



TRABAJO FIN DE GRADO

TITLE:

**Three Decades since the Establishment of the
Convention on the Rights of the Child:**

*The enforcement of Norway and Sweden and its effects on
international relations*

AUTHOR: **Karine Nordnes Skoglund**

TUTOR: Julio Guinea Bonillo

GRADO EN RELACIONES INTERNACIONALES/

BA IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Academic year 2020/2021

FACULTAD DE CIENCIAS SOCIALES Y DE LA COMUNICACIÓN UNIVERSIDAD
EUROPEA DE MADRID

Abstract

Following the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), the international community has placed a stronger emphasis on children's rights and their position in the international arena as equally significant actors. This research examines the various approaches used by Norway and Sweden to view and apply the CRC. An essential factor is detecting distinctive methods of interpretation. Furthermore, one of the main objectives is to assess the consequences of possible violations of the Convention and whether they would affect international relations. This research contends that there are variations in how the respective countries want to adopt and enforce the Convention and interpret it.

Keywords: Convention on the Rights of the Child, Implementation, Interpretation, International Relations, Norway, Sweden,

List of abbreviations

The following list indicates the meaning of various abbreviations used throughout the thesis.

Abbreviation	Meaning
NCPS	Norwegian Child Protection Scheme
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
CRIN	Child Rights International Network
DCI	Defense for Children International
EC	European Council
ECHR	European Human Rights Court
EU	European Union
IO	Intergovernmental Organization
ILO	International Labor Organization
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NGO	Non-governmental organization
TEU	Treaty of the European Union
TL	Treaty of Lisbon
TW	Treaty of Westphalia
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UN	United Nations
UNGA	United Nations General Assembly
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund

Table of contents

1. Introduction.....	1
1.1 Research Objectives	2
1.2 Hypothesis.....	4
1.3 Methodology	4
1.4 Theoretical Framework.....	5
2. The Convention on the Rights of the Child	7
2.1 Brief introduction to Norway's and Sweden's history concerning the CRC	9
2.2 The United Nations Child Committee	11
2.2.1 Committee findings on Norway	12
2.2.2 Committee findings on Sweden.....	14
2.3 European Union	15
3. The Role of Non-Governmental Organizations, development organizations, and other groups	18
4. Children in international politics and the power of language and culture	20
5. The Swedish Case	22
5.1 Methods of incorporation and interpretation	23
6. The Norwegian case.....	25
6.1 Methods of incorporation and interpretation	26
7. Consequences of differentiated interpretations for international relations	28
8. Conclusions	32
9. Bibliography	35

1. Introduction

The creation of a universal human rights system was one of the most innovative concepts of the twentieth century. The central tenet of this system seems to be that human liberties are equally applicable for all, no matter what. In brief, the post-World War II civil rights framework reflects the legal principle that all human beings are essential. When the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) was established in the 1980s, children's rights were highlighted as being a crucial part of general human rights. Ever since its creation, children's rights have crept higher up on decision-makers' agendas, and the Convention has become one of the most ratified conventions of all time. Those countries that have ratified the Convention have agreed to provide children with fundamental rights in security, support and involvement, and more. By signing and agreeing to the terms of the legally binding Convention, states also agree to incorporate the Convention into national laws. Moreover, Norway and Sweden were early in ratifying the CRC; however, only Norway implemented the Convention into national law a few years later.

Throughout many years, the Norwegian child protection scheme (NCPS), and the Norwegian government, have been a subject of scrutiny in Europe, but it has also gained attention in other regions. The critique reflects skepticism toward the Norwegian judicial bodies and the moral basis of the Nordic welfare paradigm. A journalist from the BBC once received international recognition for bringing to light this specific topic, in which he criticized the validity of the child protection scheme and children's rights in Norway as a whole. The primary duty of the NCPS is to shield juveniles from abuse and to make decisions that are in the best interests of the child – this is required by both national legislation and international law, as outlined in the Convention on the Rights of the Child (Helland, 2019, pp. 1-2).

Along with Norway, Sweden is, in some ways, considered the crown jewel in terms of being a social-democratic welfare state. The Scandinavian model has been and still is of great importance to the respective countries as it has provided the welfare now seen. Though the models may be highly similar, there are also variations. For instance, Sweden has not nearly received as much criticism as Norway concerning the CRC and its child welfare scheme. Both have ratified and, as of 2003 and 2020, implemented the CRC into national law. Nevertheless, the international community's eyes have been

directed towards Norway and its repeated convictions in the European Human Rights Court (ECHR).

1.1 Research Objectives

This thesis will examine the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and the differences in how two countries have been interpreting the Convention. For the purpose of this research, only two countries will be taken into consideration in regards to the in-depth analysis, Norway and Sweden. Norway and Sweden are situated in Scandinavia, and both countries are commonly considered strong democracies and "happy" countries. For instance, their happiness score often ends up at the top of the list when such surveys are completed (Hansen, 2015, p. 175). Despite being homogeneous in terms of their cultural heritage, political system, and geographical similarities, they also distinguish various aspects (Hansen & Wiklund, 2008). This is particularly prevalent in court rulings done by the European Human Rights Court (ECHR), where Norway has been convicted on several occasions, while Sweden holds fewer convictions for similar cases where parallels to the CRC can be drawn. It is fruitful to look into what consequences this may have on politics, and therefore, this thesis will aim to answer the following research question: *How do Norway and Sweden act upon the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and to what extent is their interpretation a concern to international relations?*

In other words, throughout the process of this research, this analysis will aim to find out how the two countries interpret and carry out internal policy legislation in correlation with the Convention on the Rights of the Child and whether or not the interpretations are different. It will also be fruitful to understand why the countries act upon the Convention as they do by looking into the underlying processes that lead to the reasoning.

On the other hand, the objectives will strive to indicate the critical issues related to the topic in question. There will be several research objectives as this is important in order to complete thorough research. Here are the following research objectives:

Objective 1: To examine whether or not Norway and Sweden interpret the Convention on the Rights of the Child differently

Objective 2: Look into how the interpretations may be contrary to international rules and guidelines

Objective 3: To examine whether or not the interpretations have any effects on international relations

Furthermore, it is possible that several variations in meanings of the CRC would be discovered throughout the research. This may contribute to the presumption that one of the nations, on a larger scale and with greater volume, interprets and implements the Convention incorrectly in terms of the principles set by international standards. Consequently, it may also have a triple-down effect on international relations and politics.

Moreover, the current Norwegian Prime Minister, *Erna Solberg*, has been in power since 2013, and in Sweden, the current Prime Minister, *Stefan Löfven*, has held the position since 2014 (Norwegian Government, n.d) and (Government Offices of Sweden, n.d). Therefore, in order not to make the research too broad, the timeframe will, on a general basis, go from 2013 to this day, focusing on the period in which the two prime ministers and their government have been in power. However, when it comes to the historical part of the research, which is highly relevant to look into as well in order to comprehend the present, it will be necessary to look at a broader array of years.

The research will be narrowed down in terms of content to draw attention to the Convention on the child's rights and the differences between the two countries. The paper will not discuss the two states' judicial system as such but will instead focus on interpretations of the Convention. In addition, there will be drawn parallels to human rights, as the subject in question is closely related to the matter.

1.2 Hypothesis

The hypothesis will intend to conduct the relationship between the independent and dependent variables alongside the research question and theoretical framework. Moreover, both Norway and Sweden have strong institutions and social-democratic welfare systems, which strive to take care of everyone in the respective countries. Thus, one may question the underlying reason and grounds for how the countries choose to comprehend, interpret and implement the CRC.

For that reason, and for the purpose of the research, the thesis will look into whether or not Norway's interpretation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child is, concerning international rules and guidelines, more alarming than that of Sweden, and whether this may have an effect or if it might be a concern to international relations. The assumption is that the differences are indeed an area of concern to foreign actors.

In the case of insufficient interpretation or implementation, where parallels to the CRC can be drawn, it may have consequences beyond national borders, raising concern amongst states and non-state actors.

1.3 Methodology

The research approach was mainly completed through qualitative data analysis, and secondary data has been the primary method of collecting and retrieving information. Most information gathered and what exists in academic journals is presented in words, and for that reason, a qualitative analysis better suits the research, making it both fruitful and comprehensive. Nevertheless, due to the limited research previously completed on the specific issue in terms of a comparative analysis between Norway and Sweden on the CRC and its effects on international relations, it was additionally necessary to collect some primary data.

The primary type of materials analyzed to produce this comprehensive dissertation is academic articles, journals, and books retrieved from the London School of Economics Library and that of Universidad Europea. Sources and various articles covering similar issues have also been taken into consideration and used throughout the paper in order to do a comparative analysis and to examine the different objectives the research proposes.

In addition to this, official websites of the United Nations, the EU, and governmental websites of Sweden and Norway have been used. This was done for historical reasons, current issues and to access direct statements and perspectives from the respective countries part of this research.

1.4 Theoretical Framework

The topic itself is significant and will be essential to study because of its nature. Both state actors, Norway and Sweden, are important in the international arena, both when it comes to being advocates for human rights and as being stable democracies. One might find it troubling that such strong democracies may have different interpretations and implementations of an international convention in which they have ratified. A country is, according to international law, bound to follow a treaty or Convention in which it has agreed upon and signed and should therefore not breach it. The way a country interprets international law, and in this case, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, may have an impact on foreign policy, which in turn might cause challenges in terms of international relations and geopolitics. Constructing an analysis on this matter will produce a comprehensive understanding of why Sweden and Norway act upon the Convention as they do, which can be helpful to comprehend the differences between the two countries in terms of how they, in general, choose to implement treaties and conventions.

Conventions and treaties are a crucial part of international law, and if a state decides to sign a legally binding agreement, this determines whether the country will be expected to comply with its articles and follow the rules and guidelines that follow. In the case of a legally binding convention, such as the CRC, a breach would lead to consequences, but whether or not these consequences are not felt, one may argue it had no effect. Additionally, realism usually considers international law as a representation of the desires of countries and often dominant ones, while structural realism, on the other hand, rejects the idea that international law is substantive or infinite. In other words, realists hold a variety of perspectives, ranging from some who believe international law is irrelevant to those who believe it is necessary in order to comprehend the conduct of a given state (Steinberg & Zasloff, 2006, pp. 64).

Furthermore, taking into account the structural realist point of view in this research would be considered fruitful because it is the perspective that has the most important to the goals of this study, considering the focus it puts on international law not being substantive, or in other words, consequential.

Moreover, there is also the concept of sovereignty. Sovereignty is a fundamental legal concept. That is the essence of national identity. It underpins the provision of state agreed to conventions in international law as well as international humanitarian law. Additionally, it illustrates why nations recognize sovereign limits, grant and refuse recognition (Goldsmith, 2000a, pp. 959).

The question regarding sovereignty is not uncommon today, and in Europe, for instance, there is a debate on whether or not countries are giving away too much of their sovereignty, or if all sovereignty is lost by joining the European Union, for instance (MacCormick, 1995, pp. 1). One can draw parallels between joining the EU and signing a legally binding treaty – both matters will contribute to some extent affect a country's domestic legislation. When a state chooses to ratify a particular convention, one may contend that the state relinquishes some of its sovereignty or the authority to make independent decisions under certain circumstances since it would be deemed contrary to international law to violate any of the rules in the Convention after ratification.

Stephen Krasner wrote the book *Sovereignty: Organized Hypocrisy*, where he dug deeper into the notion of sovereignty. In his book, Krasner contended that sovereignty, as a concept of international law, was never an effective check on state conduct and that the concepts belonging to international law in relation to sovereignty were often ignored when states considered it fruitful (Goldsmith, 2000b, pp. 960). In other words, states do what they consider is best for their national interests, even if it may deem contrary to international law.

This assumption will be fruitful to consider throughout the thesis as one may draw parallels between different interpretations of the CRC, the implementation, and the authority in possession of the respective countries. Due to sovereignty, states may ultimately do as they wish, despite there being potential sanctions or other kinds of consequences. However, the assumption Krasner proposes is of interest to this research and will therefore be taken into account in the analysis by looking at reasoning, outcomes, and strategies by Norway and Sweden.

2. The Convention on the Rights of the Child

Throughout the years, children's rights have reached the agenda of states across the world, and one might argue that one of the main reasons for this may be due to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, with the help of mobilization from non-state actors. Despite the issue regarding children's rights being acknowledged and considered necessary before this, contemporary politics and academic debates have arguably led to it almost impossible not to have in mind the Convention as such when debating the topic of children's rights (Reynaert, et al. 2009). Nor is the Universal Declaration of Human Rights absent in the debate.

Leading up to the United Nations International Year of the Child, which took place in 1979, the United Nations Human Rights Committee established a working group. The working group was originally an initiative of the Polish Government, intending to organize yet another convention. However, this time, it would be concerned about children and, more specifically, on the child's rights (Søvig, 2009a, p. 17).

The United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) adopted the CRC in 1989 but did not enter into force until September 2, 1990 (UN, 1989a, pp. 1). The CRC is an international treaty that protects children's rights and establishes these as intangible. Many of the rights presented in the CRC are also safeguarded by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), and for that reason, the two are fundamentally connected (Strand, 2020). In other words, children's rights and human rights are equally as significant. A critical aspect visible throughout the CRC is its recognition and acknowledgment of children's vulnerable position as individuals in society who require protection. The Convention contains 54 articles and is all part of the critical message the Convention is portraying, each article being significant in its way to promote and protect the right of all children across the world.

The member states, or the people of the UN, have, with their signature and affirmation on the UDHR, underscored the issue and importance of human rights by highlighting their determinacy to work towards a society where all people are equal before the law and should receive equal rights no matter the reasoning. In the official CRC published by the UN, it is stated that "*everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth therein, without distinction of any kind, such as race, color, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.*" (UN,

1989b, pp. 1). In other words, recognizing the UDHR is, as some might say, the basis and core of the CRC to affect it – it is something that must be respected, safeguarded, and attained.

Moreover, and according to the CRC, the appreciation and recognition of the interests that are in the best attentiveness of the child must be an overarching concept in the handling of matters affecting children across the world, not only by public bodies but also by private ones, as well as in national courts. The Convention further stresses the role of the home in regards to how children are educated. Additionally, the CRC comprises clauses addressing topics concerning children with special needs and the entitlement and right to receive proper medical treatment by national or local health care. What is also significant to note is that by ratifying the Convention, the country, which proceeds to do so, is also entitled to create a committee, which will oversee the country's compliance with the requirements in the CRC. More importantly is the preposition that defines the defense of human rights concerning the provision on the rights of the child, as well as actions made by the United Nations, the International Labor Organization (ILO), and the European Council (EC) for promoting such rights (Utenriks- og konstitusjonskomiteen, 1990-91).

The Convention on the Rights of the Child is one of the conventions established by the United Nations in which have received, to a certain extent, the broadest support and hence serves as a critical universal preliminary step for global work with and for children around the world. Following the accession of Somalia and South Sudan to the CRC in 2015, only one member state of the UN has failed in becoming a part of the Convention; The United States (OHCHR | Committee on the Rights of the Child, 2019a).

2.1 Brief introduction to Norway's and Sweden's history concerning the CRC

Norway joined the CRC as early as 1991, and the Convention was implemented into national legislation not long after. With this, Norway made itself accountable and promised to fully comply with the obligations that came along with the Convention (The Norwegian Directorate for Children, Youth and Family Affairs, 15/2016a). By mid-1990, eighty-five countries had ratified the Convention. However, there was a considerable debate on whether or not Norway would incorporate the CRC through the national human rights law into legislation when it was first adopted. Initially, the outcome was negative, which led to it not being implemented (St.prp, 104 (1989-90), p. 1).

Moreover, and to begin with, Norway expressed concerns over the right to appeal in juvenile offenses; however, this was eventually withdrawn. Except for the premise, the CRC was adopted by passive transition, i.e., Norwegian law was deemed adequate to conform to its commitments under the CRC. In other words, 2003 was the year in which the Convention was incorporated, despite the uncertainty expressed in advance (Søvig, 2009b, 17-18).

Moreover, Sweden also joined relatively early in the process of the Convention being established. However, Sweden did not implement the Convention into national law until January 1, 2020. There was a call for looking into whether or not Sweden would consider implementing the CRC into its national legislation in 2013. The report was going to analyze and revise the pros and cons of implementation and the potential consequences this would spur. The report revealed a range of flaws in respect to how the CRC affects children's rights. The flaws in the philosophy of the child's best interests and the freedom of children to voice their views (SOU 2016:19, pp. 3-22). However, when the report was published, the proposal itself came to life in the Swedish Parliament in 2018, and it took two years to become a reality (Regeringen, 2018), meaning that in 2020, Sweden finally implemented the CRC into national law.

As a result of the adoption, Swedish officials and decision-makers had to refer to the CRC differently than before, as the Convention became legislation and had to be used as a guideline for authorities' decisions in matters related to the Convention. Furthermore, the Convention is now to be seen as a whole, and the articles in the Convention can be read concerning one another, which should be assumed to pave the groundwork for a more rights-based policy.

Moreover, Norway and Sweden distinguish in the way that they do and handle child welfare as such. Norway has an established law which is named "Barnevernsloven" (The Child Welfare Service Act), and an institution called "Barnevernet" (The Child Protection/welfare Services), both explicitly applying to children under the age of 18, and in some cases if the person agrees and wants to, for persons up to the age of 23 (Barnevernsloven, 1993, § 1-1 & § 1-3).¹ Barnevernet is a government-run and funded institution where one has to complete a bachelor's degree within "Barnevern" to be able to work. Barnevernsloven, on the other hand, is the primary legislation that Barnevern always has to take into consideration in cases concerning children. However, Sweden, on the other hand, does not have such a law specifically directed towards children in which their institutions have to know by heart and follow. The state does have legislation regarding children, but nothing compared to that of Norway. The closest one get is the "Lag om Förenta nationernas konvention om barnets rättigheter", which is the law about the UN CRC (SFS: 2018:1997).

Nor does Sweden have a "Barnevern." What Sweden does have is an institution where one may work as a socionom, or have a different degree within a similar field, but there is no specific in-depth education on the protection of the child as there is in Norway.

With this being said, one may argue that one of the reasons as to why the CRC was embedded into Norwegian national law relatively early, at least in comparison to Sweden, was the culture the country had in regards to laws on children. Prior to the adoption, Norway had already established its own legislation on child welfare services, which in some ways prompted the implementation of the CRC. Sweden, on the other hand, did not have this embedded into their legislative culture in the same way, and one could, for that reason, argue it took the country a long time to have the CRC implemented.

¹ Barnevernet is the main and sole institution for children and adolescents in Norway. For more information about Barnevernet, please visit their official website through the following link: https://www.bufdir.no/en/English_start_page/The_Norwegian_Child_Welfare_Services/

2.2 The United Nations Child Committee

As it is commonly known, the Committee on the Rights of the Child is a committee established by the UN to oversee and make sure that countries who have ratified the Convention comply with the general rules and guidelines it provides and sets out. The Committee consists of 18 people, all specialists within their field of expertise. In addition to overseeing the different countries' commitment to the CRC, how it is being implemented, and what countries are doing to fulfill the Convention, the Committee also observes the execution of three additional "Optional Protocols" to the CRC as such. These three concern the "involvement of children in armed conflicts," the "sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography," and "a communications procedure." The last one, the communication procedure, is a body, which was proposed in 2011, and established in 2014, that allows children themselves to raise complaints concerning contraventions of their just (*OHCHR | Committee on the Rights of the Child, 2019b*).

Nevertheless, those countries that have ratified and implemented the CRC are all obliged to report on progress, whether or not the state has failed to comply with the Convention, etc. Each country shall present a periodic report, every five years, to the working group Committee on how the Convention is being implemented, and it is then the Committee's responsibility to evaluate the report to see if a state has succeeded, or if there is room for improvement. It is also fruitful to mention the involvement of Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) for the purpose of this subchapter, as its relevance will be seen throughout the thesis. The working group Committee does not solely, by themselves, consider the reports sent in by the respective countries, they also include other UN bodies, and to some extent, NGOs and other human rights institutions of whom have contributed to transparency and information. Once completed, the Committee shall report to the UN General Assembly on the findings throughout the evaluation process (*CRIN, 2018*).

Moreover, the Committee is a body that does a relatively, or as some might argue, important job in making sure countries keep their end of the deal. However, whether or not their recommendations on areas of improvement at the end of the day make any difference is an entirely different matter – this can be tied to sovereignty. Even though a country has ratified a legally binding convention or Treaty, it may, even though it will be considered a breach of the agreement, decide not to follow it after all. This may lead

to sanctions; however, it is the responsibility and decision of the respective country in which has breached the Treaty to weigh the consequences it is willing to pay, whether it be economic or political sanctions.

2.2.1 Committee findings on Norway

The CRC has, since its establishment, served as a protective measure for children around the world and has evolved into what some might call a cornerstone in human rights issues, as well as serving as a critical factor for political assessment, both nationally and transnationally. Despite having implemented the CRC into domestic legislation, Norway has received criticism due to its way of implementing the Convention, which may be rooted in the country's understanding, but may also be due to political will. On the one hand, Norway is one of those countries scoring the highest on social welfare, including that of children's rights when it comes to global indexes.² (Langford et al., 2019a, p. 15-16).

Based on this information, one could argue that Norway is a safe and sound place to be in as a child – there is conceivable, no reason to think otherwise. On the other hand, the criticism Norway has received has generated areas of concern to institutions such as the United Nations and other organizations. For instance, the UN Committee on the CRC has been concerned about aspects such as asylum cases, the protection of juveniles, and in regards to people with disabilities and those in poverty. In addition to being a concern for the UN Committee, this has also been on the agenda for NGOs and as a concern in Norwegian scholarly literature (Langford et al., 2019b, p. 16-17).

Additionally, in 2018, the Committee published a concluding report "on the combined fifth and sixth periodic reports of Norway." While the report highlighted progress in various areas, there is one area that in particular stands out. This area concerns the "Family environment and alternative care," or more specifically, "children deprived of a family environment." In this section, the Committee highlights its concerns on children being taken away from their families, which is argued not always to have been in the child's best interest. Following the CRC, this would be considered a breach of the

² In 2020, Norway ranked number 14 on the Kids Rights Index. This is an index in which is measured annually, and calculates the average scores of all countries assessed with different domains. For more information and to see the statistics, visit: <https://kidsrights.org/research/kidsrights-index/>

Convention (UN, CRC Committee, 2018a). It is stated in the CRC, under Article 3, that "In all actions concerning children, whether undertaken by public or private social welfare institutions, courts of law, administrative authorities or legislative bodies, *the best interest of the child shall be a primary consideration.*" (UN, 1989c, pp. 2).

Furthermore, what is significant to note from this excerpt is the emphasis on what is in *the child's best interest*. According to the CRC and its various articles, the child's best interest may vary, but the message is recognized as a repetitive red thread throughout the Convention, from the first article to the last. For instance, Article 9 of the CRC points out the importance of a child not being taken away from its family if not applicable to legislation, but only if it is in the child's best interest. Additionally, according to Article 13 of the Convention, a child should have the right to speak its mind in legal cases and on a general basis. In other words, the child is to have the right to express whatever it may feel or think, and its opinion shall always be taken into consideration (UN, 1989d, pp. 3-4).

Further, in the concluding report by the Commission, it is found that children are separated from their siblings and that there is a lack of follow-up measures when these children are put in care, either in the homes of other families or at institutions run by the local county or municipality. The Committee also found that there is extensive use of force in the separation of the child from the family or parent, which is an alarming finding and one that has been seen repeatedly. This is evident in the cases brought before the ECHR concerning child welfare cases (ECHR, 2021, pp. 2-6). The Committee provides several points of reference where Norway could improve, but one may wonder if the recommendations or sending in these reports have the wanted effect. For example, Norway continues to be convicted in the ECHR, and Norwegian citizens continue to bring cases up against the state in the ECHR on cases where children are forcefully removed from their homes and into alternative care (UN, CRC committee, 2018b, pp. 6-7).

2.2.2 Committee findings on Sweden

The Committee does indeed do a job, which is deemed necessary by the United Nations in keeping track of each and every country that has signed and ratified the CRC. Nevertheless, despite the effort put down, it is evident through their reports that countries favor their sovereignty in terms of how much is being done to improve the areas proposed by the Committee's concluding reports. This is evident in the case of Norway.

Moreover, Sweden also received comments on areas where the Committee deems it necessary to improve. In 2015, the Committee published its concluding report on Sweden. One of the main differences, which is evident in the report, is the absence of cases found under section E, on "Family Environment and alternative care," which concerns children being taken away from their families and placed into alternative care. The main areas of concern in which the Committee highlights in the concluding report in regards to Sweden are the "*principle of closeness*" and the "*arbitrary interference in the family of Afro-Swedes and Africans*." In the first case, the issue raised concerns about how some children have to travel a long way to be able to meet and see their biological parents of whom they have been deprived of. The second instance concerns the deprivation of children from Afro-Swedes by Swedish authorities (UN, CRC committee, 2015, pp. 8).

These specific issues are, as one could argue, no more severe in terms of their effect or outcomes on juveniles than that of Norway, despite the cases being somewhat different. Nevertheless, it is arguably vital to have in mind the role of the family in such a situation, and particularly the child and its thoughts and feelings, as the most important thing, according to the CRC, is to act in the best interest of the child.

Additionally, in 2020, the Committee published its latest review of issues on Sweden in regards to the CRC. In this review, Sweden is asked, under section E, yet again on family environment, to explain why the country has taken the measures they have, which concerns the same challenges the Committee found in 2015. (UN, CRC committee, 2020, pp. 5-6). The concluding report has yet to be published. However, since the same issue is being raised as a concern repeatedly, one ought to question whether or not Sweden is taking the feedback seriously or if it is simply not doing enough. Nevertheless, it is evident that Sweden has fewer issues raised against them as areas of concern by the CRC Committee.

2.3 European Union

The European Convention on Human Rights entered into force in 1953, followed by the drafting of and eventually the establishment of the European Court on Human Rights, which reinforced the relations between individual claimants and member states' governments.³ Moreover, and from where we are now, it is clear that the fundamental structure and aims of the system have shifted. The larger context whereby the government operates has witnessed profound institutional as well as constitutional change. The western European countries progressively adopted more contemporary constitutionalism during the 50s and 70s, which consequently led to greater legitimizing of rights, freedoms, and security. Key organizations throughout this process were NATO and the EU, as both ensured stability across countries, as well as more political and economic integration (Sweet & Keller, 2008, pp. 3-4).

Furthermore, the EU's approach towards children's rights has also evolved – this in order to fit contemporary times and politics, and most importantly, to the needs of all children across borders. (Canetta et al., 2012b, pp. 7). In addition to this, it is worth acknowledging the complex pluralism, which is seen throughout Europe. There are many countries in which try to cooperate in various fields, and though being a member of the EU does not mean all sovereignty is lost. Before the Treaty of Westphalia (TW), Europe was a complex, interconnected network of various political entities, where no one entity held hegemony on political authority. Nevertheless, following the TW, European states became independent sovereign bodies with sole authority of their territory and the freedom to be free of external intervention in their domestic relations (Havercroft, 2012, pp. 121). This principle has not vanished with time, nor is it probable that it will in the near future either. Sovereignty continues to be an essential and crucial factor in international relations, as well as within the EU as such.

Moreover, the European Union (EU) has for a long time been an essential and highly influential advocate within the international political field for children's rights and has done so through numerous measures. Additionally, there is indeed a more significant

³ With an emphasis on the CRC, one of the key functions of the ECHR is to decide if a State has violated any of the rights, in any particular situation, mentioned in the CRC. The Court often triggers the concept of subsidiarity and its dogmatic implication, as well as the threshold of consideration granted to policymakers in countries who have ratified the convention. (Sweet & Keller, 2008, pp. 6). This is also the role the court has on a general basis, and does not only count for the CRC as such.

concern, on the political sphere, in regards to poverty, which affects families with kids or children in particular due to a web of interconnected factors. Moreover, the EU has, throughout the years, put a greater emphasis on awareness and protection. An important cornerstone, which brought the issue onto the political agenda with greater weight, was the Treaty of Lisbon (TL) and how this particular Treaty was integrated into the Treaty on the European Union (TEU) (Canetta et al., 2012a, pp. 7-8).

Furthermore, the EU is vital in many ways for the international society, specifically when it comes to international relations, and it is evident that the union's actions have consequences, both positive and negative. In other words, the EU strives to be a world leader in global politics with its emphasis on participation in several fields, such as, for instance by being at the negotiating table on numerous critical issues. Of these include dispute settlement mechanisms, cooperation arrangements, and a large set of instruments with a diverse range of parties. Some might argue that it is because of the union's distinct existence that it is frequently referred to as a separate great force in the international spectrum. The decisions made within the EU do indeed have an effect on various aspects and may serve as a reference point for foreign actors (Bengtsson & Elgström, 2012, pp. 93). In other words, the implementation of children's rights sends a clear signal from the EU – it is a way of stating its support and uttering the issue's importance in the global arena. What the EU does may have an impact on the decisions taken by state leaders across the world and potentially lead to a trickle-down effect.

Additionally, the European Union, like the United Nations, has put down great efforts to reinforce policies on children's rights, and it has done so through various measures. For instance, the EU has made its own strategy on how to implement best the rights of the child, which as an addition, has been made accessible and readable for children themselves. Moreover, the creation and implementation of the TL made the union required to protect the rights of the child across its member states, giving it no other option than to comply with its commitment (*Children's rights | EuroHealthNet*, 2013).

Besides this, globalization may be argued to play a critical role in assisting in the realization of numerous regional and international goals, which would have ramifications for diplomatic affairs or particular policies in general. Implementing and mobilizing treaties, such as the CRC, through institutions like the EU and the UN draw benefits from the phenomenon as it arguably makes the mobilization process less

challenging in terms of creating awareness across borders. Globalization may additionally be a crucial influence in bringing about progress in areas such as law, peacekeeping, and security concerns. In other words, globalization may, through trade, technological exchange, and advancement, including a heightened understanding and greater appreciation of shared values such as the idea of democracy, and human rights, including that of children, bring about new opportunities in addressing issues related to inequality and destitution (Barnett et al., 2002, pp. 7-33).

Moreover, globalization is a phenomenon that has made the world even more interconnected, and it has allowed for more significant and a more rapid sharing of ideas, thoughts, goods, and services with more. In politics, globalization has, for example, led to the rapid exchange of information, which has brought with it immense opportunities for individuals, communities, and states, and not to mention organizations. Technological advancement is also a significant aspect that has made globalization expand further. In other words, and according to Held and McGrew, *globalization is the process in which entails a modification of social connections, from the financial to the security spheres, moving further and beyond the global to the multinational and intercontinental world* (Mariscal, 2016, pp. 34-35).

Furthermore, the interconnectedness in which the globalization process has brought with it has arguably led to increased cooperation with the help from intergovernmental organizations, but also from non-governmental organizations, along with other actors who have gained increased impact on decision making in countries across the world. In other words, the role of non-governmental organizations continues to increase, and their role in decision-making has become increasingly influential. Additionally, and according to Saint-Martin, their approaches have changed throughout time (Saint-Martin, 1994, pp. 1). The changing approach may be the underlying reason for their increasing influence.

One may argue that the fundamental rights for children, and the promotion of such rights through the EU, the UN, and through the conventions and treaties they have established are part of an inevitable development in society in which may lead to specific outcomes. In this sense, development refers to the evolution and modernization of contemporary politics, which is changing year by year, and day by day, the priorities and what ends up on the political agenda.

3. The Role of Non-Governmental Organizations, development organizations, and other groups

Non-governmental institutions (NGOs) have gained influence throughout the political sphere and continues to do so at a rapid and moderate pace. Advocacy and lobbying are some of how NGOs mobilize and get messages out to the people. NGOs have grown in amount, but it has also gained a stronger foothold across more countries and grown in variation. In other words, NGOs have started to fill some of the people's growing structural and regional holes, which is seen throughout the international and regional community (Tujil, 1999, pp. 493-494). Creating awareness regarding specific issues is arguably a huge part of what NGOs do and what has led to the attention received, and the case of children's rights is no exception. Furthermore, NGOs also collaborate closely with several UN bodies, the Commissioner for Children's Rights being one of them. However, along with cooperation with UN bodies, NGOs may also have close relations with governmental institutions and other kinds of agencies, the media, along more (CRC Policy Center, 2016, pp. 4).

Moreover, many NGOs are working towards the same goals, and with mobilization and awareness, change may be made possible. Think Tanks are also significant in work towards promoting children's human rights. However, the main difference between a think tank and an NGO is that a Think Tank may be an institute, a corporation, or simply a group of people who do research and put much effort into advocacy on various fields – some choose to focus on a particular field. A think tank may also belong to a government. An NGO, on the other hand, is an organization that does not belong to any kind of government and would be established by either natural or legal persons (Pop, 2012, pp. 1). A lot of the work they do may be of similar essence, but it is essential to acknowledge their differences.

Some of the organizations that are both fruitful and relevant to acknowledge in the case of children's rights in Norway and Sweden are Save the Children, PLAN International, Child Rights International Network (CRIN), Defense for Children International (DCI), UNICEF, Red Cross, and Amnesty International (fighting for human rights across the world). In the case of Norway and Sweden concerning the CRC interpretation and implementation, it is fruitful to look at the NGOs approach from a bottom-up perspective. A bottom-up strategy is depicted as a relation between an NGO and a

given country, in this case, Norway and Sweden, in which the NGO's decision-making mechanism is entirely independent of the government's legislative process. Their ultimate goal is to change a situation for the better by influencing decision-makers on the field, which might make up for a difference. In his Ph.D. about the power of NGOs, Kim Youngwan stated, "The longer NGOs exist, the more independent they become from governmental control and the more influence they can achieve over governments' policies." (Kim, 2011a, pp. 34-35).

In 2011, the United Nations issued an additional report, the "Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on a communications procedure." This Protocol asked nations of whom had ratified the CRC to give children the opportunity to raise their own complaint to the UN if they believe their rights have been violated by the state they live in. Some examples of matters in which could be raised were cases regarding bullying, child welfare, and immigration. This Protocol stands until this day, but Sweden and Norway have yet to sign the Protocol, which was created to provide greater protection of children's rights under the CRC. In other words, the Protocol provides children with the right to raise their own complaints, not having to go through the state of which they are citizens (UNTC, 2011, pp. 1-2).

When it became apparent that neither Sweden nor Norway would sign the additional Protocol, NGOs, intergovernmental organizations (IOs), and smaller entities expressed their concerns. UNICEF, Save the Children, Plan International, and the Norwegian Child Ombudsman were among those who came out and stated unequivocally that this was unacceptable. It was assumed that the appeal process included many and broad junctions that were difficult to concretize, rendering them unsuitable for international inspection in specific cases. Furthermore, the Norwegian government still remains by its 2013 statement, in which they pointed to the "principle of the best interests of the child," along with other aspects. In other terms, the government fears that the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child would prioritize the best interests of the child over "other relevant social issues, such as immigration laws and policy." Save the Children rendered this unbelievable. Plan International called it a betrayal towards the children, and UNICEF called it astonishing in a negative way (Foss, 2013).

4. Children in international politics and the power of language and culture

Children were for a long time overlooked as actors and as study concerns within international relations theory. However, with the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, children gained greater attention as a group of individuals deserving of equal recognition and rights as adults, being no less important than other actors in the local, nor the global society (Watson, 2006a, pp. 237). One could say that children are the future, and the future is arguably worth fostering, as they, in addition to all who contribute to society in the present, will lay the path for future generations to come. Moreover, and arguably nonetheless important, "Children are not just the future. They are the present as well." (The Norwegian Directorate for Children, Youth, and Family Affairs, 15/2016b).

Furthermore, and in her review, Watson presents several arguments on how children play a critical role in society, despite being brutally exploited in various parts of the world. Nevertheless, there are also numerous cases where one can see how children have been, are being listened to in decision-making across the world, where they are allowed, and to some extent even encouraged to participate in different instances in politics. Norway would be a prime example of this as the state encourages participation on several levels and include children as official delegates on special occasions. In other words, there is indeed a variety of roles children may have within a society, both positive and negative. That is to say, the importance of children in society has not gone unnoticed, and the trend does not seem to shift any time soon (Watson, 2006b, pp. 238-239). Consequently, the role of children has gained a more significant spot in the field of international relations and politics.

However, despite Norway seemingly being an inclusive actor in the sense of incorporating children, to a certain extent, in decision-making, it does not de-legitimize the country's apparent wrongful implementation of the CRC on specific areas, which consequently affect children, with an emphasis on those being taken away from their families, within the state's borders.

Moreover, it is seldom rare nowadays that one ought to believe influential frameworks affect and to a certain extent shape international relations and political theory and

reality, and that an interpretation and evaluation of specific, expressive, and differentiated communication participate in the research of world affairs. Through the drafting of the CRC, the international community witnessed liberation concerning children, an increasingly important topic in international relations (Holzscheiter, 2010a, pp. 1-3).

The CRC can be argued to have played a crucial part in the adoption of children's rights in current affairs, paving the way for substantial support in the negotiations on topics such as disability. (Arts, 2014). However, Anna Holzscheiter argues that despite all the positivity the Convention has brought with its implementation throughout the years, it may not be entirely adequate. One of the main reasons for this, she argues, is that each country that ratified the Convention went into the process having national interests and cultural influence in their backpack (Versteegh, 2013, pp. 807).

Furthermore, like any other people or party part of the decision-making process, this may be the case with Norway and Sweden as well. Despite the countries' similarities, both states arguably, and most probably, went into negotiations with a set of, what some may argue being subconscious influences, and an idea of how they could best implement the Convention after its ratification. There is no reason to believe that Norway nor Sweden went into negotiations with an idea of consciously, or with purpose, to breach any of the articles in the Convention and implement it in a way that would not be satisfactory by the UN Committee on the CRC. Nevertheless, no single state is outstandingly perfect in the sense that all might commit mistakes, there is arguably no exception. That is to say, all state actors might commit mistakes intentionally; however, there are also those who do not, which happens to be unintentionally.

Additionally, how actors excel or struggle to convert solid and substantive conventions and treaties may vary. A political decision-making system can often be treated as a method of context creation and modification; the power of language interpretation is, therefore, an essential aspect of political activity. Furthermore, and highly relevant, is to understand that when looking at how a country interprets a convention, specific aspects would be fruitful to consider prior to potential judgment.

Moreover, Holzscheiter puts it nicely by emphasizing the importance of reflecting on "reality." In other words, her analysis found that there are certain aspects that impact

the understanding of language, which should be considered in correlation with historical context. This means that depending on which stadium the country finds itself in at the current moment in time and the state's social and institutional situation, such variables may influence the matter in question (Holzscheiter, 2010b, pp. 10-11). That is to say that the reality of comprehension and interpretation based on the understanding depends on context. The CRC will stay the same, provided no changes or alterations are made, but societal norms, expectations, and understanding of the Convention may be subject to alteration throughout time – it might not stay constant.

5. The Swedish Case

The Swedish government has been and continues to be an advocate for human and children's rights but has chosen a different approach to the CRC than that of Norway. As previously mentioned in this article, Sweden debated whether to introduce the CRC into national law for a long time. It was not until last year, in 2020, that Sweden agreed, in *Riksdagen* (the parliament), to fully implement the Convention, which was arguably somewhat overdue in the eyes of the UN, EU, and the international community, and was thus greeted with enthusiasm.

The incorporation was supposed to have an effect on the regulations in general, primarily by hastening the integration of the CRC's provisions. It was hoped that with the incorporation, children's rights would consume a more central role in domestic discussions and judicial matters, as well as it would receive increased attention in the Swedish media, making public awareness greater. Furthermore, and one of the aims with the implementation was that inadequacies in Swedish law would be detected and, if necessary, corrected. Furthermore, the terms of the Convention are likely to have a more significant overt effect on the development of other laws than has previously been the case. Additionally, it was argued that a significant advantage of incorporating the CRC was that it could serve as a supplement in cases where other legislation did not fully take advantage of the children's rights under the Convention. When given the status of law, the Convention would also take precedence in the event of a conflict between the provisions of the Convention and statutes of lower value.

Moreover, the implementation did not mean that Swedish children were given new rights, but that Swedish authorities and courts as such at this point were given the obligation and expectation of looking to the CRC for reference in cases concerning children, making sure that it is not being breached upon decisions taken in decision-making. In other words, the implementation meant that more weight and responsibility was put in the hands of decision-making bodies and lawyers to make sure the CRC is being taken into consideration and followed. For the first time, Sweden would use the Convention as a reference point and come one step further in living up to its promise of protecting children.

5.1 Methods of incorporation and interpretation

According to the authors of the article *Child Welfare or Child Protection: Uncovering Swedish and Canadian Orientations to Social Intervention in Child Maltreatment*, in Sweden, social services represent an essential component of the country's general health and welfare scheme, where a Social Welfare program guides people. However, there exist specific regulations covering human rights and public obligations. For example, Sweden's municipal councils provide services in various ways, and not all are the same – it may depend on which municipality one lives in which service one is eligible to receive. (Khoo, Hyvonen & Nygren, 2002, pp. 454).

Varying implementations of national law within the country is arguably not uncommon. However, a consequence of such a fragmented system is conceivably more considerable and diversifiable in the implementation of the CRC and child national child protection programs. Some of the consequences may range from how it is structured, which methods of inspection are used and how those working in the various services on the matter of children's rights implement appraisal.

Moreover, like numerous other countries globally, Sweden does not have a "Barnevern," nor a "Barnevernslov" where the children's rights already stand firm, as Norway does, their implementation methods are somewhat bleak when in comparison to Norway. In judicial circumstances, there is little to no evidence found that the CRC, prior to its implementation into national law in 2020, was used as a reference point in cases concerning children or that the Convention had precedence over Swedish national law. After the CRC was ratified, Sweden was expected to follow the

Convention as it was legally binding; however, some might argue that it has been insufficient and that it has not had the wanted effect it should have had (Besatari, 2020).

Additionally, the legal practice of any new law, just like with the implementation of the CRC, has to a certain extent been absent in regards to guidance on how the Convention should be understood and interpreted, which may have been a factor leading to its insufficiency. This may not only be the case for Sweden but for countries of whom have also ratified the Convention across the world. A lack of guidance on how to best, or better yet, correctly understand and interpret the CRC in the respective country may lead to bleak methods of incorporation. It may vary from person to person, group, or society, depending on cultural background, cognitive approaches, and numerous other variables on how one ought to understand the Convention. In other words, there is no set method of incorporation or interpretation in neither of Sweden's municipalities nor its counties as such (SKR, 2021).

Furthermore, and as a consequence of the lack of methodology connected to the CRC in Swedish practice, the way in which a group of people, or individuals for that matter, work with children's rights in Sweden is, as one could argue, undeniably fragmented and to a certain extent not heterogeneous. Some would express that there are instances from the ECHR that could be used as reference points in interpretation and guidance of the CRC, but what use does this come to if one is not made aware of this being an option. Education and knowledge are said to be the key to many things, and for such a system to work, structure, comprehension, and a more profound knowledge could prove beneficial when aiming for it to work out in practice.

Moreover, there may also be instances where Swedish law does not coincide with the CRC, and in such instances, Swedish law will have precedence over the CRC. According to the Swedish Child Ombudsman, there is a specific law that weighs more than others do, taking precedence over national and international law, and that is the constitution. If the CRC is to be found contrary to the Swedish constitution, Swedish law has precedence over the CRC (Barnombudsmannen, 2019). With this, one may then ask whether or not Sweden's interpretation and its fruitfulness coincides with the ultimate aims of the UN with the creation of the CRC, as each and every state should treat the CRC with equal seriousness as with national law.

However, it is not to say that Sweden does not take the Convention with any seriousness at all. In fact, the Swedish government is planning to create a guide in which will help those in decision-making bodies and working with cases concerning children's rights to know how to use the Convention. There is no evidence found that this has been done, by the government, prior to the implementation. Nevertheless, this guide will provide support in the process of the CRC being implemented by making sure the interpretation and application are of conformity according to Swedish law (Sveriges Riksdag, 2018, pp. 2-3).

6. The Norwegian case

According to the Norwegian Government, human rights are very well secured in the state, playing an essential role in the rule of law and as being ingrained in the country's political institutions. Furthermore, Norway has a high standard of living and fully functional and developed social democratic institutions, which offer social security to its entire people. As a consequence of ratifying the Human Rights Act, five major human rights treaties have been incorporated into Norwegian law. This relates to the following legal instruments: European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR), the CRC, and the international Treaty on Civil and Political Rights, Economic Social and Cultural Rights, as well as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women. In the case of an emergency or conflict, the provisions set out in these legally binding documents shall have priority over requirements set out in other legislation. Compared to other countries with a different kind of jurisdiction, Norway holds an internal regulation that takes precedence over other laws. The above ensures that Norwegian courts will independently extend such human rights treaties to particular instances. The fact that prominent human rights treaties can be used as sources of legislation in courts in this form is part of Norway's valuable moral on human rights and the importance of it being safeguarded (Meld. St. 39 (2015-2016), p. 5-6).

6.1 Methods of incorporation and interpretation

It is stated in the official "Odelstingproposisjon" (Ot.prp) nr. 45, "On the law amending the Human Rights Act mv. "incorporation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child in Norwegian Law," a legislative proposal from the Norwegian government, that when a convention or a treaty is ratified and has made its way into Norwegian law, the state is obliged, under international law to comply with the provisions presented in the Convention with limited to no exceptions. Additionally, the CRC takes precedence over national law when there is a concern on whether or not national law is sufficient – the CRC should always be used as a reference point in decision-making bodies and on the grass-root-level.

Norway follows the *dualistic principle*, meaning that in order for the rules of the Convention to apply to national law directly, a particular implementing act has to take place in advance. The *monistic principle*, on the other hand, which Norway does not follow, means that when a convention is ratified by a country of which goes by this principle, the Convention, or Treaty, will be directly implemented into national legislation without the need of a particular implementing act. Even though Norway does not adhere to the monistic principle, the conventions or treaties it ratifies will always become relevant sources of law with significant weight in legislation and decision-making. In other words, it has considerable weight in rulings. According to the *presumption principle*, of which it is commonly named, Norwegian law should always be perceived in such a manner that it applies as closely as possible to the country's transnational commitments. Nevertheless, in the case of when international law has not been implemented into national law, Norwegian courts shall put great emphasis on international law and guidelines. According to the Norwegian Government, if a dispute between Norwegian rule and international law was to take place, where the international law has yet to be incorporated, Norwegian legislation, through its legislators, will have precedence (Ot. prp. 45 (2002-2003), p. 13).

Moreover, the institution in which deals with children, and arguably the most with the CRC, is *Barnevernet*. It is set out by the government, a set of rules and principles *Barnevernet* has to follow so that it has the closest conformity to the CRC as possible. The main principles include the best interest of the child, the biological principle, and the mildest or softest effective intervention principle. Throughout the years, and as

Barnevernet has evolved, more emphasis has been put on the child's participation and influence in cases. The Norwegian government argues this has become increasingly important in order to assess best what outcome will be in the best interest of the child. The fact is that in reality, what is in the best interest of each child varies, and it might not be the same case for everyone, and for that reason, the government has highlighted this throughout the field of professionals working with children. Each of these principles is explained in depth in national law on children, more specifically called *Barnevernsloven*, and is to be considered in all cases that *Barnevernet* deals with (Bufdir, 2017a).

Barnevernet is unique in its structure and operation because of how effectively the CRC is applied in Norwegian legislation and how much focus it generally places on the CRC in the work this government-run entity completes. Another method used to make sure the interpretation of the CRC is smoothly made is through reporting. This is something that the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child demands all states of whom have ratified the Convention to do. However, this is something Norway has received criticism for from bodies like the ECHR. That is to say that despite *Barnevernet* being unique, it also has its flaws. *Barnevernet* is obliged to report on any decision being made, and the more serious the outcome of the decision, the more critical it is to have a report explaining in detail why, how, and on what ground the decision was taken. This is to ensure that the best interest of the child is being taken into consideration and that there is no breach of national nor international law takes place. Both the Norwegian Supreme Court and the ECHR have pointed out in several cases that Norway has to improve its reporting, as not all is sufficient. This is, for instance, one of the main reasons why Norway has been convicted in the ECHR on more than one occasion – due to the lack of thorough and detailed reports in which could back up the decision taken. When the reporting is not sufficient, one may argue it is challenging to determine whether all of the crucial considerations have been emphasized throughout the decision-making process (Bufdir, 2017b).

In brief, conclusions on measures under the Child Welfare Act must be centered on a reasonable legitimate objective judgment ground, and decisions must be supported by evidence in a way that demonstrates a careful determination has been made, all-important and severe considerations have been highlighted, and that contradictory claims are assessed against one another in a reasonable way.

7. Consequences of differentiated interpretations for international relations

As we have seen in chapter 4, various factors can influence a country's interpretation of a convention. In correlation to this, it would be fruitful to acknowledge the role of constructivism in international relations theory, as one could argue it is closely related to this analysis, where one may draw parallels between Norway and Sweden in the comprehension of the research.

Constructivism has for a long time been a concern to international relations, and the constructivist approach, as one may call it, is no exception. Emanuel Adler writes "*...that international reality is socially constructed by cognitive structures that give meaning to the material world.*" In other words, states, individuals, and societal groups may respond to some issues but are likely to be highly influenced by the surrounding environment of where they "belong" or "come from" (Adler, 1997, pp. 319-320). One may argue that Individuals build knowledge rather than unconsciously consuming the information they retrieve. That is to say that people produce their own interpretations of the world to which they add insight into their prior understanding when the information is perceived and comprehended.

Furthermore, Adler proves a point in which demonstrates precisely how constructivism plays out in reality. In his article about *Constructivism in World Politics*, he made an example about a bird and a stone being thrown up in the air. The stone would naturally fall back to the ground after being thrown in the air, while the bird would spread its wings and fly away. Truthfully, there are huge differences between a stone and a bird; however, the example proves a fruitful point in international politics when applied to human beings, state, and non-state actors. For example, where a state wishes to reach with its politics, why it chooses a given strategy, and when it is being chosen, are all dependent not only on distinct partiality but also on collectivity and shared information, or general knowledge. One could argue, based on evidential information retrieved from trusted sources in chapters 5 and 6, that this may be applied to Norway and Sweden as independent state actors.

Moreover, Sweden did not enact the CRC into national legislation until 2020, while Norway did so a few years after its enactment in 2003. The reasons for these differing decisions are based on domestic policy, interpretation of the Convention, the likely

implications of incorporating it explicitly into national legislation, and the international image it would represent. Before finally incorporating the CRC into national legislation, Sweden decided to weigh the pros and cons of incorporation. Sweden looked to Norway for inspiration on how the country's national legislation was before incorporating the CRC and how it evolved or changed after being implemented. What they found was that one of the main concerns in which had obscured the incorporation process was the vagueness of the Convention itself. Swedish politicians and experts on the field thought Swedish law was more precise and less vague, causing the CRC not to be implemented into national law, as it was believed Swedish law already protected the rights of the child in a good way (Vamstad, 2016, pp. 11-65).

A consequence that has risen due to the lack of implementation by Sweden and Norway's interpretation of the CRC is that the challenge has come to be a concern amongst non-governmental organizations such as Save the Children and the Red Cross – two organizations in which are huge advocates for children's rights in the Scandinavian countries. As seen in chapter three, both organizations have a strong foothold and are known to speak up about topics that regard children. NGOs have a significant influence on countries' foreign policy, but their influence may also vary depending on different factors (Kim, 2011b, pp. 1 & 156). However, their concerns regarding the CRC directed towards Norway and Sweden does indeed have ramifications for the respective countries' positive international image, as it, for instance, will generate media coverage, which in turn will generate greater awareness within society (Kim, 2011c, pp.157-158). This may consequently lead to uproar, movements, or demonstrations demanding change. In a democracy, politicians are heavily dependent on people who vote, and without their support, the sitting administration might, in a worst-case scenario, not be re-elected. For this reason, an excellent international but also a public image is of great importance for a state and its government.

When Norway was convicted in the European Human Rights Court in Strasbourg in 2019, being one of several instances throughout the years while having Erna Solberg as Prime Minister in the country, the ECHR found Norway guilty of breaching the human rights convention in a child welfare case. Due to the nature of the case, it was closely related to the CRC. The specific case was about a mother and her son, where foster parents had been allowed to adopt the son against the biological mother's will.

The consequences that followed this specific case and which followed all the other cases where Norway has been found guilty of breaching the Convention were the conviction in itself. Secondly, Norway is expected to do right and to go through and see if there can be made any improvements to the system. However, as some might argue, as Anniken Barstad Waaler highlights, the ECHR only primarily assesses whether states have met their treaty commitments rather than what the state can do to ensure future compliance (Skihamn, 2019). It is up to the individual states to determine this. In this situation, one would wonder if a prosecution under the ECHR has as much impact as it might intend to have when state sovereignty poses an obstacle and triumph.

Nevertheless, with a glance at events taking place across the world, there is no doubt that not only Norway and Sweden interpret the Convention in their respective ways – it is undoubtedly happening elsewhere as well. Due to sovereignty and the fact that there is no police in which operates across borders and are allowed to intervene in any given place, states may take this to their advantage and choose to not incorporate into national law or to violate conventions despite potential sanctions that would come their way (Diakonia, 2021). Consequences are set out in international law and will arguably have a trickle-down effect on foreign relations, which may influence the economy, politics, trade, transparency, trust, along with more.

States have a responsibility to act according to the Convention ratified, and if this is not done, sanctions may follow. Norway is indeed the country in which is found to have violated, or in other words, interpreted the CRC wrongfully on more occasions than that of Sweden – this is evident in the official documents published by the CRC Commission and by the ECHR and has provided evidence for in chapter 2, 5 and 6. According to international law, this should have led to consequences, and Norway should have been held accountable for its wrongfulness. Nevertheless, there is no single sanction found in which has been directed towards or imposed on Norway in any single record.

Moreover, on December 12, 2020, the Norwegian government announced that they were to align themselves with the European Union regarding "the new EU sanctions regime against serious human rights violations." (Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2020). However, one could argue that what Norway is doing instead is trying to form a stronger alliance with the EU on this field to portray the country's commitment to human

rights and children's rights as such. In other words, and from a structural realist view, one could argue that Norway, in this case, has chosen to bandwagon in hopes of creating a delicate balance that could benefit Norway's national interests.

Despite Norway's evident and long-standing commitment to human rights, their current approach to the EU and human rights may reach beyond its borders, as social and political movements are sometimes fueled by the bandwagon effect, even though it may not be the intention. One could potentially argue that the reason a state may choose such an approach might be due to the need to be on the "winning side" in international politics. Being on the "winning side" in this sense is referred to as a country that receives a positive international image.

A positive international image is arguably vital in terms of international relations, and it does indeed generate more significant benefits than those states of which do not possess such image. In her research, Helena Vieira found that "countries do well by doing good" and that a state admired by another generates benefit from this admiration (Vieira, 2015). Furthermore, no single state would arguably aim for a negative international image, as this would, when drawn from the context of Vieira's research, lead to downturns instead of upturns for the state as such. A positive international image is excellent, having in handy when it comes to negotiations and cooperation, which goes beyond the state's borders.

8. Conclusions

Children have not consistently been recognized as similarly critical foreign actors. On the other hand, children have grown in value over time, and their interests have been stressed through various measures, such as the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Children are without a doubt an essential factor for future generations to depend on, and securing the future has become increasingly important in an ever-changing environment.

Norway and Sweden are strong advocates for human rights, both have good democratic institutions, and they consistently rank high on development indexes, proving and demonstrating the countries' well-being. However, the implementation methods used by the respective countries have raised concerns due to insufficiency and the lack of knowledge on how to use the Convention in practice. Not only have these concerns been raised nationally, but they have also been emphasized in the international arena, which may lead to sanctions imposed by either the UN, EU or other state actors. Non-state actors also have a great deal of influence on the matter and could potentially lead to further consequences of different degrees if seen from a structural realist point of view.

As shown in the thesis, there are significant variations between how Norway and Sweden view and apply the CRC. Despite certain parallels between the countries in different ways, how children and their interests are handled and regarded as objects of the law differs.

Norway established a law concerning child welfare early on, and both ratified and implemented the CRC into national law. Additionally, Norway had child welfare already embedded in the legislative system prior to implementing the CRC. One might argue that this has led to a "culture" that has proved effective in the country's overall treatment of children. In situations involving minors, the Convention is always expected to be used as a reference point, and it takes precedence over national law where there is any ambiguity.

Furthermore, Sweden ratified the Convention around the same time span as Norway but did not incorporate the CRC into national law until 2020, effectively halting incorporation and the Convention's influence. Despite Sweden not being convicted as many times in the ECHR as Norway for breaching the CRC, one might contend, based

on the evidence found, that the practice and enforcement of the Convention, the procedures, as well as mechanisms since its adoption, has not lived up to the UN's expectations and standards. This can also be seen in findings released by the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child or the European Union.

Moreover, Sweden does not have a specific child welfare law connected to the handling of children by the state in cases where parallels to the CRC can be drawn. Norway, on the other hand, has shown to have a different political and legal culture in regards to children's rights, which is visible in the legislative system where "Barnevernsloven" was established prior to the ratification of the CRC, meaning children's rights have been embedded in national legislation for a couple of decades. This is not the case with Sweden.

Norway is indeed unique due to the nature of Barnevernet and the emphasis the government-run body deals with and incorporates the CRC. However, the country's reporting may be better, and when it is not possible to go back and look for justifications as to why a child or several children have been deprived of their families, the ECHR is obligated to demand improvements.

Besides, due to the concept of sovereignty, which was established with the Treaty of Westphalia, and despite the CRC being legally binding, there is no one state in which can take away the power of authority from another state. In other words, the CRC may be legally binding, and there is no indication that the respective countries have any plan of leaving it behind, but due to culture, cognitive approaches, and structuralism, their interpretations are, to a certain extent, contrary to international law and cause a triple down effect on international relation. Nevertheless, there is no indication that such consequences are on their way, but the memorandum from the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child is clear, and that is that the countries have to improve their methods so that they can better comply with the Convention, especially Norway.

One of the weak spots of international law and international relations as such is indeed the concept of sovereignty. Using structural realism as a theoretical framework in this sense serves to provide a comprehension as to why Norway and Sweden have chosen the paths in regards to the implementation and their interpretative methods in a pragmatic and applicable manner. Additionally, sovereignty limits the impact international law can have on the international structure and the ability of

intergovernmental organizations like the UN and the EU, but also other state actors to intervene. Sanctions may be imposed, but the challenges Norway and Sweden face regarding their interpretation and implementation methods of the CRC have not been considered severe enough for there to be imposed further consequences than just a warning.

Lastly, the hypothesis has been validated throughout the thesis. There are insufficiencies in the methods of implementation when it comes to Norway and Sweden when comprehended in regards to the standards set out in the CRC and by the Committee of the CRC. Additionally, their interpretations vary, despite similar institutionalist structure of the societies. Furthermore, concerns regarding the handling of child welfare have raised concerns internationally, with a special emphasis on Norway with the country's rapid convictions in the ECHR the last decade. This does indeed pose as a negative factor in foreign relations, and concerns not only state actors, but also non-state actors. Nevertheless, despite potential sanctions, which could come as a consequence of repeated breach, there is no indication such consequences are on their way.

9. Bibliography

- Adler, E. (1997). Seizing the Middle Ground: Constructivism in World Politics. *European Journal of International Relations*, 3(3), 319–363.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1354066197003003003>
- Arts, K. (2014). Twenty-five years of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the child: achievements and challenges. *Netherlands International Law Review*, (61) 3, 267-303. Doi: 10.1017/S0165070X14001272 Retrieved on April 4, 2021, from <https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/netherlands-international-law-review/article/abs/twentyfive-years-of-the-united-nations-convention-on-the-rights-of-the-child-achievements-and-challenges/6719AEF9E8E5590A36CFD7489A47A90C>
- Barnett, C., Drotner, K., Hamelink, C. J., Kumar, K. J., Lemish, D., McChesney, R. W., Montgomery, K. C., Morduchowicz, R., Nyamnjoh, F. B., Tobin, J., Wai, M. Z., Westcott, T., & Zanker, R. (2002). Children, Young People and Media Globalization. The UNESCO International Clearinghouse on Children, Youth and Media. Retrieved on April 22, 2021, from http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/HQ/CI/CI/pdf/youth_media_globalisation.pdf
- Barnevernsloven. (1993). Lov om Barnevernstjenester (LOV-1992-07-17-100). Lovdata. Retrieved on May 4, 2021, from <https://lovdata.no/dokument/NL/lov/1992-07-17-100>
- Barnombudsmannen. (2019). *Frågor och svar inför att barnkonventionen blir svensk lag*. Retrieved on May 7, 2021, from <https://www.barnombudsmannen.se/barnombudsmannen/barnkonventionen/barn/fragor-och-svar-infor-att-barnkonventionen-blir-svensk-lag/>
- Besatari, B. (2020). *Barnekonventionen som svensk lag, vad har den för betydelse?* Retrieved on May 9, 2021, from <https://www.limhamnsjuristen.se/blogg/barnkonventionen-som-svensk-lag-vad-har-den-for-betydelse/>
- Canetta, E., Meurens, N., McDonough, M. & Ruggiero, R. (2012). EU Framework of Law for Children's Rights. *European Parliament Policy Department*.
[https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/note/join/2012/462445/IPOL-LIBE_NT\(2012\)462445_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/note/join/2012/462445/IPOL-LIBE_NT(2012)462445_EN.pdf)
- CRC Policy Center. (2016). NGO Contribution on the "Protection of the Rights of the Child and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development". Retrieved on April 22, 2021, from https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Children/2030/HopChildren_CRC_PolicyCenter.pdf
- CRIN: Child rights international network. (2018) *Committee on the Rights of the Child*. Retrieved on April 18, 2021 from <https://archive.crin.org/en/guides/un-international-system/committee-rights-child.html>

- ECHR. (2021). Press country profile: Norway. Retrieved on April 19, 2021, from https://www.echr.coe.int/Documents/CP_Norway_ENG.pdf
- EuroHealthNet. (2013). Children's rights. Retrieved on April 21, 2021, from https://eurohealthnet.eu/health-gradient/fair-employment/childrens-rights?qclid=CjwKCAjwmv-DBhAMEiwA7xYrdw6eTpRh4sKxOsr8-3Tjt16dHkxKTwPqj2tUfk59AOSZKWpy9MHCixOCTCwQAvD_BwE
- Foss, A. B. (2013). *Regjeringen vil ikke gi norske barn rett til å klage til FN*. Retrieved on May 2, 2021, from <https://www.aftenposten.no/norge/i/RBXM8/regjeringen-vil-ikke-gi-norske-barn-rett-til-aa-klage-til-fn>
- Goldsmith, J. (2000). Sovereignty, international relations theory, and international law. *Stanford Law Review*, 52(4), 959-986. Retrieved on May 1, 2021, from https://heinonline.org/HOL/Page?handle=hein.journals/stflr52&div=41&g_sent=1&casa_token=cAx34CS4ceYAAAAA:eNV2O8RSjvD8k4CyaO5o7enOj7Oyt-UlBFA98XUJ0KZLF-0ptDypSO73LnNVqqMrj_eMcyzH0g&collection=journals
- Government Offices of Sweden. (n.d). Stefan Löfven. Retrieved on November 30, 2020 from <https://www.government.se/government-of-sweden/prime-ministers-office/stefan-lofven/>
- Hansen, K, B. (2015). Exploring Compatibility Between "Subjective Well-being" and Sustainable Living" in Scandinavia. *Social Indicators research*, May 2015, Vol.122, No. 1, pp. 175-187.
- Havercroft, J. (2012). Was Westphalia 'all that'? Hobbes, Bellarmine, and the norm of non-intervention. *Global Constitutionalism*, 1(1), 120-140.
DOI:10.1017/S2045381711000104
- Helland, T. (2019). *A comparative analysis of the Child Protection Systems in the Czech Republic, Lithuania, Norway, Poland, Romania and Russia*. Center for research on discretion and paternalism. Retrieved on April 30, 2021, from https://discretion.uib.no/2020-helland-ed-bfd_report-a-comparative-analysis-of-the-child-protection-system-in-the-czech-republic-lithuania-norway-poland-romania-and-russia/
- Holzscheiter, A. (2010). *Children's Rights in International Politics: The Transformative Power of Discourse*. Palgrave Macmillan. Retrieved on April 14, 2021, from [https://link-springer-com.gate3.library.lse.ac.uk/book/10.1057%2F9780230281646](https://link.springer-com.gate3.library.lse.ac.uk/book/10.1057%2F9780230281646)
- Keller, H., & Stone Sweet, A. (Eds.). *A Europe of Rights: The Impact of the ECHR on National Legal Systems*. Oxford University Press. Retrieved April 15, 2021, from <https://oxford-universitypressscholarship-com.gate3.library.lse.ac.uk/view/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199535262.001.0001/acprof-9780199535262>

- Kim, Y. (2011). *The unveiled power of NGOs: how NGOs influence state's foreign policy behaviors*. University of Iowa. DOI: 10.17077/etd.t4vkk81p Retrieved on April 29, 2021, from <https://ir.uiowa.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2537&context=etd>
- Langford, M., Skivenes, M., Søvig, K. H., & Kirkebø, T. L. (2019). 1. Introduction: Implementing Child Rights. *Children's Rights in Norway*. DOI:10.18261/9788215031415-2019-02
- MacCormick, N. (1995). Sovereignty: Myth and reality. *Scottish Affairs*, May 1995, Vo. 11, No. 1: pp. 1-13. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.3366/scot.1995.0019>
- Mariscal, N. (2016). Globalización – Unión Europea – Globalización. *Cuadernos Europeos de Deusto*, 54, 27. <https://doi.org/10.18543/ced-54-2016pp27-58>
- Norwegian Government. (n.d). Prime Minister Erna Solberg (Conservative Party). Retrieved on November 30, 2020 from <https://www.regjeringen.no/en/dep/smk/organization-map/prime-minister-erna-solberg/id742859/>
- Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. (2020). *Norway to align itself with the new EU sanctions regime against serious human rights violations*. Retrieved on April 28, 2021, from https://www.regjeringen.no/en/aktuelt/eu_hr_sanctions/id2815142/
- OHCHR | Committee on the Rights of the Child. (2019). Ohchr.org. <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/CRC/Pages/CRCIndex.aspx>
- Ot. Prp. (2002-2003). Om lov om endring i menneskerettighetsloven mv. (innarbeiding av barnekonvensjonen i norsk lov). Det Kongelige Justis og Politidepartement. Retrieved on April 17 from <https://lovdata.no/static/PROP/otprp-200203-045.pdf>
- Pop, A. (2012). Avoiding common mistakes in think tank and NGO training. *Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 46 (2012) 4039-4043. DOI: 10.1016/j.sbspro.2012.06.193
- Regeringskansliet; Regeringen och Regeringskansliet. (2018). *Barnkonventionen som svensk lag*. Retrieved on April 17, 2021 from <https://www.regeringen.se/regeringens-politik/barnkonventionen-som-svensk-lag/>
- Reynart, D., Bouverne-de Bie, M.& Vandeveld, S. (2009). *A review of Children's rights literature since the adoption of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child*. *Childhood* Vol. 16(4): 518-534. DOI: 10.1177/0907568209344270.
- Rikard Bengtsson, and Ole Elgström. (2012). "Conflicting Role Conceptions? The European Union in Global Politics." *Foreign Policy Analysis*, vol. 8, no. 1, 2012, pp. 93–108. Retrieved on April 21, 2021, from <https://academic-oup-com.gate3.library.lse.ac.uk/fpa/article/8/1/93/1795191>

- Meld. St. 39. (2015-2016). *Individklageordningene til FNs konvensjoner om økonomiske, sosiale og kulturelle rettigheter, barnets rettigheter og rettighetene til mennesker med nedsatt funksjonsevne*. Retrieved on April 3, 2021, from <https://www.regjeringen.no/no/dokumenter/meld.-st.-39-20152016/id2513020/>
- Saint-Martin, J. (1994). Increasing NGO influence on development policy. *Peace Research*, 26(1), 79-85. Retrieved on April 21, 2021, from <https://search-proquest-com.gate3.library.lse.ac.uk/scholarly-journals/increasing-ngo-influence-on-development-policy/docview/213470558/se-2?accountid=9630>
- SFSR. (2018). *Lag om Förenta nationernas konvention om barnets rättigheter* (2018:1997). Lagboken. Retrieved on May 4, 2021, from https://www.lagboken.se/Lagboken/start/familjeratt/lag-20181197-om-forenta-nationernas-konvention-om-barnets-rattigheter/d_3296064-lag-2018_1197-om-forenta-nationernas-konvention-om-barnets-rattigheter
- Skiphamn, S. S. (2018). *Innsikt: Derfor ble Norge dømt for brudd på menneskerettighetene*. Retrieved on April 29, 2021, from <https://www.faktisk.no/artikler/500/innsikt-derfor-ble-norge-domt-for-brudd-pa-menneskerettighetene>
- SKR. (2021). *Tolka, tillämpa barnkonventionen*. Retrieved on May 9, 2021, from <https://skr.se/skr/demokratiledningstyrning/manskligarattigheterjamlikhet/barnetsrattigheter/barnkonventionensvensklag/tolkatillampabarnkonventionen.33920.html#:~:text=Av%20artikel%2012%20i%20barnkonventionen,alla%20fr%C3%A5gor%20som%20r%C3%B6r%20barnet.&text=R%C3%A4tten%20att%20bli%20h%C3%B6rd%20enligt,att%20barnet%20ska%20h%C3%B6ras%20direkt.>
- SOU: statens offentliga utredningar. (2016). *Barnekonventionen blir svensk lag*. Retrieved on May 1, 2021, from https://www.regeringen.se/contentassets/7bcd0fe8815345aeb2ff0d9678896e11/barnkonventionen-blir-svensk-lag-sou-2016_19.pdf
- St.prp (1989-90). *Samtykke til ratifikasjon, med visse forbehold, av De Forente Nasjoners, FNs Konvensjon av 20. november 1989 om barnets rettigheter*: S.tprp. Nr 104 (1989-90, innst. S. nr. 7 (1990.91). Stortinget. Retrieved on April 17, 2021 from <https://www.stortinget.no/no/Saker-og-publikasjoner/Saker/Sak/?p=5450>
- Steinberg, R. H., & Zasloff, J. M. (2006). Power and international law. *American Journal of International Law*, 100(1), 64-87. Retrieved on April 30, 2021, from https://heinonline.org/HOL/Page?handle=hein.journals/ajil100&div=11&g_sent=1&casa_token=NriSvfwhSfcAAAAA:v4OZfpqwRnsVvAP2kXO5-AVtHeWhRvY6BchwN4JBGmLX-1EJqdqQ3WKwpVkbmFNTTgTziz9TuA&collection=journals
- Strand, V, B. (2020). *Barnekonvensjonen – Store norske leksikon*. Retrieved April 15, 2021 from Store Norske Leksikon. <https://snl.no/Barnekonvensjonen>

- Sveriges Riksdag. (2018). *Konstitutionsutskottets yttrande 2017/18:KU8y. Inkorporering av FN:s konvention om barnets rättigheter*. Retrieved on May 4, 2021, from <https://data.riksdagen.se/fil/185934BC-F332-4069-B9EF-C8EAA581A95D>
- Sweet, A., & Keller, H. (2008). The Reception of the ECHR in National Legal Orders. In *A Europe of Rights: The Impact of the ECHR on National Legal Systems*. : Oxford University Press. Retrieved April 23 2021, from <https://oxford-universitypressscholarship-com.gate3.library.lse.ac.uk/view/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199535262.001.0001/acprof-9780199535262-chapter-1>
- The Norwegian Directorate for Children, Youth and Family Affairs. (15/2016). *"Children aren't just the future. They're the present as well." – A report on how children and young people feel about growing up in Norway*. Bufetat. ISBN: 978-82-8286-301-8. Retrieved on April 18, 2021, from https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/Treaties/CRC/Shared%20Documents/NOR/INT_CRC_ARL_NOR_25616_E.pdf
- United Nations. (1989). *Convention on the Rights of the Child*. Retrieved on March 15, 2021, from https://ec.europa.eu/info/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/rights-child/eu-action-rights-child_en
- United Nations. (2015). *Committee on the Rights of the Child: Concluding observations on the fifth periodic report of Sweden*. CRC/C/SWE/CO/5. Retrieved on April 20, 2021, from https://www.refworld.org/publisher_CRC_CONCOBSERVATIONS_SWE_566e7e8c4.0.html
- United Nations. (2018). *Committee on the Rights of the Child: Concluding observations on the combined fifth and sixth periodic reports of Norway*. CRC/C/NOR/CO/5-6. Retrieved on April 18, 2021, from https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CRC%2fC%2fNOR%2fCO%2f5-6&Lang=en
- United Nations. (2020). *Committee on the Rights of the Child: List of issues prior to submission of the combined sixth and seventh periodic reports of Sweden*. CRC/C/SW/QPR/6-7. Retrieved on April 20, 2021, from https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CRC%2fC%2fSWE%2fQPR%2f6-7&Lang=en
- United Nations. (1969). *Vienna Convention on the Law of the Treaties*. United Nations, Treaty Series, vol. 1155, p. 331. Retrieved on April 18, 2021 from https://legal.un.org/ilc/texts/instruments/english/conventions/1_1_1969.pdf

- UNTC. (2011). *Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on a communications procedure*. No. 27531. Resolution 68/138 of December 19 2011. Retrieved on May 1, 2021, from <https://treaties.un.org/doc/Publication/MTDSG/Volume%20I/Chapter%20IV/IV-11-d.en.pdf>
- Utenriks- og konstitusjonskomiteen. (1990-91). *Innst. S. nr. 7. Innstilling fra utenrikskomiteen om samtykke til ratifikasjon, med visse forbehold, av De Forente Nasjoners Konvensjon av 20 november 1989 om barnets rettigheter*. Stortinget. Retrieved on April 13, 2021, from https://www.stortinget.no/no/Saker-og-publikasjoner/Stortingsforhandlinger/Lesevisning/?p=1990-91&paid=6&wid=al&psid=DIVL647&pgid=al_0167
- Vamstad, J. (2016). *Fördelar och nackdelar med att inkorporera barnkonventionen: En jämförande studie av internationella erfarenheter*. Institutionen för socialvetenskap. Retrieved on April 29, 2021, from <https://www.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:919332/FULLTEXT01.pdf>
- Van Tuijl, Peter. "NGOs and Human Rights: Sources of Justice and Democracy." *Journal of International Affairs*, vol. 52, no. 2, 1999, pp. 493–512. Retrieved on April 23, 2021, from www.jstor.org/stable/24358050. Accessed April 23 2021.
- Versteegh, L. (2013). Children's Rights in International Politics: The Transformative Power of Discourse. *The European Legacy*, Vol, 18, No 6, pp. 807-808. DOI: 10.1080/10848770.2013.816157. Retrieved on April 2, 2021, from [https://www-tandfonline-com.gate3.library.lse.ac.uk/doi/full/10.1080/10848770.2013.816157?scroll=top&needAccess=true](https://www.tandfonline.com/gate3.library.lse.ac.uk/doi/full/10.1080/10848770.2013.816157?scroll=top&needAccess=true)
- Vieira, H. (2015). A positive international image helps countries export more. *LSE Business Review*. Retrieved on April 28, 2021, from <https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/businessreview/2015/10/12/a-positive-international-image-helps-countries-export-more/>
- Watson, A. M. S. (2006). Children and International Relations: A New Site of Knowledge? *Review of International Studies*, Vol 32, No 2, pp. 237-250. Retrieved on April 14, 2021, from <https://www.jstor.org/stable/40072136>

