

BACHELOR'S THESIS

Title in English: Contributing factors as to why immigrant women are overly represented or dominant group at the women shelter.

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I confirm that the work is self-prepared and that references/source references to all sources used in the work are provided, cf. Regulation relating to academic studies and examinations at the Western Norway University of Applied Sciences (HVL), § 12-1.

Abstract

Vold i nær relasjon har vært et stort tema de siste årene både i Norge og mange andre land. Dette har ført til etablering av krisesenter tilbud på alle fylker i Norge, der kan alle som er utsatt for vold i nære relasjon få ulike hjelp tilbud etter deres behov uavhengig av deres økonomiske situasjon, kjønn eller nasjonalitet. Selv om krisesenteret er tilgjengelig for alle, har det vært noen tegn som tyder på at innvandrerkvinner er overrepresentert på krisesenter i Norge. Denne oppgave undersøkes faktorer som bidrar til at innvandrerkvinner er overrepresentert på krisesenteret.

Metode som ble brukt var litteratur studier, det bestå av både nasjonal og internasjonale studier og arbeid gjort av ulike forfattere or forskere. Ved hjelp av deres arbeid klarte jeg å svare på min problemstilling.

Mitt resultat viser at fattigdom, arbeidsledighet, lav utdanning, oppholds status, manglende nettverk og kulturelle kjønns roller og normer var en risiko faktor som kan påvirke kvinners valg om å forlate eller forbli i et voldelig forhold/ekteskap, i tillegg kan det påvirke hvem og hvor de oppsøker hjelp.

Til slutt fant jeg at de nevnte risiko faktorer var mest vanlig blant innvandrerkvinner enn etniske majoriteten, noe som da påvirker hyppigheten av kontakten mellom dem og krisesenter.

Innholdsfortegnelse

1.0 Introduction (Innledning)
1.1 Thesis question(problemstilling) & Social discipline relevance (Sosial faglig relevance)3
1.2 Delimitation (Avgrensning)4
1.3 Definitions (Begrepsavklaring)4
1.3.1 Women's shelter (krisesenter)4
1.3.2 Violence (vold)5
1.3.3 Domestic violence (Vold I nære relasjoner)
1.3.4 Immigrant/immigrant background (innvandrer)8
1.3.5 Family immigration (Familieinnvandring)9
1.3.6 Resident permit on an independent basis- (Opphold på selvstendig grunnlag)9
1.3.7 Culture (kultur)
2.0 Methodology (Metode)
3.0 Result (Resultat)11
4.0 Discussion - contributing factors as to why immigrant women are overly represented or dominant group at the women shelter14
4.1 Cultural view on violence and gender role15
4.2 Lack of higher education, unemployment and Poverty16
4.3 Network
4.4 Immigration status/ Resident permit on independent basis
4. Relation between poverty, poor health and domestic violence19
6.0 Conclusion (Avslutning)21
7.0 Reference (Litteraturliste)22

1.0 Introduction (Innledning)

"why do you treat us differently from ethnic Norwegian women? they get faster help, and move out faster from the center, while the rest of us women with immigrant backgrounds are being told to wait, and that things take time. Look around you there is almost no ethnic Norwegian women left here (women shelter)" This was what one of the women with an immigrant background said to one the case workers at the women's shelter (Krisesenter)

I was opportune to have my internship at the women's shelter where individuals, families, adults irrespective of gender, who are or have been victims of domestic violence come to seek refuge. When the word "violence" comes up on the media, most people would automatically associate it to physical violence. My experience at the women shelter gave me a new perspective to violence. In a country were immigrants account for 14.7 percent of the entire population (ssb, 2020), yet women with immigrant background are the dominant user group at women shelter. This caught my attention and drove me to wanting to find out the possible causes of these problems from a theoretical and social perspective.

1.1 Thesis question(problemstilling) & Social discipline relevance (Sosial faglig relevance)

My experience at the women shelter has helped me arrive to my thesis question which is-

"What are the contributing factors as to why immigrant women are overly represented or dominant group at the women shelter?"

The use of violence is against the Norwegian law and is just as punishable as violence from another context. Domestic violence is an extensive societal problem that often leaves its victim with the feeling of unsafety, mental health issues, unemployment and financial problems, which might eventually lead to social exclusion. In addition, domestic violence also has its economic consequences to the society in form of increased demands of resources in schools, mental health hospitals, women shelter and of course the police force. An analysis from 2012 showed that violence in close relations costs the Norwegian society between 4.5 and 6 billion Norwegian crowns annually. (Justis og beredskapdepartementet, 2012 – 2013, s. 11).

Part of the actions taken by the Norwegian government to curb domestic violence, is the establishment of women shelters in all Norwegian counties. The shelter is open to everyone who is experiencing or has experienced domestic violence regardless of their residence permit status in the country, or the municipality they belong. Furthermore, the shelter's service to the public is of a low threshold, meaning one does not need any referrals, appointments or waiting lists. This is to make the shelter easy and accessible to victims of domestic violence. (Bufdir, 2019).

As stated earlier, I had my internship in one of shelters in Norway and must admit I got a broader understanding of what violence entails. We had all types of clients, young, old, ethnic Norwegian women, women with immigrant background, women with children and some without. Of the groups I mentioned, are women with immigrant background overly represented at the shelter in Norway (Bufdir, 2018).

The average residence duration at the shelter was 28 days in 2017 and has been stable over time, the average age for the shelter's user group was 36 years in 2017. 67 percent of the shelter's user group were in a relationship before moving into the shelter, while 33 percent were either single, separated, married or registered as partners. This is where it gets interesting, 2 out of 3 inhabitants at the shelter in 2017 had an immigrant background, and these number has been relatively stable in recent years (Bufdir, 2018). The previous statistics confirms my observation about immigrant women being the dominant group at the women's shelter.

32 percent of the shelter's residence were either fully or partly employed, 34 percent were receiving some kind of benefit from the state, while 12 percent were working from home, and this numbers hasn't changed much over time.

According to the Norwegian statistic central bureau (SSB) 7 out of 10 of the Norwegian population between the age 15 and 74 years were gainfully employed in 2017. A significant amount of the women shelter's user group was unemployed compared to the Norwegian population in general (Bufdir, 2018).

This is quite relevant for social workers, as most social workers work in various women shelters, and often come in contact with women with immigrant backgrounds who seek help from shelters and other places like the welfare center (NAV), child protective service etc.

1.2 Delimitation (Avgrensning)

Knowledge about underlying factors are very important in all levels. It sheds new light and sets focus on factors which fuels the continuity of these problems. Linear thinking would of course point out that A influences B, but I am interested in looking at this problem in a broader perspective. One of the effective ways to solve a problem or help a user group experiencing a problem is to have a better understanding of that problem.

I have decided through this thesis to focus on the immigrant women married to both ethnic and non-ethnic Norwegian in Norway, women that moved to Norway together with their husbands as refugees, and women that moved to Norway through family reunification to either be with their ethnic Norwegian partner or partner with similar background as them.

I will venture slightly into the discrepancies and contrast between ethnic Norwegian women and ethnic minority women at the women's shelter.

Men and children will get little or no attention in this thesis, except in areas where they help shed light to a particular situation or problem.

1.3 Definitions (Begrepsavklaring)

1.3.1 Women's shelter (krisesenter)

The women shelter is a center for victims of domestic violence, its services is the only help and relief measures with major qualification required to give protection, safety, advice and guidance to women, men and children that are exposed to domestic violence, and it is accessible to everyone living in Norway regardless of gender or ethnicity.

The shelter act was initiated in 2010, the act imposes certain requirements on every municipality in the country in regard to the quality of service that should be rendered to its inhabitant. Their services should be made available to every man, woman and child that are victims of domestic violence. Furthermore, are the services expected to include accommodations to those who need them, drop-ins and on-phone services, i.e. victims in some cases can get advice and counselling through a phone call to the shelter.

Children aren't exempted, children at the shelter are attended to as an independent client in a manner that covers their needs. Most of the shelters have professionals that work directly with children, this can be through "one on one" counselling, serve as a resource personal and being able to systematically analyze the child's need (Bufdir, 2020).

Municipalities in Norway are required to make it easy for victims of domestic violence to benefit from the services provided by the shelter, these includes support, counselling, guidance, help to come in contact with other authorities safe and temporary accommodations. The Accommodations provided for men and women should be physically separate, in other words there should be an accommodation for just women and vice versa.

The shelter is required to be open at all time of the day, and all through the year. Financial problems should not hinder a victim from seeking help, or getting a temporary accommodation at the shelter, and that is why the accommodation and services rendered by shelters are free. The users who move out from the shelter gets a follow up when re-establishing themselves into the society (Bufdir, 2015).

1.3.2 Violence (vold)

When most people hear the word violence the first thing that comes to mind is physical violence. Violence is broad term and understood as every continuous use of power, force or threat against another individual/group that can result to death, physical or psychological issues. World health organization (WHO) further explains that violence can also be in form of physical and emotional negligence (Nkvts, u.å).

According Isdal (2018), violence is defined as every action directed to another person through with this action hurts, inflicts pain, scares, violates and makes the involved person do something they would otherwise not do, or hinders them from doing what they would usually do.

For it to be seen as violence should we not only look at the action alone, but also in what context it was carried out (Isdal, 2018, s.39).

An example would be taking a walk with a friend on sunny day, and you realize your friend was about to step on a nail or broken glass laying on ground, your reaction was to push him to prevent him from stepping on that nail that would have pierced through his shoe and hurt him.

Your friend at first might not understand why you pushed him all of a sudden. Someone looking from afar would think you were trying to engage him in a fight. You actually just prevented him from getting hurt.

In a different scenario where to parties are engaged in a heated argument, and one pushes the other. This can be seen as physical violence based on that context.

According to Isdal (2018) there are three possibilities for the person who defines an action as violence.

The first is the individual that carries out the violent action, in most cases are they aware of the reasons behind their action and what they intend to achieve with it.

In second place is the victim of the violent action, the one that experienced the pain and fear, and how it later affects their behavior. One might conclude that the victim's definition of violence is the most accurate one. But this isn't always true, sometimes a victim's motive can contaminate their definition of violence. An example could be a supposed victim converting an innocent action to be negative by attaching it to violence, for personal interest like monetary compensation.

The third possibility is that of the observer, the one that observes and studies the action, and in what context it took place, and the motive behind the offender's action and the effect of such action (Isdal, 2018, s.40).

Violence is usually associated with physical actions like hitting, kicking etc. but it actually exceeds just the physical aspect, and covers every action that affects the other individual through pain inflictions, fright or violation.

Types of violence

Isdal (2018) wrote about 5 types of Abuse or violence namely: *physical, sexual, material psychological* and *latent violence*. I will focus on the ones most relevant for my thesis.

Physical violence

Physical violence can be defined as the use of all kinds of physical power to inflict pain, terrorize, hurt or violate an individual or group of people. It is used to effect, influence or control another person's behavior into doing something against their own free will.

It is important to differentiate between physical power and violence.

One might have to use physical power to stop a child about to running into traffic unawares, without it being seen as violence, however if we grip so hard intentionally that it hurts and make the child understand that he or she has done something wrong, this might be seen as the use of physical violence. People who carry out violent actions often have the tendency to justify and call their actions everything else but violence (Isdal, 2018, s.46).

Sexual abuse (violence)

This can be defined as every action directed to someone else's' sexuality, through pain, hurt, terror or violation influences to the individual or group into doing something against their free will or hinder them from doing what they would rather do (Isdal, 2018, s.47).

Sexual abuse ranges from sexual harassment and violation up until brutal rape and sexual torture. This is probably the most psychologically destructive and humiliating type of violence, because it violates our most private and vulnerable part. Researchers has downplayed the significance of sexuality being the force behind sexual violence to it being more act of exercising power. An example from Isdal (2018), are inmate rapists in the United states. It is estimated that over 250,000 men get raped in correctional facilities annually. And the culprits of these action are predominantly heterosexuals. This shows that rape for these inmates is some type of tool to exercise power.

However, women are overrepresented as victims of sexual abuse. This is not to say men aren't sexually abused, men can be victims too just not in the same number or degree (Isdal, 2018, s.48).

Material violence

This is the type of violence directed to objects, through which it appears terrifying and violating. This for example involves slamming or banging the door, breaking objects, ripping clothes to pieces or throwing things to scare or terrorize the victim. This action becomes even scarier if the offender had previously been physically violent (Isdal, 2018, s.50). Material violence reflects and shows that violence is often well planned and executed more than we think, because the objects that get destroyed are often objects of little significance. The offender might destroy everything else, but not the new phone or expensive jewelry the victim had just purchased. Children who grew up in homes where material violence is frequent, live with the feeling of walking on a minefield where an explosion might erupt at any time. (Isdal, 2018, s.51)

Psychological abuse (violence)

Isdal defined this as all kinds of ways to hurt, terrorizes and violate an individual in a non-physical way This can also be controlling and dominating a person with the help of underlying or hidden power or threat. Isdal (2018) went further to divide this type of violence into 7 subcategories – *direct threats, indirect threats, degrading or humiliating behavior, control, uncontrolled jealousy, isolation* and *emotional abuse.*

Direct threat: are all direct utterances of possible or potential violence to occur if one doesn't adhere to the wish of the offender, or if they already done what the offender doesn't approve of. "if you don't keep quiet, I will hit you" "I will kill myself, if you leave me" etc.

Indirect threat: Involves every medium used to convey a possible danger or violent consequence. It can be both verbal and diffuse utterances, which in some kind a way passes a message of possible violent consequence. "we are going to have a pleasant time together today, aren't we?" "I know where you live and what school your children attend" etc.

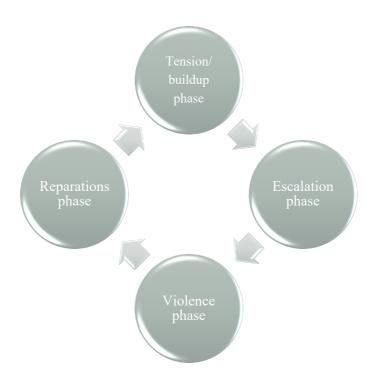
Degrading and humiliating behavior: This includes all types of behavior that's meant to hurt and violate the other person psychologically. This type of violence affects one's soul and dignity. Humiliating behavior is often in form expression. One can be angry during an argument or conflict without it being degrading. It becomes an abuse when one goes over the boundary to being rude or mean. "you are retarded" "nobody will have you" "you should never have been born" (Isdal, 2018, s.51-54,)

1.3.3 Domestic violence (Vold I nære relasjoner)

Domestic violence includes all types of violence and abuse between present and previous family members. Children who experience and witness this violence aren't exempted from the term "close relation". The Norwegian penal code describes close relation as "present and previous spouse or cohabitant, present or previous spouse or their cohabitant's relative in descending line, relative in the straight ascending line, someone in their household, someone in their care" (straffeloven, 2005, § 282)

Domestic violence often occurs over a long period of time, and are executed in different ways, some are episodic and are usually associated with relationships. Regardless of the fact that these violent occurrences happen at irregular intervals, can it have an effect on the entire relationship. The victim of the violent actions remembers the experience and then tries to adjust or adapt to avoid another violent occurrence. (Nkvts, u.å)

Violence Spiral-Voldsskylusen: this is a model that describes the dynamic of most victims of violence in close relations. It helps the victim of violence to recognize the violent pattern, and eventually work or change their situation. The spiral starts from a smooth and gentle phase, then builds up tension that triggers a violent episode, the offender thereafter becomes apologetic and caring. Then the cycle starts all over again. (Bufdir, 2018). This is better illustrated below.



I will in some part of my thesis use the term "Intimate partner violence (IPV)" in place of domestic violence.

1.3.4 Immigrant/immigrant background (innvandrer)

This involves all non-ethnic Norwegians that migrated to Norway for work, family reunification, asylum program or that was born here to immigrant parents This is relevant for my thesis, because a considerable number of women who visit the women shelter are of immigrant background.

Norwegian statistical bureau (SSB) use the term "immigrants" and "Norwegian-born with immigrant parents" the rest are considered the rest of the population.

Immigrant according to ssb is a person who migrated to Norway but born in a foreign country by foreign-born parents and four foreign-born grandparents.

Norwegian-born children with immigrant parents, are people born in Norway by two foreign-born parents, with four foreign-born grandparents. (Dzamarija, 2019)

United nation's definition of a refugee is everyone who finds themselves outside their country of origin, as a result of genuine fear of being victimized on grounds of race, religion, nationality, political views or membership to a special social group. (Leraand & Bahus, 2018)

I will in some part of my thesis use the term "ethnic minority women" in place of immigrant women. The reason for this, is to have a unified term that covers all kinds of immigrants in Norway, and to avoid unnecessary repetitions.

1.3.5 Family immigration (Familieinnvandring)

Family immigration distinguishes between Family reunification and family establishment.

Family reunification is applicable for those who already have an existing family in Norway and want to be reunited with them. While family establishment is applicable to those who wants to establish a family in Norway. Applicants of family immigration are often spouses or children of a person who already resides in Norway. It extends as far as parents with children living in Norway, applicants who will be getting married to someone already living in Norway. (Utlendingsdirektorat). It is important to clarify this, as the statistic from Bufdir states that 67 percent of the residents at the shelter were either married or co-habiting, and further stated that 2 out of 3 residents at the shelter are of immigrant background. (Bufdir, 2018)

1.3.6 Resident permit on an independent basis- (Opphold på selvstendig grunnlag)

According to the Norwegian directorate of immigration (UDI) are victims of domestic violence someone who is exposed to physical and psychological violence or threats from present or previous family member, children included. It further stated that it is forbidden to use violent against anyone, it included domestic violence, genital mutilation, forced marriage and human trafficking. To protect these group of people in Norway was resident permit on an independent basis formed. The immigration act § 53 is divided into two paragraphs §53a and

§ 53b.

Fortsatt oppholdstillatelse på selvstendig grunnlag

En utlending som har oppholdstillatelse etter §§ 40 eller 41, skal etter søknad gis ny oppholdstillatelse på selvstendig grunnlag dersom:

- A. samlivet er opphørt på grunn av referansepersonens død, med mindre særlige grunner taler imot det, eller
- B. samlivet er opphørt, og det er grunn til å anta at utlendingen eller eventuelle barn har blitt mishandlet i samlivsforholdet eller av andre medlemmer av samme husstand, eller av svigerfamilie. (Udi, 2019).

According to the Norwegian immigration's regulations(regelverk) from 2019, it explained that the aim and objective of this type permit §53b, is so foreign nationals or immigrants holding family immigration or family reunification residence permits don't have to feel forced to remain in abusive marriages or relationships out of fear of losing their residence permit in Norway. There is no requirement for a causal link or connection between the abuse and the relationship breakup, furthermore its of no relevance who initiated the breakup. Which means the breakup initiative might be taken either by the victim or the offender, this will neither affect nor influence how UDI processes the case.

Reaching a conclusion as to what is perceived as an abuse from Udi's point of view is based on a wholesome evaluation, the occurrences must have led to a decrease or had an effect on the victim's quality of life.

In addition, when evaluating if there has indeed been an abuse, will the description, extent or degree of the abuse, together with the context in which the abuse took place be taken into consideration. The authority has to distinguish if there is a pattern to the actions or if its just single isolated incident. A single isolated action doesn't represent or indicate an abuse but will however signify an abuse if it becomes recurrent over time. General unhappiness, disagreements or different views based on cultural differences is not enough conclude there's been an abuse.

It is expected that the abuse is shown to be probable for this permit to be granted. The applicant's description of the situation will be the basis for the evaluation of the case, it is neither required to document the abuse, nor required that victim already pressed charges against the culprit. Statement from the victim's partner will normally not be necessary but might be requested after concrete evaluation.

§53b is most relevant for my thesis, as this is the type of permit meant for victims of domestic violence in Norway. (Utlendingsdirektorat, 2019).

1.3.7 Culture (kultur)

According to Ameer Al-Bdairi (2019) master thesis culture was explained as how different factors like knowledge, beliefs, arts, ethics, law literature and customs affects and influences and constructs an individual and his/her life from life to death. It further explained that one's culture can be influenced by their environment. which tells us that culture is flexible and not static migrating to a new country might change or influence your previous cultural beliefs (Al-Bdairi, p. 20)

2.0 Methodology (Metode)

Methodology can be understood as the tool we use when trying to analyze or study a problem, through which we discover a new knowledge or understanding about the problem in question. (Dalland, 2013, s.111)

My thesis is based on literature review, the aim is to bring to light the knowledge status in a particular area or field. This type of review is based on what others have published in books, reports and articles. The goal is to put forward the work that has been done, put together theory and practice and thereafter try to establish what one knows. (Jacobsen, 2010, s. 54).

I have chosen this method, because it gives me access to the tremendous work done by different professionals, researchers and specialists and later documented through reports and research articles. My reference point will be from Norway, but I will also include studies from other countries outside Scandinavia that I consider relevant for this thesis

I was very much aware of what I wanted to write about from an early stage, this made me scan through the university's library to find textbooks/anthology related to my thesis i.e everything that had to do with immigrant women, violence, integration, women shelter.

There is also a significant amount of information about Norwegian women shelter on Norwegian websites like *Barne- ungdoms -og familiedirektoratet (Bufdir)*, and *Nasjonalt kunnskapssenter om vold and traumatisk stress (Nkvts)*

Norway's statistical bureau "statistisk sentralbyrå" (SSB) was my source for credible statistics related to my thesis. In addition, I used the university's search engine "Oria" combined with "Google scholar" to search for relevant research articles, reports and journals that I consider relevant to my thesis statement. The search words used were "immigrant women in Norway" also "immigration challenges in Europe" "immigrants at women shelter" "immigrants OR unemployment" "Immigrants OR culture" My excluded criteria were men and children.

The reason for the search words and combination was because I wanted my results to be as precise as possible, as using the word "immigrant" alone could produce thousands of results that would most likely be irrelevant for my thesis. I however have to admit that it wasn't very easy finding research articles relevant for my thesis, as most research focused generally on immigrants or about immigrant women in a different context.

I will be making use of relevant books, reports and research articles carried out for the refuge shelter.

3.0 Result (Resultat)

I will be presenting the different materials that will be used in answering my thesis question in this chapter. The materials are a combination of different studies, Guides (veileder) and reports. It is worth to mention that the studies aren't about just about immigrant women from Norway, but also international studies from different parts of the world, because of their relevance to my thesis question.

«Et hjem for oss, et hjem for deg» en kartlegging om endringer i brukersammensetninger og bruk av krisesentrene.

Jonassen, W., & Skogøy, E. (2010). Nasjonalt kunnskapssenter om vold og traumatisk stress. (Rapport 1/2010)

This is a qualitative study done on the request from Barne og likestillingsdepartmentet (BLD). The study was based on interviews with 41 women shelter clients, 12 employees from 6 different women shelters, 6 family violence coordinators from the police force, and 7 employees from social welfare. In addition, was a survey analysis of 504 women done in regard to this.

This study is one of government's initiatives against domestic violence. The report has a major focus on the changes regarding immigrants and their connections to the women shelter. The report amongst other things contribute to shedding light to the changes of the user group at the shelter, the function of the shelter, its services and the possible consequence these changes will have on the shelter.

The shelter groups development, sociocultural situations for women with different backgrounds, changes in marriage patterns and cultural perception of divorce are all a part of this report. Women's experience and perception of being exposed to violence are also very central in the report.

Arbeid med voldsutsatte kvinner med minoritetsbakgrunn

Elin Skogøy (2008). Nasjonalt kunnskapssenter om vold og traumatisk stress (Veileder).

This guide is a response to a diversified society where its inhabitants have different sociocultural background. This can be challenging for some professionals as working with these group (ethnic minority women) might require a culturally competent knowledge and skills to effectively work with them. This guide is aimed at employees at the women shelter, and every professional which in the line of their profession comes in contact with minority women that has been a victim of violence and abuse. The motive is to gather and systemize experience within this field and make it available for others. This veileder contains information relevant to my thesis, although some of the statistics used were from 2008, I will however use an updated statistic in my discussion.

"Wives attitudes Toward Gender roles and their experience of intimate partner violence by husbands in Central Province Sri Lanka"

Achini Jayatilleke, Krishna C. Poudel, Kayako Sakisaka, Junko Yasuoka, Achala Upendra Jayatilleke & Masimine Jimba (2011).

This is a cross sectional study conducted by 6 authors in Central province Sri Lanka. Its aim was to study regularity of intimate partner violence (IPV) by husbands, the association between wives' attitude toward gender roles and their experience of Intimate partner violence. The study was community based, involving three main cities of the central province, Sri Lanka in the period between June And August 2007.

The three districts used for the study was Kandy, Matale and Nuwaraeliya with the population 156, 000, 43,000 and 36,000 respectively. The representative sample was a total of 624 wives between the age of 15 and 49. The area of abuse central in the study was Physical, psychological and sexual abuse. With the help of multivariate regression analysis were the Authors able to study the connection between wives' attitudes towards gender roles and intimate partner violence. 36% of the 624 wives used in the study had encountered at least one episode of physical, physical, psychological or sexual abuse by their husband during their life time this group was grouped as "EVER ABUSE", 19% had experienced such abuse during the last 12 months, grouped as "CURRENT ABUSE".

The study shows the potency of cultural norms and how it controls women's behavior and thinking. It was seen that wives were less likely to experience abuse by their husbands if they believed that "outsiders should not intervene on abused women's behalf". They were however most likely to experience EVER and CURRENT isolated psychological abuse by their husbands if they did not agree that "a good wife should always obey her husband". This study conclusively suggest that intimate partner violence is high in Sri Lanka, but women who respect the cultural norms, tend to experience less Intimate partner violence.

Prevalence of intimate partner violence: Findings from WHO multi-cutural study on women's health and domestic violence.

Claudia Garcia- Moreno, Henrica AFM Jansen, Mary Ellsberg, Lori Heise. Charlotte H. Watts, on behalf of the WHO multi-country study on women's health and domestic violence against women study team (2006).

This is a study mainly aimed at to estimate the extent of physical and intimate partner violence against women in 15 different countries- Bangladesh, Brazil, Ethiopia, Japan, Namibia, Peru, Samoa, Serbia and Montenegro, Thailand, and the united republic of Namibia.

Surveys was between 2000 and 2003. The interviewed women were between the age of 15 - 49. Those who had once had a male partner were asked in private about their experiences of physical and sexually violent and emotionally abusive acts.

There was a variation of 15% to 71% amongst the countries involved in the study. Regardless of the fact that intimate partner violence was a problem worldwide, was there a clear indication that severe types of violence was higher in the more traditional rural settings than in cities like Yokohama in Japan and Belgrade in Serbia and Montenegro, the result further showed that prevalence partner violence was much lower in more industrialized settings, which was also Japan and Serbia and Montenegro in the study.

"Effects of intimate partner violence on low income women's health and employment"

Susan L. Staggs & Stephanie Riger. (2005)

With intimate partner violence and poor health among low-income women being a reference point, this study explored the relationship between abuse, health and employment stability with information from a 3-year study involving 1072 women welfare beneficiaries in Illinois. The first interview was conducted between October 1999 and September 2000, the second between January 2001 and August 200, and the third year between January 2002 and September 2002 with an average of 12 months between each interview. The women that participated in the study was African Americans, Hispanics, and the rest were either European Americans or classified to belonging to None.

63% of these women were never married, while 6.8% was married and currently living with their partner, 28.2% of those who had been married were either separated or divorced, and 1.4% of that group were widows. The sample description reported that Educational attainment was low, with women on average reporting less than a high school education.

Results from the study showed that Chronic intimate partner violence was associated with poor health, result from the same study also showed that recently abused women are less likely to work steadily than other women in the study.

Experience of immigrant women who self-petition under the violence against women act

Maia Ingram, Deborah Jean McClelland, Jessica Martin, Montserrat F. Caballero, Maria Theresa Mayorga, & Katie Gillespie (2010).

This is a study about abused undocumented immigrant women living in the united states. It exposes how these women are often isolated and in constant fear of deportation. Their abusive spouse is usually their only chance to get a legal status in the country. To protect these abused immigrant women from being entrapped by immigration law was the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA, 1994) introduced. This made it easy women be able to self-petition for a legal status without help from their violent spouses. The study went ahead to examine the different obstacles and barriers these women might encounter in filing the VAWA self-petition.

Kunnskapsoppsummering om deltakelse i arbeidslivet for kvinner med innvandrerbakgrunn.

Janis umblijs INSTITUTT FOR SAMFUNNSFORSKNING (2020:2)

This report was done on the request from Barne-, ungdoms- og familiedirektoratet (Bufdir)

This is a research-based report aimed to examine immigrant's women connection to the labor market in Norway. The studies' subject group are immigrant women from other countries as well as women born in Norway to foreign parents. The report's main focus was the job situation in Norway and contains also research from other Nordic countries and countries outside the Scandinavia that is relevant to Norway. The study also examined how employment among immigrant women has developed overtime and among different groups, the different obstacles that hinders these women's participation in the labor market, and above all the different measures than can help increase their participation in the labor market.

Konflikt, felleskap og forandring- Foreldreskap og sosial kontroll i innvandrede familier fra Pakistan, Somalia og Sri-Lanka

Jon Horgen Friberg (2019).

This is a book based on some part of the reports from FAFO's project "children of immigrants longitudinal study in Norway. The quantitative analysis part was based on CILS-NOR surve, a survey that was carried out in secondary schools in Oslo, Akershus and other selected schools in Buskerud in the year 2016, while the qualitative part was built on interview with parents, adolescents, civil servants and voluntary help services.

The book is about social control amongst immigrants, it focuses on questions that's of great significance to individuals, at the same time touching fundamental questions about the relationship between minority and majority population, autonomy and collectiveness, and between family and government. It attempts to see these relations as either complementing or competing institutions in a diversified society.

Helsekonsekvenser av vold mot kvinner – Marie Flem Sørbø

This is an anthology by kjersti Narud (Red). The only used in my thesis was chapter 12, page 216. It basically talked about the health consequences of violence against women.

4.0 Discussion - contributing factors as to why immigrant women are overly represented or dominant group at the women shelter.

I have selected a few factors that I think might be a reason as to why immigrant women are overly represented at the shelter. I will write about these factors in detail with the help of materials presented in my result chapter.

4.1 Cultural view on violence and gender role

According to Skogøy (2008), women with minority background come from over 200 countries, some came to Norway as refugees, employment reasons and others through family immigration. Women with minority backgrounds amongst other things are considered to be the most vulnerable group in terms of violence and abuse. Skogøy went ahead to explain that many minority women share the same family-oriented values, unlike the system in Norway where independence is central, which makes every individual responsible for their life. Relationship between genders in family is characterized by equality, men and women are expected to raise children, carry out chores and support the family equally (Skogøy, 2008, s. 11).

From the establishment of the women shelter, has the number of immigrants in Norway increased from 100,000 in 1980 to almost 500,000 in the year 2008 (790,500 as of 1 January 2020 SSB). Immigrants from western countries has been quite stable, compared to immigrants from non-western countries that has seen a significant Increase from 30,469 to 346,594 between the year 1980 and 2008 (Jonassen, & Skogøy, 2010, s.61). I couldn't find an updated statistic for 2020 as SSB no longer use the term "western and non-western immigrant"

Migration can often mean the search for something better, amongst other things protection from war and torture, access to jobs, steady incomes, a better living standard and higher education opportunities. This doesn't come without a loss of for example, sense of belonging, status, identity and solidarity from ones' place of origin (Friberg, 2019, s. 42). Even though culture is flexible and can be affected by the environment one finds himself, I assume not everyone is willing to adapt to new cultures.

I presume that a good understanding of cultural differences is essential in many aspects, both when working with domestic violence victims and when trying to understand underlying reasons as to many why immigrant women stay longer in abusive marriages. According to Friberg 82019), he explained that patriarchy is a type of system where authority relations is connected to gender, generations and age. Men are seen to be superior to women, parents considered to be superior to their children, older folks superior to younger folks. Wealthy countries in modern times has however moved towards a balance when it comes to power, influence and opportunities between genders in areas of families, policies and employment. These developments can be seen in Nordic countries, reinforced by a non-discriminatory policy and various adjustments to include and enable women participate in the labor market (Friberg, 2019, s. 24).

According to WHO multi-cultural study carried out by Garcia-moreno et al. (2006). It showed that the regularity of physical and sexual intimate partner violence (IPV) ranged from 15% in a Japanese city to 69% in a Peruvian province and 71% in a province from Ethiopia. And in another study carried out by Jayatilleke et al. (2011), it was said that cultural norms and expectations might have contributed to these variations. 91% of the women in Ethiopia believed that a man can hit his wife for reasons like not completing house work, refusing sex, or disobeying. However, in Japan where Intimate partner violence (IPV) was low, only 19% of the women shared the same view as the Ethiopian women. Women who agree to these traditional gender roles such as husband should have the authority of the family, tends to increase wife's vulnerability to domestic violence among immigrants in western countries.

Further into Jayatilleke et al. (2011) it explained that the Sri Lankan society has certain expectations to married women like obeying, respecting and protecting their husband's dignity. This includes not discussing family matters or conflicts with outsiders, as this is socially unacceptable. And in return, are husbands expected to respect, protect and provide for their "obedient" and faithful wives. It is however acceptable for husbands to shout at and control their wives' behavior, which in most western country is seen as psychological violence, and also falls in the category of "psychological violence" according to (Isdal, 2018, s. 51). We can agree that there is a bit of a contradiction here. A society that expects husbands to respect and protect their wives, but at the same time accepts that these men control and shout at their wives.

The result from the study showed clearly that wives were less likely to experience physical, psychological or sexual abuse by husbands if they did not believe that outsiders should intervene to protect abused wives. While the wives who did not believe that a good wife should always obey her husband experienced physical, psychological or sexual abuse. (Jayatilleke et al., 2011).

The Global Gender Gap Index carried out a survey of equality between men and women in regard to economic opportunities, education, health and policy influences. Norway came in second position in terms of equality, while Pakistan was second to the last on the same list (Friberg, 2019, s. 24). Depending on what extent immigrant women from Pakistan or other non-western immigrant hold on to their cultural beliefs and view of equality after migrating to a western country, this might contribute and increase their vulnerability to domestic violence, and thereby increasing the probability of them seeking help from women's shelter compared to ethnic Norwegian women.

4.2 Lack of higher education, unemployment and Poverty.

There's has been an increase in transnational marriages between immigrant women and ethnic Norwegian men. Ethnic Norwegian men married to women with immigrant background has increased drastically over the past 10 years. Most of these women are often from Thailand, Russia and the Philippines. One out of three women at the women shelter reported that their violence experience was from their ethnic Norwegian husband. Women exposed to domestic violence in transnational marriages are more vulnerable in many aspects compared to ethnic Norwegian women (Skogøy, 2008, s. 22)

Skogøy explained further that breaking out of violent marriages for these ethnic minority women is not often easy, considering their sociocultural background, education, finances, network and resident permit status in Norway. Some of the hindrances they experience are for example the fear of bringing shame to their family, fear of being alone in a foreign country, fear of being by themselves without support from their family if she entered the marriage against her family's wish. Some families are financially dependent on these women, which makes it even harder to break free, as they will lose the financial support they get from their partner. The fear of losing their resident permit and returning to their country of origin is not excluded, as their resident permit is dependent on their violent spouse. There is also the rigidity of the rules surrounding family immigration, where one has to be married for three years before applying for a permanent resident permit. This means a woman who is entirely dependent on the violent spouse has to bear and endure the violence throughout the three years period, before being eligible for a permanent resident permit. There is however a special type of permit for victims of domestic violence to prevent them from feeling forced to remain in an abusive relationship out of fear of losing their resident. This type of permit is called "permit on an independent basis" (opphold på selvstendig grunnlag) (Skogøy 2008, s.23).

But there is also a question of how many of these immigrant women are actually aware of the existence of this permit?

It is obvious ethnic Norwegian women don't have to worry about most of the above-mentioned problems, thanks to the gender equality policies which has given women equal rights as men and enabled them to work and be independent. Even though these policies apply to everyone living in Norway, I assume that minority women's norm and culture might hinder them from taking full advantage of these opportunities.

Finance is also a very important factor when it comes to the available option a woman has when considering leaving an abusive relationship. According to the studies carried out by Jonassen & Skogøy (2010) on behalf of NKVTS, several shelter workers reported that housing or accommodation situation is the most deciding factor as to whether these women seek help at the women's shelter or not. It is a matter of how resourceful the women are in terms of economy, network, language knowledge and the ability to get housing independently. Jonassen and Skogøy (2010), further reported that the need for accommodation is usually priority for these women rather than seeking protection when they first seek help from the shelter.

Education is also a very important factor on how well minority women cope after breaking out from an abusive relationship. Jonassen and Skogøy (2010) made reference to another study in their report where it was reported that women who seek help from shelters have low education coupled with low income, compared to other women who seek help from for example - family therapists. Many of the immigrant women are in some cases denied the right to get a paying job by their husband/partner. 19 percent of 87 women that previously lived at the shelter confirmed that they have often been denied the right to employment by their spouse, this can be seen as a calculative move to isolate these women, further making them dependent on the assaulter (Jonassen & Skogøy 2010)

The same can't be said about most ethnic Norwegian women. Ethnic majority women's economic situation has improved over the years. From the period between the 80s and 90s has more women been active in the labor market, this increase was mostly amongst married women. This indicates that most ethnic Norwegian women are more independent and have the resources needed to help them cope without their abusive partner's help in the housing market. This has further increased the chances for ethnic Norwegian women to breakout of abusive relationships from an economic perspective without being dependent on the women shelter for help (Jonassen & Skogøy, 2010, s. 69-70).

It is most likely that financial stability coupled with being active in the job market has contributed to making ethnic Norwegian women less vulnerable and more independent which has made them less dependent and minimized their contact with the shelter compared to many immigrant women from non-western country.

4.3 Network

The importance of network needs to be emphasized as well, as it plays a role on how and who victims of domestic violence reaches out to in times of distress.

Based on the study carried out by Jonassen and Skogøy, the lack of network poses a problem for minority women, especially those who has newly migrated to the country, refugee women included. Some of these women have a few friends, either through the language learning school they attend, or friends from similar cultural background as them. But there are limitations to these networks. These minority women might get emotional support from them, but unable to move in with them in times of trouble. The women shelter becomes the only available option for these women without families in Norway, the other option would be to return to their home country.

This is not to say ethnic Norwegian women don't experience similar problem, but the same problem presents itself differently for ethnic majority women in terms of the distance between the victim and her family. Norwegian women experiencing violence from their partner might have their family living far away from them. For example, the victim living in the southern part of Norway while her family lives in the northern part of Norway, this might contribute to making ethnic Norwegian women seek temporary help from the shelter (Jonassen & Skogøy, 2010, s. 74).

Either way, I would assume that having your family in the same country as you is a much better situation than having them in an entirely different continent. Lack of these network might leave them with no other choice than to move into the shelter.

Breaking out of an abusive relationship can be complicated for ethnic minority women, as their family values plays an important role and affects how a breakup is perceived. For most ethnic Norwegian women who grew up in a society where freedom and right to make decisions independently is central, breaking out of an abusive relationship is expected and seen as a given, as this goes against ones' self-worth and integrity. However, divorcing an abusive partner for many non-western immigrant women can be challenging and perceived as dishonor and usually associated to shame from the minority woman family's point of view (Skogøy, 2008).

In a situation where the victim has her family members living in Norway, fear for her family's cultural perception of divorce might drive the victim to end up seeking refuge at the shelter rather than her network, which in this case happens to be her family.

4.4 Immigration status/ Resident permit on independent basis.

A woman's immigration status in a country might affect how long she stays in an abusive relationship or who and where she seeks help. There is a special permit meant for immigrant women stuck in an abusive marriage, and too scared to leave out of fear of losing their resident permit or being deported (Utlendingsdirektorat, 2019).

Women in transnational marriage usually have to stay married in Norway the first three years before being eligible for a permanent resident permit. However, if the marriage breaks down in the course of the three years, they are usually expected to leave the country. This permit also covers women that might face unreasonable difficulties and hardship due to sociocultural situation in her home country as a result of being divorced. In processing this tis type of cases the victim's explanation is quite central, it is also helpful if the victim can document her experiences as this might help strengthen her application (Skogøy, 2008, s. 65).

This is not an uncommon practice in other western countries like the united states for example. The equivalent of "permit on an independent basis" in the united states was called "Violence against women act" (VAWA, 1994). A study by Ingram et al (2010) focused on the experience immigrant women married to abusive partner have and had to endure to get a legal resident permit. The VAWA act was meant to protect these women and enable them to apply for a permit on an independent basis, without having to remain with their abusive spouses. The article explained that most immigrant women didn't use domestic violence services due to past negative experiences, and many of them weren't aware of their right to legal protection from abuse, and also ignorant of the fact that they actually meet the requirement for certain benefits. Furthermore, Immigrant women can also be skeptical to using the VAWA self-petition, because they probably heard stories of other women being deported, this made many of them scared to actually petition. The unawareness of the VAWA act also resulted to the fear of involving the police when these immigrant women are actually being abused, as they fear this might lead to the police arresting and deporting them. This fear might make them remain in such abusive relationship.

The real question is how does this drive immigrant women to the shelter?

Further into the article it explained that the discovery of VAWA self-petition usually came through family networks, or friends who refer abuse victims to services that will not ask about their immigration status. One of the women involved in the study said

"I found out about this program from a friend of my sister; she also married and got divorced. I wanted to ask for help so that he (abusive partner) wouldn't be able to take away my daughter. He threatened me that because he is a citizen and working and I'm not, he could take my child. I came to the local **shelter** and they gave me the telephone to talk to the VAWA office (Legal Aid)" (Ingram et al., 2010 s. 864).

The quote above explained that some of these immigrant women had to reach out to the women's shelter before they actually got to know about the VAWA self-petition.

Norwegian women do not need protection from immigration laws in their country laws or share the same fear as many immigrant women whom their permit depends on their violent spouse. Since a Norwegian citizen can't be deported from her own country, this is in some way an advantage for ethnic Norwegian women. This problem automatically becomes a problem for just immigrant women, thereby increasing their chances of reaching out to the shelter.

The study also confirmed that most immigrant women first found out about their right to an independent resident permit or VAWA when they first reached out to the women shelter (Ingram et al., 2010). This confirms that this problem was only limited to immigrants and not the majority population. One can assume immigrant women's legal status is also a contributing factor as to why immigrant women dominate the women shelter. The result of the study showed the importance of women shelters and other services that advocates for immigrant women exposed to domestic violence. It was first after these women reached out to these services that the VAWA self-petition began, and their needs were addressed in collaboration with other service agencies (Ingram et al., 2010).

4. Relation between poverty, poor health and domestic violence

Domestic violence is no longer an individual or national problem, but rather an international problem. According to the study carried out on behalf of the WHO on the prevalence of intimate partner violence that comprises of 10 countries namely Bangladesh, Brazil, Ethiopia, japan, Namibia, Peru, Samoa, Serbia and Montenegro, Thailand and united republic of Tanzania. Results from that study showed a life time prevalence of physical partner violence ranging from 13% in a city in japan to 61% in a Peru province. While the degree of lifetime prevalence of sexual partner violence ranged from 6% in a city in Japan and Serbia and Montenegro to 59% in a province in Ethiopia. The study went ahead to show that Japan consistently reported the lowest prevalence of all forms of violence, while Provinces of Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Peru and Tanzania reported the highest figures (Moreno et al., 2006).

Findings further showed a higher number of partner violence in traditional rural settings, than in the city settings of Japan and Serbia and Montenegro. Prevalence of partner violence was however much lower in more industrialized areas, in this case Japan and Serbia and Montenegro compared to other countries in the study (Moreno et al., 2006).

Domestic violence over a long period has health consequences on its victims, these consequences are not only limited to immigrant women, but every victim of domestic violence regardless of ethnicity or nationality. However, Despite the fact that domestic violence is an international problem, can one deduce from the above-mentioned study that domestic violence is higher in non-western countries compared to western countries.

Ethnic Norwegian women are not shielded from the psychological effects of domestic violence, but we can see with the help of the study that one can assume that non-western immigrant women are more vulnerable to mental health problems, probably because most of these women might have been experiencing domestic violence either through previous marriage or being subjected to it by family members in their home country long before moving to Norway. According to Sørbø (2014), consequences and effects of violence can still resurface long after the violent experience is over, another study showed that previous violent experiences, the intensity and length of the violence can cause a significant damage to the victim's mental health. It further went ahead to explain that the effect of violence carried out by a known person does a major damage than when it is carried out by a stranger. Women exposed to violence has reported significant number of psychological issues amongst others depression and anxiety, and studies shows that women who reported violent from their partner has twice the chance of experiencing depression compared to women who aren't exposed to violence (Sørbø, 2014, s. 216).

It is however important to emphasize that ethnic Norwegian women are not immune to mental health problems, but the living standard, education, equality and being a part of the labor force, might have contributed to making them less vulnerable compared to immigrant women with little or no education.

A study was carried out in the united states by Staggs and Riger (2005) to see how intimate partner violence affects low income women's health and their job opportunities. One can see that abuse and health are somewhat connected and can be a hindrance to a stable employment. Abuse combined with stress caused by poverty might increase psychological stress response. The study also mentioned the welfare reform in the united states that requires an individual to have been in the labor force and earned the minimum income to be eligible for certain benefits.

This rule is not unfamiliar here in Norway. One of the requirements to be met to be able to receive unemployment benefits in Norway, includes that the applicant have earned the minimum income of at least 0,75 multiplied by social security basic sum over the last 12 months or the minimum of 2,25 multiplied by social security sum in the last 36 months (Nav, 2020). But some of these immigrant women have been denied the right to employment by their spouses, and many others have had other hindrances like language barriers and low education problems, which means they don't qualify for unemployment benefits since many of them were unemployed.

According to Umblijs (2020) many minority refugee women who move to Norway have little or no education, and in cases have education that doesn't match the Norwegian labor force. This then affects their chances in the Norwegian labor force, where most jobs require educational qualifications. Even though some of these women got higher educations from their home country, language barrier would hinder their chances in the labor force (Umblijs, 2020, s.28).

There is a connection between poverty and health problems, further into Staggs and Riger's (2005), it was reported that women living in poverty are three times more likely to report chronic illness than women with financial stability. This was again confirmed in Umblij's report that emphasized the importance of health and its connection to the labor market and how it affects immigrant women's chances in gaining employment. Minority women often have serious health issues compared to the Norwegian born population. These health problems could be as a result of growing up in a country with bad health system, malnutrition or exposure to traumatic situations. It could also be connected to the fact that these minority women take up jobs that involves health hazards, usually the type of jobs the majority population wouldn't apply for (Umblijs, 2020, s.28).

Staggs and Riger (2005) made reference to another study involving 397 poor women. The study confirmed that both abuse and poverty have a negative effect on women's physical health but emphasized that abuse does a significant damage to health than poverty. Another study from Michigan was also used to back the sample up, it showed that abused women had higher rates of depression, posttraumatic stress disorder and substance abuse, than women who hasn't experience abuse (Staggs & Riger, 2005).

Abuse and health problems was identified as hindrances to economic independence amongst minority women, thereby affecting their chances to gain and sustain employment. It was mentioned further in the study that abusive partners use tactics to hinder their wives from gaining employment as mentioned earlier in this thesis. Other studies from Stigg & Riger (2005) showed that poor physical and mental health affects one's connection to the labor market and results to unstable employment leading to lower income.

The overall results of the study showed that recent abuse has a stronger direct effect on employment compared to past abuse. The **recently abused group** that worked 37% of the time stood for those that had the least stable employment and worked less than the women in the **no abuse** and **past only group**. While in the area of health problems, the result showed that women who were **chronically abused** had the poorest health compared to every other group in the study. (Staggs & Riger, 2005).

6.0 Conclusion (Avslutning)

The women shelter's service in Norway has a very important function in the society. It provides victims of domestic temporary accommodation when breaking out or trying to break out of a violent and abusive relationship. Although this service is available to everyone regardless of their ethnic background, some group standout in the shelter's user group statistic.

Through my findings, I was able to discover that there was a pattern associated to a "typical" woman shelter client. The lack of education, financial stability, network, language skills etc. made some group (immigrant women) vulnerable to violence and exploitation resulting to the increase of them seeking help from the shelter. Ethnic Norwegian women experience domestic violence as well but growing up in a country with good educational system, access to the job market regardless of your gender, financial stability and security makes them less vulnerable and less dependent on the shelter in desperate times which.

While most of these immigrant women have little or no network in their host country, the shelter becomes almost the only alternative they have when experiencing violence from their partner. Studies also showed that long exposure to violence can lead to mental health issues that can affect ones' participation in the labor force and then again affects their chances of being financially stable which leaves them in vulnerable situations. There was also an indication through my findings that immigrant women are most likely to seek help from the shelter as that is a better option than reporting a violent spouse to the police, as their legal status in the country depends on the fact that they stay married. Above all it is important to emphasize that domestic violence is a worldwide problem, and affects everyone regardless of ethnicity, gender and nationality. However, more has to be done to protect the most vulnerable group.

I think these findings are relevant for social workers, courses and training should be prioritized for social workers who come in contact with ethnic minority with different cultural background. Social workers are usually the dominant employees at the shelter, it is therefore important that these social workers have the skills needed to best help these user group. Furthermore I think the women shelter also have to create more awareness about its services, as explained in my thesis some immigrant women weren't aware of the existence of the shelter, and it was first after these women came in contact with the shelter that they discovered their right and were able to leave their abusive partner. Finally, the knowledge of theses underlying factors that results to immigrant women being overly represented at the shelter is important as leaders in social work field can suggest, give opinions and advice policy makers on policies that can help hinder or reduce some of the causes of this problem.

The women shelter is essential in our society today, and hopefully more policies are made to strengthen and make it more visible in the society as this has helped many domestic violence victims.

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Høgskulen på Vestlandet

Bacheloroppgåve

BSV5-300 Bacheloroppgåve

Predefinert informasjon

Startdato: 13-05-2020 13:17

Sluttdato: 20-05-2020 14:00

Eksamensform: Bacheloroppgåve

SIS-kode: 203 BSV5-300 1 BO 2020 VÅR
Intern sensor: Inger Johanne Solheim

Deltaker

Naun: Jaime Guerra Almazan

Kandidatnr.: 373

HVL-id: 573637@hvl.no

Informasjon fra deltaker

Antall ord *: 10248

Egenerklæring *: Ja

Inneholder besvarelsen Nei

Termin:

Vurderingsform:

Studiepoeng:

2020 VÅR

Norsk 6-trinns skala (A-F)

konfedensielt materiale?:

Jeg bekrefter at jeg har Ja

registrert

oppgavetittelen på norsk og engelsk i StudentWeb og vet at denne vil stå på

vitnemålet mitt *:

Jeg godkjenner autalen om publisering av bacheloroppgaven min *

Ja

Er bacheloroppgaven skrevet som del av et større forskningsprosjekt ved HVL? *

Nei

Er bacheloroppgaven skrevet ved bedrift/virksomhet i næringsliv eller offentlig sektor? * Nei						