal in the interview with Tone:

There is no more political will to make improvements for rejected asylum seekers nor children. It seems that they (the politicians, ed.) at Christiansborg have stretched themselves (...) when they agreed to relocate the families to that new luxury hotel (departure center Avnstrup, ed.) with two rooms and with the possibility to cook their own food, etc.<sup>36</sup>.  
(Interview w/Tone)

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<sup>32</sup> Original quote: Børnene er ofte i en svær og sårbar situation.

<sup>33</sup> Original quote: Børn har brug for trygge omgivelser

<sup>34</sup> Original quote: Der vil i udvælgelsen af operatør blive lagt vægt på (...) erfaring med at arbejde med børn i udsatte situationer.

<sup>35</sup> Original quote: skærmet fra de svære omstændigheder, som de er bragt i.

<sup>36</sup> Original quote: Der er ikke politisk vilje til at gøre mere for afviste asylansøgere heller ikke børn. Man synes på Christiansborg, at man (...) virkelig har strukket sig ved at gå med til, at familierne er blevet flyttet til det der nye luksushotel med to værelser og ret til at lave egen mad osv.

Tone implicitly implies that other norms apply to rejected asylum-seekers than other Danish citizens. Other groups of children in Denmark are categorized as 'vulnerable'. For example, children of addicts or alcoholics also belong to the category 'vulnerable children'. However, the category 'illegal' places the children outside Danish society and norms for how children should be treated. According to the previously mentioned DRC report from 2018, other 'vulnerable' children in Denmark are to a greater extent considered as bearers of individual rights and in need of protection compared to 'vulnerable' asylum-seeking children (cf. chapter 2). The DCR report calls attention to that "in no other area of law in Denmark are children punished for their parent's decisions, and the children are - regardless of their parents' choices - covered by the principles of the Service Act<sup>37</sup>" (DCR, 2018). It is noteworthy that the children are only encompassed by the principles in the Service Act and not by the Act. The Service Act § 2, subsection 1, read as follows: "Everyone who resides legally in this country has the right to assistance under this law<sup>38</sup>" (Thomsen, 2016:1). In assessing whether an alien has legal residence within the meaning of the Service Act, emphasis is placed on whether the alien has legal residence within the meaning of the Aliens Act. Rejected asylum children do not have legal residence, according to this assessment. A lived effect is that no measures can be initiated based on the Service Act against rejected asylum children. The children find themselves between what Tone describes as "a limbo between the Aliens Act and the Service Act<sup>39</sup>" (Interview w/Tone). In other words, the category 'vulnerable child' becomes subordinated to the category 'illegal resident' (Vitus & Lidén, 2009:63).

The marginalization that affects the children is rooted in migration management discourse. By framing the children and especially their parents as criminals, it is possible to construct, maintain and reproduce the image of rejected asylum-seekers and migrants in general as a threat to security and cohesion in Danish society (Boel, 2016:130-131). Arguably, this categorization technology is used to justify the living condition but also the differentiated treatment of rejected asylum-seeking children and other children in Denmark. The two identity categories impose different subject positions for the children in terms of how others come to think about the children and how they come to think about themselves (Bacchi, 2009:9). The category 'illegal residents' affects the children's position and place in society because "many forget that they are humans too. That they are not just an expense to

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<sup>37</sup> Original quote: på ingen andre lovområder i Danmark straffes børn for deres forældres beslutninger, og børnene er – uanset deres forældres valg – omfattet af servicelovens principper og formål.

<sup>38</sup> Original quote: Enhver, der opholder sig lovligt her i landet, har ret til hjælp efter denne lov.

<sup>39</sup> Original quote: et limbo mellem asyllovgivningen og servicelovgivningen.

the state or a threat to our society<sup>40</sup> (Interview w/Sara). It reinforces the construction of asylum-seekers as unwanted:

(...) imagine that you have been living in an asylum center for years or you have been here since you were two or Danish is your mother tongue, and you just know that you are unwanted. It affects the children<sup>41</sup>. (Interview w/Tone)

The memoranda seem to offer different subject positions. The children are offered a subject position as 'illegal' where they are deprived of their *raison d'être* (right to be in Denmark). Because of the position as 'illegal', they are offered a subject position as 'vulnerable'. However, the subject position as 'illegal' may deprive the children the same protection and support as other vulnerable children in Denmark. It shows the ambiguity of the children's position and place in Danish society and potentially affects social interventions to enhance their well-being.

### 5.7. Reducing well-being to a matter of material living conditions

The meaning assigned to well-being is constantly contested within the policy process. Well-being appears to be connected to child rights, uncertainty, waiting time, mental welfare, and material living conditions (Bacchi, 2009:8). It is noteworthy that in the two memoranda, aspects of well-being connected to uncertainty, waiting time, the parent's well-being, and mental welfare are not mentioned, whereas material, and physical living conditions prevail. In the following, I argue that solely addressing the physical and material conditions at the center must allegedly be related to discourses on migration management and neoliberalism and categorizing the children as 'illegal'. In an attempt to “protect (the children, ed.) from the difficult circumstances in which they are brought<sup>42</sup>” (Socialdemokratiet et al., 2019b:1) both the group of children and their circumstances appear broad and undefined. At the same time, positioning the children as 'vulnerable' and 'illegal', the children appear as a homogeneous group with the same needs and experiences. Asylum-seeking children form a mixed group of children with diverse experiences and backgrounds. Some have witnessed acts of war, been separated from their parents, or been exposed to violence. The children have different

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<sup>40</sup> Original quote: Mange glemmer, at de også er mennesker. At de ikke bare er en udgift til staten eller er en trussel mod vores samfund.

<sup>41</sup> Original quote: (...) forestil dig, at du været mange år på et asylcenter eller du har været her siden du er to eller dansk er dit modersprog, og så ved du bare, at du er uønsket. Det gør noget ved børnene

<sup>42</sup> Original quote: skærme (børnene, red.) fra de svære omstændigheder, som de er bragt i.

experiences of being on the run and living as a refugee in general. The children come from various countries, for which reason they have lived under differentiated conditions before coming to Denmark. Consequently, when framing the children as a homogenous group, the individual child's story and experiences risk stepping into the background, leading us to believe that we know who they are and what they need (Shapiro & Christiansen, 2011:41, 56).

Seidenfaden (2011) argues that rejected asylum-seeking children's well-being and development must be considered from a contextual understanding. From this perspective, the children's well-being and development are understood as a complex interplay between biological, psychological, and social conditions, which also includes societal and cultural conditions and understandings. Hence, the well-being of children accommodating at departure centers depends on many factors. Some factors are specific to rejected asylum-seeking children, including experiences of violence and war, the loss of important family members, and uncertainty about the future. Others are conditions that commonly affect children, such as mental illness in the family or marginalization (Seidenfaden, 2011:73-74).

As previously stated, the implemented initiatives build on recommendations from the Red Cross and the Parliament's ombudsman. However, in the memoranda, it is not mentioned what these two reports state as the cause of the children's distress. Despite the Red Cross and the ombudsman's recommendations to improve the material conditions at departure centers, the two reports attribute the children's distress to circumstances articulated in the Aliens Act.

(...) the difficulties the children experience cannot primarily be attributed to the specific facilities and condition in the center, but to a greater extent, the very fact that according to the Aliens Act, they are obligated to live there<sup>43</sup>. (Ombudsmandens Børnekontor, 2018:17)

According to the reports, it is not the material conditions that are the main reason for the children's distress, which is otherwise what the government aims to improve with the relocation and implementation of normalizing measures. By extension, the Red Cross opines that the recommendations do not 'solve' the fundamental causes to the children's distress:

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<sup>43</sup> Original quote: (...) de vanskeligheder for børnene, der knytter sig til udrejsecenteret, ikke i første række kan tilskrives de nærmere faciliteter mv. i centeret, men i højere grad selve det forhold, at der efter udlændingeloven er pligt for de pågældende til at bo der.

The uncertainty for the future will always be considered as an extremely stressful factor for the group of children in the study, and the recommendations are compensatory in relation to the fact that the families are in a position of dispatch<sup>44</sup>. (Gunnarsdóttir & Bornfeld, 2019:38)

The interviewees also echo the impact of uncertainty on the children's well-being. To exemplify, Alice emphasizes that 'uncertainty' is a fundamental condition that affects both the work with the children and the children's well-being in general:

It may be that well-being is affected by the uncertain situation, but I have to work with the children's well-being anyway (...) Then we try to change some small things that can make the child get through the day more easily. That is what I can do, but of course, when you do not change the terms, it is what it is<sup>45</sup>. (Interview w/Alice)

These contradictions to what cause the problem highlights the limitations or inadequacies in the way the problem is being represented.

The current problem representation of unacceptable living conditions seems to follow a one-size-fits-all model to normalize the children's everyday lives. It does not account for other aspects of the children's lives that might affect their well-being or acknowledge the situation's complexity. Arguably, migration management discourses seem to have gained institutional endorsement, constraining how the problem is represented. Since the government's initiatives are based on the Red Cross and Ombudman's recommendations, they are aware of the complexity of the children's situation. This deliberate silencing of other factors impacts the well-being of children, shows how migration management has become a familiar notion and established practice of how to govern rejected asylum-seekers and their children. In this regard, Bacchi stresses that discourses that frame certain problem representations limits what can be thought and said. A discursive effect derived from the limits imposed by migration management is the way to think about rejected asylum-seeking children and their well-being. The technologies of migration management, including

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<sup>44</sup> Original quote: Uvisheden for fremtiden vil altid være at betragte som en ekstremt belastende faktor for børnegruppen i undersøgelsen, og anbefalingerne er af kompenserende karakter i forhold til, at familierne er i udrejseposition.

<sup>45</sup> Original quote: Det kan godt være at trivslen er påvirket af den uvisse situation, men jeg er nødt til arbejde med børnenes trivsel alligevel (...) Så prøver vi at ændre nogle små ting, som kan få barnet til at komme igennem dagen på en nemmere måde. Det er det jeg kan gøre, men selvfølgelig når man ikke ændrer grundlæggende vilkår, så er det ligesom hvad det er, ikke

categorizing the children as 'illegal' and the parents as 'irresponsible' close off some options for social interventions. To exemplify, previous proposed social interventions aimed at improving other conditions than material living conditions have been rejected. This includes the possibility of rejected asylum-seeking families to be accommodated elsewhere than at a departure center or granting rejected asylum-seeking families a temporary residence permit if the family 18 months after being rejected asylum is still in a 'deadlocked' position (Bacchi, 2009:15-16). In connection with the reading of the resolution 'accommodation for families with children who have been refused asylum' the then Minister of Immigration and Integration, Inger Støjberg stated:

A reintroduction of the possibility of accommodation in special housing units where there is no requirement to cooperate in departure will thus not contribute to an incentive to voluntary departure<sup>46</sup>. (UIM, 2019d:1)

From the documentary sources, it becomes evident that migration management discourses shape and constrain the problem representation. Other reasons for the children's distress are not considered, including extended stays at departure centers combined with uncertainty for the future. Hence, it can be discussed whether the children's well-being is only improved on paper and whether the improvement is a symbolic act.

### 5.8. A consolation? The relocation from Sjølsmark to Avnstrup

The perceptions or 'patterns' of thought shaping the memoranda opens and closes certain ways of intervening in the children's life. The simplification of the children's situation and reducing their circumstances to solely concern material living conditions give rise to questions about how the relocation has been received by politicians, practitioners, and the media but also which lived effects it has produced (Bacchi, 2009:15, 19).

The memoranda are the first state-level step towards enhancing the well-being of rejected asylum-seeking children since 2015, when rejected asylum-seeking families were enjoined to accommodate at departure centers. Carl Valentin (SF), member of the Committee on Immigration and Integration, stated in connection with the publication of the relocation:

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<sup>46</sup> Original quote: En genindførelse af muligheden for indkvartering i særlig bolig, hvor der ikke stilles krav om medvirken til at udrejse, vil således ikke bidrage til et incitament om at medvirke til at udrejse.

I am incredibly relieved that we are now moving the children out of Sjælsmark. We have a narrative about Denmark as a country that takes care of children, which did not match at the reports we have received from, among others, the Red Cross<sup>47</sup>. (Carl Valentin quoted in UIM, 2019b)

In this characteristic, the parties behind the memoranda perceive the relocation as a means to maintain a picture of Denmark as promoters of 'the good childhood'. An interesting aspect of the problem representation is the tension between politicians and practitioners, and the media. The memoranda may be pursuing enhanced well-being through a childhood protection discourse, but according to my interviewees, the initiatives are not turned into fundamental changes for the children as a migration management discourse predominantly shapes the initiatives. Tone describes the relocation as an act of preserving the status quo:

What happened when the families were transferred to Avnstrup was that they were affected by great disappointment. They had hoped that with the political attentiveness they had managed to obtain, more changes had been made to the new departure center. It ended with the same soup, just a different bowl<sup>48</sup>. (Interview w/Tone)

Tone describes that this profound disappointment mobilized the parents. In connection with a visit from Immigration Service in the autumn of 2020, residents at Center Avnstrup, the Movement for Asylum Children's Future (Bevægelsen for Asylbørn Fremtid), Black Lives Matter, and Close the Camps, arranged a demonstration in front of the center where the following demands were handed to the Immigration Service:

- Relocation to normal housing units.
- Resumption of the families' asylum cases and grant temporary residence permit for families in a 'deadlock' position.
- Psychological screening of the children to assess their well-being after the relocation.
- Improvement of educational offers, including the right to attend Folkeskolen and preparatory and higher education for all rejected asylum children.

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<sup>47</sup> Original quote: Jeg er utrolig lettet over, at vi nu får børnene ud af Sjælsmark. Vi har en fortælling om Danmark som et land, der tager sig af børnene, som slet ikke matchede de beretninger, vi har fået fra blandt andre Røde Kors.

<sup>48</sup> Original quote: Men det der skete, da familierne blev overflyttet til Avnstrup var, at de blev ramt af stor skuffelse. De havde håbet, at med den politiske lydhørhed, de havde lykkedes at skaffe, at der var sket mere på det nye udrejsecenter. Så endte det med den samme suppe, men med lidt bedre boller på.

- Abolition of reporting twice a day to the center staff/police to provide the families with the opportunity to move outside Avnstrup and more easily seek support at aid organizations and visit friends and relatives.
- Reintroduction of monetary allowances or work permits to strengthen family life, including being responsible for food, transport, and cloth purchases (Parbst, 2020).

Among other things, Tone states that the purpose of performing a new assessment of the children's well-being is to "return to the negotiating table and say this does not work, it is not enough<sup>49</sup>" (Interview w/Tone). According to her, distress is "the only trump card at hand<sup>50</sup>" which becomes a discursive strategy to improve the children's life. Alice, who works daily as an educator in one of the center's club offerings, identify positive changes to her work with the children

(...) we have been granted better staffing for leisure time activities. We have got a nursery. The staffing in the kindergarten has also been increased. Since we have been relocated to Avnstrup, we have made a tripartite leisure time offer. (...) it has made it easier to plan age-appropriate activities. (...) For us, it has really made a difference, and we have also seen the difference for our children. Especially some of the children who have been very, very restless on Sjælsmark (...) <sup>51</sup>. (Interview w/Alice)

In continuation, Alice emphasized that despite the implementation of the new conditions at the center, the children are still in distress due to uncertainty being an overriding part of their everyday life. Neither Alice as an educator can change that nor the children themselves. Alice explains that they try to provide the children with some tools to make the days easier:

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<sup>49</sup> Original quote: man politisk kan gå tilbage til forhandlingsbordet og sige det her virker ikke, det er ikke nok.

<sup>50</sup> Original quote: det eneste trumfkort man har.

<sup>51</sup> Original quote: det har også betydet, at der på pædagogiskenhed har fået bedre normeringer. Vi har fået en vuggestue. Der er også kommet bedre normeringer i børnehaven. For os betyder det rigtig meget. Siden vi er kommet til Avnstrup har vi lavet et tredelt tilbud. (...) det har jo gjort at vi bedre har kunne planlægge aldersmæssige tilsvarende aktiviteter. (...) For os har det virkelig gjort en forskel og vi har også kunne se det på vores børn. Nogle af de børn, som har været meget, meget urolige på Sjælsmark.

i.a. to talk about it or to talk about hope. Nowadays, I think a lot about our young people and if they are sad because they think a lot about life and their position (...). It is about finding ways to help yourself (the children, ed.) not to be upset all the time. (...) if it helps you if you paint every day or join volunteer yoga every Wednesday. So in that way, some small initiatives that can positively bring them some meaning in life<sup>52</sup>. (Interview w/Alice)

In many ways, the changes initiated in the memoranda are considered as a consolidation as they do not 'solve' the 'real problem'. As Tone points out, it is not possible to "organize oneself out of the state of emergency<sup>53</sup>". Similarly, several newspaper articles criticize the lived effects of the relocation. Headlines such as "The government wanted to ensure better conditions for the children at Sjælsmark - but they are still in distress<sup>54</sup>" (Berlingske December 26th 2020), "Out of Sjælsmark, and so what?<sup>55</sup>" (Dagbladet Ringsted October 27th 2020), and "Sjælsmark became a symbol of symbol politics – has anything changed now?<sup>56</sup>" (Kristeligt Dagblad December 23th 2019) has for instance been rampant in the media. Again, the uncertain position of the children, in particular, is emphasized:

Reality has shown that it was easier said than done. The fundamental conditions for the children are the same: They are children of rejected asylum-seekers who refuse to return home and have no future in Denmark. That has not changed, although they have moved to a new departure center, where a nursery has been established, and the parents can cook in the rooms<sup>57</sup>. (Holst, 2020)

The ongoing debate about rejected asylum-seeking children must be understood as shaped by strategical representations of the 'truth' manifested in a childhood protection discourse and migration management discourse. However, the childhood discourse on protection and care is

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<sup>52</sup> Original quote: Det er bl.a. at tale om det, men også tale om håb. Nu for tiden tænker jeg meget på vores unge mennesker, hvis de går rundt og er ked af det, fordi de går rundt og tænker rigtig meget over livets store spørgsmål og den position de er i (...). Det handler om, hvordan man kan hjælpe sig selv med ikke at være ked af det hele tiden. (...) hjælper det dig, hvis du kan male hver dag eller du kan gå til frivillig yoga hver onsdag. Altså på den måde nogle små tiltag, der positivt kan give dem lidt mening i livet.

<sup>53</sup> Original quote: organisere sig ud af den der undtagelsestilstand.

<sup>54</sup> Original title: Regeringen ville sikre bedre vilkår for børnene på Sjælsmark - men de har det stadig dårligt.

<sup>55</sup> Original title: Ud af Sjælsmark, og hvad så?

<sup>56</sup> Original title: Sjælsmark blev symbol på symbolpolitikken - så er noget ændret nu?

<sup>57</sup> Original quote: Virkeligheden har vist, at det mål var lettere sagt end gjort. For de grundlæggende vilkår for børnene er de samme: De er børn af afviste asylansøgere, der nægter at rejse hjem, og derfor har de ingen fremtid i Danmark. Det har ikke ændret sig, selvom de nu er flyttet til et nyt udrejsecenter, hvor der er etableret vuggestue, mens forældrene må lave mad på værelserne

against a dominant migration management discourse that contests the assumptions, problem representations, and policy solutions drawn up in the memoranda. From this perspective, the memoranda seem to constitute a childhood discourse with little effect on the construction of other discursive and non-discursive practices.

### 5.9. Summary

The ‘problem’ of distress among rejected asylum-seeking children are represented two ways: as a matter of inappropriate living conditions and a family choice. Framing the ‘problem’ in this way creates an ambiguous position for the children and a strategically representation of the ‘truth’. Their conditions must be improved but not to such an extent the parents get the idea that they have a future in Denmark. Motivational advancement measures are inextricably linked to migration management discourses which evoke an understanding that ‘they must leave’, because the children and their parents are ‘illegal residents’. In this way, knowledges imply itself as a power technology which generates categorization mechanisms that place the children outside Danish society and standards for intervening. It reduces the complexity of the children's situation as it does not account for other causes of the children's distress nor why some rejected asylum-seeking families do not leave. Contesting problem representations emphasizes that the fundamental cause of the children's distress is not addressed in the memoranda. Uncertainty still permeates the children's life after the relocation, and it can be questioned whether the implemented initiatives have been an act of preserving the status quo. Arguably, migration management discourses limit the way in which living conditions for rejected asylum children can be conceived.

## 6. Summary and final discussion

Throughout the last decade, the conditions and protection of children's rights at Danish departure centers have been under national and international scrutiny. In discussing whether asylum policy issues outweigh children's well-being and right to development, rejected asylum children have become a political football. In other words, a debate about what kind of 'problem' rejected asylum-seeking children ought to be. For this reason, the objective of the present thesis has been to explore

*How does politicians and practitioners' perception of rejected asylum-seeking children shape the initiatives expressed in the memoranda "Fair direction for Denmark" and "The children must move out of Sjælsmark and have better living conditions"?*

The presence of rejected asylum-seeking children activates two opposing perceptions: that of border control, migration management, and securitization, and that of children's welfare, rights, and protection. There is a collective consensus that childhood in Denmark must be safe, caring, and developing, anchored in policy frameworks on child rights safeguarded by the Danish welfare state. However, since the beginning of the 2000s, the Danish state has governed rejected asylum seekers' behavior through continuous tightenings of the Aliens Act and intensifying motivational advancement measures. The asylum policy framework serves to control and effectuate the departure of those who do not receive asylum to safeguard the welfare state. These two perceptions create a conflicting picture of how to govern rejected asylum-seeking children and what can be said and done to improve their well-being.

The initiatives in the memoranda aim to alter the living conditions and normalize the children's life. However, the initiatives are primarily based on the premise that the improvements must not compromise the Danish state's ability to deport rejected asylum-seekers. Migration management discourses seem to have implied themselves as an established way of governing rejected asylum-seekers, creating a perception of the children as first and foremost 'illegal resident' and secondary 'children'. Consequently, the Danish state feels less obliged to protect the children's well-being and places greater responsibility on the parents. Despite the intention to 'solve the problem' of distress among rejected asylum-seeking children, the initiatives appear to be of a compensatory nature. The practitioners emphasize that the cause of the children's distress only to a minor extent is due to inappropriate material conditions at the centers that the initiatives seek to change. The fact that they must

accommodate at a departure center and the uncertain position they are in is seen as the primary cause (Bendixen, 2011; Christensen & Andersen, 2006; Gunnarsdóttir & Bornfeld, 2019; Hallas et al., 2007; Nielsen et al., 2007).

Despite contesting perceptions of both politicians, practitioners, and the general public claiming that a restrictive asylum policy must not disregard the best interest of the children, the overarching perception that shapes the initiatives expressed in the memoranda is that of asylum-seekers as a 'threat to society' and thus 'must leave'. This perception reduces the complexity of the children's situation. From this perspective, it can be questioned whether the initiatives in the memoranda have led to significant changes for the children's well-being or it, to a greater extent, can be seen as an act of preserving the status quo. Thus, the findings raises questions and adds nuances to the political debate about the well-being of rejected asylum children, which seems to be fashioned by a one-sided perspective undermining the situation's complexity.

The fact that the child perspective, to some extent, is disregarded in asylum policy issues is supported by previous literature in the field. In general, previous literature indicates that considerations to immigration policy seem to take precedence over considerations to child policy in the Nordic countries (Adolphsen, 2016; DRC, 2018; Engebrigtsen, 2003; Ottosen et al., 2012; Vitus & Lidén, 2009). In many ways, the thesis supports and expands the knowledge in the area. Interestingly, the majority of the studies included in this thesis are conducted prior to the refugee crisis in 2015. Since then, several political changes have been made, including the introduction of mandatory residence at a departure center for rejected asylum-seeking families but also initiatives to alter the material conditions at the center. It shows that despite the field of rejected asylum-seeking children in Denmark is constantly changing due to changing political perception, the irregular influx of asylum-seekers, and the varying number of deportations, the perception of asylum seekers has remained the same.

The findings also show the need for further research, especially to examine whether the relocation is perceived as a change or continuity, how the children experience the tensions and paradoxes in their everyday life, or how volunteers, administrative staff, and others work closely with the children experience working in the cross-road of child rights policies or asylum policies. It has not been possible to account for these perspectives sufficiently in this thesis, mainly because of the limited number of interviews with practitioners. Involving the children or practitioners' perspective on the relocation and the changes this has brought about could provide a more nuanced and in-depth understanding of the produced effects of the policy process and why a group of children in Denmark remains in a precarious situation. In

this light, the perception of rejected asylum-seekers and the practice of governing matter – both in terms of what can be thought on a political level and what can be done on a practical level.

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## Appendix 1

### Overview of asylum centers in Denmark

The Danish Immigration Service is responsible for providing and operating accommodation for asylum-seekers. The Immigration Service has entered into agreements with several municipalities, the Danish Red Cross, and The Danish Prison and Probation Service to act as operators of the centers (nyidanmark.dk, 2019; UIM, 2020b). There are currently 12 asylum centers in Denmark, including one transit center, three departure centers, three child centers, and five accommodation centers. The type of center reflects which phase of the asylum process an asylum-seeker is in. At the transit center, newly arrived asylum-seekers are accommodating (phase 1). Asylum-seekers pending their case (phase 2) are living at accommodation centers and rejected asylum-seekers accommodate at departure centers.

Table 4. Overview of asylum centers in Denmark

<b>Name of center</b>	<b>Type of center</b>	<b>Operator</b>	<b>Host municipality</b>	<b>Capacity</b>
Center Ranum	Accommodation center	Vesthimmerland Municipality	Vesthimmerland Municipality	300
Center Holstebro	Accommodation center	Vesthimmerland Municipality	Holstebro Municipality	300
Center Østrup	Child center for unaccompanied children	Vesthimmerland Municipality	Vesthimmerland Municipality	45
Center Kærshovedgård	Departure center for convicted	The Danish Prison and Probation Service	Ikast-Brande Municipality	400
Center Jelling	Accommodation center with women's section	Red Cross	Vejle Municipality	205
Center Hviding	Accommodation center	Tønder Municipality	Esbjerg Municipality	350
Center Aaløkke	Accommodation center	Tønder Municipality	Tønder Municipality	160
Center Tønder	Child center for unaccompanied children	Tønder Municipality	Tønder Municipality	45
Center Sandholm	Transit center	Red Cross	Allerød Municipality	300
Center Sandholm	Child center for unaccompanied children	Red Cross	Allerød Municipality	45
Center Sjælsmark	Departure center for singles and families without children	The Danish Prison and Probation Service	Hørsholm Municipality	400
Center Avnstrup	Departure center for families with children	Red Cross	Lejre Municipality	400

Source: Nyidanmark.dk, 2019

## Appendix 2

### Search strategy

The search strategy for the previously literature chapter is based on a combination of quick search, Boolean search, and chain search. In the quick search, core concepts including rejected asylum-seeking children, well-being, and policy have been used in Google search. A focus list with three focus areas: Children living at asylum centers, well-being, and actors have been the core of the Boolean search. For each area, both Danish and English keywords have been used searching for by using Boolean operators in different databases. In the chain search, references from already identified literature have led on to other relevant literature (Lund et al., 2014: 52-53; Rienecker & Jørgensen, 2014: 141-161).

Table 5. Focus list for the Boolean search.

<b>Focus 1: Asylum-seeking children</b>	<b>Focus 2: Well-being</b>	<b>Focus 3: Actors</b>
Asylbørn/børn på asylcentre	Trivsel	Frivillige organisationer
Flygtningebørn	Levevilkår	Skoler/lærer
Asylcentre	Livsvilkår	Daginstitutioner/pædagoger
	Ventetid	Fritidsklubber
Asylum-seeking children	Uvished	Kommuner
Refugee children		Regioner
Asylum centers	Well-being	Staten
	Living conditions	Danmark
	Quality of life	Skandinavien/de nordiske lande
	Waiting-time	
	Uncertainty	Voluntary organizations/NGO
	Child welfare	School/teachers
		Day-care institution/educator
		Sports clubs
		Municipalities
		Regions
		The state
		Denmark
		Scandinavia/the Nordic countries

Source: Compiled with basis in Lund et al., 2014

## Appendix 3

### Overview of documentary sources

The table below provides a detailed overview of the collected documents, including the sender, type of document, year of publication, the Danish title and status. Status indicates whether a resolution has been passed, rejected, or annulled.

Table 6. Overview of collected documents.

Sender	Type of document	Year of publication	Document title	Status
Berlingske	Newspaper article	2020	Regeringen ville sikre bedre vilkår for børnene på Sjælsmark - men de har det stadig dårligt	
Dagbladet Ringsted	Newspaper article	2020	Ud af Sjælsmark, og hvad så?	
The Danish Red Cross and the Immigration Office	Contract	2020	Operatørkontrakt om indkvartering og underhold af asylansøgere m.fl.	
The Danish Red Cross and the Immigration Office	Rider to contract	2020	Allonge om udrejsecenter Avnstrup	
The Immigration and Integration Affairs committee	Parliamentary report	2020	Betænkning over Forslag til folketingsbeslutning om, at afviste asylbørn skal tildeles bedre vilkår i hjem og udrejsecentre og midlertidig opholdstilladelse senest 18 måneder efter endeligt afslag	
Kristeligt Dagblad	Newspaper article	2019	Sjælsmark blev symbol på symbolpolitikken - så er noget nu ændret?	
Udlændinge- og Integrationsministeriet	Newspaper article	2019	Partierne bag forståelsespapiret enige om, at børnefamilier vil kunne flytte fra Udrejsecenter Sjælsmark senest i april 2020.	
DR Nyheder	Newspaper article	2019	Tesfaye flytter børnene ud af Sjælsmark. Men 'næste skridt er Kastrup Lufthavn'	
The Immigration and Integration Affairs committee	Questions to the Minister of Immigration and Integration, Mathias Tesfye	2019	Spørgsmål og svar til ministeren (forslag til Folketingsbeslutning om, at afviste asylbørn skal tildeles bedre vilkår i hjem- og udrejsecenter og midlertidig ophold senest 18 måneder efter endeligt afslag)	

Tone Henriette Olaf Nielsen and Michala Clante Bendixen	Speech	2019	Foretrædetale	
Tone Henriette Olaf Nielsen, Michala Clante Bendixen, Knud Klarskov Vilby, Kjeld Christian Festersen Holm, Anne Lise Marstrand-Jørgensen, Shaka Loveless Grøn, Kirsten Thorup, Bjørn Erik Elmquist, Ghita Nørby, and Jon Bjarke Kiellberg	Citizen proposal to Parliamentary resolution	2019	Forslag til Folketingsbeslutning om, at afviste asylbørn skal tildeles bedre vilkår i hjem- og udrejsecenter og midlertidig ophold senest 18 måneder efter endeligt afslag	Rejected
The Ministerium of Immigration and Integration, Mathias Tesfaye	Policy	u.d.	Forslag til Danmarks første hjemrejselov	
The Ministerium of Immigration and Integration, Mathias Tesfaye	Letter	2019	Brev til Udlændingestyrelsen om Tilpasning af forholdene på Udrejsecenter Sjælsmark	
Social Democrats, Danish Social Liberal Party, Socialist People's Party, and Red-Green Alliance	Memorandum of understanding	2019	Retfærdig retning for Danmark	Not juridically binding but expresses a convergence of will between the parties, indicating an intended common line of action
Social Democrats, Danish Social Liberal Party, Socialist People's Party, and Red-Green Alliance	Memorandum of understanding	2019	Børnene skal ud af Sjælsmark og have bedre forhold	Not juridically binding but expresses a convergence of will between the parties, indicating an intended common line of action
Danish Red Cross	Report	2019	Trivsel hos børn på udrejsecenter Sjælsmark	
The Immigration and Integration Affairs committee	Parliamentary report	2019	Betænkning over Forslag til folketingsbeslutning om indkvartering af børnefamilier, der har fået afslag på asyl	
Søren Søndergaard (EL), Carolina Magdalene Maier (ALT), Sofie Carsten Nielsen (RV) og Holger K. Nielsen (SF)	Resolution	2019	Forslag til folketingsbeslutning om indkvartering af børnefamilier, der har fået afslag på asyl	Rejected
The Immigration and Integration Affairs committee	Questions to the Minister of Immigration and	2018	Spørgsmål og svar til ministeren (forslag til folketingsbeslutning om	

	Integration, Inger Støjberg		indkvartering af børnefamilier, der har fået afslag på asyl)	
Søren Søndergaard (EL), Carolina Magdalene Maier (ALT), Andreas Steenberg (RV) og Holger K. Nielsen (SF)	Resolution	2018	Forslag til folketingsbeslutning om indkvartering af børnefamilier, der har fået afslag på asyl	Rejected
The Immigration and Integration Affairs committee	Parliamentary report	2019	Betænkning over Forslag til folketingsbeslutning om større hensyntagen til børns trivsel på asylcentre	
The Immigration and Integration Affairs committee	Questions to the Minister of Immigration and Integration, Inger Støjberg	2018	Spørgsmål og svar til ministeren (forslag til folketingsbeslutning om større hensyntagen til børns trivsel på asylcentre)	
Holger K. Nielsen (SF) og Jacob Mark (SF)	Proposal for Parliamentary resolution	2018	Forslag til folketingsbeslutning om større hensyntagen til børns trivsel på asylcentre	Rejected
The Parliament's ombudsman	Report	2018	Uanmeldte tilsynsbesøg i Udrejsecenter Sjælsmark – forholdene for børn	
Martin Henriksen (DF), Kristian Thulesen Dahl (DF), Søren Espersen (DF), Marie Krarup (DF), Christian Langballe (DF), Morten Marinus (DF), Peter Kofod Poulsen (DF) og Peter Skaarup (DF)	Proposal for Parliamentary resolution	2018	Forslag til folketingsbeslutning om et helt eller delvist udgangsforbud for asylansøgere under 18 år	Rejected
The Immigration and Integration Affairs committee	Parliamentary report	2018	Betænkning over Forslag til folketingsbeslutning om et helt eller delvist udgangsforbud for asylansøgere under 18 år	
Martin Henriksen (DF), Kristian Thulesen Dahl (DF), Søren Espersen (DF), Marie Krarup (DF), Christian Langballe (DF), Morten Marinus (DF), Peter Kofod Poulsen (DF) og Peter Skaarup (DF)	Proposal for Parliamentary resolution	2017	Forslag til folketingsbeslutning om et helt eller delvist udgangsforbud for asylansøgere under 18 år	Annulled
The Immigration and Integration Affairs committee	Statement	2017	Beretning over Forslag til folketingsbeslutning om et socialt tilsyn på asylcentre, hvor der bor børn, samt en præcisering af asylansøgere og udlændinges retsstilling i forhold til serviceloven	

Sofie Carsten Nielsen (RV), Marianne Jelved (RV) og Morten Østergaard (RV)	Proposal for Parliamentary resolution	2016	Forslag til folketingsbeslutning om et socialt tilsyn på asylcentre, hvor der bor børn, samt en præcisering af asylansøgeres og udlændinges retsstilling i forhold til serviceloven	Annulled
The Ministry of Social Affairs	Letter	2016	Skrivelse om servicelovens anvendelsesområde i forhold til asylansøgere og udlændinge uden lovligt ophold (Til samtlige kommuner m.fl.)	
The Parliament	Law	2015	Lov om ændring af udlændingeloven (Håndtering af flygtninge og migrantsituationen)	
Johanne Schmidt-Nielsen (EL), Ulla Sandbæk (ALT), Sofie Carsten Nielsen (RV) og Jacob Mark (SF):	Changes to resolution	2015	Ændringsforslag til 3. behandling af Forslag til lov om ændring af udlændingeloven (Håndtering af flygtninge og migrantsituationen)	
The Immigration, Integration and Housing committee	Parliamentary report	2015	Tillægsbetænkning over Forslag til lov om ændring af udlændingeloven (Håndtering af flygtninge og migrantsituationen)	
The Immigration, Integration and Housing committee	Parliamentary report	2015	Betænkning over Forslag til lov om ændring af udlændingeloven (Håndtering af flygtninge og migrantsituationen)	
The Immigration, Integration and Housing committee	Questions to the Minister of Integration and Immigration, Inger Støjberg	2015	Spørgsmål og svar til ministeren (Håndtering af flygtninge og migrantsituationen)	
The Ministry of Immigration, Integration and Housing, Inger Støjberg	Proposal for Parliamentary resolution	2015	Forslag til lov om ændring af udlændingeloven (Håndtering af flygtninge- og migrantsituationen)	Approved

Sources: The data are extracted from [retsinformation.dk](http://retsinformation.dk), [karnov.dk](http://karnov.dk), [uim.dk](http://uim.dk), and [regeringen.dk](http://regeringen.dk)

## Appendix 4

### Interview guide center staff (Danish)

Tusinde tak, fordi du har taget dig tid til at deltage interviewet. Før vi går i gang, vil jeg lige introducere dig for formålet med specialet og interviewet, og samtidig også lige sætte et par ord på min baggrund for specialet.

Jeg er ved at afslutte min kandidat i Sociologi på Lunds Universitet i Sverige. Siden 2018 har jeg været frivillig i Red Barnet og Red Barnet Ungdom, hvor jeg har lavet aktiviteter med børn på asylcentre i Danmark og Sverige. Jeg har derigennem fået et lille indblik børnenes liv på centrene. Og det er også på baggrund af nogle af de oplevelser jeg har haft som frivillig specialet udspringer af.

Specialets overordnede fokus er den politiske proces omkring afviste asylbørn og deres trivsel. Jeg har derfor både fokus på politiske aftaler og lovforslag på området, men også på hvordan forskellige aktører i praksis arbejder for og med børnenes trivsel. Interviewet vil derfor komme til at handle om, hvordan du/I på center Avnstrup konkret arbejder med børnene.

Interviewet tager som udgangspunkt cirka 30-45 minutter, og dine svar vil blive behandlet anonymt. Inden vi går i gang, skal jeg høre, om det er i orden at jeg optager interviewet? Det er kun mig, der kommer til at lytte til det, og det gør det nemmere for mig at huske dine pointer efterfølgende.

Har du nogen spørgsmål inden vi går i gang?

<b>Tema</b>	<b>Interviewspørgsmål</b>
Baggrundsinformation	Vil du ikke starte med at fortælle lidt mere om dit arbejde på Avnstrup? Hvad er din stilling? Hvad består dit arbejde konkret i? Hvor lang tid har du arbejdet på Avnstrup?
Det pædagogiske arbejde med børnene	Vil du fortælle om din sidste arbejdsdag med børnene på Avnstrup? (Du må meget gerne fortælle om dagen fra du møder indtil du har fri) Hvad er formålet med dit arbejde? Hvordan arbejder du/I med børnene i dagligdagen?  Hvordan arbejder I konkret med børnene og deres trivsel? Kan du give et eksempel?
Børnenes tilværelse på centeret	Vil du fortælle lidt mere om de børn, der bor på Avnstrup og som kommer i klubben?  Hvordan vil du beskrive børnenes tilværelse på centeret?  Hvordan oplever du, at børnene håndterer det at bo på centret? Kan du give et eksempel?  Har I iværksat tiltag for at forbedre børnenes trivsel?

	Hvis ja, hvilke? Hvis nej, hvorfor?
Flytning fra Sjælsmark til Avnstrup	Hvilke forandringer har flytningen medført for børnene og deres familier?  Hvordan har de påvirket børnene? positivt/negativt  Jeg har læst forskellige udtalelser i avisartikler omkring flytningen, som jeg godt kunne tænke mig at du forholder dig til: “Avnstrup har ikke været nogen forbedring i forhold til Sjælsmark” “Pædagogernes muligheder for at sikre børnenes trivsel er langt bedre nu” Hvad tænker du om disse udtalelser?
Politisk indflydelse og beslutning	Hvordan oplever du politiske beslutninger påvirker dit arbejde? Føler du, at politiske beslutninger fremmer eller hæmmer jeres arbejde med børnene?  Hvordan oplever du, at de påvirker børnene?  Hvor meget kan I påvirke politiske beslutninger på området? Har I mulighed for at sige imod, hvis I er uenig i en beslutning? Kommer I med forbedringsforslag?
Ansvar	Hvem mener du har ansvaret for børnenes trivsel? (fx politikere, forældrene, civilsamfundsorganisationer, centermedarbejdere?)
Udfordringer og forandring	Hvad ser du som den største udfordring i dit arbejde? Hvordan påvirker det dit arbejde? Hvordan kommer det konkret til udtryk?  Hvis du havde muligt for at ændre noget som kunne fremme børnenes trivsel, hvad skulle det så være?
Andet	Kender du nogen, som kunne være relevant for mig at tale med?  Har du noget andet at tilføje?

## Appendix 5

### Interview guide organizational members (Danish)

Tusinde tak, fordi du har taget dig tid til at deltage interviewet. Før vi går i gang, vil jeg lige introducere dig for formålet med specialet og interviewet, og samtidig også lige sætte et par ord på min baggrund for specialet.

Jeg er ved at afslutte min kandidat i Sociologi på Lunds Universitet i Sverige. Siden 2018 har jeg været frivillig i Red Barnet og Red Barnet Ungdom, hvor jeg har lavet aktiviteter med børn på asylcentre i Danmark og Sverige. Jeg har derigennem fået et lille indblik børnenes liv på centrene. Og det er også på baggrund af nogle af de oplevelser jeg har haft som frivillig specialet udspringer af.

Specialets overordnede fokus er den politiske proces omkring afviste asylbørn og deres trivsel. Jeg har derfor både fokus på politiske aftaler og lovforslag på området, men også på hvordan forskellige aktører i praksis arbejder for og med børnenes trivsel. Interviewet vil derfor komme til at handle om dine erfaringer fra arbejdet med afviste asylbørn gennem Trampolinhuset/Bevægelsen for asylbørns fremtid.

Interviewet tager som udgangspunkt cirka 30-45 minutter, og dine svar vil blive behandlet anonymt. Inden vi går i gang, skal jeg høre, om det er i orden at jeg optager interviewet? Det er kun mig, der kommer til at lytte til det, og det gør det nemmere for mig at huske dine pointer efterfølgende.

Har du nogen spørgsmål inden vi går i gang?

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Interview question</b>
Baggrundsinformation	Fortæl lidt om dit arbejde og hvordan du er involveret i hele debatten omkring trivsel blandt afviste asylbørn? Kan du give nogle eksempler på, hvordan du/I arbejder for afviste asylbørns trivsel?
Civilsamfundets rolle	Hvem mener du har ansvaret for børnenes trivsel? (fx politikere, forældrene, civilsamfundsorganisationer, centermedarbejdere?)  Hvad mener du, jeres rolle som civilsamfundsaktør er i forhold til at forbedre afviste asylbørns trivsel?  Er der en forskel på jeres rolle som civilsamfundsaktør og politikernes rolle? Hvis ja, hvilken? Hvis nej, hvorfor ikke?
Politisk indflydelse	Hvorfor engagerer I jer politisk og søger at opnå politisk indflydelse?  Hvad var baggrunden for og formålet med at organisere demonstrationer foran asylcentre?  Hvad var baggrunden for, at I udformede borgerforslaget tilbage i 2018?

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	<p>Hvordan oplever du, at politikerne har taget imod jeres forslag?  Er de åbne for at lytte til jer?  Oplever du, at I kan påvirke politisk beslutningstagen?</p>
Flytning fra Sjælsmark til Avnstrup	<p>Hvad tænker du om, at børnene er blevet flyttet fra Sjælsmark til Avnstrup?  Hvilke forandringer her flytningen medført for børnene (positive/negative)</p> <p>Jeg har læst forskellige udtalelser i avisartikler omkring flytningen, som jeg godt kunne tænke mig, at du forholte dig til:  “Avnstrup har ikke været nogen forbedring i forhold til Sjælsmark”  “Pædagogernes muligheder for at sikre børnenes trivsel er langt bedre nu”  Hvad tænker du om disse udtalelser?</p>
Udfordring og forandring	<p>Hvad ser du som den største udfordring i dit arbejde?</p> <p>Hvis du havde muligt for at ændre noget ift. At forbedre børnenes trivsel, hvad skulle det så være?</p>
Andet	<p>Har du noget at tilføje?</p>

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## Appendix 6

### Interview guide volunteer

Tusinde tak, fordi du har taget dig tid til at deltage interviewet. Før vi går i gang, vil jeg lige introducere dig for formålet med specialet og interviewet, og samtidig også lige sætte et par ord på min baggrund for specialet.

Jeg er ved at afslutte min kandidat i Sociologi på Lunds Universitet i Sverige. Siden 2018 har jeg været frivillig i Red Barnet og Red Barnet Ungdom, hvor jeg har lavet aktiviteter med børn på asylcentre i Danmark og Sverige. Jeg har derigennem fået et lille indblik børnenes liv på centrene. Og det er også på baggrund af nogle af de oplevelser jeg har haft som frivillig specialet udspringer af.

Specialets overordnede fokus er den politiske proces omkring afviste asylbørn og deres trivsel. Jeg har derfor både fokus på politiske aftaler og lovforslag på området, men også på hvordan forskellige aktører i praksis arbejder for og med børnenes trivsel. Interviewet vil derfor komme til at handle om, hvordan du gennem dit frivillige arbejde, arbejder med børnene.

Interviewet tager som udgangspunkt cirka 30-45 minutter, og dine svar vil blive behandlet anonymt. Inden vi går i gang, skal jeg høre, om det er i orden at jeg optager interviewet? Det er kun mig, der kommer til at lytte til det, og det gør det nemmere for mig at huske dine pointer efterfølgende.

Har du nogen spørgsmål inden vi går i gang?

<b>Tema</b>	<b>Interviewspørgsmål</b>
Baggrundsinformation	Vil du ikke starte med at fortælle, hvorfor du blev frivillig? Hvorfor engagerer du dig i frivilligt arbejde med afviste asylbørn? Hvor lang tid har du været frivillig?
Aktiviteter på centeret	Vil du fortælle lidt mere om jeres aktiviteter for børnene på Avnstrup? Hvad er formålet med aktiviteterne? Hvilken målgruppe henvender aktiviteterne sig til? Hvor ofte afholder I aktiviteter?  Hvad laver I typisk på en aktivitet? (kreative aktiviteter, fysiske aktiviteter etc.)  Hvad er det for nogle børn, der deltager i jeres aktiviteter? Hvilke børn deltager typisk? Hvor ofte deltagere de?  Oplever du, børnenes situation påvirker jeres aktiviteter? Hvis ja, hvordan?  Hvad tror du, at børnene får ud af at deltage i aktiviteterne?  Hvilken følelse går du hjem med, når du tager fra asylcenteret?

Flygtning fra Sjælsmark til Avnstrup	Hvilke forandringer har flygtningen medført for jer?
	Hvordan har flytningen påvirket jeres aktiviteter? (positive/negative)
Ansvar	Hvem mener du har ansvaret for børnenes trivsel? (fx politikere, forældrene, civilsamfundsorganisationer, centermedarbejdere?)
Udfordring og forandring	Hvad er den største udfordring i dit arbejde med børnene?
	Hvis du havde muligt for at ændre noget ift. børnenes tilværelse, hvad skulle det så være?
Andet	Har du andet at tilføje?

## Appendix 7

### Coding hierarchy

A complete extract of the coding hierarchy developed in NVivo as a part of the first cycle of data analysis is provided below. Files indicate the number of documents/interviews where the code is represented, whereas references indicate the number of times the specific code has been coded.

Figure 2. Coding hierarchy in NVivo

Name	Files	References	Created On	Created By	Modified On	Modified By
Rejected asylum-seeking children		32	07-04-2021 09:54	NS	09-04-2021 08:06	NS
Enhancement of well-being		15	05-04-2021 14:59	NS	09-04-2021 08:05	NS
Normalization of family life		12	07-04-2021 09:11	NS	22-04-2021 08:17	NS
Political influence		4	22-04-2021 08:14	NS	22-04-2021 08:54	NS
Relocation		7	26-03-2021 14:47	NS	22-04-2021 08:36	NS
Strengthening of care and leisure facilities		6	07-04-2021 09:15	NS	22-04-2021 08:54	NS
Migration control and management		20	30-03-2021 09:57	NS	09-04-2021 08:05	NS
Asylum-seeking children cause insecurity		2	05-04-2021 08:06	NS	08-04-2021 15:41	NS
Extraordinary times demand extraordinary measures		4	30-03-2021 09:58	NS	08-04-2021 16:03	NS
Motivational advancement measures		14	08-04-2021 15:41	NS	22-04-2021 08:37	NS
They must leave		8	06-04-2021 14:13	NS	22-04-2021 08:39	NS
Respect the asylum system		4	26-03-2021 14:51	NS	15-05-2021 21:25	NS
The best interest of the child		24	05-04-2021 08:25	NS	09-04-2021 08:05	NS
Child rights		19	05-04-2021 11:22	NS	22-04-2021 08:49	NS
The Service Act vs. the Aliens Act		6	05-04-2021 08:36	NS	22-04-2021 08:24	NS
Safe environment		7	07-04-2021 09:14	NS	09-04-2021 07:33	NS
The world's best country to be a child in		3	26-03-2021 14:56	NS	09-04-2021 08:02	NS
Vulnerable children		7	26-03-2021 14:48	NS	22-04-2021 08:12	NS
The hostage-taken children		15	05-04-2021 11:24	NS	09-04-2021 08:07	NS
Failure of authority		8	08-04-2021 14:16	NS	22-04-2021 08:42	NS
Failure of parenthood		6	08-04-2021 14:15	NS	08-04-2021 14:26	NS
The children are not to blame		6	08-04-2021 14:16	NS	08-04-2021 14:26	NS
They can or will not leave		5	05-04-2021 10:28	NS	22-04-2021 08:38	NS
Well-being		13	07-04-2021 09:55	NS	22-04-2021 08:36	NS
Material conditions		5	05-04-2021 15:37	NS	22-04-2021 08:49	NS
Mental health		8	05-04-2021 12:13	NS	22-04-2021 08:49	NS
Political determined		9	09-04-2021 07:29	NS	15-05-2021 21:27	NS
Uncertainty		8	05-04-2021 15:39	NS	22-04-2021 08:43	NS