

Making sense of adoption from care in very different contexts

Tarja Pösö, Marit Skivenes and June Thoburn

Introduction

This book has its focus on a very special group of children, namely, children in public care for whom adoption may be appropriate. It is about children who, for various reasons, are the responsibility of the child protection system and the government in a country. The traditional division of responsibilities between the family and the state has been altered for these children; for them, it is the state that has the formal responsibility to raise them and evoked the *parens patriae*. Of course, in practice, children are raised by foster parents, kin and extended family, and residential care workers; however, it is nevertheless the state that has the formal authority to make decisions about the child, and to ensure that the child's needs are appropriately met, as would any good parent.

The recent WHO–UNICEF–Lancet Commission article ‘A future for the world's children?’ (Clarke et al, 2020) measures the foundational conditions for today's children, across the world, to survive and thrive. The nine countries in this book are, with two exceptions, among the top 20 in terms of children's living conditions. The exceptions are Estonia (ranked 27) and the US (ranked 39) (Clarke et al, 2020). As we remarked upon in the introductory chapter, the countries approach their responsibilities towards children in different ways, with those approaches varying from risk-oriented child protection systems¹ to family service systems with a focus on the family and on children's rights (Gilbert et al, 2011). Although different forms of child protection removals and alternative care have been highlighted before in conjunction with the states' responsibilities towards children and the different child protection systems, this book's focus on adoptions from care is unique in its ambition to provide in-depth analyses of country policies, practices and key themes regarding adoption from

care. It complements the analysis by Palacios et al (2019), in which an interdisciplinary group of researchers, based on their broad knowledge of research in this area, conclude that adoption provides a legitimate model for the alternative care of children if undertaken within a rights and ethics framework that emphasises children's best interests, as set out in international conventions and national laws. In this concluding chapter, we will summarise the key messages from the previous chapters, look at the strengths and weaknesses of the use of adoption as a child protection measure, and suggest ways ahead for research, policy and practice.²

The types of adoption from care

We presented the definition for the term 'adoption from care' in the introductory chapter in the following way:

adoptions from care ... are to be understood as those adoptions where a child who is currently in public care or is under guardianship of the state, after full or partial removal of custody from the parents, is placed with prospective adopters and/or legally adopted by their foster carers with or without the consent of the parents.

We have included only domestic adoptions from care in this book. Family reunification is an aim in all child protection systems (Berrick et al, forthcoming a); however, unfortunately, the statistical information on reunification seems to be scarcely available and even information about the length of time spent in public care is not available for cross-country comparisons. Nevertheless, several country authors report that children rarely leave long-term care. Although the term 'adoption from care' is not an established and comprehensively used term, children who are in public care are adopted in every jurisdiction included in this book. We found two main types of adoptions from care. They take place: first, in those situations in which children are already in long-term public care and are then adopted by the foster parents (or a relative) with whom they already live; or, second, when the child moves to live with specially recruited adopters, sometimes fairly quickly but sometimes after a period of months or years in public care. In the first path, the foster parents who become adoptive parents are already familiar to the child, whereas the adoptive parents will usually be strangers in the second path. Some of the countries in this book use mainly one approach, while others use both.

For almost all countries, adoption is an integral part of the child protection system (the exceptions are Austria and Finland). For most, it is the same decision-making body that makes the decision about a care order that also makes the decision about an adoption from care (the exceptions are Finland and Spain). Although all systems can decide on adoption without the agreement of the parent(s), in four countries, cooperation and consent from the parent(s) are the norm: Austria, Finland, Germany and Ireland (in Ireland, there are two pathways depending on the consent). Children's consent is equally required (we will return to the age limits later in this chapter). A comprehensive overview of the proceedings and decision-making bodies in eight of the nine jurisdictions (minus the US) included in this volume is laid out in Burns et al (2019: esp 365, Table 4).

Two important, and recently recognised, themes in discussions about adoptions from care (see Helland and Skivenes, 2019; Breen et al, 2020; see also ECtHR *Strand Lobben v Norway* 2017) are: first, that decisions in these cases are about continued public care *versus* an adoption, and rarely about an adoption or a reunification with the birth parents; and, second, an adoption decision shifts the public care responsibility for the child to the private care of a family. An adopted child is no longer directly under the *parens patriae* responsibility of the state, but included in the private sphere of the family (Tefre, 2015). This resonates with a view that children not only have formal rights, but are also recognised as individuals within the family unit that both the state and courts must relate to directly. From a family perspective, and regarding the child's right to family life, this is an under-reported dimension in our view and something we believe is immensely important. In an article by Breen and colleagues (2020), the status of and respect for the child's de facto family life is discussed, and based on an analysis of 20 judgments regarding adoption from care made by the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR), the authors argue that the discourses are changing. The interesting and paradoxical theme in cases of adoption from care is that, in case law and principles, the birth family is regarded as the superior family, even for children who will never be reunified with their birth parents, but will grow up in care (Breen et al, 2020). What Breen et al find is that the ECtHR's view on and understanding of family for children increasingly entails a recognition and stronger protection of children's non-biological and de facto family life.

The adoptive family of a child previously in public care is as any family in all countries included in this book, with some exceptions regarding financial and other post-adoption support (the US and England). The same applies to adopted children: as they are adopted,

they rely on their adoptive family's support and, if needed, on the support given to any other child with a similar need. We will look at the issues related to pre- and post-adoption services raised by the country authors after we first look at the numbers of children adopted from care.

Adoption from care in numbers

The nine jurisdictions included in this book cover a range of welfare state models and child protection systems. Examining the statistics, it is of importance to examine how many of the children placed in public care by the child protection system are subsequently adopted. We asked every country author to provide the numbers of children adopted from care, as well as the numbers of children in care by a care order. Underscoring that the bases for the calculations are not always similar and that comparing statistics across countries is notoriously difficult (for example, in terms of stock or flow numbers, or defining what a care order means in different jurisdictions), the overview gives a very clear picture of the countries that make most frequent use of adoption from care. In the US, 14.44 per cent of children in care on a given day were adopted during the year, and in England, it was 6.2 per cent. In Spain, 1.7 per cent of children in care were adopted, and in the remaining countries, less than 1 per cent of children in care were adopted. An interesting observation is that we see some correlation between adoption policies in a country and the child protection system in place. England and the US are high users of adoptions (see [Table 15.1](#)). However, Ireland also has a risk-oriented system but has few adoptions from care.

An important reason for the use of adoption in England and the US, as both Thoburn (in [Chapter 2](#)) and Berrick (in [Chapter 5](#)) point out, is that research demonstrated that too many children were not reunited with their families and experienced too many placement changes. In the US, a child rights orientation among congressional leaders focusing on children's right to permanency resulted in new legislation (the Adoption and Safe Families Act 1997) that set adoption as the preferred alternative if reunification was not possible (see [Chapter 5](#)). Tefre (2015) argues that an important driver for the new legislation in the US was research that revealed the importance of permanency and the improved outcomes for children that were adopted compared to children in foster care. Similar reasons are evident in Norway (see [Chapter 9](#); see also Tefre, 2020) and Ireland (see [Chapter 4](#)). In England, the emphasis on children's rights to stability and family membership

Table 15.1: Overview of children in public care and adoption from care for nine countries

1	2	3	4	5	6
Country and child population (0–17) (year)	Children in public care by care order decision, total at year end (year)	Rate of children in public care by care order decision per 100,000	Number of children adopted from care	Rate per 100,000 child population adopted from care	Adopted from care as a percentage of children in care
Austria 1,535,958 (2018)	13,325 ^a	868	110 (2018)	7.1	0.83%
England 11,776,562 (2018)	61,710	524	3,820 (2017/18)	32	6.2%
Estonia 252,117 (2018)	2,451	972	22 (2018)	8	0.9%
Finland 1,058,091 (2018)	9,295	878	10 (2015)	0.9 (2015)	0.1% (2015)
Germany 13,470,300 (2016)	147,258 (2016)	1,082	269	2	0.18%
Ireland 1,190,478 (2017)	5,974 (2018)	501	25 (2018)	2	0.42%
Norway 1,122,508 (2018)	8,868 (2018)	790	55 (2018)	4.8	0.62%
Spain 8,119,000 (2015)	34,644 (2017)	426	588 (2016)	7.2	1.7%
USA 73,600,000 (2016)	437,283 (2018)	595	63,123 (2018)	85.9	14.44%

Note: ^a For Austria, the statistics include all types of out-of-home placements during a year.

resulted in both an increase in adoptions and also improvements in long-term foster care so that it could be regarded as a permanence option for some children, though young entrants to long-term care are mainly placed quickly for adoption (see [Chapter 2](#)).

When we look at the trends of adoptions from care over the last 15 years or so (depending on the data available in different chapters), the US and England stand out again. The use of adoptions from care has expanded in both contexts. However, England has experienced a decline in the most recent years. We can see trends in Austria, Norway, Estonia and Germany as well, and the trends show either some decrease (Estonia) or very slight increase (Austria and Norway). The ways in which adoptions from care have been included in the statistics have, however, changed in many countries over the years. Those trends follow the overall pattern of decreasing domestic adoptions across the globe (Palacios et al, [2019](#)).

Indeed, adoptions from care are not common forms of placement for children needing long-term care in the family service-oriented child protection systems. The research about the public's view and opinion on child protection interventions is scarce but the few studies that do exist display that a majority have a positive view of adoptions from care and would choose adoption over foster care in certain circumstances (Skivenes and Thoburn, [2017](#); Helland et al, [2020](#); Berrick et al, forthcoming b). This is somewhat surprising, and for some countries, such as Norway and Finland, research indicates that public opinion may be on a collision course with ongoing practice.

Children as the standpoint

In the course of its long history, adoption has very much been seen from the perspective of those who wish to adopt, and only quite recently – since the 1960s and 1970s – has a more child-centred view on adoption emerged (Triseliotis et al, [1997](#)). That view has brought the child more into focus, and issues such as children's capacities to recover from early childhood adversity and to adjust to adoptive life have been studied and findings used to improve planning and practice (Palacios and Brodzinsky, [2010](#)). Currently, that view has been expanded to a more rights-based view, with an emphasis on human rights and children's rights in particular (see [Chapter 11](#)). This emphasis suggests that if we examine adoptions from care from the perspective of the child, it is also a story of a child given the opportunity to belong within a family for life, recreating the bonds of belonging so vital for an individual's self-esteem and perception of self-worth. It is discouraging that, more

often than not, it is adoption from the perspective of the birth and prospective adoptive parents that is promoted (Breen et al, 2020), as pointed out in Chapters 9 and 12. Research focusing on children's experiences of inter-country adoptions is not fully transferable to the issues of adoptions from care, though some notions of identity and belonging are most likely relevant to both types of adoption. For example, from the point of view of making decisions, Helland and Skivenes (see [Chapter 9](#); see also McEwan-Strand and Skivenes, 2020) conclude that, in Norway, 'To a large degree, available research has left unanswered questions about: if and how Norwegian children are involved; whether children give their consent; whether children have views on foster care versus adoption as a placement alternative; and whether children have a view on their contact with the birth family.' Most countries represented in this book require that children above a certain age give their consent to adoption. The exceptions are England and Ireland, though in England, the wishes of children of all ages must be independently ascertained and reported to the court. In Estonia, the age is ten years; in Norway, Spain and Finland the 'qualifying' age is 12 years; and in Germany and Austria, the age is 14 years (see Burns et al, 2019). For most of these countries, younger children may give consent if considered legally competent.

It is indeed a gap in the knowledge base not to know more about children's views on their own placement histories and involvement in decision-making regarding adoption. In their 1999 study reporting on interviews with 41 children adopted from care in England, Thomas and colleagues reported that half of the children were concerned about the court proceedings, not only in terms of the actual court hearing, meeting a judge and being in the courtroom, but also about the outcome of the proceedings and whether the judge would, for example, say 'no' to an adoption, and what would happen then: 'I was worried whether I would be allowed to get adopted or not. And if I was not, what would I do and where would I go' (Thomas et al, 1999: 69). The long waiting period before the court hearing was also mentioned as difficult for about half of the children. For their ten-year follow-up study, Neil et al (2015) interviewed 32 adoptees aged between 16 and 20. As part of their follow-up study of 265 children of minority ethnic heritage permanently placed from care (mostly with adopters), Thoburn et al (2000) spoke with 24 young people aged between 16 and 21. Both these studies record that the young people themselves had a wide range of experiences and opinions about the positive but also negative aspects of adoption, and especially the regrets some had at having to lose all links with adult birth relatives and siblings (see

Chapter 14). Based on a small qualitative study in Norway on families experiencing involuntary adoption from care, including interviews with six children that were adopted from care, Berg (2010) reports that children who were 17 or older at the time of the interviews said that they were fully aware that they were adopted, of the family they came from and why they had been adopted. All the children said that they were happy they had been adopted and that they believed they had had more opportunities and a better life in their new families than they would have had in their families of origin.

However, children's standpoint should not be narrowed down to only asking for their views. It is much wider as it should guide the fundamental way of thinking of adoption as an alternative to long-term care for some children. This standpoint challenges us to think carefully about the two premises evident in all countries employing adoptions from care: the principle of the child's best interest; and the ambition to create families by adoption. These two premises can complement each other but children can also be objectified and treated as means to create a family by adults wishing to have a family through adoption. In this respect, Breen et al (2020) provide a promising view as a result of their analysis of all ECtHR judgments on adoptions from care, concluding:

The Court's understands 'family unit', in the context of adoptions from care, to mean biological relationships between children and parents, but more recently, also between children and foster parents, and to a more limited extent in terms of recognition, between siblings themselves. To this extent, our findings with regard to the Court's understanding of family composition are in line with the theoretical literature, wherein the concept of family reflects the bonds created by personal, caring relationships and activities.

The bonds created by personal, caring relationships and activities are important for any child. It is equally important for children who may be adopted that their existing relationships and the likely relationships with the prospective adoptive parents are assessed correctly. Chapter 13, examining the ways in which the Norwegian court views attachment as part of its decisions on adoption, demonstrates how important the high quality of assessments of such key psychological terms is and what challenges the courts may have when working in this juncture of legal and welfare reasoning.

Birth parents and adoption from care

Domestic adoptions were more common in the first part of the 20th century than later in many Western countries as single motherhood was not supported. Social stigma attached to single mothers, as well as lack of economic support and childcare, was reflected in higher numbers of children abandoned and/or given up for adoption. Since the 1960–1970s, the increasing welfare state services addressed to single mothers, the expansion of contraception and the decreasing stigma attached to ‘illegitimate’ children and mothers have resulted in decreasing numbers of children released for domestic adoption. Nevertheless, the country chapters still report on abandoned children. The baby hatches in Germany and newborn babies given up for adoption in Austria, Estonia, Finland and Spain may point to gaps in services supporting mothers to look after their babies (see Luhamaa et al, 2021), and that there are social and cultural norms that make this kind of abandonment possible. It is noteworthy that when talking about babies ‘left’ for adoption, the focus is still on mothers, excluding the role of fathers. Although the background of and motives for ‘baby adoptions’ are only lightly discussed in this book, and they may be different from abandonment (see [Chapter 7](#)), the very existence of babies adopted in this way is relevant from the point of view of the existing legal and ethical guidelines for adoptions.

There are differences between countries in the routes taken from birth family to adopters, which impact on the legislative provisions for and understandings of the impact of adoptions from care on birth family members and the services provided. However, whatever route to adoption is taken, once the ‘supply’ of infants for consensual adoption (who came from across social backgrounds) diminished, those whose children were considered for adoption from care have tended to come from materially deprived or otherwise disadvantaged backgrounds. In countries with a longer history of the provision of family support services, inadequate resources are rarely – or should not be – the sole reason for adoption from care (Luhamaa et al, 2021), and poverty and deprivation as sources of parental difficulty are compounded by physical and mental health problems, addictions, and inter-parental violence.

Of particular note in those countries (especially England and the US in this volume), where a large proportion of those adopted from care enter care as infants, is that some of the birth parents are themselves under the age of 18 and have special rights as children themselves, and especially so if they are also still ‘in care’. The research on birth parents of children adopted from care does, however, demonstrate that mothers

and, even more so, fathers cross the age range, and this is especially so for those who lose more than one child (either as a sibling group or infants born sequentially) to non-consensual adoption. Some of the studies of adoptions from care referenced in the country chapters show detailed information at the time of entry to care and adoption placement, though fewer provide information on birth families over the longer term (see [Chapter 14](#); see also Howe and Feast, 2000; Triseliotis et al, 2005; Neil et al, 2015; Broadhurst et al, 2018).

Becoming an adoptive parent for a child adopted from care

In every type of adoption, prospective adoptive parents need to be declared not only eligible (legal criteria), but also suitable (health and psychosocial criteria), according to the international treaties and ethical standards in this area (see [Chapter 11](#)). Prospective adoptive parents should also receive skilled preparation and services before, during and after the child's placement. When children are adopted from care in the countries represented in this book, it is often foster parents who adopt the child. In some countries (for example, Norway), it is *only* foster parents who can, in fact, adopt a child in public care, and in some countries (for example, Estonia and Finland), it is especially foster parents who initiate the adoption process of a child in care. Obviously, children and foster parents have learnt to know each other before the adoption proceedings, and the new form of an adoptive family is based on existing relationships. At the same time, this means that the recruitment of foster carers is important for adoption and that what is done at that stage regarding matching children and foster carers has an impact on the future interest and likelihood of adoption. When people are recruited by fostering services, they are assessed and trained to be foster carers, which is a different task and commitment from that of being adoptive parents.

It is not, however, only assessment of the suitability of foster parents to become adoptive parents that matters, but also their understanding of what it means to become adoptive parents. 'Adoptive parenthood' is an aspect of psychosocial counselling in some countries, required as a part of adoption proceedings (Triseliotis et al, 1997). The process of preparing for the adoption is considered to be an important part of a successful adoption (see [Chapter 8](#)). Counselling aims to support prospective adoptive parents to also prepare themselves on the emotional and psychological level for what it means to shift from being foster carers to being adoptive parents. That kind of support is also given

to other members of the prospective adoptive family as the adoption of a former foster child has an impact on the whole family structure and relations. Some country contributors, for example, Bovenschen and Meysen, express concerns that the period of foster care may have an impact on the assessment and counselling, that is, as the family is already known to the public authorities, the assessment may be lighter.

When those other than foster parents apply to adopt a child who is already in public care, matching children and prospective adoptive parents is part of the adoption process. There needs to be a way for prospective adoptive parents to learn about the children available for adoption, which is sometimes done through adoption parties, mentioned in [Chapter 2](#) on England. In order to recruit prospective adopters, campaigns to encourage interest in adoptive parenthood, especially for older children and teenagers, also take place (McRoy et al, 2009). The role of counselling prospective adoptive parents may not, however, be well developed – the chapters describing practice in the US and England in this book focus on matching in particular and give less attention to psychosocial guidance for prospective adoptive parents. The definitions of suitable adoptive parents, however, have a prominent, yet contested, role in some countries, addressing the issues of ethnicity, race, marital status or sexual orientation (see [Chapter 5](#)).

The suitability and commitment of prospective adoptive parents, whether foster carers or strangers, is crucial for children adopted from care. The history of adoptions includes too many tragic stories of children being badly cared for or even exploited (Briggs and Marre, 2009). Traditional ways of undertaking pre-adoption assessments have resulted in some prospective adopters being deemed non-suitable, resulting in their exclusion from public and formal adoption proceedings. For example, the issue of the age of prospective adopters excludes some from adoption. Currently, much attention has been given to whether the prospective adopters can be single or in same-sex relations, and whether heterosexual or same-sex couples are legally registered or not, resulting in some variation across the countries (European Parliamentary Research Services, 2016). Indeed, if adoption is to succeed in its aim of providing legal, residential and relational permanence to children in care, the adoptive parents (and families) play a centrally important role. Prospective adopters known to the child through fostering have several advantages for providing permanence of this type but they still need information, support and understanding of what the shift from fostering to adoption means for them legally, socially and psychologically. Those prospective adoptive parents who are strangers to the child to be adopted have even more learning to do at this preparation stage, not only about

becoming an adoptive parent, but also about the special needs and characteristics of the child who will be joining their family.

Pre- and post-adoptive services when children from care are adopted

The country chapters demonstrate that pre-adoption services exist to a varying degree. The main type of pre-adoption service is counselling for birth parents, children to be adopted and prospective adopters. In general, counselling aims to provide information to different parties and to support them psychosocially and emotionally to come to terms with the changes brought about by adoption. Counselling may include assessment of the eligibility and suitability of prospective adopters, as well as checking on the commitment and consent of the birth parents, and it may be regarded as an essential precondition for the proceedings towards adoption, as required in Finland, for example. Counselling may be replaced and/or accompanied by training, with some countries, Austria as an example, providing 'preparatory courses' for prospective adopters, consisting of lectures and exercises. Counselling is provided by social workers specialised in adoption in most countries. Only the Estonian chapter describes practices to prepare and support the wider network of the child, including 'biological relatives, siblings and everyone who is connected to the child' (see [Chapter 3](#)). The country chapters do not, however, report on any particular adaptations of adoption counselling to serve the situations in which children in care are adopted. In a similar way, although adoption counselling is also provided for children to be adopted, the particularities of adoptions from care are not described in the country chapters. For a child, this shift from foster care into adoption will often mean a change in the family name (or even the 'given' first name in some countries); these markers of the changes, some more mundane than others, are not meaningless and should not take place without preparing the child for the change. It is, after all, well known that children in care struggle with a variety of issues of social belonging. Therefore, the shift from foster care into adoption should pay enough attention to the counselling needs of children, in addition to their wishes and views on the decision itself.

After the child has been adopted, adoptive families and adoptees are, in general, the same as any other family with children regarding the services they may receive. In most countries, former foster families lose the support and payments given previously. In this collection of countries, it is only the US and England chapters which state that some or most adoptive parents continue to receive state funding as adoptive parents. In

the US, 'adoptive parents typically receive an initial tax credit; thereafter they usually receive a monthly subsidy, similar to the foster care subsidy, until the child turns 18' (see [Chapter 5](#)). Furthermore, it is not only the former foster parents that may lose the support, but also the children. The Finnish chapter, for example, demonstrates how children who grow up in care receive aftercare services to support their independent young adulthood; however, children who have been adopted from care will not have that same public support, but will be dependent on the support given by their adoptive families. In most countries, post-adoption services to adoptive families are more likely to respond, though only when asked to do so, to requests for assistance by adoptive parents, as well as the child, with respect to issues around identity. This is most likely to be as the adoptee reaches adolescence and moves towards adulthood, when they may wish to seek information or reconnect with birth family members. The post-adoption service to birth parents is also most likely to concern providing assistance with post-adoption contact, though mental health services may also provide counselling with respect to the grief reactions experienced by many birth parents, especially of children placed for adoption shortly after birth.

Conclusion

The motivation for this book has been to explore adoption from care and to thereby learn how children's rights are practised and weighed against parents' and adopters' rights in present-day societies, as well as how governments and legal and welfare professionals balance those rights and discharge their duties of care to those children who cannot grow up in their parents' care. This edited volume has demonstrated that children in care for protective reasons are more likely to be adopted in the US and England, and that these two countries have well-developed guidelines and practice frames. In the other seven countries, including countries with a risk, family service and children's rights orientation to child protection, children are rarely, if ever, adopted from care and interest in adoption within child welfare policy is not, in general, strong. There is also surprisingly little country-specific research providing information about the different stakeholders in adoption from care. The characteristics, views and coping mechanisms of children, birth parents and adopters at the time of the adoption decision and afterwards, are only rarely studied outside the countries making more frequent use of adoption from care. Thus, child protection systems have to make policy and practice decisions based on the limited information they do have. As the rationales of child protection systems, welfare states

and the history and cultural meanings of adoption vary, the messages from research elsewhere have to be adapted to specific country contexts and their understandings of private and public responsibilities, rights to family life, and children's rights. Children needing long-term care from the state should be given the best possible option to grow up in every jurisdiction, and the provision of options should be based on research-based knowledge of their strengths and weaknesses.

Acknowledgements

This project has received funding from the Research Council of Norway under the Independent Projects – Humanities and Social Science program (grant no. 262773) and European Research Council under the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme (grant agreement No 724460). Disclaimer: This chapter reflects only the authors' views and the funding agencies are not responsible for any use that may be made of the information contained therein.

Notes

- ¹ England is positioned between these two approaches, with family service-oriented legal provisions but operating in practice within a risk-oriented framework.
- ² When we comment on practices in different countries, we are aware that, with limited word length, authors have had to be selective about what they include and miss out. Therefore, if something is not mentioned, it cannot be assumed to mean that it does not happen.

References

- Berg, T. (2010) 'Adopsjon som barneverntiltak – hvordan gikk det med barna? Rapport fra praksis' ['Adoption as a child welfare measure – how did it work out for the children? A report from praxis'], *Tidsskriftet Norges Barnevern*, 87(1): 48–59.
- Berrick, J.D., Gilbert, N. and Skivenes, M. (eds) (forthcoming a) *International Handbook of Child Protection Systems*, New York: Oxford University Press.
- Berrick, J.D., Skivenes, M. and Roscoe, J. (forthcoming b) 'Right orientation and citizens views of adoption from care in U.S. and Norway'.
- Breen, C., Krutzinna, J., Luhamaa, K. and Skivenes, M. (2020) 'Family life for children in state care. An analysis of the European Court of Human Rights' reasoning on adoption without consent', *International Journal of Children's Rights*, 28(2020): 715–747. Available at: <https://brill.com/view/journals/chil/aop/article-10.1163-15718182-28040001/article-10.1163-15718182-28040001.xml?language=en>

- Briggs, L. and Mare, D. (2009) 'Introduction. The circulation of children', in D. Mare and L. Briggs (eds) *International Adoption. Global Inequalities and the Circulation of Children*, New York: New York University Press, pp 1–28.
- Broadhurst, K., Alrouh, B., Mason, C., Ward, H., Holmes, L., Ryan, M. and Bowyer, S. (2018) *Born into Care Proceedings in England*, London: Nuffield Foundation.
- Burns, K., Kriz, K., Krutzinna, J., Luhamaa, K., Meysen, T., Pösö, T., Sagramio, S., Skivenes, M. and Thoburn, J. (2019) 'The hidden proceedings – an analysis of accountability of child protection adoption proceedings in eight European jurisdictions', *European Journal of Comparative Law and Governance*, 6(4): 339–71.
- Clark, H., Coll-Seck, A.M., Banerjee, A., Peterson, S., Dalglish, S.L., Ameratunga, S., Balabanova, D., Bhan, M.K., Bhutta, Z.A., Borrazzo, J., Claeson, M., Doherty, T., El-Jardali, F., George, A.S., Gichaga, A., Gram, L., Hipgrave, D.B., Kwamie, A., Meng, Q., Mercer, R., Narain, S., Nsungwa-Sabiiti, J., Olumide, A.O., Osrin, D., Powell-Jackson, T., Rasanathan, K., Rasul, I., Reid, P., Requejo, J., Rohde, S.S., Rollins, N., Romedenne, M., Singh Sachdev, H., Saleh, R., Shawar, Y.R., Shiffman, J., Simon, J., Sly, P.D., Stenberg, K., Tomlinson, M., Ved, R.R. and Costello, A. (2020) 'A future for the world's children? A WHO–UNICEF–Lancet Commission', *The Lancet*, 395(10224): 605–58.
- European Parliamentary Research Service (2016) 'Briefing. Adoption of children in the European Union'. Available at: [www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2016/583860/EPRS_BRI\(2016\)583860_EN.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2016/583860/EPRS_BRI(2016)583860_EN.pdf) (accessed 24 June 2020).
- Gilbert, N., Parton, N. and Skivenes, M. (eds) (2011) *Child Protection Systems. International Trends and Emerging Orientations*, New York: Oxford University Press.
- Helland, H. and Skivenes, M. (2019) *Adopsjon som barneverntiltak [Adoption from Care as a Child Welfare Measure]*, Bergen: University of Bergen.
- Helland, H., Pedersen, S. and Skivenes, M. (2020) 'Befolkningens syn på adopsjon' ['Population's view on adoption from care'], *Tidsskrift for Samfunnsforskning*, 61(2): 124–39.
- Howe, D. and Feast, J. (2000) *Adoption, Search and Reunion: The Long Term Experience of Adopted Adults*, London: BAAF.
- Luhamaa, K., McEwan-Strand, A., Ruiken, B., Skivenes, M. and Wingens, F. (2021) 'Services and support to mothers and newborn babies in vulnerable situations: A study of eight countries', *Children and Youth Service Review*, 120: 105762.

- McEwan-Strand, A. and Skivenes, M. (2020) 'Children's capacities and role in matters of great significance for them. An analysis of the Norwegian county boards' decision-making in cases about adoption from care', *International Journal of Children's Rights*, 28(3): 632–65.
- McRoy, R., Lynch, C., Chanmugam, A., Madden, E. and Ayers-Lopez, S. (2009) 'Children from care CAN be adopted', in G. Wrobel and E. Neil (eds) *International Advances in Adoption Research and Practice*, Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, pp 97–118.
- Neil, E., Beek, M. and Ward, E. (2015) *Contact after Adoption: A Longitudinal Study of Post Adoption Contact Arrangements*, London: Coram-BAAF.
- Palacios, J. and Brodzinsky, D. (2010) 'Adoption research: trends, topics, outcomes', *International Journal of Behavioral Development*, 34(3): 270–84.
- Palacios, J., Brodzinsky, D., Grotevant, H., Johnson, D., Juffer, F., Marninez-Mora, L., Muhamedrahimov, R., Selwyn, J., Simmons, J. and Tarren-Sweeney, M. (2019) 'Adoption in the service of child protection. An international interdisciplinary perspective', *Psychology, Public Policy, and Law*, 25(2): 57–72.
- Skivenes, M. and Thoburn, J. (2017) 'Citizens' views in four jurisdictions on placement policies for maltreated children', *Child and Family Social Work*, 22(4): 1472–9.
- Tefre, Ø. (2015) 'The justifications for terminating parental rights and adoption in the United States', *Children and Youth Service Review*, 48: 87–97.
- Tefre, Ø. (2020) 'The child's best interest and the politics of adoptions from care in Norway', *The International Journal of Children's Rights*, 28(2): 288–321.
- Thoburn, J., Norford, L. and Rashid, S.P. (2000) *Permanent Family Placement for Children of Minority Ethnic Origin*, London: Jessica Kingsley.
- Thomas, C., Lowe, N.V., Lowe, N., Beckford, V. and Murch, M. (1999) *Adopted Children Speaking: A Whole New World*, London: British Association for Adoption and Fostering.
- Triseliotis, J., Shireman, J. and Hundelby, M. (1997) *Adoption. Theory, Policy and Practice*, London: Cassell.
- Triseliotis, J., Feast, J. and Kyle, J. (2005) *The Adoption Triangle Revisited*, London: BAAF.